

theatermainstage

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OPHELIA:

A PRISM

BY MIEKO GAVIA

DIRECTED BY H. HARVEY



Theater
OBERLIN COLLEGE

February 2, 3, 4

7:30 pm

February 4, 5

2:00 pm

IRENE AND ALAN WURTZEL THEATER



The Cast

MATSEDISO MATHEBULA '24 as Green Ophelia

BIANCA (B) BERGER '23 as Orange Ophelia

KARAH INNIS '23 as Brass Ophelia

KAT CHRISTIE-MIZELL '24 as Horatio

CYRIL AMANFO '22 as Laertes

LEANDER (LEE) CHOW '23 as Hamlet

LIA FAWLEY '24 as Gertrude and Mor

Special Thanks

Oberlin College Theater Department Faculty and Staff, Nusha Martynuk, Carter McAdams, and Andrew Suseno (creator of Moving Rasa)

Run Time: 120 minutes (10 minute intermission)

Content Warning: Racism in dialogue, depictions and discussions of sexual and sex acts, depiction of sexual assault, implied violence/abuse, depiction of suicide and mental illness, intoxication (alcohol), fake blood, misogynistic remarks, loud noises

Artistic Team

Playwright.....	MIEKO GAVIA '11
Director.....	H. HARVEY '11
Costume Designer.....	CHRIS FLAHARTY
Scenic Designer.....	LAURA CARLSON TARANTOWSKI
Lighting Designer.....	JEREMY K. BENJAMIN
Sound Designer.....	LUCAS DRAPER '23
Associate Lighting Designer.....	NELSON GUTSCH '25
Assistant Director/Dramaturg.....	KAT CHRISTIE-MIZELL '24
Stage Manager.....	GABRIELA CASTILLO '23
Assistant Stage Manager.....	ASHTON DOLL '24

Production Staff

Managing Director for Theater, Dance, & Opera.....	ERIC STEGGALL
Technical Production Director.....	JOSEPH NATT
Assistant Technical Director.....	DAVID BUGHER
Lighting & Sound Supervisor.....	SCOTT DEVINE
Costumer/Costume Shop Manager.....	SOFIA DANG
Head Scenic Artist.....	JOANNE STEGGALL
Marketing & Engagement Coordinator.....	HANNAH DOUGALL
Box Office Coordinator.....	STEPHANIE KING
Light Board Operator.....	LILY MAGAR-MATSUOKA '23
Sound Board Operator.....	YASIEL EWING '26
Stagehands.....	ANNA COHEN '24, ANTONINA DIVALENTIN '23, PIPER MORRISON '23
Scenic Construction Crew.....	WREN HOUSE '23
Scenic Art Crew.....	MOE ARIYOSHI '26, ZOLA HABER '23
Costume Construction Crew.....	LAUREN O'HEAR '23, MATTHEW PALACIOS '23
Electrics Crew.....	XIWEI GUO '23, NELSON GUTSCH '25, ANDREW MCCRACKEN '26
Production Photography.....	JOHN SEYFRIED
Administrative Assistant.....	RAVEN FAIRLEY

Playwright's Note

When I was first given the option to write an author's statement, I wanted to submit a doodle of myself on a motorcycle with my middle finger up, popping a wheelie on Shakespeare's grave. I have a complicated relationship with "The Bard." I appreciate his verse, I admire his imagery and wordplay, but I think he (and other old, dead, white guys) are over-hyped in the theater canon. Additionally, as a queer actress of color, I never quite fit into his world. I could see myself as the awkward and forlorn Helena, the free-thinking yet manhandled Katherine, the (definitely) queer weirdo called Puck- but despite my Oberlin Shakespeare training, years of acting experience, and love of heightened language I have yet to book a classic Shakespeare gig. I suspect it's because I am too brown, too unwieldy, with hair that takes up too much space and a voice too deep for an ingénue. Instead, I found my home in indie theater. I found that I loved new works, and even landed roles in new translations and remixes of Shakespeare. Playwrights like Mfoniso Udofia and John Reed showed me that there were ways of tweaking and twisting and rewriting archaic plots into something new and different beasts. Productions of their works found ways of exploring systemic violence, minority ambition, and misogynoir- ways of giving power and voice to those previously chained and silenced.

