



December 4, 2024

For Immediate Release

Contact: Steven Padla, Director of Communications / steven.padla@yale.edu

Candi Adams, General Press Representative / candiadamsnyc@gmail.com

Yale Repertory Theatre
presents
EDEN
By Steve Carter
Directed by Brandon J. Dirden
January 16–February 8, 2025

Yale Repertory Theatre (James Bundy, Artistic Director; Florie Seery, Managing Director) will present ***Eden*** by **Steve Carter**, directed by **Brandon J. Dirden**, January 16–February 8, at Yale Repertory Theatre (1120 Chapel Street). Opening Night is Thursday, January 23, which is also press night.

Eden features scenic design by **George Zhou** 周亦款, costume design by **Caroline Tyson**, lighting by **Ankit Pandey**, sound and original music by **Tojo Rasedoara**, projections by **Ein Kim**, hair and wig design by **Krystal Balleza** and **Will Vicari**, dramaturgy by **Austin Riffelmacher** and **Tia Smith**, technical direction by **Nickie Dubick**, fight and intimacy direction by **Michael Rossmly**, vocal and dialect coaching by **Paul Pryce**, casting by **Calleri Jensen Davis**, and stage management by **Hope Ding**.

The cast of ***Eden*** includes **Chaundre Hall-Broomfield**, **Russell G. Jones**, **Juice Mackins**, **Prentiss Patrick-Carter**, **Alicia Pilgrim**, **Christina Acosta Robinson**, **Heather Alicia Simms**, and **Lauren F. Walker**.

About *Eden*

1927, San Juan Hill, a six-block stretch of Manhattan where tensions run deep between its populations of Black Americans and Caribbean immigrants. Eustace, recently transplanted from the South, falls in love with the girl next door, Annetta. But her ironfisted father, Joseph, an ardent Garveyite, has arranged for her to marry another man from the West Indies to protect his bloodline. In Steve Carter's

blistering saga, *Eden*, clashing ideologies and youthful passions threaten dangerous consequences for two families and their community.

Ticket Information and Performance Calendar

Tickets are \$15, and \$35 (all previews), \$15 and \$50 (weeknights), and \$15 and \$65 (weekends and matinees). Student tickets are \$15 for all performances. Tickets are available online at yalerep.org, by calling (203) 432-1234, and in person at the Yale Rep Box Office (1120 Chapel Street).

Thursday, January 16	8PM	Preview
Friday, January 17	8PM	Preview, Post-Show Discussion
Saturday, January 18	8PM	Preview, Post-Show Discussion
Tuesday, January 21	8PM	Preview
Wednesday, January 22	8PM	Preview
Thursday, January 23	8PM	Opening Night
Friday, January 24	8PM	Black Night Out
Saturday, January 25	2PM	
Saturday, January 25	8PM	
Tuesday, January 28	8PM	
Wednesday, January 29	2PM	Pre-performance Discussion
Wednesday, January 29	8PM	
Thursday, January 30	8PM	
Friday, January 31	8PM	
Saturday, February 1	2PM	Touch Tour Audio Description; post-show Talk Back
Saturday, February 1	8PM	ASL
Tuesday, February 4	8PM	
Wednesday, February 5	8PM	
Thursday, February 6	8PM	
Friday, February 7	8PM	Open Captioning in Spanish
Saturday, February 8	2PM	Open Captioning
Saturday, February 8	8PM	

Yale Rep at New Haven Free Public Library

Monday, January 27, 5-7PM
Stetson Branch Library, 197 Dixwell Avenue

Join members of the *Eden* cast and creative team for a community conversation about the production.

The Creative Team

Steve Carter (Playwright) Horace E. “Steve” Carter, Jr. was an American playwright, best known for his trilogy of plays involving Caribbean immigrants living in Manhattan. Mr. Carter received the Living Legend award at the 2001 National Black Theatre Festival. After taking over the position from Lonnie Elder as Director of the Negro Ensemble Company’s (NEC) Playwrights’ Workshop, Steve Carter later became Literary Manager/Dramaturge at NEC. During those years, NEC produced the first two plays of his Caribbean trilogy: *Eden* (1975, winner of an Outer Critics Circle Award, AUDELCO Award, and the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award) and *Nevis Mountain Dew* (1978). He was Victory Gardens Theater’s first playwright-in-residence beginning in 1981, and he also served as playwright-in-residence at George Mason University. Carter’s *Pecong* (winner of the Joseph Jefferson Award for New Work) premiered at Victory Gardens in the 1989–1990 season and received subsequent productions at London’s Tricycle Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and Newark Symphony Hall. His plays *Dame Lorraine*, *House of Shadows*, *Shoot Me While I’m Happy*, *Spiele ’36, or the Fourth Medal*, and *Root Causes* also premiered at Victory Gardens. Mr. Carter died at the age of 90 in 2020.

