

The making of: **THE MIGHTY SCARABS !** at **Dobama**



**The
Mighty
Scarabs**

Written by -
Cornell Hubert Calhoun III

Directed by -
Christopher Johnston

Featuring -
Jerome Anderson
Rodney Freeman
Leonard Goff
Lillshell Gray
Kenny Johnson
Saidah Mitchell
Kenneth C. Parker
Lauren Nicole Sturdivant
Bobby Williams

DOBAMA THEATRE
2340 Lee Rd. Cleveland Hts., OH 44118

JANUARY
27, 28, 29 & 31

FEBRUARY
1 & 2

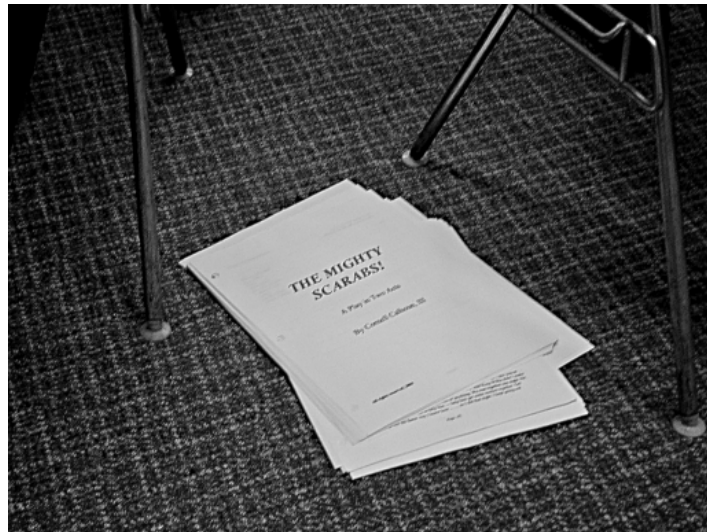
Twenty years have passed since the East Tech High School Basketball Team captured the State Championship - but did that one shining moment contribute to their demise?

Albert Bell

A Photographic Compilation by Albert Bell

The making of:
THE MIGHTY SCARABS !
at **Dobama**

by **Albert Bell**



*Dedicated to the loving memory of my Dad.
Cleveland Ohio, East Technical High School,
"Scarab", Class of 1950.*

