

micah meets a mami wata

by prentiss matthews iii



fonseca
theatre
company

july 18th - august 3rd
on the c.h. douglas & gray wealth
management stage

from TRASH to treasure

artistic creations made with found objects

July 17 - September 21
Fonseca Theater Company

View the creations by the current featured artists
next door in our Basile Collaboration Center.

Warren Beal



Micah encourages all of us to **reduce and reuse** and not rely only on **recycling** in our role as stewards of this planet.

These featured artists use scraps and bits that might be thrown away and recycle them as art.

Gina Lee Robbins



To see what they created, walk through the lobby and go down the short hall to the right to enter our Basile Collaboration Center. This is where we teach theatre classes, have rehearsals for shows, and invite the community in for fun events.

Gabrielle Simone Jones



Enjoy!

The selection of artists' work to hang in our theatre lobby and the Keith O. Norwalk & Steve L. Hamilton Gallery Wall is meant to help continue thoughts and conversations about themes from our stage productions.

Artists receive 100% of the sale of their work from our space.



artist bios

A Note from the Producing Director



Micah Meets a Mami Wata is almost two years in the making. When we joined the national BIPOC Superhero Project and committed to commissioning a new play for young audiences about a Black or Brown child embracing their superpowers, I was excited to build a bridge between our main stage and our education programs.

Over the past seven years we have seen so many incredible students grow through our classes and then ask for more advanced opportunities. There is not enough space here for me to regale you with my favorite memories of the alumni and current students involved throughout this production process, but I will say that watching them transform into the talented professionals you will see today has been the greatest joy of my career. Their hard work, creativity, and care are what give me hope for our struggling world and sharing this process with them has been truly special. In addition, this process has been an incredible collaboration with the playwright, Prentiss Matthews III. He is also a passionate theatre educator and shares my passion for making the art we needed when we were younger. Representation is more critical ever, and we need to show kids that their stories matter, that they are powerful, and that people who look like them are part of the narrative. It is in this spirit that we look forward to making shows for young audiences a more regular part of our programming and are working to expand our education programs and partnerships even more.

Micah Meets a Mami Wata stands at the cusp of our Season of Resilience and our Season of Opportunity. I cannot think of a better time to both take this artistic leap into producing our first ever show for young audiences and to share the story of a boy who gets to go on the adventure of a lifetime because of the power he finds in his differences. At our first rehearsal I told the cast that this is a play about love – about love for each other, love for ourselves, and love for our planet. And in all this time bringing this world to life, I have yet to find a better way to describe Micah's journey. I hope that you walk (or swim) away from today's performance feeling your heart has grown just a bit. I know mine has.

Con gratitud,
Jordan Flores Schwartz
FTC Producing Director

An FTC Event

Earth Care Action Steps

A discussion with award-winning author Diana J. Ensign



This free event will give actionable steps each of us can take to help create a healthier planet.

The first 10 people to register at phansen@fonsecatheatre.org will receive a copy of *Faith, Hope, Action*.



Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025 • Basile Collaboration Center • Noon – 1:30pm

A Note from the Puppet Designers



Theatre is, unfortunately, not a very environmentally friendly industry. In a season a typical theatre creates four to six entirely different worlds from lumber, steel, plastic and fabric for productions that run for two to six weeks and then unfortunately throw most of it in the dumpster after the strike. We recycle and reuse as much as we can, of course.

This reality was something to be considered when designing the puppets for *Micah Meets a Mami Wata*. Throughout Micah's journey we are reminded of the impact of the things that don't get recycled and instead end up in landfills, litter our roads, clog our waterways, and poison our oceans. We took our lead from Micah and his passion reclaimed/found art projects and set a goal of buying as few materials as possible and making use of "trash" when creating the puppets for the production. Plastic bags became bat wings. Bottles became jellyfish. Micah encourages all of us to **reduce** and **reuse** and not rely only on **recycling** in our role as stewards of this planet.



