

VILLAGE KEEPER PRESS KIT

Village Keeper is an understated drama with anchoring notes of social realism. It is the feature film, directorial debut from Karen Chapman (*Measure*, *Quiet Minds*, *Silent Streets*, & *They Should Be Flowers*) based on her short film, *Measure*. It stars Olunike Adeliyi (*The Fire Inside*, *Mike*, & *The Porter*), Zahra Bentham (*Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker*, *Star Trek: Discovery*), Micah Mensah-Jat�e (*Home Free*), and Maxine Simpson, a retired nurse, Grandmother, and first time actor.

The film was written by Karen Chapman and produced by Enrique Miguel Baniqued and Chapman. Executive producers include Christina Piovesan (*French Exit*), Floyd Kane (*Orah*), Taj Critchlow (*40 Acres*), Susana Ferreira (*Hip Hop Evolution*), Molly McGlynn (*Fitting In*), Jordan Oram (*Spiral: The Book of Saw*, *Drake-God's Plan*), Lora Campbell (*Two Penny Road Kill*), and d'bi.young anitafrika (*Da Kink In My Hair*).

Village Keeper was filmed in Toronto, Canada in June 2023.

Canadian distribution is being handled by Level Film and CBC is the Canadian broadcasting partner.

Cinematography by Jordan Oram, production design by June Charles (*Lost Jen*), costume design by Charlene Akuamoah (*40 Acres*), and editing by Christopher Minns (*Letterkenny*, *Ginny and Georgia*), Jordan Hayles (*Run the Burbs*) and Xi Feng (*Sing Me A Lullaby*, *Lucky Star*).

Village Keeper is produced by Smallaxx Motion Pictures and is funded with financial participation from Telefilm Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, and The Canada Media Fund.

SYNOPSIS

Village Keeper follows a family grappling with secrets that uphold domestic abuse and unresolved rage. After life's precarious scale tips her fortune back into poverty, Jean relocates her children with their grandmother to the community housing project where she grew up.

Jean lives in constant fear of everything that could go wrong, going to great lengths to shelter her children, so when a spree of violence comes to her doorstep, she secretly cleans an abandoned crime scene, which unknowingly leads her on a path that exposes generational chains of silence, self-discovery and finally putting herself first.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Writer and director Karen Chapman has been carrying the concept for *Village Keeper* of a family grappling with the aftermath of violence for most of her adult life.

Working in documentary for years, Chapman found momentum moving to narrative through the Director's Lab at the Canadian Film Centre, where she made an abbreviated version of the script into a narrative short film, *Measure*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and won the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and Golden Globes Residency Award.

Village Keeper follows Jean, a widow and a mother of two, who has been running on autopilot for some time. We meet her at her lowest point. She's a former dancer who has lost her love of dance and can't even bring herself to listen to music. Denying her own needs is an acceptable cost of putting all her energy into caring for others, in particular her daughter, her son, and her mother. Only when she notices her daughter is not okay that she realizes that if she can't fill her own cup, she can't fill her daughter's cup.

And so, Jean takes herself, as Chapman describes it, on an "eat, pray, love" journey to become herself again so she can be an example for her daughter and her family and her community. "It's more important to find happiness where you are rather than waiting for a future that may never come. Seeing her daughter face mental health challenges that she can relate to, is what flips the switch in her mind to change." says producer Enrique Miguel Baniqued.

Jean's relationship with her children is fueled by fear that her children will make decisions similar to those of their parents. As a mother, Jean is overprotective and unwilling to relinquish the maternal grip even though she's stifling them. The peculiar thing about parental fear is that when you project it onto children, they shut down even more.

Jean's relationship with her mother, Brenda, is just as complicated. Chapman explained, "Relationships with mothers are loaded, for many, many reasons so many things are left unsaid. Jean has this opportunity to poke the bear a little bit and approach her mother in a way that she never has before." Through trial and tumultuous error, it works, and the two women open up to one another, seeing each other not just as mother and daughter, but as people.

"This lyrical, complicated film, aims to speak to the cultural and generational shadows of unresolved violence against women and the remnants of rage that it leaves with us," said Chapman. "The world we're creating in *Village Keeper* has a particular kind of nuance and levity, despite being a journey through grief. Rather than being autobiographical, it is observational. We talk a lot about the things that we carry generationally and the things that we pass down generationally. Families never actually talk about issues that lie underneath the surface. Having an opportunity to untangle things has been an honor."

