

MOTHERLOSS

BY MYLAN GRAY DIRECTED BY LUDMILA DE BRITO

SHEILA AND HUGHES POTIKER THEATRE MAY 5-16

UC San Diego
school of ARTS AND HUMANITIES
THEATRE BANCE

WRITTEN BY MYLAN GRAY DIRECTED BY LUDMILA DE BRITO

CAST

Dwayne:

Regaie/ Chico:

Regaie/ Chico:

Germainne Lebrón

Reggie/ Chico: Germainne |
Bartum/ Old Man/ João/ Trader: Elliot

Bartum/ Old Man/ João/ Trader:

Nemasa/ Rainha:

Elliot Sagay

Nio Russell

Blue/ Mami Wata: Kara Mack

Miss/ Auntie 1/ Slaver/ Boy: Kylah Whittaker

Missus/ Market Person 1/ Trader 2/ Slaver/ Boy: Emelysse Parez

Chorus 1/ Market Person 3/ Slaver/ Boy: Mercedes Rockin

Chorus 2/ Auntie 2/ Trader 3/ Slaver/ Boy: Leah Mitchell

Chorus 3/ Market Person 3/ Slaver/ Boy: Emilia Molina

Understudies:

U/S Dwayne: Nio Russell

U/S Nemasa/ Rainha: Kylah Whittaker

U/S Missus/ Market Person 1/ Market Person 2/ Trader 2/

Chorus 2/ Boy/ Auntie 2/ Trader 3/ Chorus 3/ Slaver:

U/S Miss/ Auntie 1/ Chorus 1/ Market Person 3/ Boy/ Slaver:

Kelly Callejo
Omar Lopez

STAGE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Production Stage Manager:Stephanie CarrizalesAssistant Stage Manager:Rosemary MontoyaAssistant Stage Manager:Maya MelanconProduction Assistant:Mark FraleyProduction Assistant:Charlotte Yu

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright: Mylan Gray

Director:Ludmila de Brito

Assistant Director: Sparrow Naito

Assistant Director:

Jay Slomka

Choreographer: Ana María Álvarez

Assistant Choreographer: Vrisika Chauhan

Contributing Choreographer: Kara Mack

Dramaturg: Cambria Herrera **Dramaturg:** Emma Baker Scenic Designer: Muting Fan Costume Designer: Kimberly Kocol Lighting Designer. Spencer Duff Sound Designer. Scarlett Shi **Dramaturgy & Script Consultant:** Lamar Perry **Cultural Consultant:** Oluyemisi Bolonduro **Cultural Consultant:** Kara Mack Fight/Specials Coordinator. Zachariah Payne **Voice & Accent Coach:** Andrea Caban **EDI Advocate:** Aysan Celik

PRODUCTION / ADDITIONAL TEAM

Production Manager:

Technical Director:

Paints Supervisor:

Props Shop Supervisor:

Costume Shop Supervisor:

Jan Mah
Electrics Supervisor:

Audio & Video Supervisor:

Steve Negrete

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Motherloss by Mylan Gray is a ritual of grieving, an embodied meditation on kinship, centering Dwayne, a young Black boy living in an orphanage during Jim Crow East Texas, who sets out on a journey in search of his mother.

How do we reconnect with a lineage of ancestral resilience that is bigger than us?

How do we find the pathways that got buried?

What does it mean to find home?

And what is the cost of searching?

The rhythms of community, hope, and resilience transcend rhetoric -

Motherloss reminds me that, in the face of cyclical violence and displacement, our ancestors have repeatedly found ways to conjure a sense of home with those willing to build hope alongside us.

And that takes work.

Reminder to self: Roots sometimes need to be regrown- acknowledge the parts that have been severed.

Directing this play has been a gift; Mylan has written grief as love itself, which this team has worked rigorously to embody with truth and depth - think communion through movement and heart.

Our hope for you, who has chosen to join us today, is that this ritual invites you to embark on a journey, giving yourself permission to laugh and grieve -

And, by the end of it, may the transformative power of remembering urge you to reconnect.

- Then.... Chop Chop!

DRAMATURGY NOTE

A system of slavery demands forgetting.

