

# UMD SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Leigh Wilson Smiley, Producing Director



## THE ME NOBODY KNOWS

October 10-17, 2014  
Kay Theatre

Music by Gary William Friedman

Lyrics by Will Holt

Adapted by Robert Livingston and Herb Schapiro

Based on the book *The Me Nobody Knows*,  
edited by Stephen M. Joseph

Additional lyrics by Herb Schapiro

Arrangements and orchestration by Gary William Friedman

Co-Directors	Alvin Mayes and Scot Reese
Music Director	L. Richmond Sparks
Scenic Designer	April Joy Tritchler
Lighting Designer	Brittany Shemuga
Costume Designer	Robert Croghan
Projection Designer	Hannah Marsh
Sound Designer	Patrick Calhoun
Stage Manager	Cindy King
Rehearsal Accompanist	Reenie Codelka
Research Dramaturg	Cindy King

*Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.*

*The Me Nobody Knows* is presented through special arrangement with  
SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

*The Me Nobody Knows* is Tony-nominated and OBIE Award-winning.

## DIRECTORS' NOTE

As a culture we are learning to hear what our young people have to say about their own lives.

*The Me Nobody Knows* is a dramatization of the voices of young people ages 7 to 18 in an urban setting.

Their mission is to take control of their own lives.

— Scot Reese and Alvin Mayes

Special thanks to Paul Alvaran for his generous donation of guitars for the production.



## PROGRAM NOTES

The production you are about to see, *The Me Nobody Knows*, has an interesting history. In actuality, the piece did not originate in the theatre, but rather it is based on a book titled *The Me Nobody Knows: Children's Voices From the Ghetto* (1969). Moreover, *The Me Nobody Knows* was not penned by a single individual, nor do the prose and lyrics represent the joint efforts of a small cadre of professional artists. On the contrary, *The Me Nobody Knows* animates the words, feelings and experiences of 200 students from Harlem, New York. Under the guidance and tutelage of several teachers, these students (ranging from the ages of 12 to 18) were encouraged to write down their deepest thoughts and concerns. The students' teachers were well aware that many of their students were struggling with some of the worst consequences of urban unrest. Poor housing and nutrition, inadequate healthcare, deficient educational resources, dysfunctional families, drugs, crimes and violent altercations were among these debilitating circumstances. The teachers also knew that without some sort of creative or productive outlet their students were at risk to become completely victimized by these issues. Without intervention, these students were ripe to become statistics in a crippling cycle of poverty and despair.

Stephen M. Joseph, one of the teachers and the editor of *The Me Nobody Knows*, created the book by asking his students to respond to questions that addressed four dimensions of their identity. He asked them to describe “how [they] see [themselves], [their] neighborhoods, the world outside, and the things [they] can't see or touch.” Joseph understood that our personal relationships (our families, friends, teachers, peers, etc.) help mold us with laughter, hugs and love — and that the lack of this support could be equally impactful. He recognized that our communities and their institutions

should be empowered to provide useful resources; that schools should provide skills and training for career building and personal growth. Joseph's questions were also guided by the belief that our dreams hold our unlimited desires and give us vision and purpose. Lastly, he wanted his students to think about the forces *beyond* our tangible reach — he wanted them to have a sense of faith and to remind them that there is more in the world than the single self. Joseph and his fellow teachers believed that the exploration of these personal dimensions could help unlock the innermost thoughts of their students, thereby helping them to discard their mental obstacles while also helping them to unleash their hope and full potential.

Inspired by the heartfelt prose of the Harlem students, adaptor/director Robert Livingston, along with Gary William Friedman (music), Will Holt (lyrics) and Herb Schapiro (lyrics), decided to transform Joseph's edited volume to a staged musical that debuted off-Broadway in 1970. This highly acclaimed production moved on to Broadway in 1971, earning five Tony nominations and two Drama Desk Awards.

Like the original volume of prose, the award-winning musical, *The Me Nobody Knows*, features individual characters who search for their voice using Joseph's “four dimensions” as their guide. The characters use their personal narratives to express their confusion and anger, as well as to realize their hopes. They fight back and attempt to stand tall against adversity. Despite the odds against them, the characters courageously choose to define themselves and not let their surroundings fully define them. The masks come off, and the audience gets to see what's underneath the surface. The strong. The smart. The survivors.

For the University of Maryland's production of *The Me Nobody Knows* — staged 44 years after the musical's original debut — directors Scot Reese and Alvin Mayes, along with music director Dr. L.D. Sparks, teleport the musical's original characters and setting from the 1970s to the 2010s. Strikingly — and with a due note of mixed feelings — this shift is a seamless one. While the central prose in *The Me Nobody Knows* was birthed in the 1960s, we are faced with telling truths when we compare past circumstances to those we face in the present.

