twilight: los angeles, 1992

by anna deavere smith
caroline clay, director

may 3-10, 2014
kogod theatre
The performance will last approximately two hours with a 15-minute intermission.

**twilight: los angeles, 1992**

_by anna deavere smith_

Director
Scenic Design
Lighting Design
Costume Design
Projection Design
Sound Design
Choreographer, Solo & Choral Vocals
Arrangement and Direction
Voice & Dialect Coach
Dramaturg
Stage Manager
Assistant Directors
Assistant Scenic Design
Assistant Costume Design
Assistant Lighting Design
Vocal Consultant
Voice and Dialect Advisors
Assistant Stage Managers

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Andrew Cohen
Alberto Segarra
Robert Croghan
Lauren Joy
Kristina Moyer
Alvin Mays
Jenay McNeil
Khalid Yaya Long
Brittany Truske
Moriamo Akibu, Vaughn Midder
Katie Sullivan
Kara Waala
Jane Chan
David G. Powell
Mary Coy, Dr. Esther Lee Kim
Kelly Durej, Cindy King

Playwright and performer Anna Deavere Smith has made an indelible mark on American theatre. As an actress Smith has performed in a number of roles on stage, film and television. Yet, it was Smith’s career as a playwright and theatre artist that initially boosted her to national recognition.

After growing up in a racially segregated neighborhood in Baltimore, Maryland, Smith attended Pennsylvania’s Beaver College (now Arcadia University). While she had been a shy child, Smith always had a knack for imitation — a skill that served her well when she went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in acting from San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theater in 1977. Smith was teaching acting at Carnegie Mellon University when she began to develop a number of pedagogical approaches. In an effort to teach her students how to create a repertoire of fully realized, fleshed-out characters, she insisted that her students study and document the language of real people, having real conversations. These early pedagogical and artistic endeavors helped to inspire Smith’s life-long project, *On the Road: A Search for American Character*, a series of plays that aim to illuminate the everyday struggles of people living in a world full of difference. *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (1994), is among the many notable pieces born from this *On the Road* project.

While some scholars and theatre critics have argued that Smith’s work does not easily ascribe to a particular genre or form of theatre, Smith’s plays are clearly written in the style of documentary theatre. Also known as “documentary plays” or “theatre of testimony,” this mode of theatre-making can be traced to traditions in oral history. According to Gary Fisher Dawson, documentary theatre is “a form of persuasive theatre
that comes as close as possible to an actual event with the exclusive reliance upon documentation from historically accurate materials.” What makes Smith a major innovator of documentary theatre is that she often cultivates solo performances based on the interviews she has conducted. As a single performer taking on the roles of men, women, African Americans, Latinos, Whites, Jewish-Americans, Koreans, celebrities, politicians and academics, Smith not only performs the interviewees’ words verbatim but she also mimics their bodily movements. Thus, Smith creates a world in which race, gender, class and a variety of viewpoints converge.

Though not adhering to Smith’s traditional one-woman show, the University of Maryland’s production of *Twilight* seeks to highlight both the differences and commonalities of those involved in the 1992 Los Angeles riots by having each cast member play a range of characters. In doing so, this production and its artisans are invested in challenging audiences to think deeply about our own identities and the identities of others, especially in terms of how these understandings may inform social unrest. Honoring Smith’s intention to break through the silence of troubling and controversial topics, *Twilight* invites audiences to engage in a dialogue around race and racism. However, the play offers no simple solutions. Rather, *Twilight: Los Angeles* uses its animation of various viewpoints to help us all journey to a shared, common ground.

While the 1992 Rodney King beating and its fallout are powerfully dramatized in *Twilight*, the devastating impulses behind these circumstances can certainly be linked to our current racial dilemmas. The tragic circumstances surrounding the lives — and deaths — of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis and Latasha Harlins remind us of the toxic ideologies and outrageous violence that still impress themselves upon our social conscience. Despite the passage of 20 years, the racially motivated upheaval of the LA Riots is all-too-familiar territory — a painful reminder of the persistent and pervasive effects of racism. Nevertheless, we also know that progress has been made and it is toward these strides that Smith works, one step at a time, through one character at a time. Reflecting upon her process, Smith observes: “I am first looking for the humanness inside the problems, or the crises. The spoken word is evidence of the humanness. Perhaps the solutions come somewhere further down the road.” The very act of talking and listening is the first step in understanding, and it is only after we understand one another that we can begin to resolve our most injurious ills. Smith’s “search for American character” — powerfully symbolized by *Twilight: Los Angeles* — is a journey into insight and empathy, remembrance and recovery.

— Khalid Yaya Long, dramaturg
twilight: los angeles, 1992

CAST

Jessye Norman, Barbara, Queen Malkah, Frederico Sandoval
Maria, Chris Oh, Ted Briseno, Anonymous Juror
Josie Morales, Mrs. Young Soon-Han, Angela King
Paul Parker, Rudy Salas Sr., June Park, Jeffrey
Jay Woong Yahng, Judith Tur, Charles Lloyd
Twilight Bey, Cornel West, Sergeant Charles Duke, Walter Park
Octavio Sandoval, Joe Viola, Maxine Waters
Keith Watson, Elaine Young, Reginald Denny
Stanley Sheinbaum, Jin Ho Lee, Elaine Brown, horn player
Elvira Evers, Shelby Coffey III, Katie Miller
Daryl Gates, Bill Bradley, Talent Agent, Alice Waters
“The Witness”

Sisi Reid
Tiziano D’Affuso
Olivia Brann
Ariel O’Neal
Da Eun (Grace) Lee
Lee Adams
Kia Braganza
Hillary Templeton
Noah Israel
Maria Ortiz
Rachel Barlaam
Malcolm Akeem Lewis

UNDERSTUDIES

Jessye Norman, Keith Watson, Elaine Young, Reginald Denny
Maria, Bill Bradley, Chris Oh, Ted Briseno
Josie Morales, Mrs. Young Soon-Han, Angela King, Frederico Sandoval
Paul Parker, Rudy Salas Sr., Anonymous Juror, “The Witness”
Jay Woong Yahng, Judith Tur, Charles Lloyd, Alice Waters
Twilight Bey, Sergeant Charles Duke, Walter Park, Cornel West
Octavio Sandoval, Joe Viola, Maxine Waters, Talent Agent, Daryl Gates
Stanley Sheinbaum, Jin Ho Lee, Elaine Brown, June Graf
Elvira Evers, Shelby Coffey III, Katie Miller, Kristen El Yaouti
Queen Malkah

Diana Bost
Kyle Travers
Kathryn Winkler
Avery Collins
Nabreyia Scott
Philip Kershaw
Summer Brown

CREW

Run Crew
Dressers
Light Board Operator
Sound Board Operator
Projections Operator
Assistant Master Electrician

Chioma Dunkley, Conner Morrison
Jennifer Geiger, Adanna Nnawuba
Phil Ramos
Maggie Bartolomeo
Hannah Marsh
Christopher Wong
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