

DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER ON TOUR

Presents

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

AN AFRICAN TALE

Based on the book by **JOHN STEPTOE**

Adapted for the Stage by **KAREN ABBOTT** Music & Lyrics by **S-ANKH RASA**

Directed by
ROBYN FLATT

Musical Direction & Accompaniment by
S-ANKH RASA

Choreographed by
MICHELLE NICOLE GIBSON

Scenic Design by
RANDEL WRIGHT

Assistant Choreographer
ANGELA DEARMAN

Stage Manager / Technical Director
JOHN MICHEAL MOSS II

Lighting Design by
LINDA BLASE

Producer / Tour Director
SALLY FIORELLO

Costume Design by
BARBARA COX

Properties Design by
JEN SPILLANE & TISH MUSSEY

Audio Engineer / Asst. Technical Director
ALEXANDER WOLFE

DCT PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

Director of Production: **H. BART MCGHEEON**

Assistant Technical Director: **JEFF STANFIELD**

Lighting Supervisor: **JASON LYNCH**

Production Staff: **REBECCA BONGIORNO, ZIGGY RENNER, TROY CARRICO, PETER SOMMERS**

Technical Director: **JOSH SMITH**

Production Coordinator: **RYAN MCBRIDE**

Staff Electrician: **JASON MONMONEY**

THE CAST IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Storyteller / Messenger **RICK SPIVEY**
Villager 1 / Hungry Boy / Laughing Tree / King **GEROLD TAYLOR II**
Villager 2 / Old Woman / Laughing Tree / Puppeteer **ASHLEY BRIDER**
Mufaro **IVAN JONES**
Manyara **CHARLI ARMSTRONG**
Nyasha **CANDACE ALLEN**

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MEET THE DIRECTORS

ROBYN FLATT

DCT Founder & Executive Artistic Director, Director of MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

Robyn Flatt co-founded DCT in 1984 with start-up funds of \$500. Under her artistic leadership, the theater's creative and operational stature has grown over the past 30 years to reflect its current annual budget of more than \$4 million. Her theatrical career has brought her acclaim as a professional director, actor and lighting designer. During her tenure as a member of the Dallas Theater Center Resident Company, she served as Assistant Artistic Director, and Director of Theater-in-the-Parks. She holds an MA Degree from Baylor University and studied with Etienne Decroux, Juana Laban and Hanya Holm. Among Ms. Flatt's many acting credits include two roles she created for award-winning world premiere productions: Dewey Dell in *Journey to Jefferson* and Martha Ann Sickenger in Preston Jones' *The Oldest Living Graduate*. Her directing credits at DCT include several world premiere adaptations by Linda Daugherty of Steven Kellogg's story books; *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *The Miracle Worker*; *Island of the Blue Dolphins*; and other critically acclaimed productions such as *And Then They Came For Me* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*. She has served on the boards of AATE, ASSITEJ/USA, and

CTFA. She is a recipient of The 500, Inc.'s prestigious Ken Bryant Visionary Award, Dallas Historical Society's 1999 Excellence in Community Service for Creative Arts, the 2002 Leon Rabin Standing Ovation Award, and the Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award. Ms. Flatt is a member of the College of Fellows of American Theatre and was recently Treasurer of the Children's Theatre Foundation of America. She was nominated by *The Dallas Morning News* arts staff for both the 2010 and 2015 Texan of the Year Award. Robyn was honored in 2016 with the Orlin Corey Award for Artistic Excellence from the American Alliance for Theater and Education.

S-ANKH RASA

Composer / Lyricist / Musical Director / Accompanist of MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

