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The College of Fellows of the American Theatre Announces the Relocation of its 61st Annual Fellows Weekend from Washington, DC to Denver, Colorado

The College of Fellows of the American Theatre has announced that it will once again relocate its annual Fellows Weekend, moving it from its long-standing home at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, to Denver, Colorado. This follows a similar move in 2025 to Arena Stage in Washington, made in the wake of President Trump’s reorganization of the Kennedy Center and his assumption of direct oversight of the institution in February of 2025.

This year’s decision follows a year of heightened public scrutiny and political debate surrounding the Kennedy Center—conditions that, while not a judgment on the institution itself, have created an environment inconsistent with the College’s desire to conduct its work in a space that is more inclusive and freer from external political polarization.

“For six decades, the Kennedy Center has been a valued partner in celebrating the artistry and scholarship of American theatre,” said College Dean David Grapes. Our decision is not a repudiation of that history, but a commitment to ensuring that our annual gathering takes place in an environment that fosters diversity, open dialogue, collegiality, and the free exchange of ideas. While the College still regards the Kennedy Center as its home, the Board of Directors— supported by the membership —has decided to relocate the annual Fellows Weekend for the foreseeable future.”

Central to the College’s mission is the belief that theatre must remain a force for connection and social good. The College continues to advocate for a theatre ecosystem that is accessible to all—one that removes barriers, amplifies underrepresented voices, and nurtures equitable participation across all communities. Inclusion, diversity, and social justice are not just aspirations but essential principles that inform our work, guide our collaborations, and strengthen our collective impact as a discipline. Through mentorship, dialogue, and the recognition of excellence, the College supports the next generation of theatre-makers and educators, ensuring that the art form continues to evolve with integrity and purpose.

Denver’s vibrant arts community, its expanding theatrical landscape, and its longstanding civic commitment to cultural inclusivity make it an ideal setting for the College’s 2026 convening. The College looks forward to engaging with local artists and institutions, as it continues advancing the transformative power of theatre nationwide. Fellows Weekend will be held at the Curtis Hotel April 11-12, 2026, where 9 new Fellows in the Class of 2026 will be invested into the College.

The 2026 cohort of Fellows boasts the following powerhouses of American Theatre: Ifa Bayeza, Craig Carnelia, Michael Donovan, Reginald L. Douglas, Micha Espinoza, Patdro Harris, Allen L. Hughes, Anita Maynard-Losh, and Chris Parnell.

*61st Annual
Membership Weekend*



*The Curtis Hotel
Denver, Colorado*

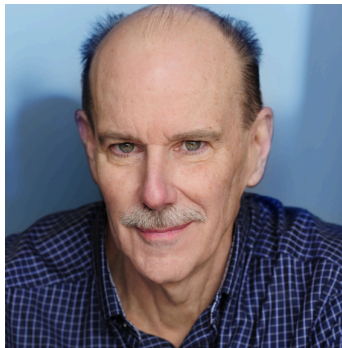
A MILE HIGH CELEBRATION OF THEATRE

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2026 CLASS OF THE COLLEGE OF FELLOWS!

The distinguished artists, scholars, and industry leaders pictured here represent the best in American Theatre. Join us to celebrate their accomplishments.



