



VOODOO MACBETH

USC School
of Cinematic Arts

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY



HARLEM, NEW YORK. 1936.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

20-YEAR-OLD

ORSON WELLES

DIRECTS

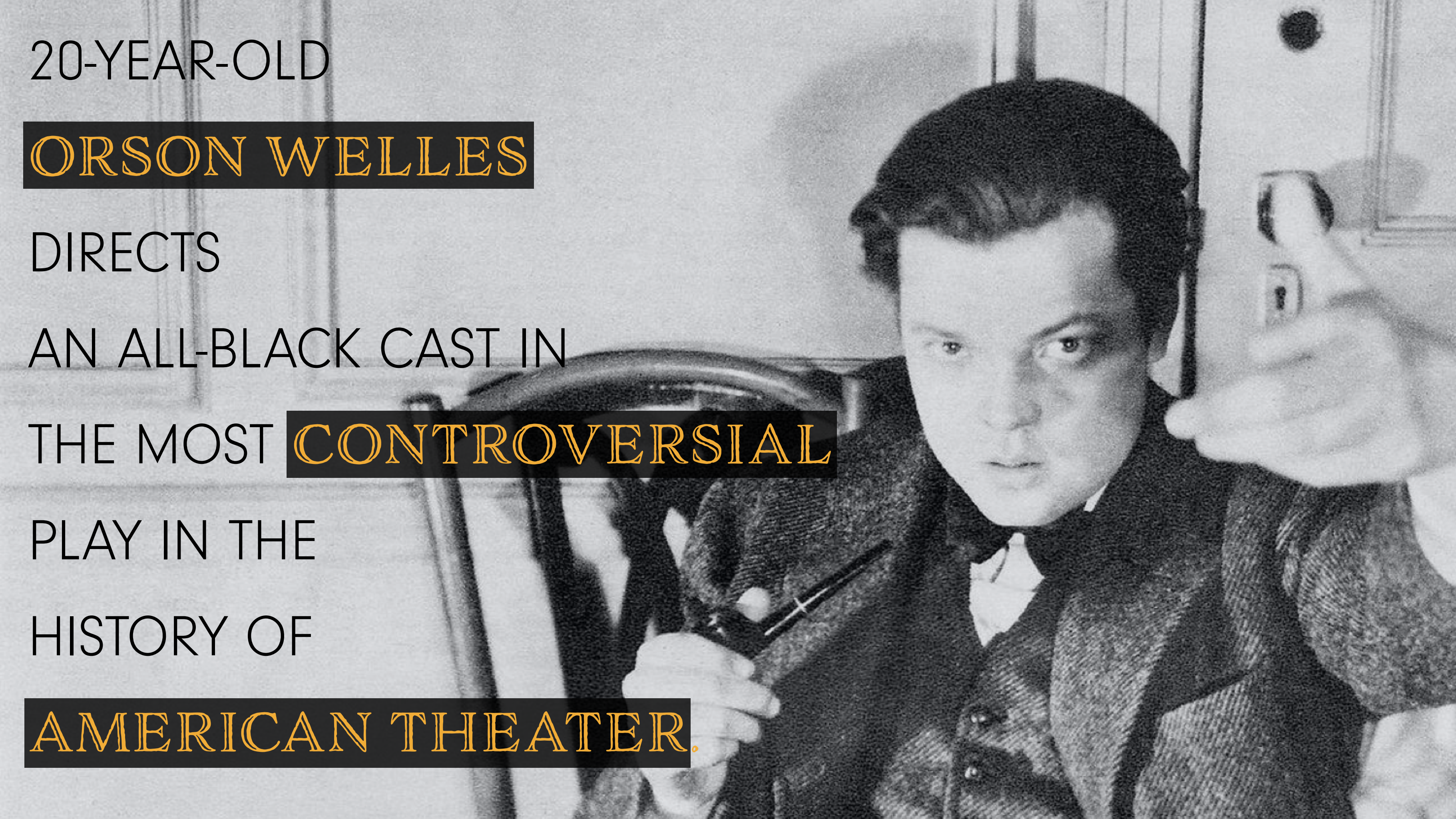
AN ALL-BLACK CAST IN

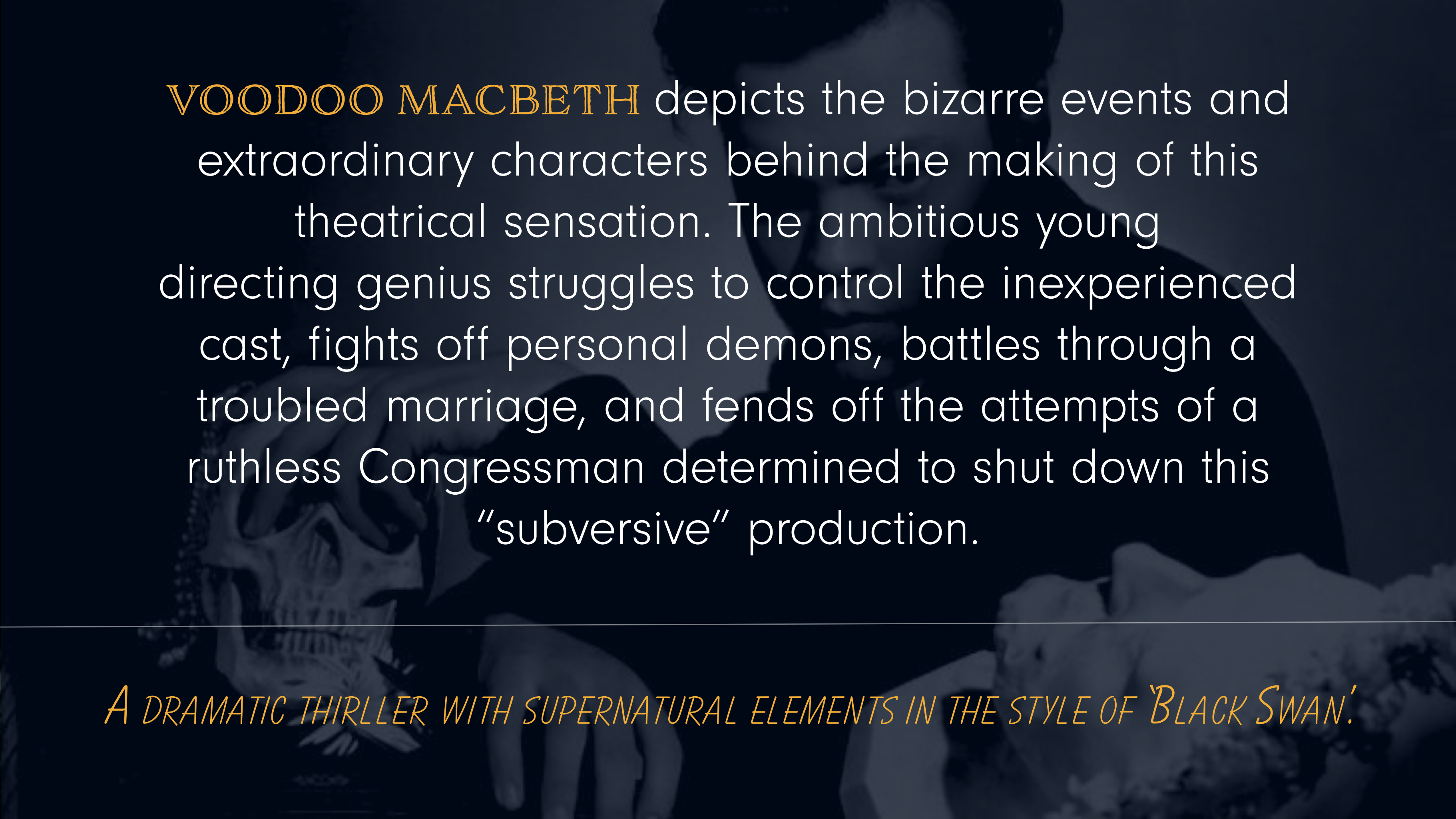
THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL

PLAY IN THE

HISTORY OF

AMERICAN THEATER.





