

CHESTER
THEATRE
COMPANY

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July 5, 2017
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**CHESTER THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS THE NEW ENGLAND PREMIERE OF
DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU'S SKELETON CREW**

The Third Installment of the Playwright's Detroit Trilogy Runs July 13 – 23

Chester, MA – Chester Theatre Company (CTC) is proud to present Dominique Morisseau's *Skeleton Crew* in the historic Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA, from July 13 - 23, 2017. The production is directed by Awoye Timpo, making her CTC directorial debut.

In this "deeply moral and deeply American play" (*The New York Times*), Reggie has worked his way up to supervisor at a faltering auto factory. Now he has to decide whether he owes his loyalty to himself, to his bosses, or to long-time family friend Faye and the younger workers on the line, Dez and Shanita. In the spirit of August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, this third play from Morisseau's Detroit Trilogy explores the hard choices facing Americans barely squeezing by. It was named by the *New York Times* as "one of six plays that reckon with an anxious America."

Of the experience of directing *Skeleton Crew*, Awoye Timpo says, "All of us are so honored to be here in Chester working on this extraordinary play by Dominique Morisseau. She is a brilliant playwright with a vibrant and honest voice that she uses to craft nuanced and real characters with a tremendous desire for survival. She has so exceptionally captured the heart of the American worker - people with tremendous pride in the work they do and striving to hold on to a way of life that is under threat. The play really questions how all of us can fulfill the promises and confront the fallacies of the American dream."

The artistic team of *Skeleton Crew* includes:

Ami Brabson (Faye) is known to audiences through her many television appearances, including roles on *Homicide: Life on the Street*, *Law and Order*, *Law and Order SVU*, *Damages*, and more. She has appeared Off Broadway in *Tough Titty* (directed by **Awoye Timpo**) and *Way of the World* at The Public. She has appeared in several works by August Wilson including *Fences* (Pittsburgh Public), *The Piano Lesson* (Syracuse Stage), and *Two Trains Running* (Center Stage.) She holds an MFA from NYU's Graduate Acting Program.

Christian Henley (Dez) is a graduate of Morehouse College and holds an MFA from the USC School of Dramatic Arts. He has appeared in *Native Guard* (Alliance Theatre); *All the Way* (South Coast Rep);

Concrete Orange (Guthrie Theatre); *Honky* (Rouge Machine Theatre); and *Threepenny Opera, Twilight Los Angeles: 1992, The Orestia Project, As You Like It, and The American Clock* (USC.) Christian has studied at Shanghai University and speaks Mandarin.

Margaret Odette (Shanita) is a native New Yorker and newly minted MFA actor from NYU's Graduate Acting Program, where roles included Mattie (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*), Elmire (*Tartuffe*), Casca/Calpurnia (*Julius Caesar*), and Varya/Dunyasha (*The Cherry Orchard*). NY credits: *Figaro* (The Pearl), *She Kills Monsters* (World Premiere, The Flea/Vampire Cowboys), *The Electric Lighthouse* (The Flea), *Out of Joint* (The Lark), *Butterfly, Butterfly, Kill Kill Kill!* (NY Fringe). Regional: *A Raisin in the Sun, The House That Will Not Stand, Good People, The Bluest Eye*. Film: Leslye Headland's *Sleeping with Other People*.

Daniel Morgan Shelley (Reggie) was last seen at Hartford Stage in August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*. Other credits include *Devil Music* (EST One-Act Marathon); *Hamlet* (Classic Stage Company); *Romeo & Juliet, King Lear, The Three Musketeers, and Love's Labors Lost* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival); *Romeo & Juliet* (Classical Theatre of Harlem); *Safe House* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis); and *Clybourne Park* (Geva & Cleveland Playhouse). Mr. Shelley originated roles in the world premieres of *The Insurgents* (Contemporary American Theatre Festival), *Find & Sign* (Pioneer Theatre Company), and *The Man Who Ate Michael Rockefeller* (ArcLight). TV: *Mr. Robot, Bull, Person of Interest, Law & Order, Blue Bloods, and Law & Order SVU*. FILM: *Sidney Hall*. Training: Juilliard.