Forgetting names.

Forgetting language.

Forgetting kindness, humanity, and the dignity that comes with our true legacy.

Forgetting our sacred duty to care for each other.

But to resist, we must remember. And to remember, we must dance.

With *Motherloss*, Mylan Gray offers a smoke signal of survival, a journey of remembrance through dance and grief. This story insists the body can remember what the mind forgot, and that rhythm speaks names that were never passed down. In every Texas swamp, African ocean, Brazilian river the young orphan Dwayne encounters, he feels traces of the many others who have suffered, grieved, and endured. The forgetting was never complete.

Finding one's origins means much more than locating a few ancestors in space and time. It is a process of reckoning with injustice that has been done and truths that might feel too terrible to face. However, the Yoruban spiritual traditions carried through the transatlantic slave trade teach us that the ancestors are energy, present in the living world. The ocean's other names in the African diaspora include *Yemaya* and *Mami Wata*: energy of the divine mother who knows great love and great loss. Through seeking her energy, even those without access to a mother, can learn how to love through the grief of life and history.

This gift of love — as boundless and nourishing as the sea — is not just for our blood family. It is for all of our neighbors, the friends who show up at the right time, and even the people we don't yet know we need. Love is a dance and the partner is anyone placed in our path.

Joining the dance is a practice. Every time we make that choice, we open up new possibilities for ourselves and those we care about. No one suffers alone. Mami Wata teaches us that it is not too late —

not to grieve, not to heal, not to reach for one another. In a world that would prefer that we turn away, we have to have the courage to hold one another. Community is the beginning of possibility.

In choosing to remember together, we begin to write our future.

- Emma Baker and Cambria Herrera, *Motherloss* Co-Dramaturgs

CONTENT WARNINGS

- Depiction of and discussion of slavery
- Depiction of and discussion of suicide
- Theatrical gunshot sound

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Mylan Gray (they/he) is an Eagle Scout and State debate champion turned playwright. He is a descendant of black educators and soldiers and is preoccupied with transforming Black suffering into Black joy, laughter and peace. He has received the Lorraine Hansberry Award from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for his play, Buried in Blood. His work has been developed by the Cygnet theater, Tank Theater, the Workshop Theater, the Kansas City Public Theater, the Whim Theater Company, the Mid-America Theater Conference, and the Writing Downtown Residency in Las Vegas. He is a graduate of Stanford University, where he received the Kennell Jackson Jr. Award. Mylan's work draws on his deep reverence for Brazil and a penchant for spiritual journeying. He is a co-producer of the LIT Council of the Tank Theater. Commissions include: Cygnet Theater and La Jolla Playhouse. He is currently a third-year MFA student in Playwriting at UC San Diego.

UC- San Diego Credits include: 809 Almond (WNPF '24), BOXED (WNPF '23), Buried in Blood (staged reading), and Tú no Estas Solo (In Collaboration with Chicanx Teatro Ensemble).

THE DIRECTOR

Ludmila de Brito (she/hers) is a certified sea kayak guide turned director from Brazil. She believes in the transformative power of our stories. Her heart steers towards politically urgent work and plays that ask us to transcend the conditioning of surviving. "When do we start living?"

Most recently, Ludmila directed The Promise by José Rivera, The Rogue's Trial by Ariano Suassuna, The Half Sibling Play by Agyeiwaa Asante, Grippy Sock Vacation by Beth Hyland, Comedy of Errors and Emily J. Daly's episode of the MTARadioPlays (Rattlestick). Ludy Co directed Project Transform (Hartford Stage) with Nilaja Sun. United World Colleges and NTI alum, Ludmila is a Lin Manuel Miranda Family Fellow. Assisting credits include Knud Adams at the La Jolla Playhouse, Jenna Worsham in *The Siblings Play* by Ren Dara Santiago at Rattlestick and Megan Sandberg-Zakian in *Much Ado* at the Boston Common. As an educator, she has worked with Westerville South Theatre, Hartford Stage, and the National Theater Institute at the O'Neill.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Ana María Alvarez, a 2020 Doris Duke Artist and an inaugural Dance/USA Artist Fellow, is a prolific choreographer, skilled dancer, masterful teaching artist, and movement activist who has achieved multiple accolades for her dynamic works. Her thesis work explored the abstraction of Latine dance, specifically Salsa, as a way to express social resistance as related to the U.S. immigration battle. This work became the impetus for founding CONTRA-TIEMPO Activist Dance Theater in 2005 in Los Angeles. Her most recent work with the company, jazúcar! was commissioned by APAP Arts Forward and NC State Live in Raleigh, NC. She will continue to work with CONTRA-TIEMPO on further developing the work as part of Jacob's Pillow, Pillow Lab, in February 2024 and will work with local dancers as part of WinterWorks 2024. After this, jazúcar! will be shared as part of the 20th season of Art & Power at UCSD in Spring 2024.

