

DRAMA FACULTY AND STAFF

Maya Cantu  
Michael Giannitti  
Linda Hurley  
Kirk Jackson  
Dina Janis  
Sherry Kramer  
Brian Lambert  
Richard MacPike  
Michael Rancourt  
Jean Randich  
Sue Rees  
Jenny Rohn  
Charles Schoonmaker

FIRST HANDS

Emma Castle  
Isabel Wing  
Luis Davide Yepes  
Taelen Robertson  
Alex Earle-Richardson  
Raewyen Fairless  
Lecil James  
Mira Darham

COSTUME LAB WORKERS

Luis Davide Yepes  
Kaiya Kirk  
Danielle Robbins

WARDROBE

Sarah Burry  
Emmeline Sudock  
Audrey King

LIGHTBOARD OPERATOR

Devin Beckwith

SOUNDBOARD OPERATOR

Katie Sciacqua

LAB ELECTRIC CREW

Michaela Brown  
Anna Demchenko  
Imani Lewis-Shirley  
Clare Maceda  
Jack McKeon  
Lucia Ordaz  
Charles Pisano  
Foster Powell  
Joshua Reinstein  
Ella Richardson  
Saaran Zaman

MASTER ELECTRIC CREW

Ronald Anahaw  
Dado Cobo  
Shana Crawford  
Chloe Engel  
Nathaniel Guevin  
Lecil James  
Sam Mistry  
Kaitlyn Plukas