Brandon J. Dirden (Director) recently appeared on Broadway starring in the Tony Award-winning production of *Take Me Out* and *Skeleton Crew* for which he received a Drama Desk nomination. He also appeared on Broadway as Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Tony Award-winning production of *All the Way*, with Bryan Cranston; as well as in the Tony Award winning revival of August Wilson’s *Jitney*, *Clybourne Park*, *Enron*, and *Prelude to a Kiss*. Off-Broadway, he has appeared in *The Piano Lesson*, for which he won OBIE, Theatre World, and AUDELCO awards; *The First Breeze of Summer*, *Day of Absence* (Signature Theatre); *Detroit ’67* (The Public Theater, Classical Theatre of Harlem); *Peter and the Starcatcher* (New York Theatre Workshop); and as Brutus in *Julius Caesar* (Theatre for a New Audience). On screen he has appeared in *The Good Wife*, *For Life*, *Evil*, *The Big C*, *Public Morals*, *Manifest*, *The Get Down*, *The Accidental Wolf*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Quad*, the FX miniseries *Mrs. America*, and four seasons of FX’s *The Americans* as Agent Dennis Aderholt. He has directed numerous plays by Dominique Morisseau and August Wilson and recently *Wine in the Wilderness* by Alice Childress for Two River Theater. Brandon is an Associate Arts Professor on the faculty of Tisch Grad Acting at NYU; a frequent volunteer at the 52nd Street Project; and a proud member of both Actors’ Equity Association and Fair Wage On Stage.

George Zhou 周亦款 (Scenic Designer) is a third-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama, where his credits include *Cleansed* and *Rent Free*, as well as *Baksa* at Yale Cabaret. He received his bachelor’s degree in set design from the University of the Arts London. yiyangzhou.design

Caroline Tyson (Costume Designer) is a third-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama, where credits include *Pearl’s Beauty Salon* and *Fucking A*. Other costume design credits include *Herencia*, *Arlington*, *The Royale*, *And the Beetle Hums*, and *Marry Me A Little* (Yale Cabaret); *Bat Boy: The Musical* (Weston Drama Workshop); and *Twelfth Night* (The Public Theater Children’s Shakespeare Ensemble). Assistant/associate design credits include productions at The Juilliard School, Cincinnati Opera, Barrington Stage, Berkeley Rep, Wolf Trap Opera, and Lincoln Center Theater. B.A., University of Maryland, Baltimore County. carolinetyson.com

Ankit Pandey (Lighting Designer) is a lighting designer, theater practitioner, and educator originally based in New Delhi, India, and currently a third-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama. They have worked in and designed for a wide gamut of performances

including but not limited to theater, music, dance recitals, films, exhibitions, and installations. Notable among these are *Pearl's Beauty Salon*, *Fucking A*, *The Winter's Tale* (Geffen School); *Dastaan LIVE*, *Table Radica*, *Green Room*, and *Love, Prufrock*. Ankit has also served as the technical and art director for various performing arts festivals. They are also a co-founder of Tech Quartet, a technical design and production company based in New Delhi.

Tojo Rasedoara (Sound Design and Original Music) is a third-year sound designer and M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama. Recent and notable credits include *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone*, *Charlotte*, *Springtime*, *Birthdays Candles*, *Fabulation*, *falcon girls*, *The Light and the Dark* (Chautauqua Theater); *Pearl's Beauty Salon*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, *Ghost*, *Furlough's Paradise* (Geffen School); *Wish You Were Here* (Yale Rep); *Soft Jade* (Yale Cabaret); *OFF-PEAK* (world premiere, Hudson Stage Company, 59E59 Theatre); *Sandblasted* (Vineyard Theatre); *Is There Still Sex in the City?* (Daryl Roth Theatre); *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Duke University); *The Gradient* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); and *Harriet Tubman* (HI-ARTS). Tojo holds a B.A. in entertainment technology from City Tech Brooklyn. He also worked with various New York Fashion Weeks as a production assistant. He would like to thank his sound team and creatives Cat Slanski, Robert Salerno, Kiersten Lamora, Stephanie Smith, Mike Backhaus, Justin Ellington, James Monaco, Jill Du Boff for their incredible support towards the play.