Additional notes

Village Keeper is a quiet meditation on class and the demoralizing daily pursuit of upward mobility. It's a generational narrative that delves into the longstanding effects that violence has on children and families while illuminating a mother's enduring love. Remarkably, director, Karen Chapman, was eight and a half months pregnant when principal photography began. Despite the physical demands of pregnancy, Karen led her team to a safe and successful shoot. Her unwavering dedication to and commitment to the project exemplify the very resilience and fortitude the film seeks to portray. Chapman's experience in documentary added a profound layer of authenticity to the film's exploration of maternal strength, making the storytelling even more impactful and genuine.

Adding to the film's rich tapestry, *Village Keeper* features song appearances from Juno Award-winning Toronto artists such as Mustafa, Kirk Diamond, Zenesoul, and Trinidadian soca recording artist Machel Montano. These musical contributions enhance the film's emotional depth and cultural resonance, creating a powerful and immersive experience for the audience.

CASTING

JEAN

"To have such a talented cast embodying each role and hardworking, thoughtful crew mates, makes me feel tremendously empowered. I thrive on being creatively collaborative so working with an actor like Olunike Adeliyi has been like playing, frankly. She's such a generous, creative partner. I've learned so much by observing and trusting her." -Karen Chapman

Adeliyi sees her character as more than a daughter, mother, and widow but as a member of a community. Deep down, she's a traumatized woman who is looking for her liberation through her kids, through her environment, and maybe even accessing her own life.

"The title of the film, *Village Keeper*, is what Jean becomes," observed Adeliyi who felt endearingly about the concept. Both Jean and her mother, Brenda, are the keepers of the village. It's a generational role as is a mother who lacks the instinct of caring for themselves.

Jean carries great shame in having to move back into the Village after her husband is killed and she resents the community deeply. But she learns to hold less judgment, putting effort into preserving the place and the people who raised her. At first glance, the community of Village is made up of struggling, working-class people, it is underfunded and plagued with violence. But with a longer glance, as Jean learns, the Village is fueled by kind and generous neighbors, "people here take care of each other here."

As much as *Village Keeper* is a community story, it is also an intergenerational story of women who have passed down traditions and culture, but also trauma. "This is a story about how they intertwine with each other," Adeliyi explained. "Through the characters of Grandma Brenda, Jean, and Tamika, you can see how trauma passes from one generation to the next. What I find with Jean is that she's trying to figure out how to stop this, but she doesn't know

how to go about it because she's fighting against so many learned habits. Along the way, it is her daughter, Tamika, who helps her find her liberation, her freedom. Tamika's generation is trying to end generational curses. I find that the young people in today's world, starting with Gen X, more so with Millennials, and even more so with Gen Z, are trying to put a stop to this. The things that traumatized us in the past are no longer ok. I like how that is portrayed in the film because cutting off generational trauma applies to all classes and all races, all creeds."

When Adeliyi takes on a role, she likes to draw on her own life to play characters: "It's simpler. Besides, I come from a long line of ancestral storytellers. I do this work to honor them and to honor our stories. I haven't been through abuse, but I know many who have. I align with Jean in that I am a mother and I have a daughter, a grown woman now. I was a single mother and had the help and support from the other mothers, aunts, and grandmothers in my family. And I can also relate to wanting children to do well in life and to be able to give back to the world. I think everyone wants that for their kids."

The process of shooting this film was made all that much easier because Adeliyi and Chapman clicked immediately on their meeting. "There's a beautiful thing about Black women. When we come together, we hold each other up, and we create such beauty in the world," she stated. "We create a safe space for people to experience life, tell their stories, and heal. So, when Karen and I met, I saw this as a chance to go on a healing journey with her. Karen's style is not different whether she's doing a documentary or a narrative. The medium is different, but she's telling a story that we, as Black women, can experience. She trusts us. I like her relaxed nature of allowing the actors to do the job that they came to do. Her style is creating an environment where actors can follow their instincts. You, as an actor, know the story. It's in your body."

GRANDMA BRENDA

Maxine Simpson is not an actor. She's never been on camera ever. A nurse by profession, she's a friend of the Chapman family. "Grandma's one of my favorite characters. I've always wanted to mix actors and non-actors, so for Maxine to be grounded in lived authenticity, the role of Grandma belongs in this world already, we've just built around it," noted Chapman. "It takes a great deal of bravery for someone who's never acted to walk onto a film set. I was so excited when Maxine said yes to the project, she's done a phenomenal job."

