



Travis Bogard Artist in Residence 2022

The Travis Bogard Artist in Residence Program gives theatre scholars and professionals an unparalleled opportunity to create in the inspirational setting of Tao House. O'Neill himself was the first artist in residence at Tao House (1937-1944) where he created some of his most famous plays. From the field of applicants, the Foundation has selected five individuals whose projects run the gamut from difficult family relationships to the history of Russian theatre.



(top, l-r)Tommy Smith, Mary Lynn Owen, Dasia Posner
(bottom, l-r) Nia Akilah Robinson, Vernon Williams

From London comes playwright **Tommy Smith**, son of a British father and Irish mother. He says he was inspired to write the play *The Buried Stream* when Brexit revealed to him that “the UK would no longer mask its cultural xenophobia and history of domination and fear of foreigners.” Smith, who moved to London last year, after decades of residence in the US. Smith says, “I have long sought to write a piece that reflects the generational violence baked into my genes.” That piece is *The Buried Stream*, now in draft form. He thanks the Eugene O'Neill Foundation for “the chance to bring forth this play.” His play, Smith notes, has a simple premise. It concerns two villagers searching, waiting in a crumbling castle, for British ships to arrive.

Based in Atlanta, **Mary Lynn Owen** will focus on *Salvage*, her play about an interracial, intergenerational family. In some ways, the family dynamics in *Salvage* are similar to those in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. As Owen puts it: “As they move about the room, the characters collide with the past and present and face the truths of each other's lives. Ultimately they must choose what to keep and what to throw away.” The entities in question include their relationships to each other. The mother

must confront her hidden racism; the daughter must face the neglect of her mother; her brother has to deal with his secret impending fatherhood. Finally, the grandfather has to face his resentment of his daughter.

The discipline of Illinois-based **Dasia Posner** is the performance history of Russian and Soviet theatre, a timely topic given current events in Ukraine. Posner will work on her book *The Moscow Kamerny Theatre: An Artistic History in Political Times*. “Over the course of six trips to Russia over the past decade,” notes Posner, “I have accumulated most of the archival sources needed to complete this book.” When it is completed, it will analyze pivotal Kamerny productions in political and social contexts.

New York City is the home of playwright **Nia Akilah Robinson**. Robinson has experience in her core discipline of playwrighting, as well as in acting. In 2021, she was a finalist in the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. Her focus during her time at Tao House will be on completing a play about Black life in Harlem. “All the characters in the play are called to a required rehearsal before the play's performance,” Robinson explains. From there, these characters respond to interpretations of their work by a Black critic and a white reviewer from The New York Times. The play delves into how the two critiques affect the actors.

Vernon Williams will spend his time completing his full length play *The Mayor Jones*, a modern day creation inspired by O'Neill's 1920 play, *The Emperor Jones*. He has spent the last year conceptualizing and completing a short film of *Mayor Jones*. Being at Tao House, he believes, “will give (me) the best possible inspiration to successfully complete this project.” A fitting subject for our final fellowship of 2022.

Festival 2022: “A Moon for the Misbegotten”

A production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* will be the centerpiece of the 2022 Eugene O'Neill Festival. Eugene O'Neill channeled his final creative energies into facing his family and the hurt he felt at their hands. Of the six plays written at Tao House, no figure emerges more frequently than his older brother Jamie. He is a pivotal character in the heavily autobiographical *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, and a model for leading characters in both *The Iceman Cometh* and *Hughie*. In *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, the last play he ever wrote, O'Neill imagined the last days of his estranged brother's life. With great empathy and humor, he fantasized that his brother encountered a unique and powerful woman whose love, acceptance, and sacrifice alleviated his brother's suffering and allowed him to find a measure of peace at the end of his life. The play helped O'Neill find forgiveness for his brother and a greater understanding of himself. And now, almost 80 years later, the experience of *Moon* at Tao House is a gift to us all.



More details will be announced soon. Visit www.eugeneoneill.org to stay apprised.