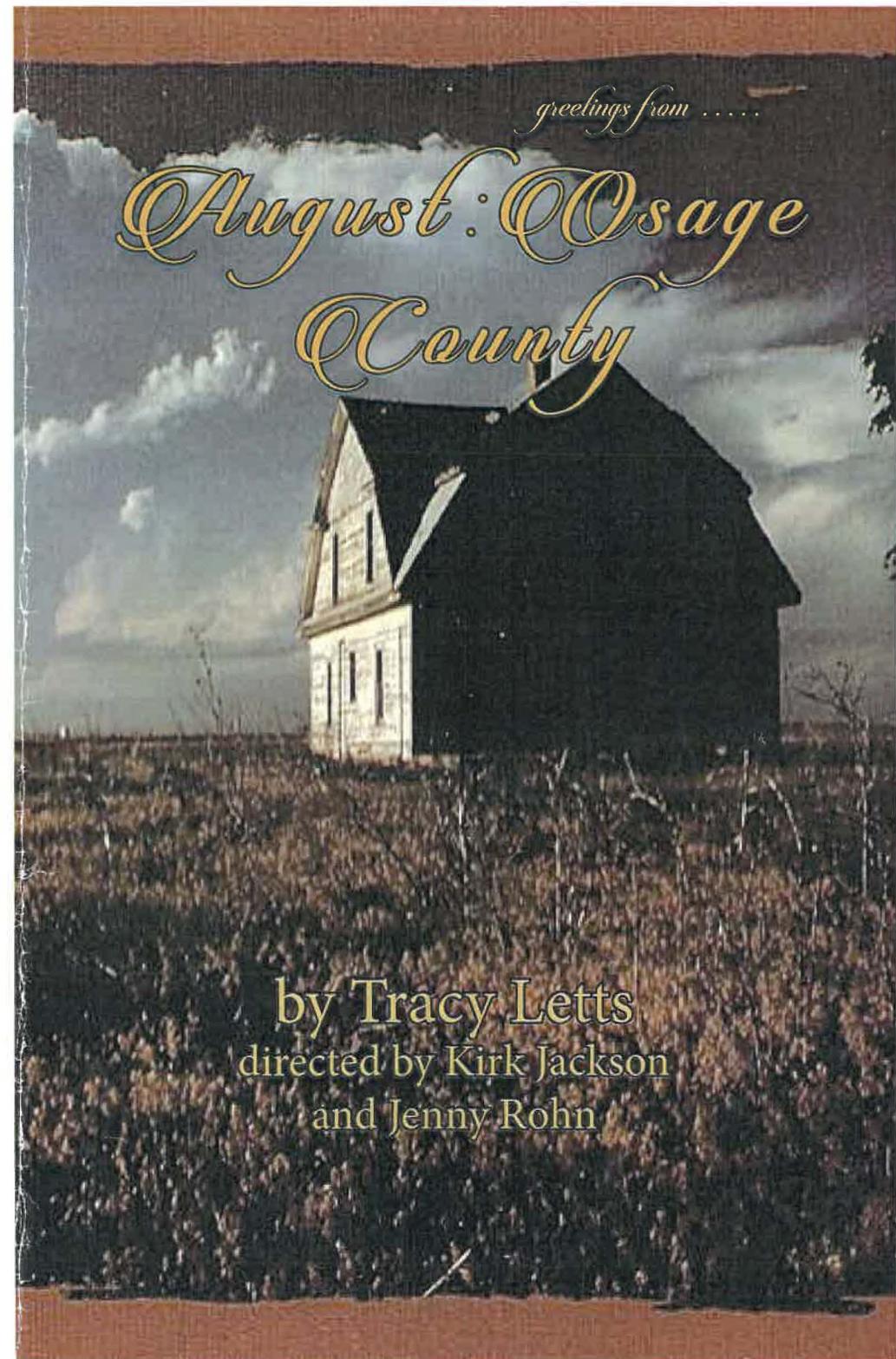
Wigs provided by Wigboys

Special thanks to Habitat for  
Humanity ReStore, Linda  
Hurley, Purple Carrot Farm  
and Emily McGann.

"Lay Down Sally"

(Eric Clapton, Marcy Levy and  
George E. Terry)

August: Osage County is presented by special arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York



From the Directors:

We wanted to experience mentorship and collaboration with our students on a deep and immediate level, which is a thrilling and challenging prospect. One that teaches some fairly old-fashioned virtues: emotional and physical endurance, resourcefulness, patience, audacity tempered with humility, determination with respect. It has been a pleasure to work with so many dedicated and talented students and a thrill to share the stage with them.

In 2007, Tracy Letts (and his audience) enjoyed the privilege of lampooning while lamenting an America that had allowed itself to unravel, lose its moorings, and dissipate to “a whimper” - to use the T.S.Eliot imagery borrowed from *Hollow Men*. But Wednesday we awoke to an America that seems poised for the “bang” instead. Crisis Equals Opportunity is the obvious and appropriate cliché for this moment. As much as we would like to climb under the covers of avoidance and entertain you with a prettier picture, neither the history of our republic, nor the charge of its artists will allow us that cushion. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to laugh, or cry. Laughter means you are thinking, and we need to think critically about what to do next. Crying means empathy is not dead, and we must tap that precious resource for any real progress to begin.

---Kirk & Jenny

In Tracy Letts’ *August: Osage County*, there are no “good” people. Letts doesn’t allow the narrative of his play to be reduced to such a simple duality. Rather, the world of *Osage County* is occupied by the intense and overbearing complex power politics which exist at the core of the American family and indeed American society. This exploration is more relevant now than ever. We, the audience, are living in an entirely different world today than we were when this week began. It is a harsher world, perhaps a darker world, but it is also a world of greater transparency. In the last week we have seen some of the most raw elements of American life, up-close and personal. This is the same view that Tracy Letts provides. Elitism masquerading as intellectualism, toxic masculinity run amok, the trivialization of day-to-day acts of violence... Each of these are given free reign to manifest as a microcosm of their larger wholes within Letts’ self-contained, pressure-cooker world. He also shows us powerful women fighting tooth and nail to stay afloat in a world that was built to accommodate men above all else. This, too, is particularly topical. Tracy Letts gives us a method by which to *experience* all these complex issues in a direct, emotional way. The play is an I.V. of socially relevant commentary straight to the bloodstream, bypassing the exhaustingly extensive public debate in favor of a straight-up emotional jolt. It is a raw experience, but a powerful one, and one which I hope will allow us as a community to process and engage with these issues in new and productive ways. We invite you to join us, and enjoy the complete emotional and sensory immersion that is Tracy Letts’ *August: Osage County*.

---Jamie Catania

CAST

Beverly Weston.....Kirk Jackson  
Violet Weston.....Jenny Rohn  
Barbara Fordham.....Emma Welch  
Bill Fordham.....Morgan Morse  
Jean Fordham.....Rebecca Mitzner  
Ivy Weston.....Jessie Berliner  
Karen Weston.....Julia Crowley  
Mattie Fay Aiken.....Sarah Jack  
Charlie Aiken.....Sam Levit  
Little Charles Aiken.....Jade Pope  
Johnna Monevata.....Cat Adragna  
Steve Heidebrecht.....Trevor Gibbons-Reich  
Sheriff Deon Gilbeau.....Will Larsen

PLACE

A large country home outside Pawhuska, Oklahoma, sixty miles northwest of Tulsa.