Ifa Bayeza



Craig Carnelia



Michael Donovan



Reginald L. Douglas



Micha Espinosa



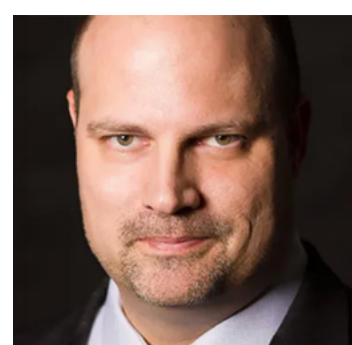
Patdro Harris



Allen Lee Hughes



Anita Maynard-Losh

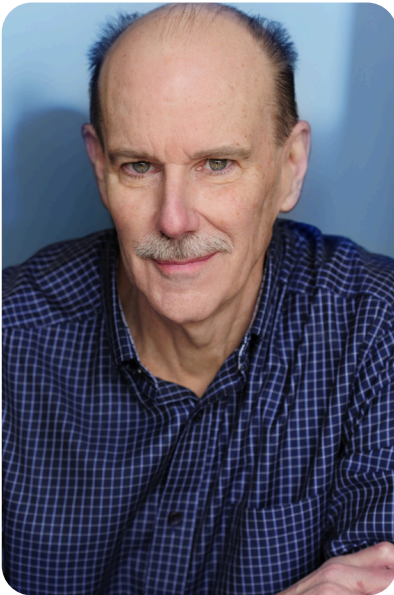


Chris Parnell



Ifa Bayeza

Ifa Bayeza is an award-winning playwright, director, composer, novelist, and educator. A finalist for the 2020 Herb Alpert Award in Theatre and the Francesca Primus Prize, she was the inaugural Humanist-in-Residence at the National Endowment for the Humanities and a 2022 MacDowell Fellow. Her creative nonfiction and fiction examine pivotal intersections of race across history and the present. Plays include the *Till Trilogy*, *String Theory*, *Infants of the Spring*, and *Ta'zieh Between Two Rivers*. Her musical *Bunk Johnson...A Blues Poem* is in workshop at Arena Stage, and her TYA comedy *Kid Zero* is in development. With her sister Ntozake Shange, she co-authored the novel *Some Sing, Some Cry*. Her newest play, *One Small Alice*, was featured at the 2024 Kennedy Center Festival of New Works. A current Fellow at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Bayeza holds degrees from Harvard University and UMass Amherst.



Craig Carnelia

Craig Carnelia is known for his book, *The Reason to Sing: A Guide to Acting While Singing*, having taught renowned classes in New York for 25 years to some of today's finest musical theatre actors, and master classes at such universities as CCM, Elon, and Northwestern. On Broadway, he wrote the lyrics for *Sweet Smell of Success* (composer Marvin Hamlisch, bookwriter John Guare) and *Imaginary Friends* (Hamlisch and Nora Ephron). As both composer and lyricist, Craig wrote the score for *Is There Life After High School?* and contributed four songs to *Working*. Off-Broadway and regionally, he wrote *Three Postcards* at Playwrights Horizons with Craig Lucas, *Poster Boy* at Williamstown Theatre Festival, and had world premieres at the Goodman, South Coast Rep, Old Globe, and Hartford Stage. Awards include two Tony nominations, two Drama Desk nominations, two "Best Plays" citations, the Johnny Mercer Award and the Kleban Award. He has served on the Council of The Dramatists Guild since 1995 and is married to actor/educator, Lisa Brescia.



Michael Donovan

Michael Donovan is a Los Angeles-based award-winning casting director (9 Artios Awards) known for a sharp eye for talent and a collaborative, actor-first approach. Working across film, television, and new media, he partners closely with writers, directors, and producers to build authentic ensembles that serve story and tone. Michael has cast over 1000+ theatre productions for professional regional theatres across the United States as well as several national tours, the annual Hollywood Bowl musicals, numerous films, TV series, and commercials. He has also produced productions in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City. Michael has taught courses at UCLA, USC, AFI, and Pepperdine, and currently serves as the President of the Board for the Foundation for New American Musicals (FNAM) and serves on the board for Camp Bravo.



Reginald L. Douglas

Reginald L. Douglas (he/him) is a director, producer, and educator dedicated to supporting new voices, and harnessing the power of theatre to connect community members. He currently serves as the Artistic Director of Mosaic Theater Company in Washington, DC, where his leadership has supported the development and production of new and contemporary plays by acclaimed writers including Dominique Morisseau, Psalmayene 24, Erika Dickerson-Despenza, Samuel D. Hunter, Ifa Bayeza, and more. In addition, he has directed new and classic work at theatres across the country, taught at several universities, and served on the Executive Committee of the National New Play Network’s Board of Directors for many years. Reginald is the recipient of the NTC’s Emerging Professional Award, the Georgetown University Legacy of a Dream Award, and in 2024, he was named “Washingtonian of the Year” by *Washingtonian Magazine*.