Ein Kim (Projection Designer) is a video artist and a third-year projection design student at David Geffen School of Drama. Hailing from South Korea, she earned her B.F.A. in film from the Korea National University of Arts. Her artistic journey is dedicated to unraveling the universal language of visuals, transcending geographical and linguistic boundaries. Recent theater works include *Gianni Schicchi*, *Seven Deadly Sins*, and *Measure for Measure*. Video installation projects include *Moving Sculpture: Streams*, and *You See What You See*. einkim.com

Krystal Balleza (Hair and Wig Designer) Previously at Yale Rep: *falcon girls*; *the ripple*, *the wave that carried me home*; and *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles*. Opera: Opera Theatre of Saint Louis 2023–24 season. Off-Broadway: *Orlando* (Signature Theatre); *The Connector* (MCC); *Good Bones*, *The Tempest* (The Public Theater); *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *At the Wedding* (Lincoln Center); *Americano!* (New World Stages). Regional: *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Barrington); *Angels in America, Part One* (Arena Stage); *Real Women Have Curves* (ART). Krystal is the Hair and Makeup Department Head at *Six: The Musical* on Broadway. Krystal holds a B.F.A. in Wig and Makeup Design from Webster Conservatory and is co-owner of The Wig Associates with her design partner, Will Vicari. [@thewigassociates](https://www.instagram.com/thewigassociates)

Will Vicari (Hair and Wig Designer) Previously at Yale Rep: *falcon girls*; *the ripple*, *the wave that carried me home*. Broadway: *Yellowface* (Roundabout), *Parade* (2023 revival), *Harmony*, and *Spamalot* (associate wig and makeup design). Opera: Opera Theatre Saint Louis 2023 and 2024 seasons. Off-Broadway: *Orlando* (Signature Theatre); *The Connector* (MCC); *At the Wedding* (Lincoln Center); *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Candida* (Gingold Group). Regional: *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Barrington Stage Company), *Angels in America, Part One* (Arena Stage). Will holds a B.F.A. in Wig and Makeup Design from Webster University and is co-owner of The Wig Associates with his design partner, Krystal Balleza. [@thewigassociates](https://www.instagram.com/thewigassociates)

Austin Riffelmacher *he/him* (Production Dramaturg) is a third-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama, where his credits include *Stray Dogs* by comfort ifeoma katchy, *HELLYOUTALMBOUT* by ML Roberts, and *The Misanthrope* directed by Mary Lou Rosato. At Yale Cabaret, his work includes *The Royale* directed by Lauren F. Walker and his solo performance “A Phantastic Christmas.” Originally from Worcester, Massachusetts, he holds a B.A. in English with a concentration in African American literature and film from Framingham State University. Austin would like to dedicate his work on this production to his father, Donald.

Tia Smith (Production Dramaturg) is a second-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama and the current Robert and Jean Steele Intern at Yale University Art Gallery. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, she authored an award-winning thesis on *Eden* by Steve Carter and nominated the play for Yale Rep’s 2024–25 season. She is a recipient of the Black Theatre Network’s S. Randolph Edmonds Young Scholars Award and the Cody Renard Richard Scholarship. She holds a B.A. in theater studies and African & African American studies from Duke University. She thanks her sister for introducing her to Carter’s work. She is proud to be from the South Side of Chicago.

Nickie Dubick *she/her* (Technical Director) is a second-year M.F.A. candidate in the technical design and production program at David Geffen School of Drama, where her credits include *Ghosts* (properties manager), *Marys Seacole* (assistant production electrician), and *Measure for Measure* (technical director). Her Yale Rep credits include *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* (assistant technical director), *Wish You Were Here* (production electrician), *The Far Country* (properties manager), and *falcon girls* (assistant technical director). Prior to Yale, she earned a B.A. in scenic design from Marymount Manhattan College and worked for The Polar Express Train Ride™ as Décor and Props Supervisor.

Michael Rossmly (Fight and Intimacy Director) is a Resident Fight and Intimacy Director for Yale Rep, a lecturer in acting at David Geffen School of Drama, and Stage Combat and Intimacy Advisor for Yale College. Broadway credits include *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Cymbeline*, and *Superior Donuts*. Regional theater credits include The Public Theater, Roundabout, The Atlantic, Primary Stages, Westport Country Playhouse, Goodspeed Musicals, Paper Mill Playhouse, Asolo Rep, The Old Globe, TheaterWorks Hartford, Princeton University, The Acting Company, Soho Rep, the Geffen Playhouse, Long Wharf Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Kansas City Rep, People’s Light & Theatre, and others. He was nominated for a 2017 Drama Desk Award for his work on *Troilus and Cressida* for The Public Theater’s production in Central Park and a 2024 Barrymore Award nominee for his work on *Bonez* at Peoples Light. His work can also be seen in the upcoming independent film *Floating Carousel*.