Cast

Phoenix Ray Warrior	<i>Micah</i>
Makayla McElwain	<i>Emi</i>
Arika Casey	<i>Mom/Sticky</i>
Josiah McCruiston	<i>Dad/Brumbly</i>
Joshua Short	<i>Olokun/ensemble</i>
Empressnikia	<i>Yemaya/ensemble</i>
Ja'Taun Tiara	<i>Enchantra/ensemble</i>

This play is performed with no intermission.

Artistic Team

Jordan Flores Schwartz, *Director*

Jeanne Bowling, *Costume Designer/Props Artisan*

Pauly Crumpacker, *Lighting Designer*

Ben Dobler, *Sound Designer*

Brant Hughes, *Scenic Designer*

Matt Keller, *Stage Manager*

Beverly Roche & Lukas Felix Schooler, *Puppet Designers*

Journey Slater, *Summer Production and Education Intern*

Cast Bios

Phoenix Ray Warrior - *Micah*



Phoenix is a passionate young creative making his FTC debut. Phoenix loves telling stories and entertaining others through his YouTube channel Pheastmode where he shares fun videos full of creativity and energy. He enjoys laser tag, escape rooms, video games, and anything that challenges his imagination and brings people together. A fun fact about Phoenix: his name was almost Nova, but when he was born, the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck and he came into the world red. Because of that powerful beginning, his name became Phoenix—like the mythical bird that rises from the ashes. That same fire and spirit live in everything he does. When Phoenix was told he had the “chops” for acting, he had no idea what that meant—but now he knows it means he’s got real talent. He’s thrilled to be a part of this amazing production and can’t wait to shine on.

Makayla McElwain - *Emi*



Makayla has been a proud member of Fonseca Theater Company since 2019, where she continues to grow as a performer and creative. In 2023, Makayla was honored with a Rosie Award, recognizing her outstanding talent and dedication to the arts. Some of her favorite roles include dynamic characters that allow her to express emotion and bring powerful stories to life on stage. In addition to acting, Makayla is a visual artist who enjoys drawing and painting, often using her free time to create new pieces. A true creative at heart, she also plays the alto saxophone and finds joy in exploring different forms of artistic expression. Makayla is passionate about storytelling and hopes to inspire others through her performances and artwork. A fun fact: she believes that creativity is her superpower—and she’s just getting started!

Arika Casey - *Mom/Sticky*



Arika is a native of Indianapolis. She is honored to be sharing the stage with such amazing artists. Her recent credits include, *Sophisticated Ladies* based on the music of Duke Ellington at Beef & Boards, *Tales Out of Twelve O’ 8* by Jamaal McCray at Storefront Theatre, and *Panther Women: An Army for the Liberation* by India Nicole Burton at Phoenix Theatre. Arika serves as a principal dancer in Kenyettá Dance Company; *Black Keys: The Evolution of the Black Classical Arts* which premiered June 2024 on WYFI. Arika is a professional teaching artist who specializes in dance education for youth. She also a certified yoga instructor at Capture Fitness. IG: @aree.lynn

Josiah McCruiston - Dad/Brumbly



Josiah McCruiston is a nationally recognized multidisciplinary artist, award-winning playwright, director, and visionary arts leader. As founder of Grand Griot Productions and the acclaimed Musical Theatre Summer Camp, he empowers youth and adults through Afrocentric storytelling and professional training. His play *5 Moods for Black Anguish* was a 2023 OnyxFest finalist. Josiah serves as the Performing Arts Chair at Providence Cristo Rey High School,

where he fosters a brave space for young artists from underserved communities. A sought-after instructor in Afro-Centric Acting Methods, he has a fixed focus on creating a future for creatives that are free from barriers, and they are grounded and accountable. He has performed and taught nationally, collaborated with museums and cultural institutions, and serves at Witherspoon Presbyterian Church. Rooted in the legacy of the Black Arts Movement, Josiah is a proud son, devoted fiancé, and unstoppable force for cultural transformation. Follow his journey @grandgriotprod

Joshua Short - Olokun/ensemble



Joshua is a stage and film actor from the Indianapolis area. He studied with Asante Arts Institute of Indianapolis and focused on social issues. Joshua, aka “The Craftsman Crafted by God’s Hands,” is also a dancer rapper and storyteller. He’s the Co-Producer of *The Taco Show*, a dinner and show style variety show in Indy at the Fonseca Theatre Company.