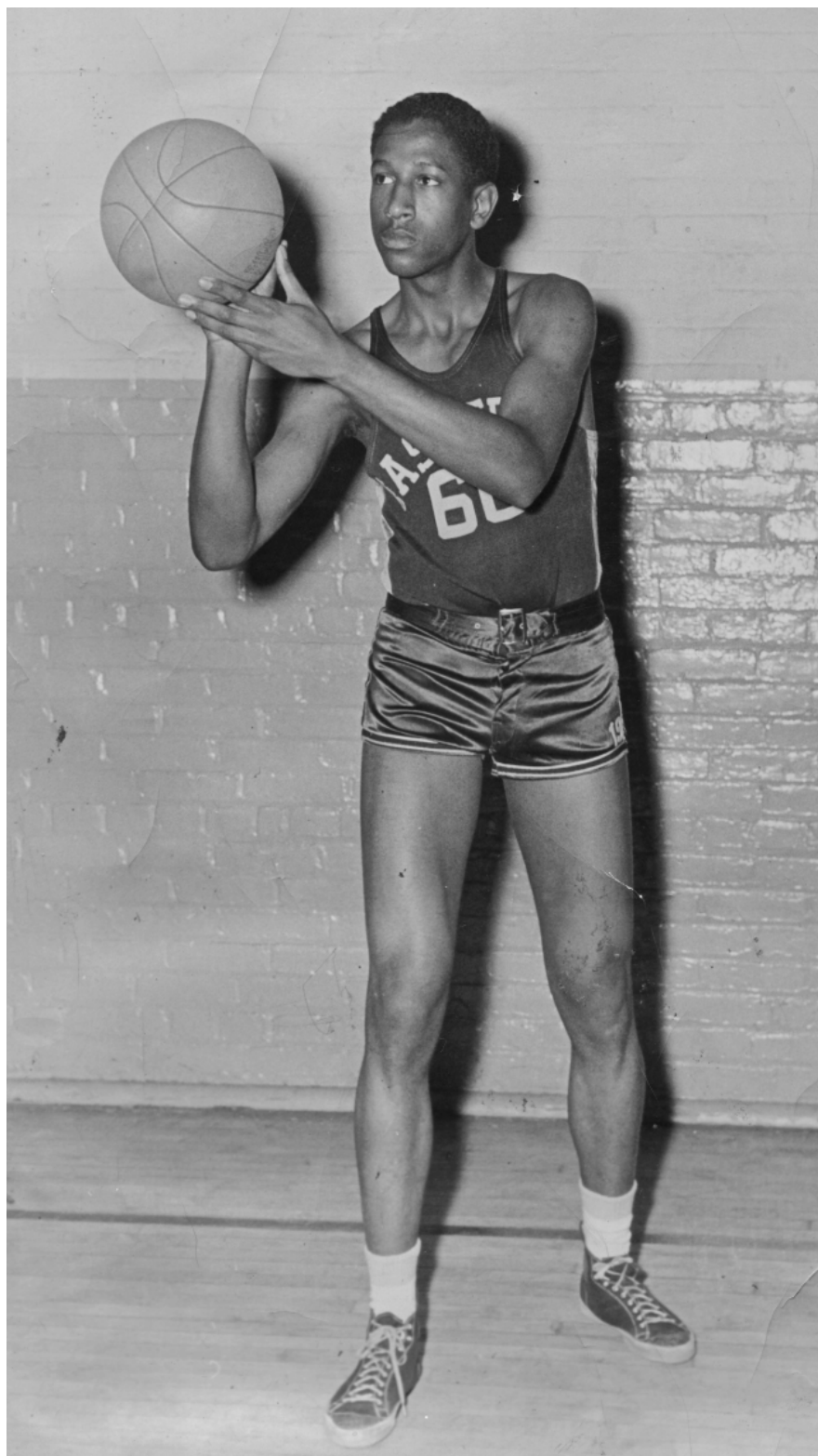


Table of Contents

About This Project	5
Playwright: Cornell Hubert Calhoun III	6
Actor: Jerome Anderson	7
Character: June Bailey	8
Actor: Rodney Freeman	11
Character: Johnny Dollar	12
Actor: Leonard Goff	15
Character: Slim Slim Payne	16
Actor: Lillshell Gray	19
Character: Gabriella (Gabby) Chatman	20
Actor: Kenny Johnson	23
Character: Jimmy Love	24
Actor: Saidah Mitchell	27
Character: Girlena Chatman	28
Actor: Kenneth C. Parker	31
Character: Charles "Killer" Davis	32
Actor: Lauren Nicole Sturdivant	35
Character: Jamaica Pearl	36
Actor: Bobby Williams	39
Character: Ricks	40
Director: Christopher Johnston	43
Stage Manager: Becky Adams	45
Production Staff	46
Thank You!	47

About This Project

August in Cleveland is predictably hot and sticky in a way that those who live here love to hate. Blogging and my growing commercial and wedding photography assignments were keeping my August days full, busy and long. It's particularly the busy part that made me take breaks when and where I could during the day. With several rapid fire meetings coming up, I took one of those opportunities to take a break; it was the August heat that convinced me to take it inside to one of my favorite coffee houses.

Seated at one of the tables inside, was friend/writer Christopher Johnston tapping away on his laptop. Seeing he was busy, I would have normally waved when he looked up and allowed him to keep writing, but with a final keystroke, he exhaled, looked up and met my greeting smile with his own. We caught up quickly on what each other was working on, when I revisited a conversation we had months earlier.

“Chris, you know that I still would love to capture the process of making a play that you direct, do you have anything coming up?”

“You know it's fortuitous that you ask me that now. I'm going to direct a play by a friend and fellow playwright with Dobama's Playwrights' Gym. It's not going to open until sometime in January....”

Anxiously, I cut him off, “No, that would be perfect! Not only do things slow down a bit in January, it would allow me get in on the ground floor... capture the whole thing from table reads, rehearsals, everything!”

Relaxed as ever Chris replied, “Good, get in touch with me in a couple of months when we'll be closer to putting a schedule together and I'll bring you in.”

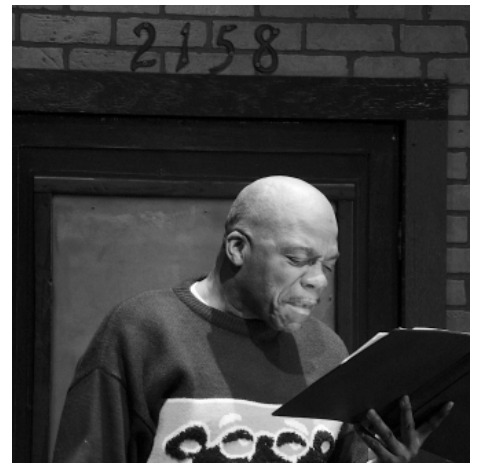
That was it, the wheels where in motion. A couple of months later I sent Chris an email and he cleared the way for me to attend the very first table read and every rehearsal after that. My mission was to watch the transformation of ***The Mighty Scarabs !*** from a two act play written by Cornell Hubert Calhoun III into a interpretive theater performance by a cast of talented professional actors.

At some point in our conversations Chris told me the name of the play was ***The Mighty Scarabs !***. I'm sure that Chris also explained that the story was about a circle of people twenty years after they won the State Basketball Championship and that it was that shining moment that might be the start of their demise. I heard all that, but wasn't listening. Instead, I focused on, how could I visually tell the story of the making of this play? What was I going to shoot? How was I going to shoot it? What kind of aesthetic would rehearsals have versus stage performances? It was finally during the first table read of the script when the story finally clicked for me.