During the 1960s the world was embroiled with the Cold War and the Vietnam War. We were struggling with an oil and energy crisis, and an economic recession. Race relations were tenuous, and debates regarding civil



rights raged. And so, where are we now? It is 2014 — what has changed? Forty-four years later our nation is wrestling with the War on Terrorism; trying to rebound from a Global Financial Crisis; and we are still entrenched in civil rights debates that include — and go beyond — issues of race. Yes, the world has taken many great steps forward. The world has also taken steps backwards, circling around the same problems. Thus, *The Me Nobody Knows* not only serves as a powerful piece of musical theatre but also as a powerful reminder: there is still, and perhaps there always will be, work to be done.

— Cindy King  
Research Dramaturg

## CAST

Rhoda  
Lillian  
Catherine  
Lillie Mae  
Melba  
Nell  
Carlos  
Benjamin  
Lloyd  
Donald  
Clorox  
William

Rebecca Mount  
Chloe Adler  
Noelle Roy  
Chioma Dunkley  
Kristen El Yaouti  
Tyasia Velines  
Tiziano D’Affuso  
Tendo Nsubuga  
Noah Israel  
Avery Collins  
Christopher Lane  
Sam Elmore

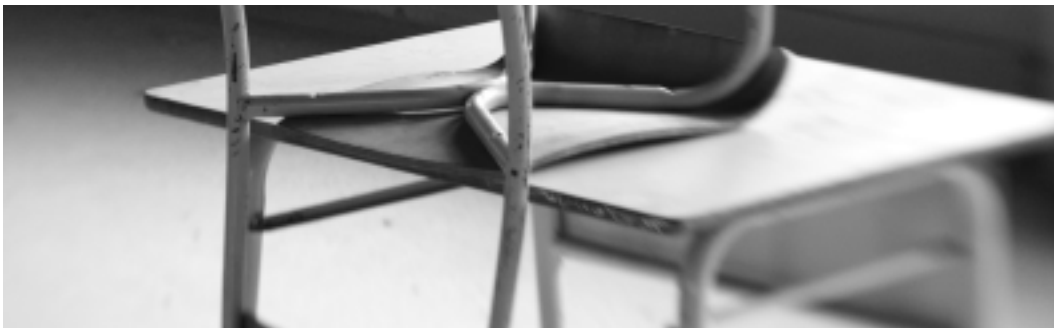
## UNDERSTUDIES

Rhoda/Melba  
Lillian  
Catherine  
Lillie Mae  
Nell  
Carlos  
Benjamin  
Lloyd  
Donald  
Clorox  
William

Jessica Cooperstock  
Monica Albizo  
Diana Bost  
Nebreyia Scott  
Rebecca Bradley  
Morgan Scott  
Foluke Tuakli  
William Jeffreys  
Ariel O’Neal  
Rachel Grandizio  
Matthew Balfour

## SETTING: THE PRESENT

*This performance will last approximately two hours with one 15-minute intermission.*



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Chloe Adler** (Lillian), third-year theatre major. UMD productions: *The Matchmaker* (Ermengarde), *Seagirl* (Andesine), *Safe as Houses* (Nora). Member of UMD's only all-improvisational group, Erasable Inc.

**Monica Albizo** (Lillian u/s), first-year theatre major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar, Bancker Key Scholar. This is her first UMD production. Outside productions: *The Addams Family: The Musical* (Wednesday), *Children of Eden* (Yonah), Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts.

**Matthew Balfour** (William u/s), second-year theatre and management major. Stamps Family Bancker/Key Scholar. UMD productions: *Shared Graduate Dance Concert* (assistant stage manager), *Spring Dance Thesis* (light board operator), *The Waiting Room* (orderly, Douglas/Larry u/s), *The Matchmaker* (August/Cabman u/s). Outside productions: *Not Every Card*, *Capital Fringe* (stage manager).

**Diana Bost** (Catherine u/s), third-year theatre performance major. Stringer Foundation Scholar. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Jessye Norman/Keith Watson/Elaine Young, Reginald Denny u/s).

**Rebecca Bradley** (Nell u/s), sophomore in the College of Letters and Sciences. She is involved in various theatre organizations on campus, including Kreativitiy Diversity Troupe, and she will be directing a production of *The Vagina Monologues* in the spring.