Micha Espinosa

Micha Espinosa is an internationally recognized teaching and performing artist, scholar, director, and coach working across acting, voice, and embodied practice. She is the award-winning editor of *Monologues for Latino Actors* and co-editor of *Scenes for Latinx Actors* and *Latinx Actor Training*—honored by the International Latino Book Awards and widely adopted. Her teaching spans the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Africa, with an emphasis on voice and somatic practice. Over the past decade, her research has been grounded in activism, feminist praxis, border consciousness, and social and climate justice. Professor Emerita of Voice and Acting at Arizona State University, she is now Professor of Acting and Directing at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



Patdro Harris

Patdro Harris is a director and choreographer celebrated for bold storytelling, musicality, and emotionally grounded movement. His work spans stage, film, and live events, blending cinematic visuals with precise, expressive choreography. Patdro is known for shaping performances that feel both technically sharp and deeply human, drawing out authenticity from artists at every level. He has directed extensively for such regional theatres including The Alliance Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Penumbra Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, and Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre Company. He choreographed the Tony Award-winning hit *A Raisin in the Sun* starring Sean Combs and Phylicia Rashad. Early in his career, he travelled the world as choreographer and lead dancer for Stevie Wonder. He was the recipient of the 2024 President’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



Allen Lee Hughes

Lighting Designer, Broadway designs include: *Home, Our Town, A Soldier's Play, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, Clybourne Park, Having Our Say, Mule Bone, Once on this Island, K2, Strange Interlude, Accidental Death of an Anarchist, and Quilters*. His work has been seen at major theatres including the McCarter Theatre, Seattle Rep, Goodman Theatre, Guthrie Theatre, and Mark Taper Forum. New York designs include work at Roundabout Theatre Company, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, New York Shakespeare Festival, and Lincoln Center Theater. He is proud to have been honored with four Tony nominations, Audelco and Ovation Award nominations, Outer Critics Circle Award, Joseph Maharam Award, USITT Distinguished Achievement Award in Lighting Design, Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration, two Helen Hayes awards and eight other Helen Hayes nominations. He is a professor at NYU Tisch and The Fellowship Program at Arena Stage bears his name.



Anita Maynard-Losh

Anita Maynard-Losh is the former Director of Community Engagement and Senior Artistic Advisor at Arena Stage where she led the theatre's education and outreach programs and served on the artistic team from 2004 to 2023. While at Arena Stage she worked on 40 productions, as director, associate director, or vocal/dialect coach. Her acting credits include work at Perseverance, CO Shakespeare Festival, and ACT. She directed/devised multiple international productions in Croatia, India, and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Prior to joining Arena Stage, Anita served as the Associate Artistic Director and Education Director for Perseverance Theatre, where she directed a bilingual adaptation of *Macbeth* set in the Tlingit culture, which toured Alaska, and was also performed at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. She also served as the dialect coach for the 2009 Broadway production of *Ragtime*.



Chris Parnell

Chris Parnell is an accomplished television executive with more than two decades of experience in creative development and programming at Sony Pictures Television and Apple TV+. In September 2025, he stepped into his current role as Executive Vice President of Originals at Paramount+, where he oversees the development and production of all original content, including the flagship Star Trek franchise. Collectively, the series he has helped develop in Los Angeles have garnered 146 Emmy nominations. Chris holds a BA in Theatre Performance from the University of Colorado Boulder and an MFA in Acting from the Asolo Conservatory in Florida. Despite his prominence in the television industry, he remains deeply connected to his theatrical roots, actively mentoring emerging artists through university theatre and film programs across the Los Angeles area.