I am a firm believer in writing the change you want to see in the world. I write for the people who don't see themselves in books, onstage, or on screen- I write characters that I hope will make them feel less alone. Ophelia is an interesting character- she's a bit of a cypher to both those in the play and those in the audience. She is the subject of derision, scorn, and admiration. She exists as a pawn, an object, a foil. She is subject to her father's ambition, her brother's bravado, Hamlet's scorn, and Gertrude's pity. She is emotional cannon fodder. I have tried to give her agency, yet I am handcuffed by the text- no matter how fiercely she may struggle, she must drown before the end. But I hope that, at least, I have given that struggle meaning.

This particular play was written with an Oberlin cast and audience in mind. It has been adapted to fit the needs of the Oberlin Theater Department, and will eventually morph into something with a larger cast. The play you are about to experience is an incubator production- The world premiere of Ophelia: A Prism will be held in New York City this summer, and I look forward to seeing what it will become. I extend my sincere love and gratitude to the cast, crew, and production team of Ophelia: A Prism. You have all made me and my work feel so welcome and supported. I hope that I have made you all feel the same.

Mieko Gavia

Cast Bios

MATSEDISO MATHEBULA (Green Ophelia) is a third year Theater major with an Education Studies concentration. They are of South African descent and were raised in Atlanta, GA. Most recent Oberlin productions include *Olympus* (Ensemble), *AtGN* (Tiresias), *Fires In the Mirror*, and the student directed piece, *Sankoch* (Abuelo). Tseli is especially thankful for the opportunities to make Black, community centered art. Outside of theater, they are involved in OSLAM and choreographing for step teams. They give endless love and gratitude to family and friends from home, and hope you enjoy the show!

KARAH INNIS (Brass Ophelia, she/her) is a Senior, and a Classics major. She recently appeared in Cyril Amanfo's *Olympus*, as Enyo, *Goddess of War*, Underground Shakespeare's production of *Twelfth Night* as Sebastian, and *The Death of Midas* as King Midas. She would like to thank her friends and family for supporting her in this endeavor, and she hopes that you enjoy the show!

BIANCA BERGER (Orange Ophelia) is a fourth-year Psychology major and Africana Studies minor. Last spring, she was seen playing Artemis in Cyril Amanfo's *Olympus*. She took a step back from campus this fall to study theater with the Trinity/La MaMa Performing Arts Study Away Program. More broadly, Bianca is interested in singing, dance, and theater. She's interested in theater as a means to tell a story. She hopes to continue her career as an actor and explore the intersection of traditional and experimental theater. Bianca is honored to be back on campus working with such a diverse and talented cast and crew.

KAT CHRISTIE-MIZELL (Horatio, Assistant Director, he/him) is a fourth year Theater major from Nashville, TN. He has worked on several Oberlin Theater productions, such as *OLYMPUS* (Assistant Director), *The Death of Midas* (Assistant Director), and Professor Caroline Jackson-Smith's *The Word and the Beat* and Black Arts Workshop, but this is his first time stepping into a full acting role since high school. He would like to thank every single person who had a hand in seeing this production come to life, and to make sure they know it couldn't be done without them. He can't wait for you to see *Ophelia: A Prism*!

CYRIL AMANFO (Laertes/King Hamlet (Voice of King Hamlet, Voice of Polonius)) is a recent grad (class of '22) from Oberlin, and pursuing a professional career in acting, playwriting, and directing. Past Oberlin credits include *Olympus* (Apollo, playwright, composer, choreographer), *AtGN* (Haemon), *Fires in the Mirror* (multiple roles), and more. He is super excited to be back with Oberlin Theater and very grateful to the team for this incredible play. He hopes you enjoy the experience.