**Patrick Calhoun** (sound designer), freelance sound designer. Professional credits: Shakespeare Theatre, Folger Theatre, Center Stage, Theater J, Round House Theatre, The Kennedy Center, The Hub Theatre, Anacostia Playhouse, No Rules Theatre Company, The Arts Collective at HCC and others around the country. For the 2012–2013 season, he received the William R. Kenan, Jr. Fellowship at The Kennedy Center in sound design. Calhoun completed graduate school at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts after earning his bachelor's degree at Greensboro College, North Carolina. For more information, visit [www.patrickcalhoun.info](http://www.patrickcalhoun.info).

**Avery Collins** (Donald), junior theatre performance major. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (The Witness/Rudy Salas Jr./Paul Parker/Anonymous Juror u/s), *for colored folks...* (Brother #8). Outside productions: *Chupucabra* (Vetala), *The Rocky Horror Show* (Riff Raff).

**Jessica Cooperstock** (Rhoda/Melba u/s), senior theatre major. She is very excited to work with such a talented cast and crew.

**Robert Croghan** (costume designer), third-year MFA candidate in costume design. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; *Way In*; *Kincerto*; *Visible Seams*; *Take Me With You*; *Be Still My Heart*. Outside productions: *Grains* (Kennedy Center), *Cancun* (GALA Hispanic Theatre), *L'elisir d'amore* (Carroll College). Outside productions (assistant): *Machinal* (Broadway), *Appomattox* (Guthrie), *Importance of Being Earnest* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *Medieval Play* (Signature Theatre Center), *Godspell* (Broadway), *Shrek The Musical* (Broadway).

**Tiziano D'Affuso** (Carlos), senior theatre performance major. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Maria/Chris Oh/Ted Briseño/Anonymous Juror), *The Matchmaker* (August, Barnaby u/s), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (run crew), *The Waiting Room* (assistant stage manager), *Way In* (Storyteller), *You Aren't ...* (Griff). Outside productions: *A Chorus Line* (Paul), *Les Misérables* (Manus).

**Brandon Deane** (assistant stage manager) is a recently transferred theatre major from American University. His previous work at AU includes *The Who's Tommy* (young Tommy) and *Wecycling* (stage manager).



**Connor Dreilbelbis** (assistant lighting designer), first-year MFA candidate in lighting design. Outside productions: Lighting Design: *Moon Over Buffalo* (Mt. Gretna Theatre), *Camelot* (Mt. Gretna Theatre), *Scenography: Der Stein* (Theater Paderborn), *Peer Gynt* (Theater Paderborn), *Um die Ecke* (Theater Paderborn). From 2012-2014 resident designer and design assistant at Theater Paderborn in Paderborn, Germany.

**Chioma Dunkley** (Lillie Mae), second-year theatre major. UMD productions: *Spring Awakening* (elemental). Outside productions: *Liberty To Go To See* (Charity), *Ragtime* (Sarah), *A Separate Sun* (Little Ansonia), *Our Town* (Rebecca), *The Piano Lesson* (Maretha).

**Sam Elmore** (William), junior theatre performance major. Outside productions: *Hairspray* (Randy). Elmore regularly writes and performs music with various ensembles, including the rock band *Somewhat Superhero*.

**Allison Friedman** (co-assistant director), second-year theatre major. UMD productions: Weekday Players Original Works Project, *I Am What I Eat* (director). Member of Erasable Inc. and The Weekday Players.

**Brooke Friedman** (co-assistant director), is a senior theatre major and rhetoric minor. She has been writing and performing stand-up comedy since 2012. Friedman has appeared twice on *Capital Comedy Connection* at Montgomery Community Media studios.

**Sean Patrick Forsythe** (assistant lighting designer), senior theatre major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UMD productions: *Spring Awakening* (assistant lighting designer), *UMoves*, *Seagirl*, Graduate Movement Concert, *Ladies Rep* (lighting designer). Weekday Players: *Safe As Houses*, *Forever Hold Your Peace* (lighting designer).

**Rachel Grandizio** (Clorox u/s), junior theatre and civil engineering double major. UMD productions: *The Matchmaker* (Gertrude/Flora Van Huysen). Outside productions: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Nick Bottom), *The Music Man* (Eulalie Mackecknie Shinn), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Countess Rousillon).