I was shocked out of my artistic preoccupation, and realized that this story was closer to MY HOME than I realized. Perhaps once or twice, I heard my father refer to the *Scarabs* but usually when we talked about his high school days he simply called it East Tech. My Dad was full of stories of his time at East Tech, and the academic standards that you had to meet to go there instead of the less demanding Central High School. Springtime, Dad would tell stories about training and track meets, as the schools championship team worked to uphold the benchmark set by alumni and olympians Jesse Owens, Harrison Dillard and Dave Albritton years before he attended. In the winter, the stories would switch to East Techs “Globetrotter-like” basketball team and how he was the starting forward/center in charge of running “the weave”. My father was a *Mighty Scarab*, class of 1950, and his high school that he was always proud of, is central to this play.

Without warning, this project became more than just an artistic endeavor for me, it was a connection to my Dad.

~ Albert (Al) Bell



Cornell Hubert Calhoun III
(Playwright, **The Mighty Scarabs**)

is the recipient of the 2011 Writing Fellowship at the Vermont Studio Center. He received the 2010 Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award for his play, **Blooz 4 An Early Autumn (LUPUS Down For The Count)**, and was a nominee for the 2010 Cleveland Arts Prize for Literature. He is the former Theater Director at Glenville High School and is an award-winning actor, poet, playwright and director. Mr. Calhoun is a two-time semi-finalist at the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, for his works, **East 43rd** and **A Tyme 4 Blue**. His plays **Blooz For An Early Autumn** and **Any Man And Five Cents** were selected at The National Black Theater Festival in 2009 and 2011. He credits much of his success to actor/director and Cleveland theatre legend, Reuben Silver, Ph.D., a long-time mentor and friend. Mr. Calhoun holds a B.A. in English and a M.A. in Education.





Jerome Anderson is happy to be appearing at Dobama for the first time, and is stoked to be working with Chris Johnston for the third time, after **A Colored Funeral** at Karamu and **Sexually Explicit Material** at Cleveland Public Theater. Jerome dedicated his performance to Chuck Scott and "Uncle Doc" Johnson, a couple of black heroes from the old neighborhood.





June Bailey: Former East Tech basketball Star, who lives in the past and walks with a cane after a work place accident. June considers himself to be a poet and self appointed mentor to Gabby Chatman.

