

The Cast

From Spelman College

Cymiah Alexander
Rimothy Bennet
Myles Chandler (Morehouse)
LaMonica Moody
Egypt Noboa
Aquilah Ohemeng
Joshua Paine (Morehouse)
Robert Rucker (Morehouse)
Issiah Simas (Morehouse)
Joi Stewart
Treasure Tannock
Sydney Terry
Summer Kai Thomas
Jarron Williams (Morehouse)

From UGA

Jack Dugan
Madeline Franz
Brett Green
Claire Holman
Jonathan Matthews
Nosayaba Okungbowa
Sydney Patton
Mira Ratchev
Morgan Watkins
Breanna Wheeler

Production Crew

Amaya Alexander
Leslie Bacon
Louis Chatman
Attiyah Dais
Gabriel Hansley
Kiana Kearse
Kiara Kearse
Coriyanna Osbourne
Keith Patterson
Christian Shortt
Tyonté Williams
Zakariya Veasy
The Production Lab Class and the
Theatre Management Class with
Prof. Joan McCarty Sanchez

NOTE: All bios for this production are redacted in solidarity with our incarcerated collaborators who cannot be named in this show's credits.

Sponsors

This project is generously supported by the following sponsors:

From Spelman College: the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation through the Division of the Arts, the Department of Dance Performance & Choreography, the Department of Theatre & Performance. The Bonner Office of Civic Engagement, Spelman College Media Services.

From the University of Georgia: the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through the Global Georgia Program of the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, a Faculty Research Grant from the Office of Research, by the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, the Institute for African American Studies, the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, the Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection, the Office of Service-Learning through the David A. and Evelyn A. Knauff Endowment for Service Learning, the Ferman Fund, the McCay Fund, and the Franklin Excellence Fund.

Additional sponsors of this production include: the Atlanta Film Festival.

Spelman College
Department of Dance Performance & Choreography
Department of Theatre & Performance

An Original Devised Archives-to-Performance Production

SPRING 2020 SEASON

SPELMAN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



[THE GEORGIA INCARCERATION
PERFORMANCE PROJECT] PRESENTS:

BY OUR HANDS

FEB. 8TH, 7:30PM | FEB. 9TH, 2:30PM
FEB 15TH, 7:30PM | FEB. 16TH, 2:30PM

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | 4 SHOWS ONLY!

BALDWIN BURROUGHS THEATRE, FINE ARTS BUILDING
350 SPELMAN LANE, ATLANTA, GA 30314



A Collaboration with The University of Georgia
Department of Theatre & Film Studies

The Georgia Incarceration Performance Project

The Georgia Incarceration Performance Project is an archives-to-performance collaboration between Spelman College, the University of Georgia, librarians and archivists, students and faculty, professional artists and designers, incarcerated students enrolled in college courses in Georgia-area prisons, and community partners. After a yearlong research and creative devising process, we are honored to share with you our production: *By Our Hands*.

By Our Hands

Through a compelling collage of scenes collectively devised by the collaborators, we invite you on a non-linear journey to explore the impact of incarceration and forced labor through dance, theater, spoken word, music, and visual media.

This unique experience will be limited to four shows only.

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Production Content Advisory

This production contains high levels of sensorial stimulation including the use of fog/haze, lighting effects, and scenes depicting physical violence. As this production uses verbatim text and imagery from archival material about Georgia's carceral history, please be aware that this performance contains strong language, some profanity, imagery, and scenes which may be offensive to some audiences. It may not be suitable for all audiences.





Why Here, Why Now?

Hidden in plain sight throughout Atlanta are products of incarcerated labor. Railroads, highways, parks, and brick, the city's infrastructure is itself an archive of the experiences of people whose stories go untold, and whose experiences bring to light how our current carceral system has come to be. The timeliness and urgency of this work is palpable. From films like Ava Duvernay's *13th* to the 2018 nationwide 20-day protest by incarcerated peoples about prison work conditions, there has been a national call to look at the historical set of events, peoples, and personalities that contributed to what some have called "modern-day slavery" or "the New Jim Crow."

