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The Abyss of the Unknown

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Abyss of the Unknown

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Jasmine Ashanti St.Clair

Committee in charge:

Kyle Donnelly, Chair  
Ursula Meyer  
Charles Oates  
Manuel Rotenberg

2014



The thesis of Jasmine St.Clair is approved and it is acceptable  
in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

## **DEDICATION**

To my family, church family, and closest friends for always supporting me and nurturing me, helping me do my best to succeed in all things.

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## LIST OF SUPPLEMENTAL FILES

- File 1. *Afghan Women's Project*
- File 2. Martha Bessel in *Spring Awakening*
- File 3. Judith in *Cry Old Kingdom*
- File 4. Judith in *Cry Old Kingdom*
- File 5. Shun in *In the Red and Brown Water*
- File 6. Cabaret Singer in *Tonight We Improvise*
- File 7. Sula in *Little Children Dream of God*
- File 8. Claudia in *Sideways*
- File 9. Anna Balicke in *Drums in the Night*
- File 10. Kristine Linde in *A Doll House*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wouldn't be anything without my faith, so I thank God for giving me my talent and passion. I would not have made it this far without the love and support and nurturing care of my family. They are the rock I stand on to sustain.

I have been so honored and privileged to work with so many great talents here at the university. Everyone's dedication and hard work is what has inspired me to do my very best and it gave me a hunger to want to create and for that I'm grateful.

I want to thank Kyle Donnelly for seeing potential and taking a chance on me. She has been a mentor and teacher and has helped me to think outside the box and in a new way. Thank you Greg Wallace for coming into the program like a hurricane and helping me be the best I can be. Thank you for showing me myself, not only in acting, but also in life. There is a confidence and love I have for myself as an African American Actress, thanks to you. Charlie Oates, thank you for allowing me to physically express myself in a new way. Ursula Meyer, thank you for opening my voice to new possibilities. Eva Barnes, thank you for your amazing kindness and attention to detail. Linda Vickerman, thank you for showing me that there was a singer deep inside of me bursting to come out. Finally, Jim Winker, thank you for sharing your love for classical text, your knowledge, and talent. It has been an absolute joy working with you all.

Where would I be without my wonderful class? Tom, Vi, Michael, Danvir, Gerard, Ronnie, and Chaz, you all are my backbone. I could not have made it through without you. Also to the classes of 2013, 2015, and 2016, you all light my fire! Thank you.



## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Abyss of the Unknown

by

Jasmine Ashanti St.Clair

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California, San Diego, 2014

Professor Kyle Donnelly, Chair

Gregory Wallace once said to me, “You are comfortable with the idea that you don’t know something. Cut it out and go figure it out.” For most of my life, my fallback answer to things I was uncomfortable with or lacking confidence in, was “I don’t know”, afraid that I didn’t have the right answer or that I would be unable to articulate my thought process efficiently. These past three years at UCSD have given me the conviction to be proactive in figuring things out for myself.

As an artist, there is always going to be a sense of uncertainty. I’ve learned to embrace it and look at it as what is truly beautiful about art. Learning to take a leap of faith, make a big bold choice, and fail in a great way. If we don’t fall, how will we learn,

right? Singer Jhene Aiko said, “I do not feel the fear of falling, I want to fly”. This program has given me the courage to fly into unknown spaces, throw caution to the wind, and take pride or see beauty in my mistakes.

Although, I’m sure I knew what I was doing in other productions and scene work, playing Anna in *Drums in the Night* was the first time I was actually able to feel my growth and have a sense that I indeed knew what I was doing. From movement, to voice and speech, to having the guts to take a leap into the abyss of the unknown, it was like the world opened up to me and I feel confident leaping into my next.