TIME

August 2007.

Directors.....Kirk Jackson & Jenny Rohn  
Assistant Director.....Jamie Catania  
Stage Manager.....Lecil James

Set Designer.....Ali Eisen  
Costume Designer.....Sierra Reid  
Lighting Designer.....Martin Carrillo  
Sound Designer.....Kyle Gordon  
Props Master.....Shea Messinger  
Dramaturg.....Kholiswa Mendes-Pepani  
Assistant Stage Managers.....Evan Caldwell,

Tali Martineau,  
Kholiswa Mendes-Pepani,  
Margaret Fortuna-Yassky

Kandinsky Painting.....Charles Pisano  
Fight Choreography.....Chris Edwards  
Fight Captain.....Sam Wood  
Technical Director.....Mike Rancourt  
Costume Shop Manager.....Richard MacPike  
Master Electrician.....Brian Lambert  
Sound Technician.....Curt Wells

## A Note From the Dramaturg, Kholiswa Mendes-Pepani

The Westons are a remarkable family joined together in a moment of uncertainty and pain. The neurotic, funny and intelligent characters are divided by lies and miscommunication as it is connected by love and lineage. With both pathos and pitch-black comedy, Tracy Letts gives us a vision of the American family that is specific, distinct, and also eerily familiar.

In its portrayal of family, the play has never been more pertinent to the moment in which we are living now. Letts builds a representation of the American family on soil that is conscious of the foundations and systems from which America has germinated. The son of the late actor Dennis Letts, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Letts remains faithful to the DNA of this country, as well as what he experienced in his own home. The sweltering house of the Westons sits on the hot and barren Plains of Oklahoma: mostly hostile, bordering on uninhabitable, and as portrayed by Letts conveys a state of mind as much as a geographical location. The history of forced relocation of Native Americans to the land also brings to mind an understanding of the landscape of this play. Inviting the Native American character of Johnna, who is, into this world and into “The American Family Home” serves as a reminder of what came before, what exists now, and a warning and prophecy of where the country might be headed.

The organism that is the United States of America was constructed on a system of family. It is impossible to remove the jargon of home, belonging and outsider from the way in which the country has defined itself since its birth. *August: Osage County* emphasizes the flawed nature of the American dream by demonstrating how the American Family has spooled out of control. The Westons are important because they are truthful to what we know.

The American family is in crisis. As The White House is in the process of changing tenants, the 2016 election has revealed the dangers of forgetting America’s landscape. Furthermore, the disturbance of Native American land and ancestry with the Dakota Access Pipeline echoes the malicious indifference toward the preservation of Native American history. The pipeline threatens to wipe out important Native American cultural and spiritual areas and as it erases their footprint from the world, it erases Native Americans as people, continuing the genocide that happened hundreds of years ago.

During the most critical turning point of this play—the dinner scene—the matriarch of the family, Violet Weston, defends herself by saying, “some people get antagonized by the truth.” This sentiment accurately captures society’s attitude toward owning up to the atrocities that have happened and continue to happen in this country. In *August: Osage County*, Letts asks us to consider uncomfortable questions: is it more honorable to live a comfortable lie rather than deal with the truth?

In a play rich in poetic nuance and metaphor, Letts reminds us that we cannot afford to disregard the past or one another. In order to move forward, we need to hold ourselves accountable for what has taken place and our actions. Most importantly, we need to create thriving environments that allow for self-reflection and growth. Like them or not, family informs an integral part of who we are.

Written in 2007, *August: Osage County* invites reflection and dialogue on the political and social situation in front of us now. We are doing this play now because the American system of family continues to dissipate; because someone as divisive as Donald Trump can garner enough support to be President—the head of the American family; and because the rights of Native Americans and minorities continue to be ignored.

If the Westons represent our country, and our country is our family, it’s our prerogative to invest in making it personal—and to redefine the family by allowing room for acceptance, repentance, and forgiveness.