The performance process of The Georgia Incarceration Performance Project, drawing on archival and embodied research, afford us -- students, faculty, incarcerated people, prison employees, historians, archivists, artists, residents, and the State of Georgia -- the opportunity to have this serious, much-needed conversation. We ask,

- How do we gather a community of Georgia residents to openly look at and discuss this difficult past (and present)? How do we honestly negotiate our own relationship to incarceration, issues of race, and the impact of forced labor on our everyday experiences as Georgians?
- How can we explore the cultural memories of this history that live and move in our bodies?
- How can we make a human connection to the inanimate archival objects of this felt history?

We turn to performance.



The Team

Co-Directors:

Keith Arthur Bolden (Spelman)
Dr. Amma Y. Ghartey-Tagoe Kootin (UGA)
Dr. Julie B. Johnson (Spelman)
Dr. Emily Sahakian (UGA)
Assoc. Co-Director: Kathleen Wessel (Spelman)

Choreography:

Dr. Julie B. Johnson and Kathleen Wessel
Student Assistant Choreographer: Aquilah Ohemeng

Scenic Design: Kellie Murphy

Costume Design: Daniel Carter and Debörah Hughes

Costume Assistant: Kiersten Mills

Lighting Design: Erwin Greene (eGreene Designs), Matthew Oliner, and Diana Norton-Bagwell

Sound Design: Erwin Greene (eGreene Designs) and Diana Norton-Bagwell

Sound Engineering: Erwin Greene (eGreene Designs) and Diana Norton-Bagwell

Media Design: Charmaine Minniefield and Jason Woodworth-Hou

Visual Media Production: Kimberly Binns

Original Music Composed and Recorded by: Colette “CC” Coward, Okorie “OkCello” Johnson, and Munir Zakee

Script Supervision: Philip Brankin and Angela Hall

Co-Executive Producer/Creative

Producer: Barbara McCaskill

Production Manager: André C. Allen (Blacklight Productions Inc.)

Stage Managers: Kristen Cole and Kaylah Smith

Production Lab & Theatre Management

Instructor: Joan McCarty Sanchez

Project Managers: Vivian Lee-Boulton and Morgan Hawkins

Videographer: Kimberly Binns

UGA Special Collections Libraries Archivist

Collaborators:

Chuck Barber (Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library)

Jan Levinson Hebbard (Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library)

Mary Miller (Walter J. Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection)

Jill Severn (Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies)

Sidonia Serafini (Author of Hargrett Library exhibition: “The New South and The New Slavery”)

Spelman College Archive Collaborators:

Holly Smith

Kassandra Ware

Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library & Archives Research Center Collaborators:

Tiffany Alwater

Martina Dodd

Jordan Moore

Sarah Tanner

Thank You

We are indebted to the numerous contributors, consultants, experts, guest presenters, volunteers, and supporters who facilitated the work of [the Georgia Incarceration Performance Project].

We are grateful for our Source(s) of Faith and Strength, Families, Friends, Loved Ones, and You, the audience.

Co-Directors Notes

*Keith Arthur Bolden (Spelman), Dr. Amma Y. Ghartey-Tagoe Kootin (UGA),
Dr. Julie B. Johnson (Spelman), Dr. Emily Sahakian (UGA), Kathleen Wessel (Spelman)*

Rather than beginning with a script, devised theatre is built on improvisations with the performing ensemble--in our case, surrounding the historical archive. When encountering archival materials, we played with them: singing them, dancing them, acting them out, curating them through performance, and expressing them with our bodies, voices, media, music, design elements and artistry. Through community-based theatre techniques, we worked to explore our own relationships to the stories and voices held in the archives, and aimed to break the “fourth wall” between the audience and performances, in order to invite audiences to make the story with us. We hope that the audience will leave with a deeper understanding of histories and contemporary realities of incarcerated labor, and what this inheritance does and means to us all, as Georgia residents.

