

THE  
**THEATRE  
SCHOOL**  
-----  
AT DePaul University

presents

# THE WOMEN EAT CHOCOLATE

**by Caroline Macon**

Director – Heidi Stillman  
Scenic Designer – Angela McIlvain  
Costume Designer – Courtney Schum  
Lighting Designer – James Mitchell  
Sound Designer – Alyssa Kerr  
Dramaturg – Kaysie Bekkela  
Stage Manager – Mario E. Wolfe

**May 20 – 28, 2016**

The Theatre School at DePaul University  
Fullerton Stage  
2350 N Racine Ave, Chicago IL, 60614  
Email: [theatreboxoffice@depaul.edu](mailto:theatreboxoffice@depaul.edu) | (773) 325-7900

**Presenting Level Sponsor**



## CAST [in order of appearance]

Alex.....	Talia Payomo
Dot.....	Nikhaar Kishnani
Willard.....	Jack Disselhorst
Johnny.....	Michael Cohen
Plum.....	Jolie Lepselter
Mother.....	Ayanna Bria Bakari

### Place and Time:

A middle school in Asheville, North Carolina, and the surrounding neighborhood.  
No set time period, but the extent of the technology  
is the film projector and the household phone.

**There will be one 10-minute intermission.**

***The Women Eat Chocolate* is presented with special permission from the playwright.**

## PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Director.....	Hampton Cade
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Daniel Fender, Emily Mills
Assistant Scenic Designer.....	Claire DiVito
Technical Director.....	Sean Conlin
Assistant Technical Director.....	Todd Bleiman
Master Carpenter.....	Alyse Porsella
Assistant Costume Designer.....	Liz Martinez, Angela Mix
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Makeup Assistants.....	Megan Pirtle
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Master Electrician.....	Simean Carpenter
Assistant Master Electrician.....	Katelyn Le-Thompson
Assistant Sound Designer.....	Sadie Tremblay
Assistant Dramaturg.....	Margaret Braughman
Production Photos.....	Michael Brosilow
Audio Describer.....	George Demopoulos
Sign Language Interpreter Coordinator.....	Sheila Kettering
Sign Language Interpreters.....	Sheila Kettering, Kaythrn Lentz
Scenery and Property Crew.....	Hamad Althawadi, Sarah Marino, Laila Rodriques, Aidan Senn
Costume Crew.....	Emma Colbaugh, Jessie Glionna, Gabby Gillespie
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## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

### Poem For My Mother

by Caroline Macon

My twenties arrived and I did not blossom  
like begonias as promised by dermatologists  
and various cashiers over the years in Texas.

In the star spangled light of a Chicago subway,  
it is obvious I don't wash my face enough.  
My Converse are grubby and my faux red hair

now grows roots in gray! It's the stress,  
you warn me, your delicate southernyms  
soothing through my fingerprinted cellphone.

I am boring as a child in a tire swing.  
All those summers in Oak Creek, I swung  
in sick circles, that heat! All for a peek

at Steven Lanz up the street. At 6th grade  
orientation, he told me he did not love me  
to my face and you held my head in your lap

with seriousness that would match that  
of my wedding day, like I had been bleached  
in a pristine white get-up and left stranded

on the aisle. You took me so seriously,  
my God. The courage to be a mother  
who consoles a hormonal daughter.

Adolescence is non compos mentis,  
the worry and grief unending! Beneath  
cystic zits, you dug up my heart with love

that cannot match any in crowd. If we  
were peers, we'd go to the same sleepovers,  
sit at the same lunch table. I'm sure of it.

## DRAMATURGY NOTE

"Other than dying, I think puberty is probably about as rough as it gets."

~Rick Springfield

In *The Women Eat Chocolate*, Alex is on the wild ride that is puberty...well she's getting there. Everything seems to be going against her, including her unrequited love with two different guys and her messy self-parenting. Alex, armed with only her poetry, is fighting to find the turning point in this huge muddled poem that is her life.

Like Alex, and many others, I struggled with puberty. It felt like a never ending whirlwind of emotion. I spent adolescence being mad at my body for not being something else, upset at my mom for whatever reason I found that day, and frustrated that life wasn't what I wanted it to be.

