The J.T. & Margaret Talkington College of Visual & Performing Arts
School of Theatre & Dance
presents

BLACK GIRL, INTERRUPTED
by Iyanisha Gonzalez

director
jesse jou

scene design
ian olsen^

costume design
emilia richardson^

lighting design
taylor alfred

sound design
matthew mosher*

Taking photographs, with or without flash, and using video or audio recording equipment are prohibited during the performance. Eating, drinking, and smoking are not allowed in the event space. Thank you!
cast

riley
sasha
sidney
mr. green
kofi
terri
col. joan moore
masked man/dr. lanham
masked men
masked men
masked men
masked men
understudy

lyanisha gonzalez
laureen karichu*
cy scroggins
christian ruiz#
kietraille sutton*
madelyn robertson
anna ruth aaron-despain*
sean-riley cunningham
gerardo carreón
joshua reddington
tony morrell
hagan paulson
keandra hunt*

special thanks

master sergeant samuel berrios
lieutenant colonel adrain jackson
professor richard rosen
dr. valerie borum, lmsw
dr. debra lavender-bratcher, lcsw
deb buntzen
texas tech university’s division of diversity, equity, & inclusion

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

* Member - Alpha Psi Omega, National Theatre Honor Society
^ Member - United States Institute for Theatre Technology
# Appears in this Production courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association
production team

stage manager
meagan pierce^  jennifer ezell

dramaturg
master sergeant samuel berrios

military advisor
leah johnson

assistant director
delaney o’neal*

assistant stage manager
stevan rivera^  cory lawson#

fight choreographer
sean-riley cunningham  tony morrell

fight captain
leah johnson

delaney o’neal

intimacy choreographers
madelyn robertson  leah johnson

intimacy captain
sadie g. nickerson

vocal coach
laureen karichu

vocal coach assistant
will catalan

assistant costume designer
leyna kennedy  taylor sines

assistant lighting designer
chloe pope

assistant sound designer
matthew mosher*

trey tucker^  rebecca taylor**

audio engineer/live mixer
hunter jones  mariah solis

assistant technical director
marjorie rodriguez  taylor sines

prop master/scenic charge artist
chloe pope

set crew
elizabeth campbell^  hannah machen

costume crew
sara machen
tiffany viesca

light board operator
surasak namwatsopon

sound board operator

deck chief

sound assistant

program insert design
I first heard the story of Private First Class LaVena Johnson two and a half years ago and she’s been on my mind ever since. I was shocked and horrified, not just by the horrendous circumstances surrounding her death, but by the fact that her story failed to garner national attention and outrage. This story rests squarely at the intersections of race, gender, and violence. While violence affects everyone in our society, the picture becomes bleaker when viewed through the prism of race. By this I mean that when women of color, particularly Black women, become victims of violent acts, it is rare that society takes much notice outside of their specific community. I wanted to use the tools I have at my disposal to ensure that one such story finds its way to an audience. How is it that a female soldier can be raped, tortured, and murdered on an American military base during a war and not at the hands of the enemy? Who is the true enemy in a story like this? And how could we, the American people, not know anything about it? What does that say about who we are and the state of racial discourse in our country when even a soldier’s story goes unnoticed? It was important for me to tell this story now during these difficult times in our nation as we continue to wrestle with race, identity, patriotism, and misogyny, because theater has always been a safe haven for complex discussions. LaVena Johnson and Sasha Green are one and the same and this play is about letting her be seen. It is about giving her back her voice. And, hopefully, serves as a reckoning for the guilty.

LyaNisha Gonzalez’s Black Girl, Interrupted follows Riley Jones, a New York Times reporter, as she chases a story about the brutal murder of Sasha Green and the military cover-up that followed. The play investigates whose story gets lost and who gets to control the narrative when the political is personal and the personal, and intensely private, parts of our lives (and deaths) become political. The events in this play bear striking similarities to the brutal death of Private First Class LaVena Johnson and the sexual assault stories shared by brave soldiers in the 2012 documentary The Invisible War. Stories like these have helped raise awareness of military sexual violence and have shaped American policies on the reporting of violence in the military. Gonzalez deftly explores the intersections of race, gender, and political systems in contemporary society through Riley and Sasha’s journeys.

In the play, our understanding of military and legal procedure is filtered through the characters’ memories, personal knowledge, and emotional responses to military regulations and legal processes. Like Riley Jones, you must ask yourself, in the face of a military cover-up, whose memory do you trust? Whose hunches do you follow? How do you filter out your own emotions to get to the truth? And, does the truth matter if the victim becomes a footnote in her own story?