**We would love to hear your thoughts and questions
in response to this work after the show.**

We invite you to stay and join our post-show dialogue.

By Our Hands at Spelman College is presented within the Spring 2020 performance season of The Department of Dance Performance & Choreography and The Department of Theatre & Performance

The Department of Dance Performance & Choreography

Faculty:

Dr. Veta Goler, Chair

Dr. Julie B. Johnson

Cici Kelly

Omelika Kuumba

T. Lang

Kathleen Wessel

The Department of Theatre & Performance

Faculty:

Aku Kadogo, Chair

André C. Allen

Keith Arthur Bolden

Dr. Eddie Bradley

Isabel Curley-Clay

Moriah Curley-Clay

Will Power

Nick Ryan

Joan McCarty Sanchez

Erin Washington

Morgan Hawkins, Administrative Assistant

The Archives

This performance was developed from archival encounters and deep collaborations.

Archival Collections at UGA and Spelman College

This work began in the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library's *The New South and New Slavery: Convict Labor in Georgia*, an exhibit chronicling a gripping piece of Georgia's history: "the forced labor of prisoners in Georgia from the start of the convict lease system in 1868 until the abolition of the chain gang in 1945.", the collections of the Russell Library and the Brown Media Archives & Peabody Awards Collection.

Spelman College and the Atlanta University Center's Woodruff Library archivists provided archival workshops; curated and transferred select pieces from UGA's exhibit to Spelman College; and donated pieces from their collections to make a deeper connection to Atlanta's history. The exhibit is now on view in the Spelman College Fine Arts Building, free and open to the public.

Embodied Memory Archives

Spelman, Morehouse, and UGA students collaborated with their faculty, professional artists, and incarcerated students in Common Good Atlanta (CGA) courses to explore questions and experiences of incarceration, freedom, time, and labor. Through dialogue, writing, and movement, they mapped their embodied memories to more deeply understand their individual relationships to incarceration.

Blue Folders - Incarcerated Students' Written Works

Incarcerated students enrolled in CGA courses contributed essays, poems, and other written works, providing unique and valuable perspectives on Georgia's carceral system.





The Scenes

1. Beyond Blue

An introduction to the incarcerated collaborators' archive

2. Touch the Bones

Meet the Archivists and the Bones, our guides on the journey through past, present, and future

3. CGA Stories

The Bones voice the written works of incarcerated collaborators

4. Silent Rows of Burden: "Pines"

In the Georgia Pinewood forests...

5. The South, Beggar No Longer

...the railroad cuts through the trees, powered by incarcerated labor

6. At the Movies #1

How does an all Black cast tackle a racist classic with nuance and joy? Here's our first take

7. Bad Boys/Good Roads

Welcome to the chain gang

8. Who is Angelo Herndon?

Meet the activist labor organizer staging a protest in a replica of a chain gang cage

9. CGA Poetics

From an incarcerated collaborator: a time she "counted the minutes"

10. Women & Children

The woman's story: her work, her children, her grief.

11. Where is My Boy Tonight?

An archival musical composition

12. Diamond Queen

When two incarcerated women are abused, who gets empathy?

13. Ain't I a Woman?

Women's resistance, at a great price

14. Pageant

An extravagant display of the products of prison labor

15. Guthrie vs. Evans

Actual court testimony about the horrors of prison labor camps

16. At the Movies #2

How does an all Black cast tackle a racist classic with nuance and joy? Here's our second take

17. Out of Sight, Out of Mind, Out of Time

From an incarcerated collaborator: where the time goes

18. CGA Poetics

From an incarcerated collaborator: what does it mean to be a citizen?

19. An Ending?

With a topic so broad and so deep, how do we end the show?

The Characters

The Jokers: Our hosts, the bridge between the audience and the performance

The Archivists: Researchers, embodying what was discovered in the archive

The Bones: Afro-futuristic guides, instigators, storytellers. They pull back the veil