Empressnikia - Yemaya/ensemble



Empressnikia is an Indianapolis-based creative passionate about authentic artistic expression. Though she has always loved the arts, her zeal for performance was reignited in 2023. Since then, she has appeared in productions such as *A Touch of Glory*, *Str8 Up Frederick Douglass*, and most recently, *Seeds of Freedom*. Outside of performing, she shares her love for the arts as a teaching artist with the Asante Art Institute. She is honored to be part of this

production and grateful for the opportunity to keep creating in this community.

Ja’Taun Tiara - Enchantra/ensemble



Ja’Taun, a dynamic performer originally from Gary, Indiana, brings powerful presence and versatility to every role she is blessed with embodying. She has a resume that spans commercials, award-winning films, hit TV and web series like *Fatal Attraction* and *Save My Soul*, and standout live stage performances in *The Wizer of Odds*, *Family Betrayal*, *The Room* and *The Quilting*, while also

gracing magazines, websites, and runways as a lively model as well. Ja’Taun is a seasoned artist who has a purposeful heart, committed to continue honing her craft with the goal of engaging in storytelling that helps to heal and inspire others.

Artistic Team Bios

Prentiss Matthews III - Playwright

Prentiss is a multi-hyphenate theatre artist from Atlanta, Georgia, with a BFA in Theatre from Valdosta State University. His work as an actor, playwright, director, and teaching artist centers on storytelling for healing, social change, and joy. A former Playwriting Fellow at The Union for Contemporary Art, Prentiss developed *The Golden Loc*, a TYA play inspired by African mythology, which won Best Play of 2024 at the BroadwayWorld Michigan Awards in partnership with the Obsidian Theatre Festival. His plays have been recognized by Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre, the Atlanta Black Theatre Festival, the Black Theatre Network, and more. Prentiss's storytelling amplifies Black narratives, mythology, and intergenerational healing. He creates theatre that fosters connection, joy, and transformation. When not writing, he enjoys Zumba, exploring art museums, and hunting for the best boba tea.

Jordan Flores Schwartz - Director

Jordan is co-founder and Producing Director of Fonseca Theatre Company. Prior to her work at FTC, she worked with theatres across the country as a community organizer, teaching artist, administrator, dramaturg, literary manager, and visiting director. Schwartz received her MFA in Dramaturgy at Indiana University Bloomington and holds MA in Arts Management from the University of Oregon, as well as a BA from Bryn Mawr College. She is currently a PhD student and Graduate Instructor in the Arts Administration, Education, and Policy department at The Ohio State University, specializing in Cultural Policy. She was named a 2022-23 Creative Renewal Fellow by the Arts Council of Indianapolis. Jordan was recognized as a Rising Leader of Color by Theatre Communications Group in 2017, and was named a 2019 Young Philanthropist Scholar by Impact 100 Indy.

Jeanne Bowling - Costume Designer/Props Artisan

Jeanne is thrilled to be part of this production's creative journey. A versatile artist and educator, she has designed costumes for FTC (including *Can I Touch It?*, *Dream House*, and *Boo La La!*) and for Summer Stock Stage, Marian University, Anderson University, and more. Jeanne teaches Musical Theatre Seminar at Butler University and has taught voice and directed choirs at Marian University and Park Tudor School. She has also served as director and music director for numerous professional, university, and youth theaters, including Youth Inspirations Theatre and Summer Stock Stage.