LEANDER CHOW (Hamlet) is happy to be here and grateful for everyone who worked on and contributed to this production. This is his first show at Oberlin.

LIA FAWLEY (Gertrude) is a second-year Psychology major and Creative Writing minor from the Chicago area. She is very excited to be acting in her first production at Oberlin and extends her thanks to the cast, crew, and everyone who worked so hard to bring this production to life!

Artistic Team Bios

MIEKO GAVIA (Playwright) is a writer, actress, model, and producer. Her acting credits include Joan of Arc in *La Pucelle*, Lou Slome in *Lou at the Paradise Factory*, the webseries *Quarter Century* (Imani), *Afterswarm* at JACK (Gigi), *The Reenactors* at Abrams Arts Center (Actress 2), and Creative Time's installations: *Private Moment* (Alice) and *The Privilege of Escape* (Dr. Crenshaw). She has also lent her voice to projects with Classical Theater of Harlem (*The Muck*), Pink Flamingo/Audible (*Alight*), and Scribd. Mieko's play *Dog* has been performed at the Gene Frankel Theatre, her play *Afterswarm* (co-written with Heather Harvey) has been performed at JACK, and her non-theatrical writing has been featured in Bustle, BuzzFeed, Oxygen, and Efniks. Mieko is also a Co-Artistic Producer for Black Revolutionary Theatre Workshop- a Brooklyn based, social justice focused theatre company. <https://www.miekogavia.org/>

HH (Director) is a Brooklyn-based writer/director/producer who specializes in nontraditional storytelling for stage, audio, and screen. She co-founded Black Revolutionary Theatre Workshop in 2015 and currently serves as Co-Artistic Producer with Mieko Gavia and Tim Craig. She co-wrote *Afterswarm* (2018) with Mieko Gavia through a residency with The Tank. *Afterswarm* premiered at JACK in Brooklyn in 2019. She co-wrote and co-directed *Revolution* (2015) with Black Revolutionary Theatre Workshop, which has toured the Northeast and appeared at HERE Arts Center and JACK. She also co-developed *Fruit* (2016) with BRTW, which appeared at several colleges, universities, and community spaces. She wrote the multi-episode series *The Green Zone* (2019-) for BRTW with support from WBAI and Black and Latino Film Coalition and the audio drama, *Bandana Country* (2020) for BRTW. Recent directing credits include *Summoned* by Sheyenne Javonne Brown at The Flea (2022), Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2021) for Dramatic Question Theatre, *Rita is the Goat* by Melanie Maria Goodreux (2020) at The Foundry in the Berkshires, *Bars* by Pravin Wilkins (2020) for Four Walls Theater, *Fluid* (2018) by Sheyenne Javonne Brown for CPT at the Schomburg, and *Ruins* (2018) by Hope Rehak for the Araca Project at the American Theatre of Actors.

CHRIS FLAHARTY (Costume Designer) is the resident Costume Designer and Associate Professor of Theater for the Oberlin College Theater Department and the Opera Theater of the Conservatory of Music. Although Chris has directed and designed works from a wide repertory of theater and opera, he has a special affection for musical plays, several of which he has directed at Oberlin, including *Into the Woods*, *Company*, *Assassins*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *The Landing* and *Spring Awakening*. His lyric projects have also included several cabarets, showcases and workshops of theater music, both new and classic. With professional and educational companies, he has designed costumes for a great diversity of contemporary plays, classics and masterworks, ranging from Shakespeare and Sondheim, Molière and Mamet, to Mozart and Britten. At Oberlin, Chris teaches courses in Design and Musical Theater.