Paul Pryce (Vocal and Dialect Coach) Coaching credits include *Playboy of the West Indies* (NYU Grad Acting) and *Play the Devil* (feature film). Off-Broadway: *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice* (Compagnia de Colombari); *Pecong* (National Black Theatre of Harlem); *She Talks to Beethoven* (JACK!); *Harry the Hunk* (Cherry Lane Theatre); *Empire State Works* (Whitney Museum). Regional: *Create Dangerously* (Miami New Drama); *Hamlet*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Good Goods*,

American Night: The Ballad of Juan Jose (Yale Rep); *Julius Caesar, Pericles* (Elm Shakespeare). International: *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (Compagnia de Colombari, Italy); *Silence and Fear* (Lieux Dits, France); *Smile Orange* (Scarlett Project, Trinidad and Tobago). Film and television: *Jessica Jones, Narco Saints* (Netflix); *Unforgettable* (CBS/A+E). Directing and producing: *Constellations, Five Times in One Night, Almost Maine* (HB Playwrights); *Nina Goes to New York, Mary Jane* (Korea). Education: M.F.A. in acting, David Geffen School of Drama.

Calleri Jensen Davis (Casting Director) is a creative casting partnership among James Calleri, Erica Jensen, and Paul Davis of over 20 years. They began their collaboration with Yale Rep in 2023 with *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* and *the ripple, the wave that carried me home*. Broadway credits: *The Piano Lesson, Topdog/Underdog, for colored girls..., Thoughts of a Colored Man, Burn This, Fool for Love, The Elephant Man, Hedwig and the Angry Inch, Of Mice and Men, Venus in Fur, A Raisin in the Sun, 33 Variations*. Television: *Love Life, Queens, Dickinson*, and *The Path*, to name a few. callerijensendavis.com

Hope Binfeng Ding she/her (Stage Manager) is in her final year as an M.F.A. candidate in stage management at David Geffen School of Drama, originally from Shenzhen, China. Selected theatrical credits include *falcon girls, The Far Country* (Yale Rep); *Romeo and Juliet* (NAATCO); *Aubergine* (South Coast Rep); *Sleep No More* Shanghai; *Eye of the Storm Stunt Spectacular* (Disney Shanghai). B.A., UC San Diego. All my love and gratitude to family and friends.

The Cast

Chaundre Hall-Broomfield (Eustace Baylor) is a Newburgh, New York, native with a B.F.A. in acting from SUNY Purchase. He is so excited to be making his Yale Rep debut, working in such a powerful play and being directed by the great Brandon Dirden. His previous theater credits include the first national tour of *Hamilton, Pipeline* at Lincoln Center (understudy), *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Guthrie Theater, and *Covenant* at the Roundabout Theatre. Film and television credits include Netflix's *Luke Cage* and *R&B, FBI, Law & Order*, and BET's *Kingdom Business*. As a first-generation Jamaican American citizen, he's so excited to tell this story! Special shout out to mom and dad! I love you! Romans 8:28.

Russell G. Jones (Mr. Joseph Barton) is an AUDELCO, OBIE, and SAG Award-winning actor who has worn many theater maker hats as a fixture on New York City stages since the mid-90s. Russell proudly originated roles in plays by Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Tanya Barfield, Fernanda Coppel, Kirk Wood Bromley, and Stephen Adly Guirgis. On TV, he was a series regular opposite Edie Falco in CBS' *Tommy* and recurred on Steven Soderbergh's *Full Circle* for Max, *Only Murders in the Building* for Hulu, and *Godless* for Netflix. Russell founded BLND SPOT EXPERIENCE and facilitates cross-cultural dialogue and critical thinking by providing tools and context for perceiving racial inequity.

Juice Mackins (Nimrod Barton) is a second-year M.F.A. candidate at David Geffen School of Drama, an alum of Fordham University's theater program, and a Debbie Allen Dance Academy baby, studying with and under her in various forms of dance and artistic ventures she's shared.

His stage credits include *Come Fall in Love—The DDLJ Musical* directed by Aditya Chopra, at the Old Globe; the tour of *Brothers of The Knight* directed by Debbie Allen; and the Broadway musical *The Prom*, directed by Casey Nicholaw; as well as work in concert and commercial dance. Television appearances include *Shook*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Blue Bloods*, among others. Juice would like to thank his family and friends who've taken time to generously pour into him as it led to him making his Yale Rep debut.