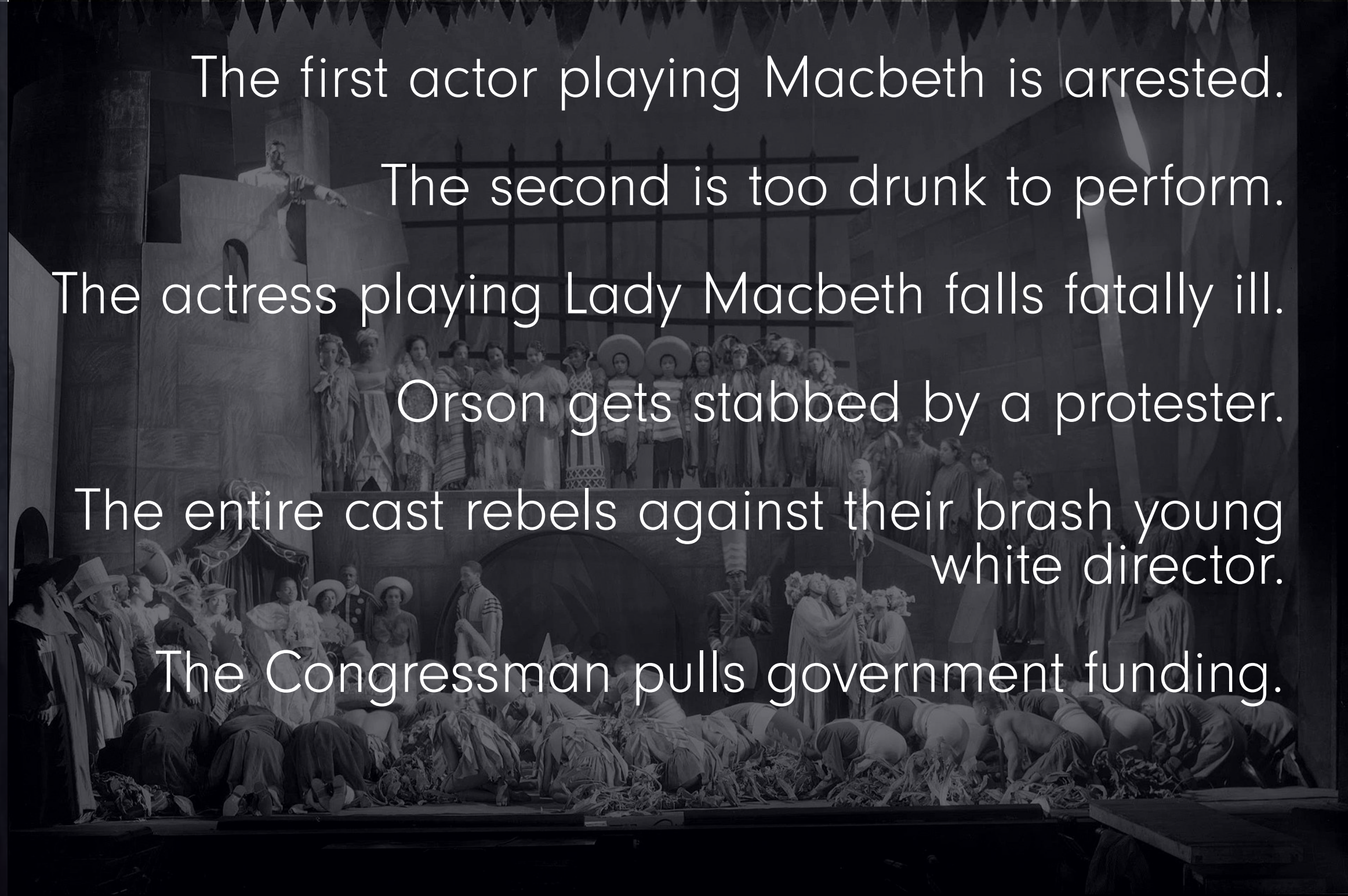
VOODOO MACBETH depicts the bizarre events and extraordinary characters behind the making of this theatrical sensation. The ambitious young directing genius struggles to control the inexperienced cast, fights off personal demons, battles through a troubled marriage, and fends off the attempts of a ruthless Congressman determined to shut down this “subversive” production.

A DRAMATIC THRILLER WITH SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN THE STYLE OF 'BLACK SWAN'.

THE PLAY APPEARS DOOMED BY
"THE CURSE OF
MACBETH."



The first actor playing Macbeth is arrested.
The second is too drunk to perform.
The actress playing Lady Macbeth falls fatally ill.
Orson gets stabbed by a protester.
The entire cast rebels against their brash young
white director.
The Congressman pulls government funding.



WHATEVER CAN GO WRONG,
DOES GO WRONG.



MACBETH

Yet against all odds ...
The play becomes the talk of New York City.
The theatrical sensation of the year.



Staged as part of the government-funded Federal Theater Project, the production becomes known as **VOODOO MACBETH**.

Director Welles moves the setting from Scotland to Haiti, and changes the witches in the play to voodoo priestesses.

The film weaves together scenes from the extravagant and flamboyant dramatic event with the stranger-than-fiction real-life drama behind the scenes.

Fight scenes and love stories, both on and off stage. Riots and protests.
**SUPERSTITION. AMBITION. MURDER. HEARTBREAKING
LOSS. ULTIMATE TRIUMPH.**

THE PROCESS

The film is the product of a **COLLABORATIVE WRITER'S ROOM**, selected from within the student body of the University of Southern California's renowned School of Cinematic Arts.