LAURA CARLSON TARANTOWSKI (Scenic Designer) is Oberlin's resident Scenic Designer and Lecturer since 2016. Recent work includes *The Moors*, *Antigone*, and *Olympus* at Oberlin, as well as *Kill Move Paradise*, *Sunset Baby*, and *Wakey Wakey* for Dobama Theater, and *Everybody* for the Case Western Reserve-Cleveland Playhouse MFA Acting Program. She holds an MFA in Scene Design from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

JEREMY K. BENJAMIN (Resident Lighting Designer) has taught Lighting Production and Lighting Design courses at Oberlin College for the past 15 years. In addition, Mr. Benjamin is currently Director of the Theatre program at Lorain County Community College where he has been Production Manager and Technical Director since 1990. Recent Oberlin Theater productions include *The Moors*, *Olympus*, *Antigone*, *Twilight Bowl*, *Urinetown*, *Body of Bourne*, *What We Look Like*, *Cabaret*, *Angels in America*, *Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*, *The Bluest Eye*, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, and *Denial*. As a freelance lighting designer, Mr. Benjamin's work has been seen at the Beck Center for the Performing Arts, Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, The Cleveland Institute of Music Opera Department, Cleveland Contemporary Dance Theatre, Cleveland Municipal School District, Cleveland's Playhouse Square Center, Cleveland's Dancing Wheels, Great Lakes Theater, Karamu House, King's Productions, Lyric Opera Cleveland, The Musical Theatre Project, Ohio Dance Theatre, Opera Cleveland, Paramount Productions, Pointe of Departure Dance, and the Village Playhouse.

LUCAS DRAPER (Sound Designer, he/him) is a fourth year Computer Science and Theater major from Melbourne, Australia. He has worked on a variety of shows across campus, sound designing *Olympus*, *Funny Girl*, *Big Spender* and *The Death of Midas*, Stage managing *The Aliens* and *Shayna Punim* and lighting designing *The Death of Midas* as well as various dance shows including the student dance showcase and senior dance capstones.

NELSON GUTSCH (Associate Lighting Designer) is a second-year Theater major with a Jazz Bass minor in the Conservatory. He has designed a number of theater and dance productions at Oberlin College for the Theater Department and OMTA/OSTA, as well as in his hometown at Theatre Salina. Nelson is the chair of the Student Lighting and Sound Association (SLSA), the Technical Coordinator for OMTA/OSTA, and a TA in the Oberlin Theater Electrics Shop.

GABRIELA CASTILLO (Stage Manager) is a fourth-year Theater and Biology double major and Africana Studies minor from New York City. This is her first time stage managing a production and she has greatly enjoyed the experience. Gabriela has previously worked tech for both *the Word and the Beat* and the Juneteenth productions during the summer of 2021. She was also an Assistant Stage Manager for the MainStage production *Olympus* last February. In addition to her tech work, Gabriela has acted in Oberlin's MainStage production of *AtGN* (Congregation) and the LabSeries production *The Death of Midas* (Talking Head/Sinner). For now, she hopes you all enjoy the show!

ASHTON DOLL (Assistant Stage Manager) is a third year Theater and Classics double major who is absolutely delighted to be a part of this production. Previously, he designed and built the sets for the OMTA productions of *9 to 5* and *Chicago*. He would like to sincerely thank Gaby, H. H., and everyone else involved in this production for all their help and guidance. Enjoy the show!

Theater Department Faculty

MATTHEW WRIGHT | Professor of Theater, Chair

KARI BARCLAY | Assistant Professor of Theater

PRESTON CROWDER '16 | Visiting Assistant Professor of Theater

ANJANETTE HALL | Assistant Professor of Theater

CAROLINE JACKSON SMITH | Professor of Theater and Africana Studies

Publicity

MAEVE HOGAN '23, DLISAH LAPIDUS '26

Central Ticket Service

HANNAH BEHROOZI '24, BAILEY BREWER '24, PHOEBE BROWN '23, ALANA BRUNETTE '23, ASHTON DOLL '24, COLETTE GOGGIN '23, CARIS GROSS '23, NOAH HAMAOU '25, MAEVE HOGAN '23, LUCIEN MESCH '24, NICK MOEN '23, JORDAN MUSCHLER '23, ANNABEL SEXTON-DALDRY '25, OLIVIA WOHLGEMUTH '25

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