At age 12, S-Ankh Rasa was the youngest student accepted to the University of California, Berkeley Music Department. He composed his first symphony at 15 while attending the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. At 16, he performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival as a featured saxophonist with Dizzy Gillespie and the Modern Jazz Quartet. In Los Angeles, he worked as a studio musician (saxophone, flute, & clarinet), composer, arranger, and musical director with Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Natalie Cole, and many others. He retired from the LA music scene and began studying traditional African music. This led to a US tour with the world-renowned African drummer, Mamady Keita. Mr. Rasa is also a performer and historian of the Mandinko kora (African harp) and composes and sings in 3 languages. He worked with acclaimed actress, playwright, and director Regina Taylor on the Dallas' production of *Crowns* in the vital role of multi-percussionist. He also performed in the US tour of *Crowns* as co-Music Director and multi-percussionist under the direction of Andrea Frye. His other Dallas area credits include the composition of original scores for Cara Mia Theatre Company's productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Lorca's Blood Wedding*. This season's tour marks his third production of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* with DCT. He was also the musical director/composer of DCT's productions of *Anansi - The Spider Man* and *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* directed by Cheryl Denson. Mr. Rasa is currently composing a one-man original score for *Crystal City 1969* directed by David Lozano for Cara Mia Theatre Company.

MICHELLE NICOLE GIBSON

Choreographer of MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

Choreographer, educator, and performing artist, Michelle received her BFA in Dance from Tulane University and her MFA in Dance and Performance Studies from Hollins University/American Dance Festival at Duke University. A New Orleans native, she has been blessed to have studied at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Delta Festival Ballet Company, Milton School of Dance, the Young African American Dance Ensemble, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, the American Dance Festival, and Jacob's Pillow. She has toured extensively and performed throughout Germany and Japan. Her motion picture credits include the Academy Award nominated film, *Interview With a Vampire*, the Academy Award winning film, *Ray*, and the movie *Just My Luck* with Lindsay Lohan. Michelle is a faculty member with both the American Dance Festival six week school intensive held at Duke University and the Dance Theatre of Harlem Summer Intensive. She has served as Artist in Resident in Port Au Prince and Jacmel Haiti, with New Waves Dance and Performance Institute. Currently a freelance artist, Michelle is an NPN artist in resident with the South Dallas Cultural Center, Artistic Director of the Dallas Youth Repertory Project, Artistic Director of the New Orleans Youth Brass Jumpers, Artistic Director/Choreographer for Voices of Congo Square Production, and a CAP artist with Office of Cultural Affairs in Dallas TX. She is also the founder and Artistic Director of Exhibit Dance Collective. Her choreographic works range from genres of the African Diaspora, Contemporary Modern, Afro Funk, and Jazz, to her own New Orleans Second Line Aesthetic. In 2013 Michelle was awarded a National Performance Network/ Visual Artists Network Creation Fund Grant to produce her first one women show entitled *Takin It To The Roots*, co-commissioned by South Dallas Cultural Center and Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans. In April 2015, one of her many choreographic works was presented in a workshop production at the Dallas City Performance Hall. Based on the novel *Wading Home* by Roslyn Story, it paid tribute to the survivors and lost souls of Hurricane Katrina, Michelle being one of those survivors. More recently, she choreographed *Voices of Congo Square*, produced by Shakaand Naimah Zulu. The production revealed the rich culture and history of the Black Mardi Gras Indians, and premiered at the Black Dance USA conference in June 2016 at the Sun Theatre in St Louis MO. Blessed to have accomplished many things in her life, Michelle's greatest achievement is being the mother/artist of two beautiful children.

SALLY FIORELLO

Producer / Tour Director of MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

Sally began her association with Dallas Children's Theater in 1984 and has since served as a director, designer, actor and consultant for numerous DCT productions. In 1998 she joined the staff as Producing Director of the national touring company. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* marks her nineteenth touring production in a distinguished line of shows which includes the nationally acclaimed *And Then They Came For Me*, *Most Valuable Player*, and *A Midnight Cry: The Underground Railroad to Freedom*, which she also directed. Sally also spearheaded DCT's inclusion in the 2006 Shanghai International Children's Culture and Arts Expo in Shanghai, China. She has worked as a designer and/or performer with The Haymarket Theater Company, Pegasus Theater, The Dallas Symphony, The Dallas Opera, Bootstraps Comedy Theater and the Broadway touring production of *Patio/Porch*. As a master puppeteer and senior designer with the critically acclaimed Kathy Burks Theatre of Puppetry Arts, Ms. Fiorello has performed throughout the country and served as Art Director for the award-winning children's television pilot *Discovery Outpost*. Ms. Fiorello is a recipient of the Dallas Theater Critics Forum Award.