Principal photography will occur in the **SPRING 2019**, with directors selected from a rigorous application process within the film school, along with an all-professional crew made up of accomplished USC alumni.



THE WRITERS



AGAZI DESTA

Agazi Desta is a first generation Ethiopian-American filmmaker from the city of Boston. Coming from a humble background, he has an innate interest in drawing vision from the communities that surround him. As a published author and recently award winning director, he derives his passion in filmmaking from a literary discipline, gaining inspiration for film in the genres of drama, satire, and dark fantasy. He started his filmmaking career by creating short dramatic narratives. He has transcended his love for art to the global realm of humanities, sustaining an interest in the religious philosophy, politics, and historical narrative of the East African/Middle Eastern diaspora.

JENNIFER FRAZIN

Southern California native Jennifer Frazin is a lifelong writer, reader, and tea enthusiast. After receiving her B.A. in Cinema and Media Studies in 2013, she returned to the USC School of Cinematic Arts as an MFA candidate in the John Wells Division of Writing for Screen and Television. During her time at USC, Jennifer has co-written feature adaptations of *THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER* and *THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO*, both of which are slated for release in 2018.



THE WRITERS



MORGAN MILENDER

Morgan Milender is an undergraduate senior English major and Cinematic Arts minor at the University of Southern California. Her love of both Shakespeare and film attracted her to this project. Though she has always aspired to be a screenwriter, her passion for the craft intensified last year when her short film script was selected for production in the School of Cinematic Art's undergraduate senior thesis class. She hails from Foxborough, Massachusetts.

MOLLY ANNE MILLER

Molly Anne Miller is a queer dramedy writer from the forests of Woodinville, Washington. After graduating from the University of Chicago with a degree in Theatre, she wrote plays for the Mission Theatre and The Public House, including the award winning musical, TRIBULATION, which was performed at the NYC International Fringe Festival. Since transitioning to screenwriting and attending the University of Southern California, Molly has written several LGBTQ-centric scripts, earning her the Edward Small Award and the Annenberg Fellowship.



THE WRITERS

AMRI RIGBY

Amri Rigby is a 2018 Sundance Ignite Fellow originally from Decatur, Georgia. He is currently a senior at the University of Southern California's Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy majoring in Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation. After discovering his passion for narrative storytelling, Amri started writing and directing films. Amri was also recently selected as 1 of 48 filmmakers around the world for a film workshop in Peru to create a short film under the guidance of Werner Herzog.



JOEL DAVID SANTNER

Joel David Santner has written and directed several short films and one feature, BARE KNUCKLE. His feature script, TUNNEL RAT, was a Quarterfinalist for the Academy Nicholl Fellowship and The Coffin Club, is currently featured in Top Lists on The Black List script-hosting site. Joel is a recipient of the 2017 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Production Grant for his project, HANGER'S LIMB. He's finishing his MFA at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts.



THE WRITERS



ERICA C. SUTHERLIN

Erica C. Sutherlin is an emerging filmmaker and producer with feature film directing experience. She is entering her second year of graduate school at the University of Southern California, majoring in Film Production with a focus in Directing & Writing. Ms. Sutherlin is an emerging filmmaker, theatrical director (stage), actress, screenwriter and arts educator who has performed and taught nationally and internationally. She received her B.A. in Theater Performance from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and has performed in the Arts & Entertainment field for over eighteen years.

THE DIRECTORS



DAG ABEBE

Dag Abebe immigrated to the United States from Ethiopia at the age of 10 and grew up in Virginia. There, he attended the University of Virginia where he majored in physics and minored in film studies. Whether it's telling made-up stories to his friends in kindergarten or writing short and feature film screenplays during his undergraduate years, he has always found a way to present his perspective to the outside world. His interest is in directing historical fiction, sci-fi, and drama films with the hopes of bringing untold minority stories to the big screen. Dag is a recipient of the 2018 Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Production grant for his script, "The Ball Method" and is currently finishing his third and final year at the USC Film and TV Production MFA Program with focus on Editing and Directing.

VICTOR ALONSO-BERBEL

Victor Alonso-Berbel (Barcelona, 1993) is a Spanish filmmaker currently based in Los Angeles. After graduating from Pompeu Fabra University and UCLA, he's currently a Lionsgate/Televisa Scholar in the Film Production MFA at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. He has most recently been recognized with the Jury Award for Latino Directors at the Student Film Awards of the DGA. In 2016 he directed the feature documentary "The Brave Class", an analysis of the political impact of language that was theatrically released in Spain. That same year he was featured by Variety as one of the upcoming Catalan filmmakers, and after a nomination for Best Documentary at the Catalan Film Academy Awards, he became a voting member of the European Film Academy.