Alvarez and CONTRA-TIEMPO have continued to tour "joyUS justUS" (2017). This signature work is a radical celebration of humanity and the feminine, centering joy as a more loving and just future is imagined. Herwork has been presented in theaters across the country and the world, including in Germany, Bulgaria, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and El Salvador. She was selected as the 2018 BiNational Artist in Residence, connecting communities in the Sonoran Desert, Phoenix (U.S.), Douglas (U.S.), Tucson (U.S.), and Agua Prieta (M.X.), through leading artistic workshops, collaborative performances, and public talks, and concluding with a performance at the U.S.-Mexico border. Alvarez and CONTRA-TIEMPO were also invited to represent the best of American Contemporary Dance Abroad through The Obama Administration's U.S. Department of State cultural exchange program, produced by BAM, DanceMotionUSA. In the Fall of 2022, Alvarez was invited to join the UC San Diego Theatre and Dance Department as a tenured faculty member. In this exciting new chapter of her career, Alvarez, in collaboration with her colleagues and students, is imagining and designing a new future for embodied performance and practice at UCSD.

Alvarez has been recognized with a number of awards and grants including NEFA's National Dance Project, the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, LA City Department of Cultural Affairs, Los Angeles County and the California Arts Council among others.

She is the recipient of the Mujeres Destacadas award from LA Opinion and a Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival Rainbow Award for her work with CONTRA-TIEMPO called "Agua

Furiosa." She received a Bachelor of Arts in Dance and Politics from Oberlin College and a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. Alvarez lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children.

CAST

Kelly Callejo (Understudy Chorus) is a fifth-year dance major and Asian American Pacific Islander studies minor. UC San Diego credits: joyUS justUS (CONTRA-TIEMPO Activist Dance Theatre), WinterWorks '24, The Walk Amal with Little Amal/Reflexiones Compartidas (UCSD T&D Co-Laboratory with the UCSD Center for Global Justice and Casa Familiar Community Station). Kelly is thrilled and grateful to join this beautiful process, and team, for the world-premiere and production of Motherloss.

Germainne Lebrón (Reggie/Chico) UC San Diego credits include: The Promise by Jose Rivera, Romeo and Juliet, 809 Almond (Wagner New Play Festival 24), Hedda Gabler, The Rogues Trial. Regional theatre credits include: Derecho (La Jolla Playhouse) La Gringa (American Stage); Native Gardens (The Warehouse Theatre), The Inheritance (Trinity Rep); Eight Tales of Pedro (The Secret Theatre), Dead Man's Cell Phone (Cahill Theatre), Madre Tierra (Louisville, Kentucky, USA; Fifth Third Banks), Dracula, A Christmas Carol (Actors Theatre of Louisville), Are You There? (Humana Festival of New American Plays '20). Education: second-year MFA student at UC San Diego. (He/him) Instagram: @Germainne_lebron Website: Germainnelebron.com