Watch the Film of “Beyond the Horizon”



The live performances of Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon* have come and gone, but the film is always available for your viewing. In addition to the film, we have an engagement guide as well as nearly a dozen short videos featuring leading scholars from around the country sharing their insights into various aspects of what is considered America's first great tragic drama. The film, the guide, and the scholar videos can all be found on our website or by scanning this code, or go to:

<http://www.eugeneoneill.org/beyond-the-horizon-the-film/>



Day-Use Fellowships at Tao House

Eight Bay Area artists have recently completed fellowships working on their projects in the inspirational solitude at Tao House. Each praises the gift of 80 hours of creative time the fellowship offers. Application forms are available on the website for Session C, which begins December 1. (Note: no Session B in 2022)

<http://www.eugeneoneill.org/artist-in-residence-program/>



Tao House to Birth a New Play

Working on our 2019 production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, I came to the conclusion that Tao House allowed Eugene O'Neill to write the play and, in return, the play's place in the theatre firmament returned the favor by making Tao House important enough to be saved as a National Historic Site. In a sense, the house "wrote" the play, and the play "wrote" the house. Fast forward to 2022 and I find myself working with playwright **William Davies King** on a new play that endeavors to tell the story of how *Long Day's Journey* was written at Tao House. *Into Night* is the working title for an odyssey into the imaginations of Eugene and Carlotta at the time *Long Day's Journey* was written. King, a small group of actors, and I have been gathering in O'Neill's barn to develop this metaphysical journey in which real-life characters interact with fictional characters to solve the riddles that ultimately lead to the creation of *Long Day's Journey*. At the conclusion of our final workshop in June, we will be ready to bring *Into Night* to Boston, where it will be a featured event at the International Conference on Eugene O'Neill this July. ~ *Eric Fraisher Hayes*

Thanks to Our Partner, the Town of Danville



The Foundation got a wonderful surprise in October when we received a Town of Danville grant dispersed from the Federal COVID Relief Fund. We were selected by the Town Council along with 49 other community partners to receive relief from the impact of the pandemic. After careful deliberation, the Board of Directors decided to invest a portion of the "windfall" in long-needed capitol improvements: update our website to enable us to communicate better with our audience, purchase needed equipment for our research library, and purchase communication tools for downtown Danville.

We are most grateful to the Town of Danville that has enabled us to make these long needed capitol improvements a reality.

National Park Service News: Superintendent's Message



As the official National Park Service liaison to the Eugene O'Neill Foundation, I'd like to introduce our new superintendent, **K. Lynn Berry** who was selected to oversee management of Eugene O'Neill NHS as well as John Muir NHS, Port Chicago Naval Magazine NMem, and Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front NHP. K. Lynn begins her post in early April after she moves across the country from her most recent assignment serving as the superintendent of Congaree National Park in South Carolina. At Congaree, K. Lynn strengthened alliances with non-profit partners, educational institutions, and other agencies to expand the park's reach to the public.

"I very much look forward to supporting the teams at these unique and important parks," said Berry. "The parks' stories inspire me, but I'm even more impressed by what I've heard about how the staff is telling these stories and engaging surrounding communities. It will be an honor to help them continue growing those connections."



Berry joined the NPS in 2010 with a background in community and environmental planning, as well as cultural resource management and public involvement processes. She brought that combined experience to her NPS roles as the National Heritage Area Program Manager and NPS Centennial Coordinator for the South Atlantic Gulf Region; acting superintendent of DeSoto National Memorial; regional chief of community assistance and partnerships for the National Capital Area; and acting superintendent of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

Before joining the NPS, Berry worked in federal and state government, as well as private consulting. Her bachelor's degree in cultural anthropology led to a master's in the same field; later studies led to another master's degree in city and regional planning.

Berry and her partner, Lynn-Margaret, have spent time living, working and traveling across the country and world. In addition to paddling, biking, hiking, and other outdoor pursuits, Berry enjoys blacksmithing, the theatre, fine restaurants, and museums. Please join us in welcoming our new superintendent!

Gretchen Stromberg, Eugene O'Neill NHP Resource Stewardship and Planning Division Manager and NPS Liaison to the Foundation

Please check www.nps.gov/euon for updates about access to the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site.

Thanks to Our Members, Theatre Patrons, and Volunteers



Invest in the future of our theatre, education, and artist in residence programs.

Your donation helps cover production costs and enables us to continue bringing performances and programs that promote the legacy and vision of America's greatest playwright. Thank you for supporting the Foundation!

To make a donation to the Foundation, go to www.eugeneoneill.org/join-us/ or send your check to Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House, P.O. Box 402, Danville, CA 94526-0402

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