Simpson thinks it was a complete fluke that she got the part, but it was worth it. "Brenda has similarities I see in myself - and differences. I'm not as flamboyant as her, but once I put on the wardrobe, I could feel her. She's spontaneous and when she wants to say something, she just says it. I'm not like that. I like her tenacity, her strength."

Simpson's take on the script and characters is fascinating. She relates to all of it with fresh eyes that connect with the veracity of the story rather than through the acting process because she's seen it all before in real life. Having been raised by her grandmother and understanding how grandmothers are often the backbone of the family, she recognized Grandma B's difficulty in accepting her daughter, Jean, as an adult. She also relates to meddling in her children's lives. Equally important is the whole idea of secrets. "Everything is a secret. Everything. Oh, it's a disgrace. You shouldn't talk about this. This is a family secret. And there's a lot of that in our culture. This story takes you through a life experience. I recognize this as a regular story of a family because my parents used to live in Ontario housing.

Regardless of where you live, Simpson maintained, "Your family's the first foundation and in your family, it is a community. We have all our different characters in it, and in every family I've met, the same characters exist. Community is very important because it takes a village. In African culture, it's a village that raises a child. In Jamaica, when I was growing up and going to school, if we didn't say good morning to Mr. Smith, by the time we got home, our parents knew we had disrespected Mr. Smith. Community is very important because they look out for one another. They look out for your children. I think that's what's missing now. The village is not raising the child anymore." Chapman concluded, "Trauma is such an overused word, but still, it lives in us, it hides. We carry it around and try to compartmentalize it, but it often overflows. So what are we left with? And I think that this film examines the aftermath of the overflow. I'm fascinated with the 'after' and how people put themselves back together again and how they find beautiful ways to be kind to one another."

TAMIKA

Jean's daughter, Tamika, is brimming with swagger and proud self-determination. Zahra Bentham takes on this role with relish, embodying the 'I can take care of myself' attitude: "Tamika is such a hardworking person, even though it seems that she's sometimes misunderstood by her mom. At her core, she has such a gentle heart, and she wants good for people and for her family. She's a hustler and very smart." This is different from her younger brother, Tristan, played by Micah Mensah-Jatoo, who lives in a world of his own and has a stronger bond with his grandmother, especially since his father died.

The complicated relationship Tamika has with her mother stems from the fact that she hasn't told her mother that she knows the truth about the abuse. "There's a flashback moment in the film where Tamika, as a young child, sees her father abuse her mother," Bentham explained, "and this is a secret Tamika has kept for many, many years."

Now, 21 years old and exhausted by living with the awkward elephant in the room, the situation comes to a head. "She loves her mom a lot and wants to protect her. It's all about the daughter protecting the mother, and the mother protecting the daughter. And then there's the important conversation between Tamika and Jean where, for the first time, Tamika says, 'I knew all along and I've been lying to my brother, I've been lying to you. I haven't openly spoken about it until now.' And you can see the budding of something really, really special. It's an opportunity for the relationship to truly blossom. And it's beautiful to see."

Working with Chapman has been an important experience for Bentham because the director went out of her way to ensure, right from the first table read, that the set was a safe space for the actors. "Karen was very clear that she wanted everyone to be comfortable and if anyone had any feelings or emotions that they should voice it and it would be heard."

Village Keeper also gave Bentham the chance to work with Olunike Adeliyi, something both women had been hoping to do for a very long time. "I'm so grateful to be working with Olunike and to be able to talk in between takes, finding those special moments of getting to know her more. It's been such a treat. During one of our really heavy scenes, we had the chance to speak about the abuse. She shared things that had happened in her life, and I shared what had happened in mine and how it was relevant to the story. She's such an amazing actress and she gave me the confidence to move forward for myself in any other job, to find the process of how to come from an honest place, and to know that you're secure and you're safe to do that. She did that for me."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

KAREN CHAPMAN (Writer/Director/Producer) At the service of every story, award-winning filmmaker Karen Chapman strives to center work that is grounded in storytelling and impact. Chapman holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University and is an alumnus of the Norman Jewison's Canadian Film Centre's - Director's Lab, the Banff Centre for the Arts, Women in the Director's Chair, and the CaribbeanTales Incubator Pitch Winner, HotDocs Accelerator, The TIFF Talent Lab, TIFF Accelerator and Every Story Accelerator. She is also a recipient of the 2023 Micki Moore Fellowship.