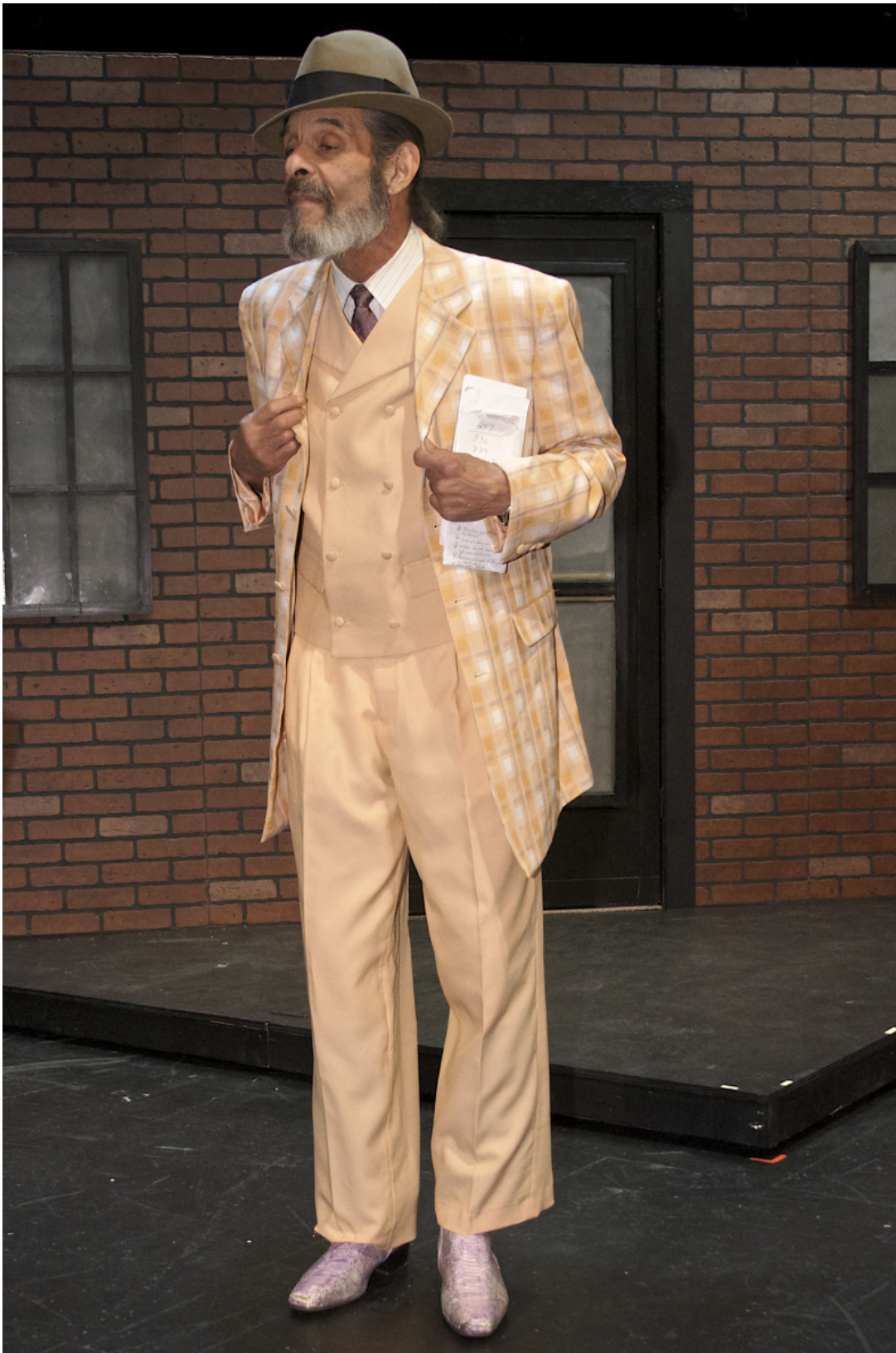






Rodney Freeman has performed at Karamu House (**Supposed To Be Daddy, Gray Panthers, Coming To The Mercy Seat, Dream On Monkey Mountain, Bee-Luther-Hatchee, God's Trombones**) at the Center Stage in Omaha, Nebraska (**Street Car Names Desire** – named Best Supporting Actor by Metropolitan Actors Guild) and Omaha Community Theatre (**Sweet Bird Of Youth**) and the University of Nebraska (**Inherit The Wind** and **Blood Knot**). Prior to performing in **The Mighty Scarabs**, Rodney appeared in Karamu's reading of **From Breast Cancer To Broadway** at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York.



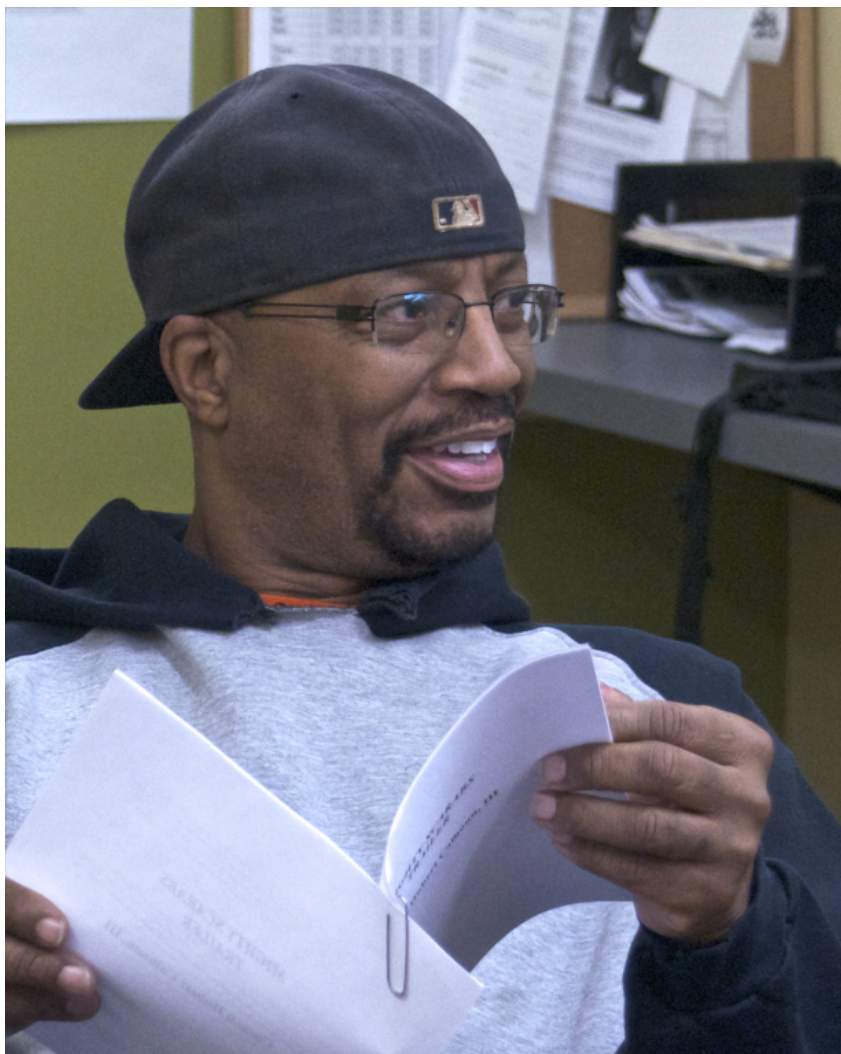


Johnny Dollar: A flashy, colorful and funny Numbers Runner in Cleveland's illegal numbers game. Johnny does well as an employee of the heavily armed and muscled, Massario Brothers.