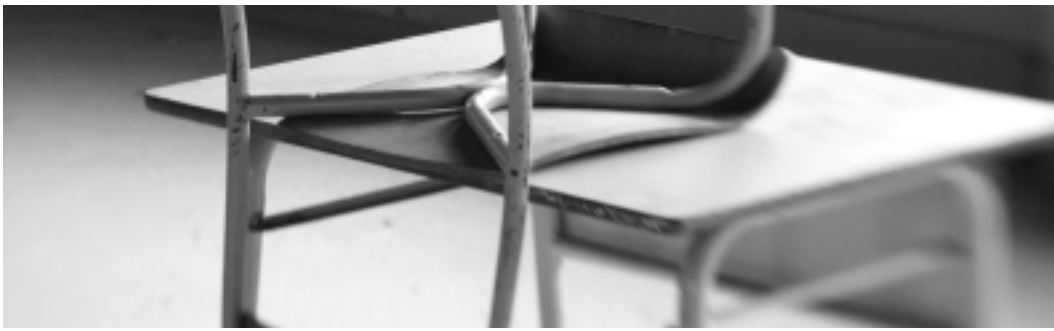
**Noah Israel** (Lloyd), third-year theatre performance and neurobiology/physiology major. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Stanley Sheinbaum, Elaine Brown, Jin Ho Lee, horn player). Outside productions: *Les Misérables* (Javert).

**William Jeffreys** (Lloyd u/s), third-year theatre performance major. This is his first production at UMD. Outside productions: *Into the Woods* (Wolf/Cinderella's Father), Wildwood Summer Theatre.

**Cindy King** (stage manager and research dramaturg), senior theatre and communications major. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; (assistant stage manager). Outside productions: *The Pajama Game* and *Curtains* (stage management).

**Sarah Kost** (assistant costume designer), first-year MFA costume design candidate. Outside productions: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Promises, Promises* (Lancaster Opera House), *The Rocky Horror Show* (SUNY Buffalo).

**Christopher Lane** (Clorox), senior theatre performance and marketing major. UMD productions: *The Old Settler* (Husband), *In the Red and Brown Water* (Elegba), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Ensemble). Outside productions: *The Exonerated* (Delbert), *The Amen Corner* (David). Baltimore School for the Arts alumnus.



**Hannah Marsh** (projection designer), senior economics major. UMD productions: Props Artisan since 2011. Outside productions: *The Ashes Under Gait City* and *Uncanny Valley* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), *Saving Kitty* (NJ Rep).

**Alvin Mayes** (co-director) has collaborated with theatre director Scot Reese on a number of productions including the award-winning *In the Red and Brown Water*, *The Colored Museum* and *Sophisticated Ladies*. This past season he directed the movement sequences of *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* with director Caroline Clay. His longtime muse Julia Smith, who is his assistant for this production, has danced in many of his works from *Tales My Mother's*, *Mother's Mother Told My Father's*, *Father's Father*, to last season's *A Time of Confidences* and *Kincerto*. Mayes is much better known for his work with dance companies. He received a MetroDC Dance Award for *Tabquamenon Falls*, which he created for the Maryland Youth Ballet, and his work *Los ojos sobre Manabí*, created for the Compañía Ceibadanza, was accepted into the XI Festival Internacional "Fragmentos de Junio" 2013 in Guayaquil, Ecuador. His most recent works *Momentos en el Tiempo*, *Escenas del oestre* and *Desdémona* were all created for Ceibadanza in Manta, Ecuador under a Greenbaum Charitable Foundation grant.

**Rebecca Mount** (Rhoda), third-year theatre and communication major. Theatre Patrons Fund scholarship recipient. UMD productions: *The Matchmaker* (ensemble, Mrs. Molloy/Minnie Fay u/s), *UMoves* (assistant stage manager), *The Waiting Room* (run crew). Kreativity assistant artistic director.

**Tendo Nsubuga** (Benjamin), senior theatre major. UMD productions: *The Waiting Room* (Oliver/Male Lawyer). Outside productions: The Kennedy Center: *In His Own Words: A Tribute to Walter Dean Myers* (Reader); Montgomery College Summer Dinner Theatre: *Seussical* (The Cat In The Hat), *Hairspray* (Duane).

**Ariel O'Neal** (Donald u/s), senior theatre performance and math double major. UMD productions: *for colored folks...* (Lady in Red), *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Rudy Salas, Paul Parker, June Park). Outside productions: *MacBeth* (Lady MacBeth), *A Piece of My Heart* (MaryJo).

**Scot Reese** (co-director), professional theatre credits include productions from Los Angeles to New York. Television credits include daytime dramas, situation comedies, variety specials, commercials and an Emmy Award in performance. Recent credits include premieres of *Oliver du Brasil*, *A Cricket in Times Square*, *Colossal*, *Embrace*, *Etudes for the Sleep of Others* and *Blues Journey* at The Kennedy Center, the premieres of *The Waiter* at Arena Stage and *24/7, 365* at the Theatre of the First Amendment. Additional recent credits include *Dr. of Alcantara* at Strathmore Music Center, *Once On This Island* at the Round House Theatre, *Pretty Fire* for the African Continuum Theatre Company and *Barefoot in the Park* (with Laura Linney and Eric Stoltz) at LA Theatre Works. He is a professor in directing, Black theatre and musical theatre at the University of Maryland.