Her Canadian Film Centre's thesis film, *Measure*, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019 and won the International Hollywood Foreign Press and Residency Award at the 2020 Golden Globe Awards as well as the CineFilm's Best Overall Film, and Best Directing in 2020 at the Women in Film and Television - Toronto Showcase. Chapman's *Quiet Minds Silent Streets* premiered at the 2022, Toronto International Film Festival and received the award for best Documentary at the Canadian Film Festival along with winning Best Mental Health, Non-Fiction Film at the Yorkton Film Festival and a Silver Medal at the 2024 Anthem Awards.

ENRIQUE MIGUEL BANIQUED (Producer) Enrique's journey began as an enterprising force at De La Salle University Manila, where he sparked his passion for innovation and entrepreneurship. His move to Toronto in 2020 followed a groundbreaking startup venture, where he transformed everyday products for students and corporations, showcasing his innate talent for revolutionizing the ordinary. Embracing the power of storytelling, Baniqued helped produce the *Soul Surfer's Podcast*, aiming to spotlight the environmental battle against a looming coal plant in a serene surf town. His dedication made the podcast a catalyst for change, successfully halting construction by early 2021.

Today, Baniqued's creative brilliance shines through collaborations with prestigious Toronto entities such as Destination Toronto, the City of Toronto, FIFA WORLD CUP, UFC, TIFF, NHL, The Michelin Guide, The Academy, The JUNOS, and CBC's Family Feud Canada, as well as various local commercial production companies. Inspired by the global resonance of South Korean cinema, he strives to replicate that success with Filipino stories, aiming to bring captivating & entertaining narratives to audiences worldwide. Baniqued's journey exemplifies storytelling's power as a force for change, underscoring his commitment to amplifying underrepresented stories. Enrique is also a recipient of the 2023 Micki Moore Fellowship and TIFF Every Story Accelerator.

Producer Enrique Miguel Baniqued first met Chapman as a production assistant on her film, *Quiet Minds, Silent Streets*.

CHRISTINA PIOVESAN (Executive Producer) is a leading independent producer responsible for award-winning, internationally distributed productions. In 2022 she was named Producer of the Year by Playback Magazine. In partnership with Elevation Pictures, recent feature films include Brandon Cronenberg's *Infinity Pool*, Azazel Jacobs' *French Exit*, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, *The Nest* directed by Sean Durkin, and *Alice, Darling* directed by Mary Nighy. On the television front, under her production banner First Generation Films, Christina worked with best-selling author Kate Beaton to adapt her book to series, *Pinecone & Pony* for

DreamWorks Animation which ran for two successful seasons on Apple TV and won a Children's Emmy Award. More recent productions include *Home Sweet Rome!* for BBC and Family Channel, as well as a five-part limited series adapted from Jeff Lemire's cult graphic novel *Essex County* starring Molly Parker for CBC/ITV Studios. Christina is a member of the CMPA, PGA, and the AMPAS.

FLOYD KANE (Executive Producer) started his career as an entertainment lawyer working on productions such as the long-running satirical news program *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and the Oscar-winning documentary, *Bowling For Columbine*. He transitioned into writing with his creation of the half-hour CBC drama *North/South*. Since that time, Floyd has written for a range of series, including *Continuum*, *Slasher*, and *Backstage* as well as producing several feature films, including the award-winning *Across the Line*, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, and *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*. Floyd is the creator, showrunner, and executive producer for the CBC drama, *Diggstown*. Most recently, he produced two feature films, *Orah* and *Cafe Daughter*. In 2019, he received the Sandi Ross Award from ACTRA Toronto, recognizing individuals striving to create a more inclusive media industry.

JORDAN ORAM (Executive Producer/Cinematographer) a Toronto-born cinematographer transforms the dynamic world of visual storytelling with his distinctive flair for amplifying the ordinary. His work spans features, television, shorts, music videos, and commercials, each project weaving culture and authenticity into every frame. Known for his acute sense of purpose and dedication to progress, Jordan captures life's essence, transforming everyday subtleties into bold visual narratives that resonate deeply with audiences. Jordan's remarkable work in *The Porter*, which won Best Photography, and Drama at the 2023 Canadian Screen Awards, features stars like Aml Ameen and Alfre Woodard. His filmography includes the thrilling *Spiral: From the Book of Saw*, starring Samuel L. Jackson and Chris Rock, and *When Morning Comes*, directed by Kelly Fyffe-Marshall, which debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2022.