Kara Mack (Mother/Mami Watta) is a performing artist, singer/songwriter, choreographer, and a 2nd year UCSD Dance Professor. Kara Mack is a creative force, with an intentional expertise in African Diasporic music and dance. As a dancer Kara has performed on several award shows including the Grammys, NAACP Image Awards, The BET Awards, and the Billboard Music Awards. As a choreographer, recent credits include COMING TO AMERICA 2 (Assistant Choreographer) as well as a contributing choreographer and Dance consultant on THE COLOR PURPLE MUSICAL Movie. Other notable credits include assisting Industry-Leading Choreographer Fatima Robinson on Kendrick Lamar's iconic performance at the 58th Grammy Awards, Busta Rhymes' performance at the 2021 MTV VMA's, and Freeform's GOOD TROUBLE, Gwen Stefani's performance on "The Voice", co-choreographing Chance the Rapper's performance on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE; as well as projects with the NBA, Disney, NBC, and Fox and being Margot Robbie's Movement Coach for the movie "Babylon". Kara is the founder of Africa in America®, which serves as a primary resource for professionals and participants of African Diasporic music, dance, arts & culture in America. Her passion and expertise have led her to teach all over the nation including The Debbie Allen Dance Academy.

Leah Mitchell (Auntie #2 / Chorus) is a fourth-year theatre major from Diamond Bar, CA. UC San Diego credits: Hedda Gabbler (ALD), Star Crossed Lovers (Honors Thesis '24), Dripping in Honey (Staged Reading, Honors Thesis '24), Cancelina (ASM/WNPF '24), Can You See it Too? (Winter LABS '24), X, Orlando, 900 Years (WNPF '23), 45 Minutes of Chaos! (Staged Reading, Winter LABS '23), Luck Games (Fall LABS '22). Select credits: As You Like It (BADA), Evelyn Hates

Porkchops (Zombie Joe's Underground Theatre Group). This will be her final production at UC San Diego! (she/her)

Emilia Molina (Chorus/Boys/Market Person & Fight Captain) is a third-year transfer theater major from Tijuana. Past credits: The Cradle Will Rock (Southwestern College), Psycho Beach Party (Southwestern College), Mojada (Centro Cultural de la Raza) and The Rogues Trial (UC San Diego). She is forever thankful to her family and friends, gracias por todo. Her heart always remains with those who have been displaced. @emiliaamolina

Emelysse Paez (Chorus/Missus)- is a third-year transfer student. This is her first department show here at the University of California San Diego and she is so grateful and ecstatic for the opportunity to create with so many talented artists! Paez's credits include Rent (Mimi) Footloose (Ariel) and Steel Magnolias (Shelby). She wants to thank Ludmila for putting faith in her and her support system back home for always cheering her on! Enjoy this beautiful new production! Xo

Mercedes Rockin (Chorus/Boys/Market Person/Trader/Slaver) is a fifth-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: The Rogue's Trial (Mary), A Comedy of Errors (Duke Solinus), The Promise (Woman in the Shroud). Other credits: The Five Bards of Desente (Company157 Fall '24), Dripping in Honey (Spring LABS '24), Can You See It Too? (Winter LABS '24), Another College Musical (UCSD Triton TV). She is so proud to share the culmination of her last quarter's work with everyone and hopes you all enjoy the show! (she/her) @rockin.theworld

Nio Russell (Nemasa/Rainha) is a fourth year Developmental Psych Major. Regional: The Hunter S. Thompson Musical (La Jolla Playhouse), The Color Purple (New Village Arts), Little Women (Moxie Theatre), Our Dear Dead Drug Lord (Moxie Theatre). Muir Musical credits: Footloose (Ren), Something Rotten (Shakespeare), The Rocky Horror Show (Janet), The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Rona Lisa Peretti). Their work on this show is dedicated to their momma.

Elliot Sagay* (Bartum, Old Man, et al.) is a second-year MFA student from Irvine, CA. UC San Diego credits: Vinegar Tom (Jack), No Singin' in the Navy (Sailor 2), X (Clark), Orlando (Archduke/Archduchess). Regional: we are continuous (Diversionary Theatre); As You Like It, Hamlet (Santa Cruz Shakespeare); Passing Strange (Theo Ubique); A Christmas Carol (Indiana Repertory Theatre); The Magnolia Ballet (About Face Theatre); The Last Pair of Earlys (Raven Theatre); Call Me Madam (Porchlight Music Theatre). Film: "Chicago Med". Elliot graduated from Northwestern University with a BA in Theatre, a Musical Theatre Certificate, and a concentration in playwriting. (he/him) @elliot_sagay

Nate B Smith (Dwayne) is a fourth-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: Rogues Trial, Half Sibling Play, WinterWorks '25 (Martin Luther King Jr.), The Promise Other credit: N at Point Loma Playhouse, Amelie at El Camino College, Spring Awakening at El Camino College. Keep in touch with him @natebsmith03 on all platforms.