Leonard Goff is a graduate of the Cleveland State Department of Theatre. He has done several plays in the Cleveland area. He has performed in Dobama's Marilyn Bianchi Kids' Playwriting Festival several times. He thanks Cornell and Christopher for this opportunity.





Slim Slim Payne: A member of the 1945 East Tech High School State Championship team. Twenty years after that crowning moment, Slim Slim drives big rig trucks on the open road and loves it.







Lillshell Gray started acting when she was in 6th grade and loves to perform on stage. Lillshell was crowned as 2008, Miss Cleveland and hopes after she graduates from Cleveland State University this upcoming fall, to become more involved in acting. She's excited for her first performance at the Dobama Theatre.





Gabriella (Gabby) Chatman: Girlena Chatman's fifteen year old bright, inquisitive, articulate and intelligent daughter. A talented basketball player able to play with the boys despite their jealousy and attempts at intimidation.

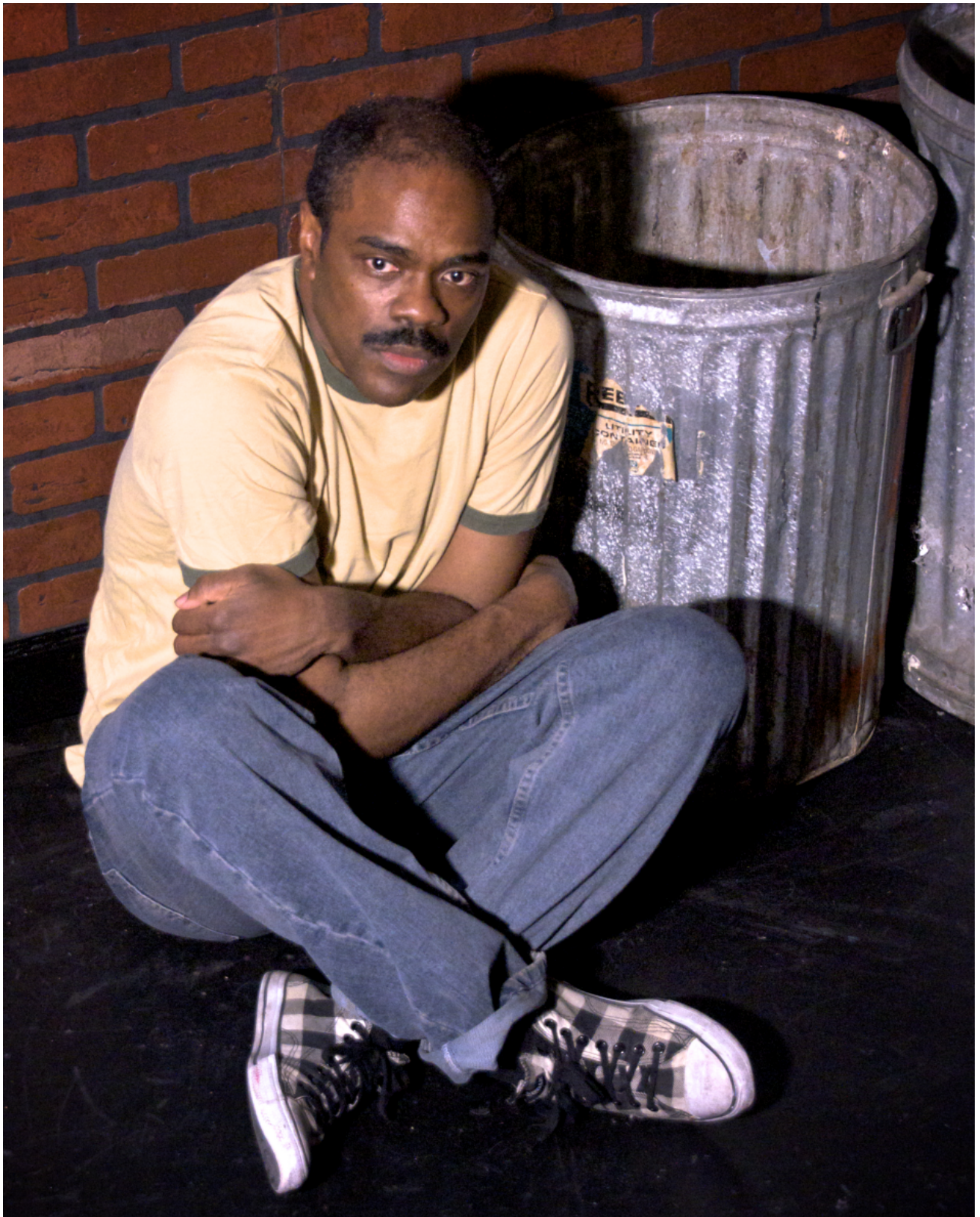




Kenny Johnson has appeared in plays at Karamu House, East Cleveland Theatre and here at Dobama. His credits here include **Talledega** and last season's **Unthinkable**. He also was a co-writer of **Soul Sounds**, most recently produced in Buffalo, NY. He made an appearances in the film **Antwone Fisher** and a recent episode of HGTV's **House Hunters**.