Awoye Timpo's directorial credits include *Sister Son/ji* (Billie Holiday Theater), *Carnaval* (National Black Theatre), *Ndebele Funeral* (59E59; South African tour; Edinburgh Festival), *The Libation Bearers* (Shakespeare Theatre NJ), *Chasing the Bird* (Joyce Theater), *Children of the Road* (NYU Grad Acting), *In the Continuum* (Juilliard), *Tears of Anatolia* (Columbia), *Araby* (La Mama), *Clybourne Park* (Farmers Alley), *Ruined* (WMU), *The Vanished* (Novisi, sitespecific), *Rhinoceros* (Novisi), *Feast* (Segal Center). Broadway: Assistant Director, *Shuffle Along*; Associate Director, *Jitney*. PEN World Voices, Other: Page 73, TerraNOVA, Ma-Yi, PEN World Voices, Royal Shakespeare Company, WNYC, ABC/Disney, Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab, Cherry Lane Mentor Project, Lincoln Center Directors Lab.

Dominique Morisseau, writer and actress, is an alumnus of the Public Theater Emerging Writer's Group, the Women's Project Playwrights Lab, and Lark Playwrights' Workshop. Her new work, *Pipeline*, is currently in previews at the Newhouse Theatre at Lincoln Center, opening July 10. Among her other playwriting credits are: *Detroit '67* (Public Theater; Classical Theatre of Harlem/NBT; Northlight Theatre), *Sunset Baby* (Labyrinth Theater Co – NYC; Gate Theater- London), and *Follow Me To Nellie's* (O'Neill; Premiere Stages). Her produced one-acts include: *Third Grade* (Fire This Time Festival); *Black at Michigan* (Cherry Lane); *Socks, Roses Are Played Out* and *Love and Nappiness* (Center Stage; ATH); *love.lies.liberation* (The NewGroup), *Bumrush* (Hip Hop Theater Festival) and *The Masterpiece*(Harlem9/HSA). Dominique is currently developing a 3-play cycle on her hometown of Detroit, entitled "The Detroit Projects." *Detroit '67* is the first of the series. The second play, *Paradise Blue*, was developed with Voice and Vision, the Hansberry Project at ACT, New York Theatre Workshop, McCarter Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and the Public Theater. Dominique's work has also been published in NY Times bestseller "Chicken Soup for the African American Soul" and in the Harlem-

based literary journal “Signifyin’ Harlem.” She is a Jane Chambers Playwriting Award honoree, a two-time NAACP Image Award recipient, a runner-up for the Princess Grace Award, a recipient of the Elizabeth George commission from South Coast Rep, a commendation honoree for the Primus Prize by the American Theatre Critics Association, winner of the Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwriting Award, the Weissberger Award for Playwriting, the U of M – Detroit Center Emerging Leader Award, a Lark/PoNY (Playwrights of New York) Fellow, and a recent recipient of the Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama. She is an artist that believes wholeheartedly in the power and strength of community.

The design and production team for *Skeleton Crew* includes **Lara Dubin** (Lighting Designer), **Laura Kathryne Gomez** (Stage Manager), **Elizabeth Pangburn** (Costume Designer), **Tom Shread** (Sound Designer), and **David Towlun** (Scenic Designer).

All performances will take place in the intimate setting of Chester's Historic Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA. Show times are 8:00 p.m. Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and 2:00 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. Individual ticket prices are \$37.50. Chester residents, members of the military and their families, and those holding EBT/SNAP cards may purchase \$10 tickets at the door or by calling the box office. (Call box office for details.) Student Rush \$10 tickets are available day of show. Single tickets, season subscriptions, and flex passes may be purchased online at chestertheatre.org, or by phone at 413.354.7771. Special rates for groups of 10 or more are available.

About Chester Theatre Company

Chester Theatre Company, a professional theatre company located between the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley--and convenient to both--is known for presenting high-quality productions with top-notch actors, directors, and designers from across the country since 1990. Founded by former Artistic Director of Dublin’s Abbey Theatre, Vincent Dowling, CTC is now in its 28th season, and produces four thought-provoking plays each summer in the intimate setting of the Town Hall Theatre.

For further information, please call CTC at 413.354.7770, or visit www.chestertheatre.org.

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