[cont. on page 4]

One day, years after my run-in with puberty, my mom came running into my room holding my old Winnie-the-Pooh diary, "Wait you have to hear this!" she said. "I was going through our old stuff and I found this!" She started to read it: "I know I'm too young to know but I think I'm in love with Bodhi. No I am in love with Bodhi. And I will love him forever. I know that's really deep. But it's true."

Upon hearing this quote about my first middle school boyfriend, Bodhi Mayo, I was horrified and instantly thrown back into my thirteen-year-old teenage body. Even though I had long since forgotten Bodhi and all the drama surrounding our tween love, every single trippy emotional moment of my young life flew by in my mind. I remembered feeling awkward, emotional, and curious about my menstruating body, and wanting to be an adult. But then a different feeling hit me: pride. As I took in the words my mom read, I felt so proud of how far I had come from that time in my life. Adult-me was able to look back and see that I needed to experience all that in order to be the self-sufficient person I had become.

In *The Women Eat Chocolate*, playwright Caroline Macon explores a painful transition from childhood to adulthood and what it means to take the good with the bad in order to grow. As teenagers we want to cross the dangerous road to get to the adult side of life but we get scared of what might hit us on our journey. By re-experiencing the horror that is puberty we are able to realize that those are the moments when we found out how to grow up and carry on. Perhaps experiencing Alex's struggle, you too will be thrown back into your thirteen-year-old selves and acknowledge the journey you have taken.

~Kaysie Bekkela, BFA3/Dramaturgy and Criticism

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Ayanna Bria Bakari** (*Mother*), BFA3/Acting. Ayanna Bria is from Washington, D.C. Recent credits include *In the Blood* (Welfare Lady/Bully), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Molly Cunningham), *Medea* (Medea), and *An American Daughter* (Judith B. Kaufman).

**Michael Cohen** (*Johnny*), BFA3/Acting. Michael is an actor, writer, and musician from Kansas City. Past performances at The Theatre School include *The Triangle Factory Fire Project*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

**Jack Disselhorst** (*Willard*), BFA3/Acting. Jack is from Crystal Lake, Illinois. Recent Theatre School credits include *God's Ear*, directed by Andrew Peters, and *12 Angry Men*, directed by Matt Hawkins. Jack is an apprentice at Piven Theatre Workshop in Evanston.

**Nikhaar Kishnani** (*Dot*), MFA2/Acting. Nikhaar is from South City, California, and grew up in East Brunswick, New

Jersey. She is an improviser and a former television show host. Her Theatre School credits include *Prospero's Storm* (Gonzala), directed by Damon Kiely; *The Children's Hour* (Rosalie), directed by Nathan Singh; and *The Qualms* (Regine), directed by Shade Murray.

**Jolie Lepselter** (*Plum*), BFA4/Acting. Jolie is from Dallas, Texas. Previous Theatre School credits include *The Killing Game*, *Dreams, Undo*, *The Children's Hour*, *Prospero's Storm*, and *Unconditional*. Jolie is also a double major in psychology with a concentration in human development.

**Talia Payomo** (*Alex*), BFA4/Acting. Talia is from Oakland, California. She is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

**Caroline Macon** (*Playwright*), BFA4, Playwriting/English. Caroline is a Dallas-born writer. She participates in DePaul's annual Wrights of Spring, featuring *Salmonella* and *Other Myths*, a 10-minute play and *Anne*

and *Rowan Play Make Believe*, a one act. Her 10-minute play, *The Bubble Machine*, was commissioned by Victory Gardens for College Night. She performs at reading series including *Salonathon!*, *The Marrow*, and *The Mingle*. She is a member of Poems While You Wait. Her writing has been featured in *[PANK]* and *Crook & Folly*.

**Heidi Stillman** (*Director*) Heidi is a director, writer, actor, ensemble member, and Artistic Director of Lookingglass Theatre Company. She most recently directed *Death Tax* at Lookingglass, and created and directed *Cascabel* with Rick Bayless. Productions Heidi wrote and directed at Lookingglass include *The North China Lover*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *Hard Times*. Also at Lookingglass, she has directed *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Trust*, and *Hillbilly Antigone*.

**Hampton Cade** (*Assistant Director*) BFA3/Theatre Arts. Hampton is an actor and director from Hagerstown, Maryland. Recent credits at The Theatre School include *Marat/Sade*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Lady from the Sea* (Assistant Director). Other credits include *The War Boys* (Kepler Black Box), and *Caligula* (Academy Theater).