Character: Jimmy Love



Jimmy Love: The athletic and academically talented member of the 1945 East Tech High School, State Championship team struggles with his long time addiction to street demons.







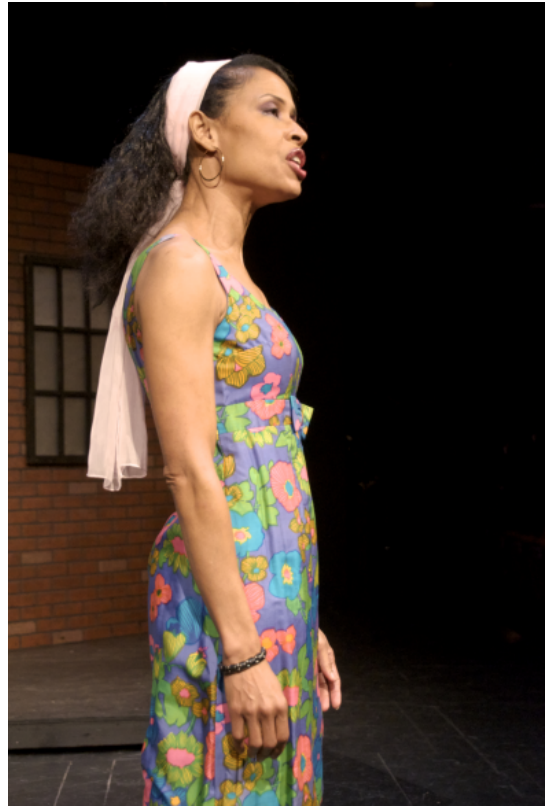
Saidah Mitchell made her theatre debut in the 2006 production of **Dream On Monkey Mountain** at The Karamu House. Prior to that she was a dancer/choreographer with Cleveland's Dance Afrika Dance. She was last seen at Karamu in **From Breast Cancer To Broadway**. She holds a degree in art and is working on a second degree in nursing. She is thrilled to be working with a talented cast, director and playwright.



Girlena Chatman: The attractive, former East Tech High School Cheerleader is still gains attention with her gorgeous legs. Although Girlena gets attention from many men, she has a strong history of choosing the wrong ones.



Girlena Chatman fill



Kenneth C. Parker has been acting throughout Ohio since 1998, where he has won several acting awards. He is Founder and Executive/Artistic Director of BLACKSPEAR Ed+u%tain=ment and Nu-Jeru-Salem Productions. This is his first appearance at the Dobama Theatre.





Charles “Killer” Davis: Although he grew up with the members of the East Tech High School Basketball team, he did not play. Now, after fifteen years in prison for murder, the former boyfriend of Girlena Chatman is on his way home...