Pauly Crumper - Lighting Designer

Pauly is a designer and technician based in Indianapolis, IN. A graduate of Indiana University, Pauly has worked in the midwest as a theatre professional to strengthen and uplift works that create a better world, one show at a time. Previous credits include; *Descendants* (Summerstock Stage), *Red Velvet* and *The Lion In Winter* (Southbank Theatre), *Unfurling*, *Annum 5*, and *Iconiq* (Dance Revelations), *Willy Wonka and the Golden Ticket* (Owensboro Dance Theatre), *Snow Fever* (The Phoenix Theatre), *The Moon and The Sea* (Dance Magic), *Motion Pictures* (Iibada Dance), *Boo-La-La! 3* (FTC), *The Wizard of Oz* and *Cinderella* (Ohio Youth Ensemble Stage), and many more.

Ben Dobler - Sound Designer

Ben is an Indianapolis-based designer and technician specializing in sound, video, and lighting. His work has been featured at Phoenix Theatre, Fonseca Theatre, American Lives Theatre, Eclipse, Summer Stock Stage, Actors Theatre of Indiana, Summit Performance, Constellation Stage & Screen, and Cardinal Stage, among others.

Brant Hughes - Scenic Designer

Brant makes his debut as a scenic designer for *Micah Meets a Mami Wata*, having previously assisted on sets for FTC's *A Skeptic and a Bruja* and Urban Musical Theater's *The Color Purple*, *Dreamgirls*, and *The Bodyguard*. He was thrilled to work alongside so many talented designers and artists to bring this production to life. Brant would like to acknowledge his wife, Yolanda Valdivia, for her love, support, and inspiring talent.

Matthew Keller - Stage Manager

Matthew is the stage manager for *Micah Meets a Mami Wata* at FTC, where he previously stage-managed *Abortion Road Trip* and worked backstage on *TJ Loves Sally* and *A Skeptic and a Bruha*. Other favorite stage management credits include *Silent Sky*, *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. He would like to thank his husband, Graham Brinklow, for his endless support and encouragement.

Lukas Felix Schooler - Puppet Designer

Lukas is a theater artist and sculptor based in Indianapolis, IN. Recent performance credits include "Paravicini" in *The Mousetrap* (Betty Rage), "Frederick Nietzsche" in *Seeking Nietzsche* (Southbank Theatre), and "John D'Agata" in *The Lifespan of a Fact* (American Lives Theatre). Recent design credits include puppets/masks/props for *She Kills Monsters* (Franklin College) and wearable sculptures for *Nervosity* (Sylva Dean and Me). Recently, he and his collaborator, Ventiko, were awarded a Power Plant Grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and a Creative Risk Grant from the Herbert Simon Family Foundation.

Beverly Roche - Puppet Designer

Beverly is primarily an actor, but she was bitten by the puppet bug early in life. In the fifth grade she independently raised hundreds of dollars for the Lincoln, NE zoo with her lip-syncing hand puppets she built after learning the process paper mache in art class. She is a member of NoExit Performance and co-designed and built puppets and masks for their productions of *The House of Blue Lights*, *Unusual Fauna* (an outdoor spectacle commissioned for the opening of the National Lakeshore at Lake Michigan by Dig the Dunes), and *Mad, Mad, Hercules* (a co production with Zach and Zack). As an arts-integration consultant and teaching artist, she currently works with ArtMix (art redefining disability) and Arts for Learning (the local affiliate of Young Audiences) and FTC. Beverly was named a 2024-2025 Creative Renewal Arts Fellow by the Indy Arts Council.

Help FTC Continue Making Art

You are at the center of everything we do at FTC — bringing together artists, students, and audiences to **collaborate** in an inspiring and supportive environment. We believe the sharing of culture is essential to our nation's health, and our leadership reflects the diversity of our **community**. We are **committed** to creating an accessible and radically inclusive space where artists of all races, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities can participate fully and be the authority on their own story.

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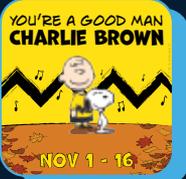
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 Mary Strinka - *fabrics*
 Youth Inspirations Theatre - *costume pieces & props*

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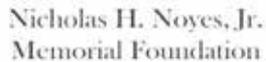
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