**Todd Bleiman** (*Assistant Technical Director*), BFA3/Theatre Technology. Todd is a native of the Chicagoland suburbs. His past Theatre School credits include Assistant Technical Director for *In The Blood* and *Video Galaxy*; Master Carpenter for *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Metamorphosis* and *The Phantom Tollbooth*; Carpenter for *Jackie and Me*, and Scenery and Properties Crew for *Our Town*.

**Alyse Porsella** (*Master Carpenter*), BFA3/Theatre Technology. Originally from Long Island, New York. Previous shows Alyse has worked on at The Theatre School include *God's Ear* (Assistant Technical Director), *The Lady from the Sea* (Technical Director), *Elemeno Pea* (Assistant Technical Director/Master Carpenter).

**Courtney Schum** (*Costume Designer*), BFA4/Costume Design. Courtney hails from

Bernardsville, New Jersey. Her design work has previously been featured in The Theatre School's productions of *In The Heights* and *Elemeno Pea*, as well as Chicago Dramatists' world premiere of *The Mecca Tales*. Courtney recently completed a quarter abroad at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, wherein she served as Assistant Costume Designer for the school's production of *Equus*. Courtney holds a dual minor in Sociology and History of Art and Architecture.

**Liz Martinez** (*Assistant Costume Designer*), BFA2/Costume Design. Liz is from North Jersey. She has been involved in theatre since middle school. She was originally a dancer with a focus in fashion, and took six classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan. Assistant Costume Design credits at The Theatre School include *God's Ear* and *Peter Pan and Wendy*.

**Angela Mix (AJ)** (*Assistant Costume Designer*), BFA2/Costume Design. AJ comes to The Theatre School from Maryland where she attended grade schools with either a Magnet or Signature liberal arts and humanities program.

**Brian Suchocki** (*Assistant Lighting Designer*), BFA3/Lighting Design. Brian's Theatre School Lighting Design credits include *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Women*, *The Memo*, *The Blood in the Pines*, and *Gruesome Playground Injuries*. He is currently also working as a Lighting Technician with Performance Lighting, Inc.

**Alyssa Kerr** (*Sound Designer*), BFA2/Sound Design. Alyssa is from Temple, Texas, and has been fascinated with sound since her freshman year of high school. Her other Theatre School credits include *12 Angry Men*, *Dreams* and *The Trojan Women*.

**George Demopoulos** (*Audio Describer*) George is one of the founders of audio narration in Chicago. He began at Chicagoland Radio Information Service (CRIS), a radio news service for those

## BIOGRAPHIES [cont.]

needing visual aid, in Chicago's Cultural Center decades ago and from there to narrating stage plays in Victory Gardens, Steppenwolf, Drury Lane and Broadway-in-Chicago Theaters among others. He also produced and acted in radio plays at CRIS.

**Sheila Kettering** (*Sign Language Interpreter*), CI/CT. Sheila last interpreted on the Fullerton Stage for The Theatre School's production of *In The Heights*, and at the Merle Reskin Theater this past February for the production of *Prospero's Storm*. Sheila has been interpreting for 25 years in the Chicagoland area in a variety of settings, such as medical, business, educational, video relay interpreting and is especially passionate about theatrical interpreting. Her most recent interpreted performances include *Oklahoma* and *A Christmas Story* (The Paramount Theater); *The Heir Apparent* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Never the Sinner* and *Hillary and Clinton* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Arcadia* (Writer's Theater); and *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* (Chicago Children's Theater).

**Kathryn Lentz** (*Sign Language Interpreter*) Kathryn graduated from Waubensee Community College's Interpreter Training Program in 2008. She has been working as a professional interpreter ever since. In her spare time, she pursues the stage at her local community theatre in Aurora called The Riverfront Playhouse. She has been in several productions including *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead*, *I'll Be Back Before Midnight*, *Little Women* and *Proof*.

**Kaysie Bekkela** (*Dramaturg*), BFA3, Dramaturgy/Criticism. Kaysie is most recently from Austin, Texas. Theatre School credits include Dramaturg for *Peter Pan* and *Wendy* and Assistant Dramaturg for *The Duchess of Malfi*. Kaysie has also worked as a Dramaturg on *The Horror, An Immersive Experience* (Parts 1, 2 and 3).