Beyond his cinematic ventures, Jordan's work extends to impactful music videos like *God's Plan* by Drake, which earned him the Best Music Video of the Year 2018, offering a spectacular insight into themes of generosity and giving back. Jordan views cinematography not just as a profession, but as a powerful tool for evoking emotions and creating memorable experiences.

DALTON TENNANT (COMPOSER) Toronto-based producer and musician Dalton Tennant, founded Dee Tenn Productions in 2006 which specializes in music production, live music, and management. Known professionally as D10, embarked on his musical journey in 2004. He has served as Musical Director and keyboardist for prominent artists including Drake, and has been the Musical Director for some of the industry's top-grossing tours. His impressive production credits feature collaborations with Drake, Justin Bieber, Justin Timberlake, Lil Wayne, SZA, and Jennifer Hudson. Additionally, D10 has produced a Billboard #1 single.

D10's musical roots trace back to playing piano in church, where he performed for services and both Youth and Adult choirs. His entry into urban music began when a close friend invited him to play keyboards for local R&B artists, quickly establishing his reputation in the music scene. Within months, he was traveling and performing with some of Canada's top artists.

CHARLENE AKUAMOAH (Costume Designer) is a Toronto-based costume designer whose keen eye for detail and love of movement has forged a path in the world of film and television. Raised between The Netherlands and Canada, her Ghanaian roots were vital in forming her earliest understanding of style. After graduating with a degree in Fashion Management in 2012, Akuamoah co-founded the unisex label *broke&living*, where she spent a decade as a principal designer. In 2017, she took on her first role as a costume designer for the feature film, *Beholder*. Describing her stylistic hallmarks as intentional, playful, and culturally significant, she went on to work on the full-length feature *This Place*, which premiered at TIFF 2022, *Murdoch Mysteries*, Season 3 of *Canada's Drag Race*, Amazon Prime series *Avocado Toast* (which landed her a T.O. Webfest and Rio Web Fest and CAFTCAD nomination for Best Costume Design).

Her work has continued in music videos for artists like Savannah Ré and Koffee, landing her multiple Canadian Alliance of Film and Television Costume Arts and Design Styling award nominations. She was also named by OkayAfrica as one of 100 Women making waves in their industries while driving positive impact in their communities and the world.

JUNE CHARLES (Production Designer) is a Saint Lucian-born Canadian multi-discipline designer. She is no stranger to creating innovative and unique designs, June has spent years creating memorable interior spaces and is now bringing that practice to the world of television and film. Best known for her work as a production designer for *Toronto the Good* which premiered at the Emerging Lens Cultural Film Festival in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and *Still Waters* which premiered at The Canadian Film Festival in Toronto Ontario. She has art directed award-winning writer/director Jade Stone's debut web series *Lost Jen*.

CHRISTOPHER MINNS (Editor) is a Day-time Emmy and CSA nominated Editor. He has worked on projects ranging from half-hour television comedies to one-hour dramas and dramatic feature films. His credits include: Netflix's *Ginny and Georgia*, Crave TV's hit show *Letterkenny*, for which he is nominated for a 2018 Canadian Screen Award, *Amazon's The Lake*, and PBS's *Odd Squad*, for which he was nominated for a Day-Time Emmy. Christopher attended Humber College's Post-Production Post Graduate program and has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film Studies from Wilfrid Laurier University

XI FENG (Editor) a Chinese-born Canadian film editor based in Montreal. Having lived in China, Canada, and France, she has cultivated a unique blend of cultural and artistic sensitivity. Feng has worked as an editor on award-winning films including *"Clebs"*, *"Cette Maison"*, *"Caiti Blues"* and most recently *"Une langue Universelle"* which won the inaugural Audience Award at the Quinzaine des Cinéastes. Her filmography includes films premiered at prestigious festivals such as Berlinale, Cannes, Sundance, Vision du Réel, HotDocs, etc. She also served as an editing mentor for festivals such as Hotdocs, ReelAsian, and CCDF.