THE DIRECTORS

HANNAH BANG

Hannah Bang is a filmmaker from South Korea and a current MFA student at the Film and Television Production Program at USC. She has an immense passion for writing, directing and cinematography. Before coming to Los Angeles, she worked as a freelance photographer and video artist in New York after having graduated from The School of Art in Cooper Union with a full scholarship. She has worked as an assistant to independent film directors both in the U.S. as well as South Korea, and was also a digital technician at Griffin Editions where she handled the works of clients such as Cindy Sherman, Jerry Schatzberg, and James Casebere.



CHRISTOPHER BEATON

Christopher Beaton is a screenwriter and director from San Diego, CA. After graduating from the USC School of Dramatic Arts, he starred-in and co-wrote the feature film Pretty Perfect. His feature, Portraits of Monsters and Men was featured in Top Lists on the Black List script-hosting site and his pilot, Prince of Vice, is currently a semi-finalist in the Final Draft - Big Break Screenplay Competition. Christopher is currently an MFA Candidate at USC's School of Cinematic Arts - where he'll graduate in 2019.



THE DIRECTORS

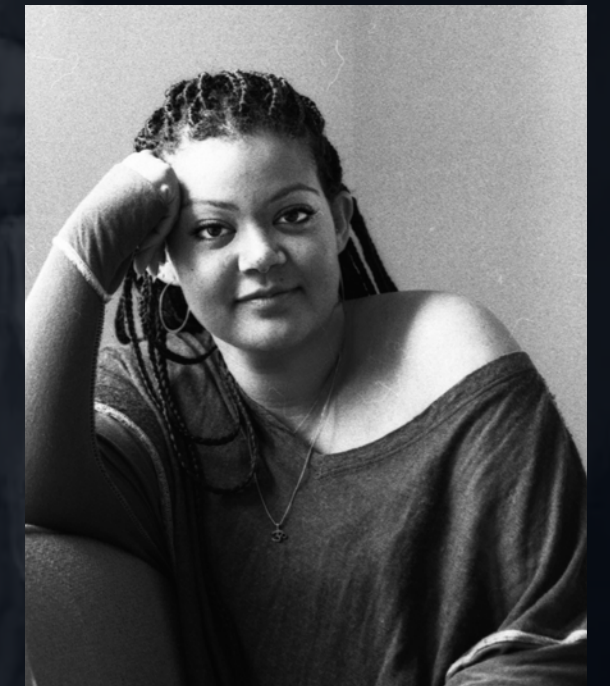


TIFFANY KONTOYIANNIS

Tiffany Kontoyiannis is a Latina writer, director, and filmmaker. She is a published playwright and is currently in her final year at the USC School of Cinematic Arts MFA program. Her most recent films have been at festivals such as LA Shorts, Athena Film Festival, Cannes Short Film Corner, Hollywood International Moving Pictures Film Festival, and Women's Only Entertainment. Tiffany is also known for her anti-bullying work and organization. Tiffany wrote and directed "The Cycle," a play that demonstrates the effects of bullying. At a young age she was touring South Florida with her cast to showcase her play. Keeping this passion in mind, Tiffany began creating films that brought inspiring, engaging and important topics to light. Her most recent projects have been devoted to telling Latin stories in hopes of further diversifying the industry.

ZOË ALYCE SALNAVE

Originally from the East Bay Area, Zoë Alyce Salnave has worked in film and creative writing since she was 14 years old. Her passion for filmmaking grew as a young documentarian producing narratives rooted in issues of diversity, community, sustainable living, and urban rehabilitation. In 2010, Salnave won a Resolution Award from the State of California by Senators Loni Hancock and Nancy Skinner for her work in documentary film and was honored with a private screening for the Obama family at the White House later that year. She is currently in her final year at the USC School of Cinematic Arts doing a MFA in Film and Television Production. Zoë is dedicated to storytelling that is diverse, inclusive, and progressive, using her experience and education surrounding cultural studies and poetic storytelling.



