



THE WHITE CARD

Written by
CLAUDIA RANKINE
Directed by
CARLENE COURY

Steeltown Coffee & Tea, Pittsburg
January 26-28, 2024

The Campbell Theater, Martinez
February 2-11, 2024



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SPECIAL THANKS

*A special thank you to Michael O'Brien for his work on this production
and to Adrian Badger for his continued support of the arts in Pittsburg.*

Originally produced in collaboration with Arts Emerson and the American Repertory Theatre,
at the Emerson Paramount Center on the Robert J. Orchard State in Boston, Massachusetts



A Note from the Director

“Well, I like to think of myself as a bit of an archeologist. I have always been interested in what gets lost ... who gets left out of the picture.”
(Charlotte, *The White Card*)

After directing the staged reading of *The White Card* last year, I was elated when asked to direct it again and not only for Pinole Community Players but also for Pittsburg Theatre Company and OnStage Rep at The Campbell in Martinez. The previous PCP performances were followed by talk backs between the actors and the audience (as will

these). These talk backs were, in many ways, conversation starters that continued long after the audiences left the theatre. Yes!

On a side note, this time the casting proved to create a bit of a dilemma – one that most directors probably wish were the case. Everyone, yes, everyone who came in to audition for the various parts were beyond what I had hoped for, and well, I cast everyone! Yes, I've double cast roles before: *Inspector Calls*, *The Nerd*, etc., but this was truly a first. So, this production features four actors sharing two of the roles. It has been rewarding to see the different energies brought to the work by these women. It has been a true gift to work with all involved.

Finally, playwright Claudia Rankin believes that *The White Card* is a conversation starter regarding race and racism among strangers. This is my hope as well. Therefore ... Let the conversations begin!

Carlene Coury, Director

About the director...

Carlene Coury is an award-winning Bay Area director, author, actress, and English professor who is pleased to be working with the Pittsburg Theatre Company and OnStage Repertory Theatre to bring *The White Card* to the stage. Ms. Coury's most recent directorial project was *The Belle of Amherst* with the Pinole Community Players. Ms. Coury is thrilled to not only be working with this very talented team of actors, but excited that this staged reading is being presented in multiple venues including Steeltown Coffee & Tea (Pittsburg) and The Campbell Theatre (Martinez). Claudia Rankin's *The White Card*, is relevant, poignant, and thought-provoking. All performances are followed by an actor/audience talk back, which Ms. Coury believes is pivotal to the subject matter of the play. When not directing, Ms. Coury donates her time to her local animal shelter (Humane Society of the North Bay). Most importantly, however, she wants to thank her handsome hubby and their two furry kids for their love and support.

Synopsis

The White Card stages a conversation that is both informed and derailed by the black/white American drama. The scenes in this one-act play, for all the characters' disagreements, stalemates, and seeming impasses, explore what happens if one is willing to stay in the room when it is painful to bear the pressure to listen and the obligation to respond.

—from the introduction by Claudia Rankine

Claudia Rankine's *The White Card* poses the essential question: Can American society progress if whiteness remains invisible?

Composed of two scenes, the play opens with a dinner party thrown by Virginia and Charles, an influential Manhattan couple, for the up-and-coming artist Charlotte. Their conversation about art and representations of race spirals toward the devastation of Virginia and Charles' intentions. One year later, the second scene brings Charlotte and Charles into the artist's studio, and their confrontation raises both the stakes and the questions of what - and who - is actually on display. Rankine's *The White Card* is a moving and revelatory distillation of racial divisions as experienced in the white spaces of the living room, the art gallery, the theater, and the imagination itself.

Cast

Charlotte Cummings..... GWENDOLYN SAMPSON BROWN

Virginia Compton-Spencer..... DESTY OLSON (1/26, 28 & 2/3, 4)

SUSANNAH WOOD (1/27 & 2/5, 9, 10, 11)

Erika Schmidt..... TYLEEN KELLY (1/27 & 2/3, 9, 11)

MARTIE MULDOON (1/26, 28 & 2/2, 4, 10)

Alex Compton-Spencer..... DAVI SANTIAGO

Charles Hamilton Spencer..... JEFF PRESCOTT

Production Team

| | |
|--|--|
| Director | CARLENE COURY |
| Producers | GWENDOLYN SAMPSON BROWN & DIANNA SCHEPERS |
| Lighting | DIANNA SCHEPERS & TODD DRUMMOND |
| Sound Design | MICHAEL O'BRIEN |
| Sound and Lighting Operator... | AVA DURAN |
| Projection Design ... | MICHAEL O'BRIEN |
| Stage Manager | MAYA DURAN |
| Graphics/Publicity & Programs | DIANNA SCHEPERS |

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do not travel read only one page.”