Kylah Whittaker (Chorus/ Understudy Nemasa) is a fourth-year theatre and dance double major. UC San Diego Credit: New Directions

Other Credit: The Laramie Project, Hamlet (Saddleback College), School of Lies, Macbeth (California State University Fullerton), Who's The Boss, and The Women of the Enlightenment

Omar Lopez (Understudy Chorus) is a first-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: Winterworks 2025 (dancer)

*Appears by permission of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

STAGE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Stephanie Carrizales (Production Stage Manager) is a recent MFA graduate from UCSD. She earned her BA in Theatre Arts with an emphasis in Tech and Design from California State University, Fresno. UC San Diego Credits: The Promise (PSM), A Flea in Her Rear (PSM), Inside Out, Dance (PSM), New Directions, Dance (PSM), Fifty Boxes of Earth (PSM), Everybody (ASM), Men on Boats (ASM). CSU, Fresno credits: Anonymous (PSM), Contemporary Dance Ensemble's: Moving Through the Static, Dance (PSM), Just Like Us (PSM), Lydia (ASM), Select credits: Redwood (La Jolla Playhouse, SM Resident), Crime & Punishment (The Old Globe, PA), What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank (The Old Globe, Script PA), So You've Think You've Seen Dance (SM, Lively Arts Foundation), The Little Mermaid (ASM, Centerstage Clovis).

Mark Fraley (Production Assistant) is a first-year theatre major. Other credits: Footloose (Muir Musical); Salt, The Bench Play, Honor the Thief, Hallow (Company 157).

Maya Melancon (Assistant Stage Manager) is a fourth-year theatre major. She is so excited to be working on this beautiful production with everyone. UC San Diego credits: Vinegar Tom (Asst. Props), Hedda Gabler (PA), New Directions (PA). Other Credits: Muir Musical Footloose (Props), Company 157 Honor the Thief (Props), Muir Musical Something Rotten (Props), and Company 157 Women in Rubber (Props).

Rosemary Montoya (Assistant Stage Manager) is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: Motherloss (ASM), Rogues Trial (PA), and Hallow (SM). Other selected credits: The Commedia Aladdin (AD), The Fisherman and His Wife (SM), Snow White: A British Panto (ASM), and Decision Height (deck crew) (Sacramento City College); Romeo & Juliet, and Another As You Like It (Sacramento Shakespeare Festival).

Charlotte Yu (Production Assistant) is a third-year theatre major and education studies minor. She's going to graduate this Spring! UC San Diego credits: Briyumba Congo-WinterWorks(dancer), Gone Missing(u/s), Can We Kick It? - WinterWorks (Dancer), Love is the Greater Labyrinth (Narrator, chorus), Who Hurt You?(Alex, Ly), 809 Almond (Assistant Director), The Comedy of Errors (Puppetry Designer), A Flea in Her Rear (Guanli), Family Dinner. Yay(Aunt Zeena). Other Credits: Salty Water (Blindspot Collective). Charlotte is very grateful to be a part in

her last UCSD Theatre Department Show and would like to thank everyone who was involved in the Motherloss production.

CREATIVE TEAM

Emma Baker (Dramaturg) is a third-year theatre major. UC San Diego credits: Baby Shower Katie, Gone Missing. Other credits: Driven (Company 157 Winter New Play Festival), HALLOW (UCSD Lab Series Fall 24), once (Domino One Productions), Twelfth Night (Eight Ball Theatre), Our American Tragedy (Sunny Gingham), The Courage to Right a Woman's Wrongs (LACC Theatre Academy).

Oluyemisi Bolonduro (Cultural Consultant) is a second-year MFA student. UC San Diego: Motherloss.