THE DIRECTORS

ROY ARWAS

Roy Arwas is a British-Israeli filmmaker who has been acknowledged for his work in over twenty festivals, including LA Shorts and Short of the Week. He won awards such as Boston International Kids Film Festival's Best Short, and Best of Fest at the Snake Alley Film Festival. Roy received his Bachelors in Film Production at the Art Institute of California - Los Angeles. In undergrad, he co-founded an independent production company which focused on new-media content. One of his most notable videos was Gym Wildlife which received over 2 million views within the first two days of release. Since his arrival to USC, Roy has focused on screenwriting and directing, working to create dramatic, inspiring, raw, and engaging stories.



AGAZI DESTA

Agazi Desta is a first generation Ethiopian-American filmmaker from the city of Boston. Coming from a humble background, he has an innate interest in drawing vision from the communities that surround him. As a published author and recently award winning director, he derives his passion in filmmaking from a literary discipline, gaining inspiration for film in the genres of drama, satire, and dark fantasy. He started his filmmaking career by creating short dramatic narratives. He has transcended his love for art to the global realm of humanities, sustaining an interest in the religious philosophy, politics, and historical narrative of the East African/Middle Eastern diaspora.



THE DIRECTORS



SABINA VAJRAČA

Originally from Bosnia, Sabina Vajrača immigrated to the U.S. as a war refugee. She started her professional life in NYC theatre, writing and directing plays at various venues, including The Lincoln Center. In 2005 she made an award-winning feature documentary BACK TO BOSNIA (AFI Fest), followed by numerous short films, commercials and music videos. Sabina received the Annenberg Fellowship as part of her MFA degree at USC, and was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan production grant for her short VARIABLES. Her other passions include practicing philosophy, and dancing to the 1920s tunes at underground vintage parties. In full vintage attire, of course.

ERNESTO M. SANDOVAL

Ernesto M. Sandoval is a Mexican-American writer and director from the San Fernando Valley, specifically Sylmar, CA. As a child, he lived in a poor town in Mexico for a small period of time. When he returned to the United States, the experience of living in poverty shaped his identity, learned the true value of family, and drove his determination to become a storyteller. At a young age, he won a prestigious writing award from the Lee Strasburg Theater and Film Institute. He graduated from UCLA School of Theatre, Film, and Television with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theater. He is currently attending the University of Southern California where he's working on his Master of Fine Arts in Film Production.



THE PRODUCERS

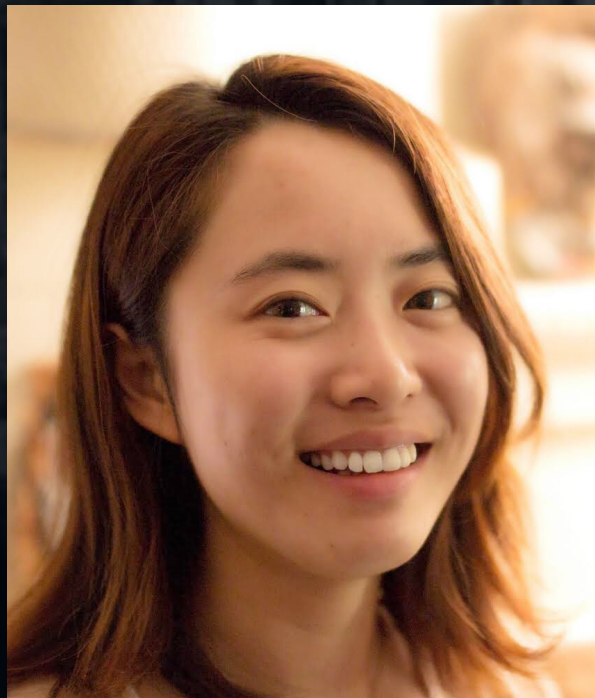
JASON PHILLIPS

Originating as a triplet from San Diego, Jason Phillips graduated from USC in May 2018 with a Film and Television Production BFA. In August 2018, Jason was featured in The Hollywood Reporter's article "Hollywood Needs Us". He has won awards at festivals such as the Los Angeles International Film Festival, SCAD Savannah Film Festival, NFFTY, and American Pavilion Emerging Filmmakers Showcase at Cannes Film Festival. Jason has also interned at companies such as Revelations Entertainment, LA Publicity, BoulderLight Pictures, and Lionsgate. At USC, he received the Malcolm and Berman Family Fund Scholarship for undergraduate producers. From working on an LGBT Western Romantic Comedy to an Alternate Present Drama, Jason loves to challenge himself to create new cinematic worlds and collaborate with others.