St. Augustine

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Cast



GWEN SAMPSON BROWN — Charlotte Cummings
Gwen and her Soulmate Robert Brown are residents of Rio Vista, CA. Gwen has many years of costuming and performance experience in Bay Area theater, Gwen also co-produced the Women of Words Productions, LLC out of Martinez. She is currently Executive Manager for Pittsburg Theatre Company. Her favorite performances to date included her role as “Libby” in *Bee-Luther-Hatchee*, “Lena Younger” in *A Raisin in the Sun* and, “Rose” in *Fences*. Gwen still works full time as a nurse with Marin Health Care. This is the second time Gwen has played the role of “Charlotte” in *The White Card* and she continues to discover the intricate and sometimes controversial layers of this powerful and relevant play.



TYLEEN KELLY — Erika Schmidt
Tyleen is honored to be returning to the stage with this important production. She grew up in Vermont and studied acting at the Circle in the Square Theatre School in NYC. Her most recent role was Hippolyta/Titania at Linacre College, Oxford. She is grateful to Carlene Coury and the production team for this opportunity, and sends all her affection to her husband Chris.



MARTIE MULDOON — Erika
Martie is thrilled to be part of this important piece, and looks forward to the discussions it generates. Martie is a retired music teacher who keeps busy with theater projects throughout the Bay Area. Most recently seen on stage as Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* (Food Bank Players) and Mrs. Tottendale in *Drowsy Chaperone* (Ghostlight Theater Ensemble), Martie also directs, produces, designs props, and just about anything else to make theater happen. She is also active in music, church, and community groups. But her favorite role of all is Oma to her three adorable grandchildren!

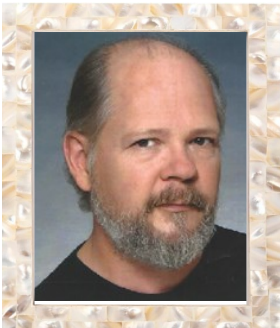
Cast



DESTY OLSON — Virginia Compton Spencer
Desty has played roles from Florence in Neil Simon's female version of *The Odd Couple* to Eliza Gant in Ketti Frings' adaptation of Thomas Wolfe's novel *Look Homeward, Angel*. Her recent shows include the title role in Encore Players' production of *Lysistrata* as adapted by Will Huddleston and Ghostlight Theatre Ensemble's Festival 10 event, as Veronica in Celeste Bonfanti's one-act play *Grace*. She is honored to be part of this talented cast and the vital issues addressed within Claudia Rankine's *The White Card*.



DAVI SANTIAGO — Alex Compton-Spencer
(He/Him) Davi is a sophomore in high school, he's been into dance and theater since he was five years old. He's done theater at school and has been in over 20+ productions at Pinole Playhouse, including: *CLUE: On Stage* (Prof. Plum), *Matilda: The Musical* (Mr. Wormwood), *The Little Mermaid Jr.* (Prince Eric), *Winnie the Pooh Kids* (Kanga), *Shrek: The Musical*, *Once on This Island Jr*, *Peter Pan Jr*, *Annie Jr*, *Bye Bye Birdie Jr*, and many more!



JEFF TRESMOTT — Charles Compton-Spencer
Jeff Trescott has appeared in many Bay Area productions and worked behind the scenes on many others. He is the treasurer of Actors Ensemble of Berkeley.



SUSANNAH WOOD — Virginia Compton Spencer
Susannah, an East Bay actor, director, teacher and choreographer, is honored to be part of *The White Card*. Recently she appeared as Venerable Tree in Marin Theater's *The Family Tree*, as Samantha in Katie Tandy's *Mothers All* (Actors Ensemble), Amelia in *Fade*, a film by Saurav Mohapatra, and Oracle for Rotterdam Wurm Radio in Kneebone's solo Radio Play, *A Disaster Foretold*. She also directed staged readings of *ROE*, by Lisa Loomer, at Berkeley's Marsh and Goldman theaters, shortly after the leak of the Supreme Court's decision.

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