

MAY 24 - JUNE 16, 2024

WORLD PREMIERE
**STOKELY:
#UNFINISHED
#REVOLUTION**

BY
NAMBI E. KELLEY

DIRECTED BY
TASIA A. JONES

**TONY
AWARD
WINNING**

COURT THEATRE



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

WELCOME

Dear Court Theatre Family,

Welcome to the final production of the 2023/24 season, *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*.

We are honored to premiere this new work by Nambi E. Kelley (with whom we had the good fortune to collaborate in 2014 on her brilliant adaptation of Richard Wright's *Native Son*).

Nambi's play is a beautiful reflection on legacy and memory—where they fall short, and where they shine—and what it means to be part of something bigger than yourself. For us, that bigger project is expanding the theatrical canon. This production is a part of that legacy.

World premieres, like *Stokely*, offer the chance to see ourselves and others reflected in unexpected and exciting ways. New work broadens our horizons, thereby broadening our possibilities for connection. When it touches on something urgent and deeply human—when it resonates with audiences across time—it then becomes classic.

Therefore, to be committed to redefining classic theatre is to be committed to new work. That has been part of our legacy thus far (as evidenced by *Native Son*, among others), and thanks to *Stokely* and next season's production of *Berlin*, that legacy will continue. We need these new stories for our art form but perhaps most importantly, we need these new stories for ourselves. We must continue to reflect on our past and present to prepare for the future; that work is never finished. As you'll see in this production, no one understood that better than Stokely himself.

Thank you to Prince Charitable Trusts for their support in commissioning and producing this play and thank you for being a part of this project. We hope you enjoy the world premiere of *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*.

With gratitude,



Charles Newell
Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director



Angel Ysaguirre
Executive Director

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CHARLES NEWELL
Marilyn F. Vitale
Artistic Director

ANGEL YSAGUIRRE
Executive Director

MAY 24 - JUNE 16, 2024

WORLD PREMIERE

STOKELY: THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

BY
NAMBI E. KELLEY

DIRECTED BY
TASIA A. JONES

Scenic Design by Yeaji Kim

Costume Design by Gregory Graham

Lighting Design by Daphne Agosin

Sound Design by Willow James

Dialect Design by Sammi Grant

Fight Consultation and Intimacy by Sheryl Williams

Hair and Wig Design Concepts by Rueben D. Echoles

Martine Kei Green-Rogers, Production Dramaturg

Casting by Becca McCracken C.S.A.

Kate Ocker,* Production Stage Manager

Lauren Peters,* Assistant Stage Manager

Setting: The play opens in Kwame Ture's memory, then transforms across space, time, his memories, and May's memories to tell the story. When in the present, Kwame Ture is in his writing den in Conakry, Guinea, on November 15, 1998.

Please note: This production contains the use of water-based haze, actors using aisles, recordings of gun shots, simulated smoking, and flashing lights.

Sponsored by



Gustavo Bamberger and
Martha Van Haitsma

This project is supported
in part by



Created with funds from the Prince Prize for Commissioning Original Work, which was awarded to Nambi E. Kelley and Court Theatre in 2018. *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution* was developed in part at the Hermitage Artist Retreat.

*Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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This project is partially supported by a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events. Court Theatre acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council.

CAST

Stokely Carmichael, later Kwame Ture Anthony Irons*
Mabel Charles, later May Charles Wandachristine*
Cecilia Carmichael/Ensemble..... Dee Dee Batteast*
Tante Elaine/Ensemble Melanie Brezill*
Adolphus Carmichael/EnsembleKelvin Roston Jr.*

Understudies:

Veronda Carey (May Charles/Ensemble)

Whitney Dottery (Cecilia Carmichael/Tante Elaine/Ensemble)

Joshua L. Green (Adolphus Carmichael/Ensemble)

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PRODUCTION CREW

Steel Pan Consultation	Becky Bass
Assistant Director	Sade' May
Associate Dramaturg	Camille Pugliese
Associate Casting Director	Aaron Mays
Scenic Artists.....	Michael A.C. Besancon U.S.A., Sarah Lewis U.S.A.
Carpenter	Cordell Brown
Assistant Costume Designer	Finnegan Chu
Stitcher	Eric Guy
Costume Shop Assistant	Jessica Donaldson
Wardrobe Technician	Sebastian Van Horn
Properties Artisan	Persephone Lawrence
Assistant Lighting Designer	Ryan Burkle
Assistant Lighting Supervisor	Joel Zishuk
Electricians	Alex Boehm, Emily Brown, Ryan Burkle, Aljoya Hall, Kenneth Martin, Ish Petersen
Associate Sound Designer	Daniel Etti-Williams
Audio Engineer	Ian C. Weber
Floor Manager	Kate Nagorski



Scenic Artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, I.A.T.S.E. Local USA829, AFL-CIO,CLC.