Prentiss Patrick-Carter (Solomon Barton) *he/him* is thrilled to be making his professional debut at Yale Rep! Prentiss is a junior at Yale University studying theater and African American studies. He also performs improv, sketch comedy, and stand-up on the side. Recent credits at Yale include *Legally Blonde*, *The Colored Museum*, *Moon Man Walk*, and *Hamlet*. Training: British American Drama Academy (MIO 2023). He's incredibly grateful to his teachers, mentors, friends, and family for their wisdom and support.

Alicia Pilgrim (Agnes Barton) is a vibrant actor, writer, producer, and sound curator, originally from Washington, DC, now based in Brooklyn, New York. With an unwavering passion for authentic storytelling and fostering community, Alicia brings depth and heart to every project. She captivated audiences with her performance in *cullud wattah* at The Public Theater, earning Tony and AUDELCO Award nominations. Alicia can be seen playing Najja in HBO Max's Peabody Award-winning *Random Acts of Flyness* (S2) and in the Sundance-winning *A Thousand and One*, continuing to break new ground. With her solo piece, *me vs. ME {a self actualizing ritual}*, she challenges creative, personal, spiritual, and social boundaries. Alicia is grateful to her mother, siblings, and community for their continued grace and love. @atribecalledalicia

Christina Acosta Robinson (Florie Barton) Happy to return to Yale Rep and David Geffen School of Drama at Yale, which is, in a way, my artistic Eden—where I was first loved, formed, and embraced as an actor. Broadway: The Godmother in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Bad Cinderella* and *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*. Regional favorites include Glinda in *The Wiz* and Dorothy Brock in *42nd Street* at Broadway Sacramento; Shug Avery in *The Color Purple* at Broadway Sacramento and Milwaukee Rep; Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Guthrie Theater; Erzulie in *Once on this Island* at Cincinnati Playhouse; Vera in *Seven Guitars* at Two River Theater. I love you Ken, Mari, Bennie, and Trace.

Heather Alicia Simms (Lizzie Harris) appeared in the Broadway hit *Purlie Victorious*. Other Broadway credits include *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *A Raisin in the Sun*. Off-Broadway: *Fairview* (Soho Rep/Theatre for a New Audience); *Fabulation* and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (OBIE Award, Signature Theatre); *Barbecue* (The Public Theater); *born bad* (Soho Rep), and *Richard III* (New York Stage and Film). She previously appeared at Yale Rep in Kia Corthron's *Breath, Boom*. Television: *The Kings of Napa*, *Swarm*, *Marvel's Luke Cage*, *The Equalizer*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Last O.G.*, *Broad City*, *Seven Seconds*, and *Law & Order*. Film: *Vampires vs. the Bronx*, *Red Hook Summer*, *The Nanny Diaries*, and *Broken Flowers*. Awards: Fox Foundation Fellowship, Audie Award. Education: Tufts University, Columbia University.

Lauren F. Walker (Annetta Barton) is a third-year actor at David Geffen School of Drama, where her credits include *Cactus Queen*, *Cleansed*, *The Alley*, and the original production of *Furlough's Paradise*. As an artist who is dedicated to telling stories that make space for healing and the complexities of humanity, Lauren is honored to uplift this story. Lauren's previous credits include *Charmed* (MCC), *cullud wattah* (The Public Theater), *That Damn Michael Che* (HBO), and *Bad Monkey* (Apple TV+). Lauren would like to send a special thank you to God, her family, and her support system here at Yale. LaurenFWalker.com | @lovevolz

ABOUT YALE REPERTORY THEATRE

Yale Repertory Theatre, the internationally celebrated professional theatre in residence at David Geffen School of Drama, has championed new work since 1966, producing well over 100 premieres—including two Pulitzer Prize winners and four other nominated finalists—by emerging and established playwrights. Seventeen Yale Rep productions have advanced to Broadway, garnering more than 40 Tony Award nominations and ten Tony Awards. Yale Rep is also the recipient of the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Established in 2008, Yale's **Binger Center for New Theatre** has distinguished itself as one of the nation's most robust and innovative new play programs. To date, the Binger Center has supported the work of more than 70 commissioned artists and underwritten the world premieres and subsequent productions of nearly 40 new plays and musicals at Yale Rep and theaters across the country—including this season's *falcon girls* by Hilary Bettis; Nikolai Gogol's *The Inspector*, newly adapted by Yura Kordonsky; and *Notes on Killing Seven Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Board Members* by Mara Veléz Meléndez.

Yale Repertory Theatre is supported by CT Humanities, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

###