**Noelle Roy** (Catherine), junior theatre performance and communication major. *The Me Nobody Knows* is her first UMD main stage production. Outside productions: *Grease* (Sandy Dumbrowski). Member of Zeta Tau Alpha and DaCadence A Cappella.

**Morgan Scott** (Carlos u/s), second-year theatre performance major.

**Nabreyia Scott** (Lillie Mae u/s), second-year theatre performance major. UMD production: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (understudy). Scott would like to thank her family and friends for their support.



**Samy Selim** (assistant musical director), first-year Anglo-Egyptian PhD student. He has acted in, directed, stage managed and produced more than 30 plays in Egypt. Selim is also an unpublished playwright.

**Brittany Shemuga** (lighting designer), third-year MFA lighting design candidate. UMD productions: *Molière Impromptu*, *Way In*, *Triumph of Disruption* (lighting designer); *Die Fledermaus*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *In the Red and Brown Water* (assistant lighting designer). Outside productions: Lighting designer: *Ben and Lucille* (Fringe), *Gianni Schicchi* (Hubbard Hall), *Marriage of Figaro* (Hubbard Hall), *Miss Nelson is Missing!* (Adventure Theatre MTC). Lighting supervisor: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Mexico tour (Synetic Theatre). Assistant lighting designer: *Hamlet... the rest is silence* (Synetic Theatre), *The Personals* (No Rules Theatre), *Habit of Art* (Studio Theatre), *Adding Machine: A Musical* (Studio Theatre).

**Julia Smith** (assistant choreographer), second-year MFA candidate in dance. BA from UMD (Creative and Performing Arts Scholar). Smith has performed in works by Alvin Mayes, Anne Warren, Alcine Wiltz, Tommy Parlon, Florian Rouiller, Vladimir Angelov, Eric Hampton, Dana Tai Soon Burgess, Sharna Fabiano, Boris Willis, Pamela Mathews and Word Dance Theater. Former company member of Bowen McCauley Dance, DC Dance Theater (Rincones & Co.), CityDance Ensemble, Tony Powell Music and Movement and DanceSmith.

**L. Richmond Sparks** (music director) is UMD's Director of Bands and conductor of the Wind Ensemble. He completed his Master's of Music at Arizona State University, where he also held a teaching assistantship with the bands and the music education program while working toward his Doctoral of

Musical Arts. As Director of Bands for Illinois Valley Central High School in Chillicothe, Illinois, his bands received numerous awards. In Peoria, Illinois, Sparks served as adjunct tuba professor at Bradley University, and he performed with the Peoria Symphony and the Prairie Wind Ensemble. Later, Sparks became a charter member of the Side Street Strutters Dixieland in Disneyland, and he also performed as a tuba/electric bass player in Disneyworld. He's been a leader in America's marching band movement since serving as Associate Director of the 1984 XXIII Olympiad. Dr. Sparks has helped organize subsequent all-American bands such as the 50th Presidential Inauguration; the unveiling of the renovated Statue of Liberty; the Centennial Celebration of the United Way; the Special Olympics at Notre Dame Stadium; numerous bowl games across America; and the NFL Europe Super Bowl Games. He has served in various capacities from board member to president on Maryland's Council of Higher Education in Music, the Atlantic Coast Conference Band Directors Association, College Band Directors National Association, MENC: The National Association for Music Education and the Sudler Foundation.

**April Joy Tritchler** (scenic designer), second-year MFA candidate in scenic design. Outside credits: assistant scenic designer to Dan Conway at Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. BS and master of architecture from the University of Utah.

**Foluke Tuakli** (Benjamin u/s), second-year marketing major in the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Honors College. Presidential Scholar. Outside productions: *The Musical Comedy Murders of the 1940s* (Nikki), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck), *Seussical* (Sour Kangaroo), *The Pajama Game* (Gladys). Training: West African Dance.

**Tyasia Velines** (Nell), junior theatre performance major. College Park Arts Scholar, Incentive Awards Program Scholar. UMD productions: *for colored folks...* (Lady in Brown).

**Kristen El Yaouti** (Melba), second-year theatre performance major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UMD productions: *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Elvira Evers/Shelby Coffey III/Katie Miller/Queen Malkah u/s).