Andrea Caban (Accent Coach) is new faculty in the Department of Theatre and Dance. She is an accent/dialect coach for film and theatre, and a public speaking coach. She collaborated with Francis Ford Coppola on his career opus film Megalopolis. Other recent coaching credits include Appropriate (Old Globe), Three Summers of Lincoln (La Jolla Playhouse), The Truth About Jellyfish (Berkeley Rep) and several seasons at the Tony Award-winning South Coast Repertory Theatre (Absurd Person Singular, Chinglish, Death of a Salesman, Madwomen in a Volvo & Peter and the Starcatcher). Co- Director and designated Master Teacher of Knight-Thompson Speechwork™; she is known internationally as a teacher of accent teachers. She has co-written two books on the subject: Experiencing Speech: A Skills-based, Panlingual Approach to Actor Training and Experiencing Accents: A Knight-Thompson Speechwork Guide for Acting in Accent. Her award-winning research on adapting actor voice and accent training for the care of people living with ALS to prolong their ability to speak without assistive devices is ongoing. She served as Head of Voice and Speech at CSULB for 11 years earning the rank of Full Professor and the 2024 Distinguished Faculty Scholarly and Creative Achievement Award. MFA, UC Irvine. andreacaban.com

Vrisika Chauhan (Assistant Choreographer) is a fourth-year double major in psychology and dance from Hayward, CA. Through her time at UC San Diego has gotten to learn and express herself through various different dance forms, growing a passion for storytelling through her choreography. UC San Diego credits include: New Directions; choreographer and dancer (2023), Walk with Amal with UC San Diego Center for Global Justice (2023), Winter Works; Can We Kick it? and jazúcar! (2024), New Directions; Bolo Azadi! choreographer and dancer (2024), Winter Works; Briyumba Congo (2025). Other credits: The Guardians of Water; dance film by Marcos Duran (2023), Holiday video card with The California Endowment LA & CONTRA-TIEMPO Dance Activist Theater (2023), jazucar! by CONTRA-TIEMPO Dance Activist Theater; Community Cast Member (2024), joyUS justUS by CONTRA-TIEMPO Dance Activist Theater; Community Cast Member (2024), Kaleidoscope short film; SAG credited; choreographed by Kara Mack (2025).

Muting Fan is a first-year MFA scenic design student from Beijing, China. His selected design credits include: WinterWorks (Potiker Theatre); It Doesn't Matter What You Look Like (National Theatre of China), Alibaba and the Forty Thieves (Poly Theatre), and Waiting for Godot (Central Academy of Drama).

Cambria Herrera (Dramaturg) is a UC San Diego MFA Alumnus and Community and Outreach Coordinator in Latin American Studies and Sociology. UC San Diego credits: 900 Years, blu, 50 Boxes of Earth, In the Red and Brown Water, and Twelfth Night. Regional: When My Body Talks, Drive (Diversionary Theatre @ LJP's WOW Festival); Our Dear Dead Drug Lord (Crave Theatre), and Allelo (Art Produce: Artist Residency).

Sparrow Naito (Assistant Director) is a third-year theater major and marine biology minor. UC San Diego credits: Romeo & Juliet, Orlando, New Directions, Neha and Neel, Bunny Bunny. Other credit: Merry Wives of Windsor, Spamalot, Little Shop of Horrors.

Jerson Rivas (Assistant Sound Designer) is a fifth-year icam major and computer science minor. UC San Diego credits: The Bench Play

Scarlett Shi (Sound Designer & Co-Composer) is a first-year MFA student. Her selected sound design credits include: Describe the Night(UCSD), ASCENT (Bangwan Theatre, Wuzhen), Jin Hua Jin Hua (Tiangiao Performing Arts Centre) and The Lady with the Dog (Central Academy of Drama). She holds a BFA in Performing Art Sound Design from the Central Academy of Drama.

Jay Slomka (Assistant Director) is a fourth year literature & writing major and theatre minor. UC San Diego credits: Romeo & Juliet, Hallow, I'm Really Glad I Got to Know You. Other credits: Honor the Thief, Memory, Into the Woods.

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