XIAOYUAN (IVY) XIAO

Xiaoyuan is an international student from China studying Film and TV production at the University of Southern California. In 2009, Xiao came to the United States as a foreign exchange student at Elkhart Memorial High School. Later she double majored in Studio art and Film&TV production at Indiana University Bloomington and received her BA degrees. After graduate, Xiao continued majoring in Film and TV production at USC for her MFA degree. Xiaoyuan has worked with various student film productions with a concentration on producing and some films she had produced/directed had been selected for several film festivals including the 68th Berlin International Film Festival 2018; NBCUniversal 2017; Newport Beach Film Festival 2016; London Independent Film Awards, 2016.



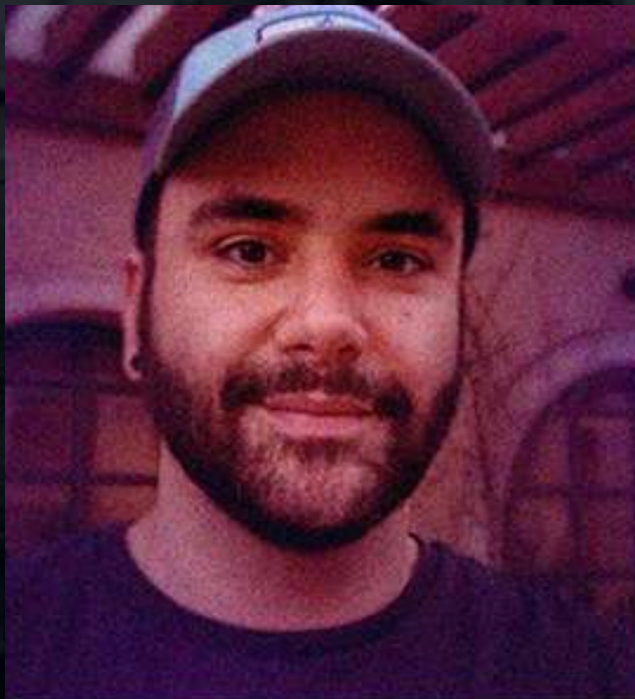
THE PRODUCERS

MILES ALVA

Miles Alva is a first-generation Latino from Los Angeles, California. His feature and short films have been exhibited across the world, at such venues as the Hammer Museum at UCLA, the Writer's Guild of America, and the Vancouver Film Festival. Most recently he produced a short film Variables, which received the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Grant. A recipient of multiple awards, including Lionsgate and Televisa Student Award, the Cossette Award and the NATO Scholarship, Miles aims to make films dealing with marginalized groups in so-ciety, especially pertaining to the people of Los Angeles in the communities less known.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



BASH ACHKAR

Bash Achkar was born to a traditional Lebanese family in Beirut, Lebanon. War was a key player in his country. His family was constantly on the move, fleeing death and persecution. Before moving to the United States in 2015, Bash graduated with a BA in film and television production from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts. He worked for five years in experimental theater as a stage manager and director. Bash graduated from the cinematography and directing tracks of the USC School of Cinematic Arts in December of 2018. During his first year, he wrote and directed three short films that shed light on human struggles. He wants to continue to tell stories of love and human resilience.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

MAREN H. JENSEN

Maren H. Jensen was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She earned her B.F.A. from Barnard College of Columbia University as well as studied advanced screenwriting and production design at Prague's Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU). She earned her M.F.A in Film & Television Production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts, where she studied production design and directing. Maren's work as a production designer has been featured in publications, including the May 2018 issue of American Cinematographer magazine, for her work on the film Wyrm (Sundance Official Selection). Maren has a background in fine arts, classical voice, piano, and theater. Her approach to production design begins on a psychological level; she takes the opportunity to explore characters, dive into their psyches, uncover histories, and in turn, discover unique characteristics about them and their surroundings. All of these components, thorough research and the process of working together with a team allow Maren to develop a collective vision of the characters's physical world. This mix of psychological study and physical creation of spaces are what continue to fuel Maren's passion for design and storytelling.



COSTUME DESIGNER



NAOMI WOLFF LACHETER

Naomi designed the costumes for the features Claire In Motion (Lisa Robinson and Annie J. Howell, Co-Writers and Co-Directors. World Premiere SXSW Film Festival 2016) Stones in the Sun (Patricia Benoit, Director. Winner Best Feature, Los Angeles Pan African Film Festival) and Forgetting the Girl (Nate Taylor, Director. Audience Award Winner, SoHo International Film Festival). She has also designed several short films including Churros (Written and Directed by Emilie McDonald and Bruce Smolanoff). Naomi has been the Assistant Costume Designer on many TV series and Motion Pictures, most recently CBS's FBI and CBS's Blue Bloods. Naomi has designed the costumes for dozens of plays and musicals in and around New York City and the Boston area and has assisted on Broadway as well. Naomi has her MFA in Costume Design from Brandeis University and her BA from Queens College. She lives in Washington Heights, New York with her husband Marty.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