**Margaret Baughman** (*Assistant Dramaturg*), BFA4/Theatre Arts. Margaret's previous credits at The Theatre School include *Much Ado About Nothing* (Director/Choreographer), *The Lady from the Sea*

(Assistant Director), *These Shining Lives* (Assistant Director), and *Symphony of Clouds* (Company Member). Additionally, Margaret has been Stage Managing for Nothing Without a Company and Waltzing Mechanics while choreographing a short film, *Cobra Cliff*, and for DePaul Theatre Union.

**Mario E. Wolfe** (*Stage Manager*), BFA4/Stage Management. Mario is originally from St. Petersburg, Florida. This July, Mario will be the Production Manager of ShePlel Theatre's summer project at Victory Gardens. Upon graduating, Mario will be the Floor Manager in the Albert Theatre for the 2016-2017 season at the Goodman. Theatre School Stage Management credits include *Joe Turners Come and Gone* and *The Day John Henry Came to School*. Other notable credits include Production Assistant for *Grand Concourse* and *The Qualms* at Steppenwolf Theatre.

**Daniel Fender** (*Assistant Stage Manager*), BFA1/Stage Management. Theatre School credits include Assistant Stage Manager for *God's Ear* and *Esperanza Rising*. Past Stage Management and Assistant Stage Management credits include *Oliver!*, *As You Like It*, *The King and I*, *The Secret in the Wings*, and *Blood Wedding*. He is a proud graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy.

**Emily Mills** (*Assistant Stage Manager*), BFA3/Stage Management. Broadway credits: Production Assistant on *The Lion King*, directed by Julie Taymor. Professional credits: Stage Management Intern with Silkroad Ensemble, Production Assistant on *Stupid F\*cking Bird* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Stage Manager on *The Game of Love and Chance* at 1st Stage Theater. The Theatre School credits: *Esperanza Rising*, directed by Lisa Portes; *We're Going to be Fine*, directed by Dexter Bullard; *Symphony of Clouds*, directed by Ann Wakefield; *The Killing Game*, directed Brian Balcom; *Number the Stars*, directed by Ernie Nolan; and *Assassins*, directed by Lavina Jadhvani.



The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival 49®, part of the Rubenstein Arts Access Program, is generously funded by David and Alice Rubenstein.

Special thanks to The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust for supporting the John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts' Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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The Theatre School at DePaul University educates, trains, and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry.

A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to our mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary, and original plays that challenge, entertain, and stimulate the imagination. We seek to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of our university community, our city, and the profession. For admissions information, telephone (773) 325-7999 or 1-800-4-DEPAUL.

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Chicago Playworks is a vital aspect of the training at The Theatre School at DePaul University. Students gain pre-professional experience in an extended run before a most demanding and appreciative audience. Chicago Playworks presents three unique productions to more than 35,000 young people each season and has entertained more than 1 million schoolchildren and families since 1925.

## HISTORY

The Theatre School at DePaul University was founded as the Goodman School of Drama in 1925, made possible by a gift of \$250,000 from William and Erna Goodman to the Art Institute of Chicago. The gift was in memory of their son, Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, a playwright. Kenneth dreamed about opening a theatre that combined a repertory company with a dramatic arts school, where classes would be taught by professional artists and actors.

In 1975 the trustees of the Art Institute of Chicago voted to phase out the Goodman School of Drama over a three-year period. Luckily, DePaul University stepped in and embraced the Goodman School of Drama to keep alive a tradition of dramatic programming. DePaul's first theatre, The College Theatre, opened on the Lincoln Park Campus in 1907.

Throughout the years, The Theatre School at DePaul University has grown in reputation and stature. Our new home at Fullerton and Racine opened in September 2013 and was designed by the internationally renowned architect César Pelli and his firm Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects.