CANDACE ALLEN

Nyasha

Candace is thrilled to be joining DCT's cast of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* and traveling on her first national tour. While completing her Masters in Critical Cultural Media Studies at the University of North Texas, Candace signed with The Linicom Agency and has primarily worked in television commercials and print ads. Her most recent stage credits include Rossignol in *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* and Ottoline in Tony Kushner's *Reverse Transcription*. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support and love.

CHARLI ARMSTRONG

Manyara / Company Manager

Charli lends her talents to DCT for a fourth national tour, having previously appeared as Manyara in the 2008-09 & 2011-12 productions of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* and as Mrs. Carter in *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*. She also appeared as Mrs. Beaver in DCT's main-stage production of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Her other Dallas area credits include featured roles in *King Arthur*, *Aladdin*, and *Puss in Boots* with Theatre Britain; and *The Soul Gatherer* and *Marianela* with MBS Productions. Charli also appeared in *Pinocchio* for the Orlando Repertory Theatre in Orlando, Florida.

ASHLEY BRIDER

Villager 2 / Old Woman / Laughing Tree / Puppeteer

A native of New Orleans, Ashley is no stranger to live theatre, having recently received her BA in Theatre Performance from Dillard University. Although her credits include many collegiate roles, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* is Ashley's first foray into the world of professional theater. She would like to thank all her family, friends and instructors who continue to believe in her talent and support her endeavors.

IVAN JONES

Mufaro

Ivan returns to DCT where he appeared as Mufaro in both the 2008-09 & 2011-12 national tours of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. His Dallas area credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Oliver*, and *The Rocky Horror Show* with KD Studios; *Nice Work*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *42nd St.*, and *Cats* with Garland Summer Musicals; *Beauty and the Beast*, *King Arthur*, *Out of Order*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Babes in the Wood* with Theatre Britain; *It Runs In The Family* with Rover Dramawerks; *Lucifer Descending* and *Dante (Inferno/Purgatorio)* with MBS Productions. He also danced with The Dallas Opera in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Boris Godunov*. Mr. Jones is a

choreographer and gymnast. He holds Associates Degrees in Theater and Musical Theater from KD Studio's Acting Conservatory.

JOHN MICHEAL MOSS II

Stage Manager / Technical Director

John continues his association with DCT's national tour where he first served as Assistant Stage Manager and ensemble member for the 2008-09 production of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. He more recently served as the Stage Manager and Technical Director for the 2014-15 tour of *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley* and last season's tour of *The BFG*. A highly skilled technician, he has worked in numerous capacities for many different theaters including Dallas Theater Center, Theatre Britain, and Wagon Wheel Theatre in Warsaw, IN.

RICK L. SPIVEY

Storyteller / Messenger

Audiences will remember Rick's performances in previous DCT national tours of *A Midnight Cry: The Underground Railroad to Freedom*, *If You Give A Pig A Party*, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* 2008-09 & 2011-12, and as Jackie Robinson in *Most Valuable Player*. His regional credits include featured roles in *South Pacific*, *Cinderella*, and *A Few Good Men* with Casa Mañana; *Jitney* and *Flying West* with African American Repertory Theater; and *God's Trombones* and *The African Company Presents Richard III* with Jubilee Theater. Mr. Spivey has also performed with The Butterfly Connection and DVA Productions.

GERALD TAYLOR II

Villager 1 / Hungry Boy / Laughing Tree / King

Gerald is pleased to return to Dallas Children's Theater where he most recently appeared in last season's national tour of *The BFG*. Active with numerous theaters across the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, some of his favorite roles include Snoopy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown!* and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mr. Taylor holds a Masters Degree in Theater from Texas A&M University - Commerce. Much love and thanks to friends and family for their never ending support.

ALEXANDER WOLFE

Audio Engineer / Assistant Technical Director

Alexander Wolfe is excited to be joining DCT's national tour of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. He has worked as the sound designer and audio engineer for numerous theaters throughout New York State, North Carolina, and most recently for the 2016 season at the Millbrook Playhouse in Mill Hall, PA. He has designed sound for many plays and musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Unnecessary Farce*, and *Chicago*. Alex is proud to be an apprentice member of IATSE Local 635 out of Winston-Salem, NC.