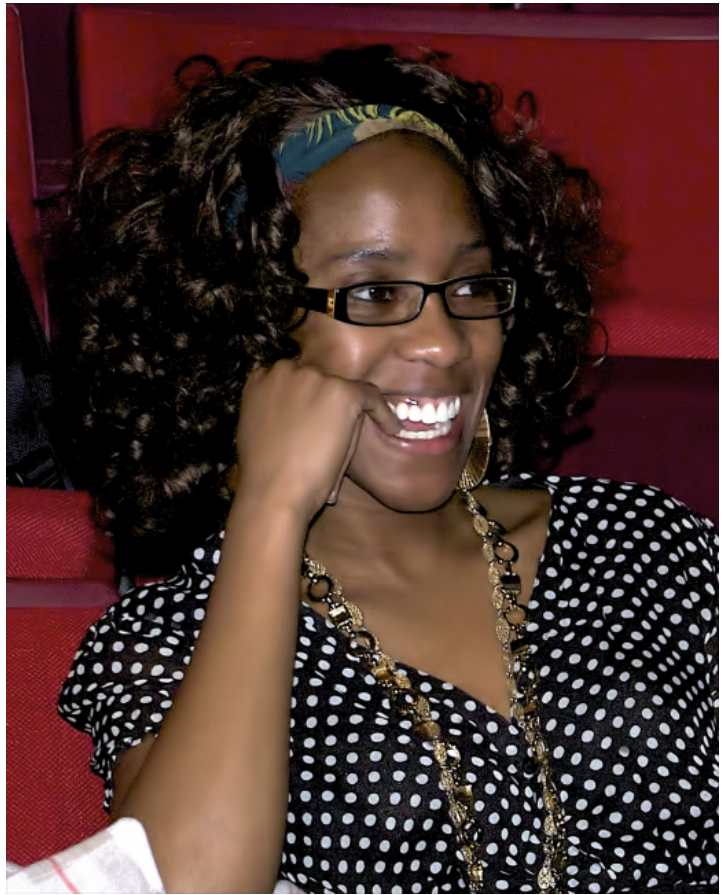




Lauren Nicole Sturdivant

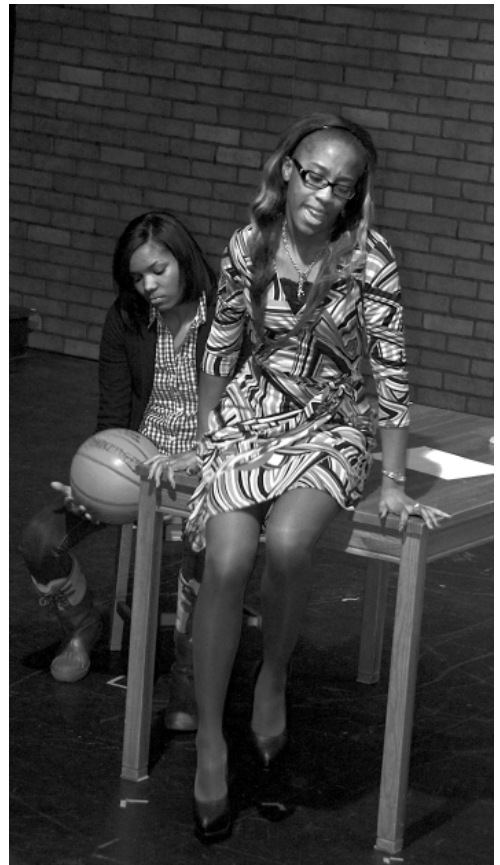
returns to the Dobama stage after her sizzling role of "Sugar" in the staged reading of **Unthinkable** last spring.

Previously, she was seen in the 2010 performance "Today" from the play **From Breast Cancer To Broadway**. In addition to acting, she directed her first full-length play at her Alma mater, Hiram College. She thanks Cornell Hubert Calhoun III for introducing her to the acting world.



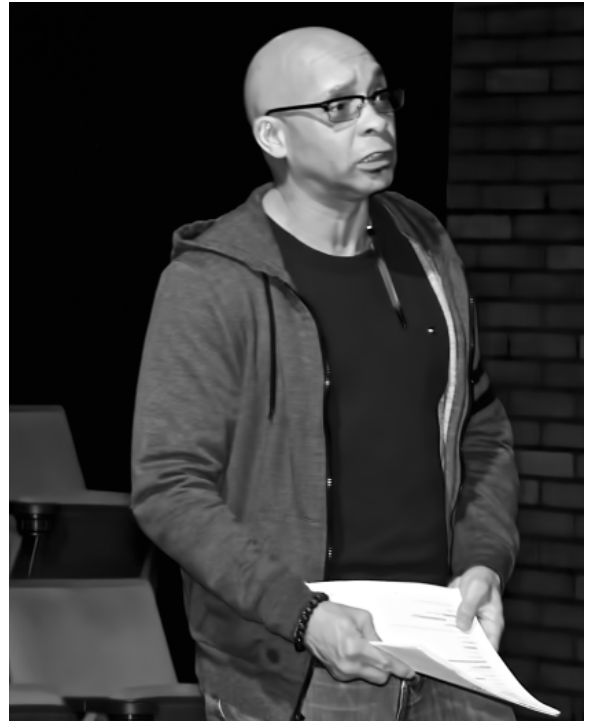


Jamaica Pearl: One of the most beautiful women ever is also a street-walker and property of King Willie II.