To learn more about our history, please visit [theatre.depaul.edu](http://theatre.depaul.edu)

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## CHICAGO PLAYWORKS FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG AUDIENCES

### *The Kid Who Ran For President*

Music, Lyrics & Book by Jeremiah Clay Neal  
 based on the books *The Kid Who Ran for President* &  
*The Kid Who Became President* by Dan Gutman, directed by Ernie Nolan  
 Recommended for Ages 6 & Up  
 October 6 – November 12, 2016

### *Night Runner*

(developed through The Theatre School's Cunningham Commission for Youth Theatre)  
 by Ike Holter, directed by Lisa Portes  
 Recommended for Ages 9 & Up  
 January 12 – February 18, 2017

### *Cinderella: The Remix*

book and lyrics by Psalmayene 24  
 music by Nick the 1Da  
 directed by Coya Paz  
 Recommended for Ages 5 & Up  
 April 20 – May 27, 2017



## ON THE FULLERTON STAGE

### *Romeo and Juliet*

by William Shakespeare  
 directed by Cameron Knight  
 November 4 – 13, 2016  
 (previews 11/2 & 11/3)

### *We are Proud to Present*

*a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia,  
 Formerly Known as South West Africa, From the  
 German Sudwestafrika,  
 Between the Years 1884-1915*  
 by Jackie Sibblies Drury  
 directed by Erin Kraft  
 February 10 – 19, 2017  
 (previews 2/8 & 2/9)

### *Wig Out!*

by Tarell Alvin McCraney  
 directed by Nathan Singh  
 April 14 – 23, 2017  
 (previews 4/12 & 4/13)

### *New Playwrights Series*

Title, Playwright, and Director TBA  
 May 19 – 27, 2017  
 (previews 5/17 & 5/18)

## IN THE HEALY THEATRE

### *Eurydice*

by Sarah Ruhl  
 directed by Michael Burke  
 October 21 – 30, 2016  
 (previews 10/19 & 10/20)

### *Richard III*

by William Shakespeare  
 directed by Jacob Janssen  
 January 27 – February 5, 2017  
 (previews 1/25 & 1/26)

### *MFA 17*

An ensemble piece to be performed  
 by MFA III actors  
 Title, Playwright, and Director TBA  
 May 5 – 14, 2017  
 (previews 5/3 & 5/4)

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **BOX OFFICE TELEPHONE**

(773) 325-7900

## **REGULAR BOX OFFICE HOURS**

Tuesday - Friday: noon - 4 p.m.

## **PERFORMANCE BOX OFFICE HOURS**

The Box Office opens 90 minutes prior to curtain for all performances.

## **NO SMOKING**

In compliance with the City of Chicago Clean Air Ordinance, smoking is prohibited in The Theatre School. We appreciate your cooperation.

## **EMERGENCY EXITS**

Please note the location of emergency exits in the theatre.

## **NO CELLULAR PHONES, TEXT MESSAGING, RECORDING DEVICES, PHOTOGRAPHY, PAGERS, FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

Please do not use the above listed items in the theatre. Patrons with electronic pagers or cellular telephones are asked to either turn off their equipment in the theatre or check them with the House Manager prior to curtain. We discourage text messaging during the performance. The light from the screen can bother other patrons. We allow photographs to be taken before and after but never during the performance. You may also check cameras and recording equipment with the House Manager who will secure them until final curtain.

## **RESTROOMS**

Restrooms are located in the lobbies on the main floor and balcony levels.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

If you find an item or have lost an item, please contact the House Manager. You may also call (773) 325-7900 the next day to determine if an item has been found.

## **EMERGENCY TELEPHONE CALLS**

Patrons with electronic pagers are requested to either turn off their pagers in the theatre or check them with the House Manager prior to showtime. Should you need to give an emergency telephone number where you can be reached during a performance, please alert the House Manager of your seat location and give the Box Office telephone number for emergencies, (773) 325-7900.

## **PARKING ARRANGEMENTS**

When you attend an event at The Theatre School in Lincoln Park, you may park at DePaul's Clifton Parking Deck, 2330 N. Clifton, with the DePaul rate: \$7.25. Validate your parking ticket at the Building Receptionist desk near the Racine entrance.

## **CAPTIONING AND LISTEN UP LISTENING SYSTEMS AVAILABLE FOR OUR HEARING-IMPAIRED PATRONS**

See the box office to receive either the Captioning or Headset device. We require the security deposit of a driver's license or other identification during the performance. The ID will be returned when you return the device.

## **LARGE PRINT PROGRAMS**

You may request a large print program from the ticket taker or the House Manager.

## **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING**

Selected performances will be interpreted in American Sign Language. Call the Box Office or see the website for the schedule.

## **AUDIO DESCRIPTION**

Designated audio-described performances and pre-performance touch tours are scheduled throughout the 2015-16 season. Call the Box Office or see the website for the schedule.