MASON GREER

Mason Greer is an Iowa City born, LA residing Director, Assistant Director and Actor. His journey began at a young age where he took to creative writing. By the age of 14 he wrote his first fiction novel and by 16 he had it published. That same year his novel was turned into a curriculum option for the Minority Literature section under the Language Arts High School course. While attending University he received multiple film festival awards and recognitions for his short films and even a publication in the New York Times for his mini documentary about racial injustices on college campuses. He was then invited to speak to a national podcast about his work and became an advocate for social justice around campus. Mason's work has landed him multiple film festival awards with in the US and Canada as well as a distribution deal to be included in an anthology series. Voodoo Macbeth would mark Mason's third feature film as an AD with two more films lined up right after the films wrap. Mason has dealt with films involving over a hundred extras for a battle scene set during the Haitian Revolution as well as a horror comedy with multiple on screen deaths and fight choreography.



CASTING DIRECTOR



TRACY 'TWINKIE' BYRD

Tracy 'Twinkie' Byrd is a Hollywood Casting Director, Producer and Owner of In The Twink Of an Eye Productions. She finds talent, and guide it, finding the Best Global Story Tellers to create visual art. Her purpose is to influence perception around the world with a passion to empower, encourage and uplift others. She has collaborated with major studios including Fox Searchlight, Sony/Screen Gems, Lifetime TV, BET, CodeBlack/LionsGate and I.M. Global. Directors and Producers such as Ryan Coogler (Creed), Mara Brock Akil (Being Mary Jane) and Debra Martin Chase (Sparkle). She is proud to have helped discover new talents like Michael B Jordan, Parker Sawyers, Tika Sumpter, Omari Hardwick and Gina Rodriguez and collaborated on fine films and TV series like Being Mary Jane, Southside with You, Fruitvale Station, Notorious and Stomp The Yard. She has created and shifted perception and awareness on specific topics in our country and around the world. From the Black Lives Matter movement of films like Fruitvale Station & the upcoming short, The Counter: 1960, which she wrote and directed, the teen sex trafficking film Fig and the historic first date of Michelle Robinson & Barack Obama in Southside With You, Twinkie has helped raise consciousness in a troubled world which desperately needs it. Whether that is working on a high-profile film or helping a lost youth to find herself, the marriage of purpose and power helps Twinkie succeed each day.

COMPOSER

JONGNIC “JB” BONTEMPS

Jongnic “JB” Bontemps is a modern film composer, harmonizing a classical education with his rich tech background as a maestro of Silicon Valley to write everything from the hip-hop infused score for the Tribeca-favorite documentary *United Skates*, to rousing additional music for *Creed II*. He’s been the go-to composer for the latter film’s director, Steven Caple Jr., including the score for the coming-of-age drama, *The Land*, where he also produced the song “This Bitter Land” for Nas and Erykah Badu. He has scored dozens of features, documentaries, shorts, and videogames in all genres—fusing a contemporary sound with timeless emotion. Other recent projects include the Toni Braxton-starring drama, *Faith Under Fire*, and the Sundance selection *Leimert Park*, produced by Charles King (*Mudbound*). JB’s scores have echoed at Cannes, the Warsaw Film Festival, Pan African American Film Fest, and American Black Film Fest, and at home on HBO, BET, Lifetime, NBC, Showtime, Netflix, PBS and Disney XD. Born in Brooklyn, JB learned the piano and soaked up his gospel and jazz surroundings. He studied music at Yale, then found himself at the heart of the tech industry as a software developer and entrepreneur (his startup was sold to HP). Eventually he decided to pursue his deeper passion at the film scoring program at USC and the Sundance Film Music Lab. He apprenticed as a programmer for numerous A-list Hollywood composers, before breaking out as a singular solo composer.



PROJECT SUPERVISOR



JOHN WATSON

John Watson holds the Broccoli Endowed Chair for Producing at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. He has produced 12 feature films, including ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES (1991, also co-writer), BACKDRAFT (1991), BLOWN AWAY (1994), and THE DANGEROUS LIVES OF ALTAR BOYS (2002). Watson has executive-produced over 300 hours of television for both network and cable, including seven seasons of THE OUTER LIMITS. He developed the CBS series THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, being the sole showrunner for two seasons.

*A TIMELESS JOURNEY
INTO THE
DARK DEPTHS OF THE
CREATIVE PROCESS.*

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