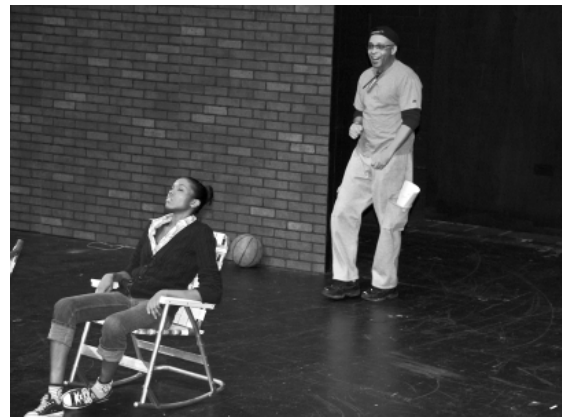
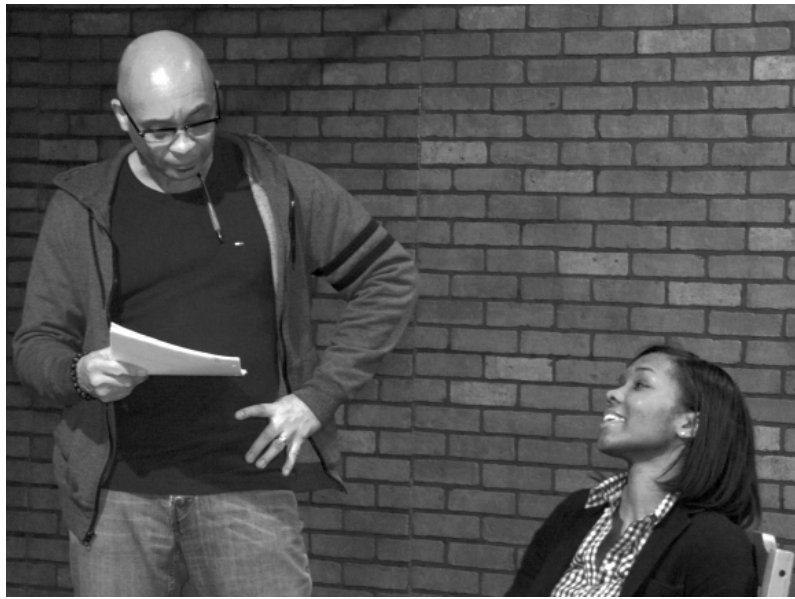


Bobby Williams is pleased to return to the Dobama stage where he last appeared in the 1996 production **The Art Of Success**. Other Dobama credits include, **America Hurrah**, **Distant Fires**, and **All In The Timing**. Recent credits include **The Two Gentlemen Of Verona** for Great Lakes Theatre, and **The Boys In The Band** for convergence-continuum.





Ricks: East Tech High School basketball star and teammate on the State Championship team in 1945. Twenty years later he now works for the Post Office as mailman and still carries his love for Girlena Chatman.







Christopher Johnston (Director, **The Mighty Scarabs**) is a playwright, director and freelance journalist. His plays have appeared at Cleveland Public Theatre (**Sexually Explicit Material**, **The Mind Field**, **Theories Of Relativity**), and Dobama Theater's Night Kitchen (**Murder In Mind**, **Loud Americans: A Punk Saga**). Last December, his play **Apokalypse!** premiered at convergence-continuum, which had produced **Spawn Of The Petrosexuals** in 2007. His play, **The Mad Mask Maker Of Maigh Eo**, premiered in March 2006 at Cleveland Public Theater and received an Honorable Mention in the Northern Ohio Live Awards of Achievement. His one-act play, **Last Light**, was performed at the West 78th Street Theatre Lab in New York. He has directed at various venues, including The Bang & The Clatter Theatre Co., Charenton Theatre Co., Cleveland Public Theater, Dobama's Night Kitchen, IngenuityFest, Karamu House, Theater Ninjas, and The Ohio Theatre. His new play about a Vietnam veteran, **Semper Fi: Ghosts Of War**, will soon be read at Dobama.



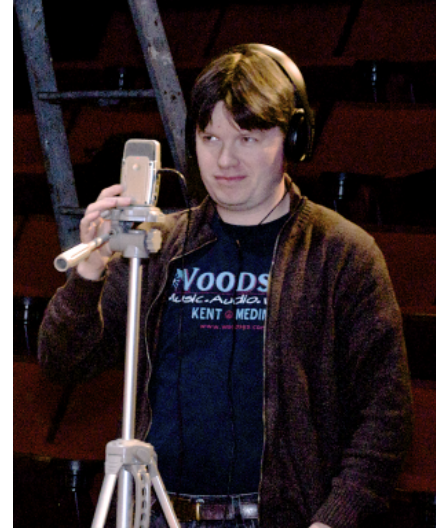


Becky Adams (Stage Manager)





Marcus Dana
Lighting Designer



Richard Ingraham
Sound Designer



Leah Loar
Costume Designer



Rob Peck
Scenic & Properties Designer

Not Pictured
Dave Tilk - Technical Director

Thank You !

I would like to thank friends, family and loved ones for their inspiration and support in doing what I've always loved. It is with their backing that I'm able to embrace and enjoy the creative process.

Many thanks go out to the Doboma Theater of Cleveland Heights and their staff of Artistic Director, Joel Hammer; Associate Artistic Director, Dianne Boduszek and Managing Director, Charlotta Enflo.

Thank you very much to the cast and crew of The Mighty Scarabs! Despite my best and stealthy methods of capturing growth of the performance, I know it can feel intrusive as you bring the play to life. You have all been very gracious and kind in welcoming me into of your thespian family.

A special thanks to Coach Cal and my friend Chris! Only people of true artistic vision would understand and allow me to explore this idea with... your baby!

~ Albert (Al) Bell



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