

South Fulton Arts



A Play Reading Series

BEYOND THE PAGE

PRESENTS

SMART PEOPLE

BY LYDIA R. DIAMOND

DIRECTED BY LEE OSORIO

March 15-22, 2024

*This play lasts 2 hours with no intermission
and will be followed by an informal talkback facilitated by **Kristin Couch**.*

SMART PEOPLE is presented in arrangement with Concord Theatricals
on behalf of Samuel French Inc.



South Fulton Arts

SouthFultonArts.org

SMART PEOPLE

BY LYDIA R. DIAMOND

Directed by **Lee Osorio**

FEATURING

Valerie Johnston.....**Asha Basha Duniani**
Jackson Moore.....**Brian Ashton Smith**
Ginny Yang.....**Marilyn Chung**
Brian White.....**Benjamin Sprunger**

Narrator.....**Kristian Clemons-Freeman**

ABOUT THE PLAY

It is the eve of Obama's first election. Four of Harvard University's brightest; a surgeon, an actress, a psychologist, and a neuro-psychiatrist, are all interested in different aspects of the brain, particularly how it responds to race. But like all smart people, they are also searching for love, success, and identity in their own lives. Lydia Diamond brings these characters together in this sharp, witty play about social and sexual politics.



South Fulton Arts

The South Fulton Arts is a regional catalyst for the advancement of the arts and education. As an organization, we seek to create an artistic environment that models humanity, is socially just, is reflective of, and celebrates the regional diversity of the Southeastern United States and our increasingly global community.

Our concentrated impact model focuses on South Atlanta and the 8 cities that make up the lower slice of Fulton County, and we want to support the communities within those cities in their efforts to make arts and culture centerpieces of the region's transformation. Arts and culture can be accelerants of vibrancy and growth, packing in social offerings and professional opportunities to an area historically excluded from resources.

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Aaron Rib, *Administrative Assistant*

MEET THE CAST & CREW



ASHA BASHA DUNIANI

(*Valerie Johnston*) [she/her] is electrified to collaborate with South Fulton Arts reading of *Smart People*. Atlanta: Alliance Theatre (*Furlough's Paradise*), Actors Express (*Cullud Watah* 2023), Synchronicity Theatre (*In the Continuum* 2023, *Eclipsed* 2016). Regional: North Carolina Black Repertory Company, Triad Stage Touring Theatre. Educational: *The Colored Museum, in the Red & Brown Water, Hurt Village, Detroit 67, Ruined, A'int Misbehavin* (North Carolina A&T State). Film/TV: Warner Bros, Magic Lemonade Productions, Westbrook Media. Asha Basha holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Professional Theater from North Carolina A&T State University. She thanks you for spending your day supporting live theatre. Find her on Instagram: @asha.b.duniani



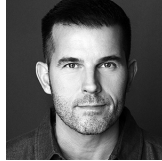
BRIAN ASHTON SMITH

(*Jackson Moore*) graduated from Morehouse College with a degree in Theatre and a minor in Psychology. He's acted professionally in Atlanta for over 15 years and has experienced Atlanta's growth firsthand. He was trained in Viewpoints by Tina Landau, in Improv with Blacktop Comedy and Dad's Garage, and has studied many acting techniques, with Meisner is at the core of his process. His television credits include *Cobra Kai, The Ms. Pat Show, Dynasty* and *The Games People Play, Dolly Parton's Heartstrings, The Game, Good Behavior, and Army Wives*. His film credits include *Holidate, Office Christmas Party, Joyful Noise, Home Safe* and *The Evil Inside Her* in which he starred opposite his wife Melissa and Oscar nominee Eric Roberts. He is a member of the Sketch Comedy groups Black AF, and Critical Crop Top, and an accomplished commercial actor. He also acts in and directs theater in Atlanta, and coaches actors privately.



MARILYN CHUNG

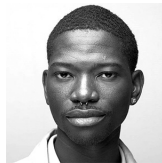
(*Ginny Yang*) is an Atlanta-based actor and improviser. She has performed at Dad's Garage, Village Theatre, Academy Theatre, Renaissance Project and has appeared on *Dynasty*. She is honored to work with South Fulton Arts and thrilled to perform *Smart People* with this talented cast.



BENJAMIN SPRUNGER

(*Brian White*) Chicago theater credits: About Face (nine productions including *Significant Other* and *The Pride*), Raven, Music Theater Works, Northlight, House, 16 th Street, Pride Films

& Plays, Goodman, Victory Gardens, TimeLine, Steppenwolf, Strawdog, Griffin (2011 Jeff nomination, Actor in a Principal Role - Musical), Steep, Sideshow, Haven, CityLit, and Theater Wit. Los Angeles theater credits: Mark Taper Forum and Pasadena Playhouse. Television Credits: *Chicago Fire, Chicago P.D., The Red Line, Will & Grace* (2 episodes as Will's boyfriend's sister's fiancé), and *Passions*.



KRISTIAN CLEMONS-FREEMAN

(*Narrator*) is a young performer and director from Riverdale, Ga, and has been performing for as long as he can remember. Currently a senior at Columbus State University, he's been seen in productions of *The Prom* (Ensemble), *Chrysalis* (Husband), *Sweat* (Chris), *Milk Like Sugar* (Male Swing), *The Wiz* (Tin Man) and many others! He's also directed his own productions of *Gem of the Ocean* and *Amateurs*. He would like to thank his friends, family, and girlfriend for supporting him through this journey, and is so excited to present this beautiful work to you all. Asé.

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LEE OSORIO

(*Director*) is an actor, audiobook narrator, director, and playwright based in Atlanta. He is a six-time Suzi Bass Award Nominee and won for Best Male Lead Actor in 2018 for *Richard II*. He has also worked in television on *Found, True Detective, The Resident, NCIS: New Orleans, and Your Honor*. www.LeeOsorio.com (Photo by Chase Anderson)

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KRISTIN COUCH

(*Talkback Facilitator*) (LMSW) is an Agnes Scott College alumna with a master's in social work from the University of Georgia. She currently works as the Associate Director of the Title IX & Compliance Office at Spelman College. Kristin has social and direct service experience in nonprofit and higher education environments, with emphasis in gender-based violence and social justice.

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