JORDAN HAYLES (Editor) hailing from Scarborough, Ontario, Jordan Hayles is an award-winning television and film editor who has taken pride in his attention to detail which has led to his ascension in his career. His diverse array of work has spanned from lifestyle, documentary, sports, and narrative, with his work appearing on networks such as VICE, NBC, HGTV, Food Network, CBC, and CTV along with short films he's edited appearing in multiple film festivals, including the Toronto International Film Festival in 2022 for *Diaspora*. He's an advocate for diversity in the workplace, understanding that in his position there are not many who are fairly represented in the edit suite and in the TV & Film industry as a whole. Part of his motivation is to give back to others, and hopefully break in more talent through the doors as his career advances.

ABOUT THE CAST

OLUNIKE ADELIYI (Jean) is a Canadian actress, writer, and producer of mixed Nigerian and Jamaican descent. Olunike got her big break in the hit television series *Flashpoint* (2008 - 2012) as Officer Leah Kerns. Since then, she has built an impressive resume that includes shows such as *Workin' Moms* (2017 - 2021), *Revenge of the Black Best Friend* (2022), *The Porter* (2022) and *Mike* (2022). Olunike's film credits include *She Never Died* (2019) where she starred alongside Kiana Madeira (*Fear Street*), *Darken* (2017), *The Parting Glass* (2018), *Boost* (2018), *The Prodigy* (2019), and *Chaos Walking* (2020).

Olunike has won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Lead Performance in *Revenge of the Black Best Friend* (2022) and has been nominated for Best Supporting Actress at the 2018 Canadian Screen Awards for her role in *Boost* (2018), Best Performance by a Female - Film at the 2014 Canadian Comedy Awards for her performance in *French Immersion* (2014), and won the 2011 Black Canadian Award for Best Actress for overall performances. In February 2020, Olunike joined the cast of Rachel Morrison's (*Black Panther*) directorial debut *Flint Strong* written and produced by Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*) alongside Ryan Destiny (*Star*) and Brian Tyree Henry (*Bullet Train*). In June 2021, Olunike Adeliyi joined the ensemble cast for *The Porter*, a BET+ and CBC drama that garnered a staggering 19 Canadian Screen Award nominations in 2023. Olunike also joined the star-studded cast of Hulu's new series *Mike*, with Trevante Rhodes, Harvey Keitel, Laura Harrier, Grace Zabriskie, and TJ Atoms.

MAXINE SIMPSON (Grandma Brenda) born on August 18th, 1956, is a remarkable individual embracing new adventures in her golden years. With 30 years of experience as an intensive care nurse, Maxine has now embarked on a thrilling journey in the acting world. Despite having no prior acting experience, she landed her first feature film role and is excited to be a part of an incredible cast, portraying the character of Grandma Brenda. Beyond her newfound passion for acting, Maxine is a devoted grandmother and mother of two. At the age of 67, she continues to radiate kindness and generosity, traits that have endeared her to those around her. Maxine finds joy in various hobbies, such as walking her dogs, tending to her garden, and managing the Facebook page of an online radio station owned and operated by her daughter.

ZAHRA BENTHAM (Tamika) originally from Toronto, Canada, Zahra Bentham is an actor, singer/songwriter & dancer. For television, she appears as a recurring guest on the final season of *Star Trek: Discovery* and on the fourth season of Canadian legal drama, *Diggstown*, from eOne and creator Floyd Kane.

Other notable recurring roles include Netflix's critically acclaimed limited series, *Self Made: Madam CJ Walker*, appearing opposite Octavia Spencer, and Samantha Stratton's Netflix drama, *Spinning Out* also starring January Jones and Kaya Scodelario. Previous work includes a lead role in the feature film, *Guidance* (Toronto International Film Festival) as well as Gloria Kim's independent feature, *Queen of the Morning Calm*, and guest appearances on TV series, *Ransom*, *Save Me*, *Private Eyes*, *Cracked*, and *Rookie Blue*. Zahra is a graduate of Wexford School for the Arts where she studied Musical Theatre, Drama, and Intensive Dance. She then went on to graduate from the prestigious Canadian Film Centre's Actors Conservatory.

MICAH MENSAH-JATOE (Tristin) a grade 12 student at Cardinal Carter Academy of the Arts, is a talented actor with a passion for the craft. Inspired by his elementary school theatre productions, Micah decided to pursue his love for acting further by joining the Young People's Theatre Drama School. With a growing list of credits, Micah's recent projects include *Home Free*, *Paige Darcy and the Case of the Stoned Cat*, and *Slip* (2023). While acting remains his main focus, Micah's other interests include writing, playing volleyball, and cooking. Looking ahead, Micah eagerly anticipates more exciting acting opportunities, showcasing his skills and dedication to his craft.

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