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EAST TEXAS HOT LINKS

By Eugene Lee

Directed by Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson



NOV/DEC 2024

FALSETTOS

Music and Lyrics by William Finn

Book by William Finn and James Lapine

Produced in partnership with TimeLine Theatre Company

Directed by Nick Bowling, TimeLine Associate Artistic Director



FEB/MAR 2025

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

By Lorraine Hansberry

Directed by Associate Artistic Director

Gabrielle Randle-Bent



WORLD PREMIERE

APR/MAY 2025

BERLIN

By Mickie Maher

Based on the graphic novel by Jason Lutes

Directed by Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director Charles Newell



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THE DRAMATURGY OF WRITING A BIOGRAPHICAL PLAY

BY MARTINE KEI GREEN-ROGERS, PHD



Writing a biographical play is no easy feat. How do you even begin to chronicle a lifetime of events of an ordinary person, let alone chronicle the life of a revolutionary presence? And all in two hours or less? As the dramaturg of *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*, a new work, I hope to demystify all the considerations that inform the creation of a biographical play such as this one.

The first major consideration is whether the play is a fictionalized version of a person's life. Generally speaking, it is difficult for a play about a deceased figure to be completely accurate; there's simply no way of knowing everything and you're unable to ask them directly (for obvious reasons!). In *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*, for example, we don't know what exactly happened in the last moments of Kwame Ture's life, so the playwright, Nambi E. Kelley, decided to take creative liberties. Even the most interesting people have uninteresting moments in their lives, and a play has to operate differently from reality: dramatic action, pacing, and audience investment have to be taken into account. Creative decisions have to be made, even though they might deviate from history.

The next major considerations are *how* and *how much*, referring to structure and biographical information, respectively. Recent plays about historical figures have often been variations of the memory play, a dramatic genre in which the narrator uses non-linear storytelling to participate in the memories they conjure, thereby blurring reality for the audience.

In *Toni Stone* by Lydia Diamond, Diamond embraces this genre by having Toni Stone, the protagonist, speak directly to the audience about moments in her life before stepping into the world of the play. While *Toni Stone* portrays some of the biographical figure's childhood, it primarily focuses on the character's most active years as a baseball player, and in many ways tells the story of what it was like for Stone to be a woman in a male-dominated athletic field. In memory plays—as we see in *Toni Stone*—the subjects of these plays are still “alive” and speaking to an audience, recounting their lives for specific reasons. The character of Toni Stone is revealing her world to illustrate why she wants to play baseball, show the barriers to being a woman in sports, and demonstrate how she navigated those challenges to set an example and inspire others.

Nambi E. Kelley chooses a different tactic in *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*. Here, our subject—Stokely Carmichael, later Kwame Ture—is dying. He is recounting the events of his life to secure his legacy. As such, unlike the previous examples, it is less a memory play about life, and more about the memories that remain when a person dies.

For this reason, we need to return to the aforementioned consideration of *how much*: How much of one's life needs to be shared in a biographical play? A play steeped in the memory of a lost life (or life in the process of being lost) has different needs than a play about a life's accomplishments. Kelley focuses on all of the moments that created the legacy of Kwame Ture and, in some ways, illustrates how fragile and fleeting a legacy can be if not preserved. Focusing on the organizations that Carmichael/Ture helped build, the movements he organized, and the choices he made as a child offers a different perspective on his life than if she had just told his overall biography. Also, dramaturgically speaking, this narrows our dramatic focus, allowing us to tell the story of a person who lived for 57 years without needing 57 years to watch the play!

The last consideration of a biographical play is the most difficult to curate: What do you want an audience to know, what do you want them to take away, after watching the play? While it's similar to deciding which life events will be shared onstage, this consideration adopts the lens of what best serves the story. Dramaturgs (myself included!) often ask, “Why this play? Why this play now?” The answers can be varied (which points to why there are several plays about one person), but ultimately it all comes down to purpose. Is the purpose of the piece to give you a complete understanding of someone's life? Is it to fill a knowledge gap? There are many reasons why a playwright may want to focus on a particular aspect of a person's story and, once you have those answers, you have to stay on track. A playwright must be willing to cut certain parts of a person's life out of their narrative if they don't serve the larger purpose of the piece – which can be difficult, especially if the subject's life is very interesting.

While there is much to consider when writing a biographical play and it's certainly never easy, these plays provide new perspectives on historical figures. In so doing, they shape our understanding of our past, our present, and our future.

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SAVE THE DATE 2024 Gala

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IN CONVERSATION

PLAYWRIGHT NAMBI E. KELLEY AND

DIRECTOR TASIA A. JONES



In 2018, Court Theatre and Playwright Nambi E. Kelley (Native Son) received the Prince Prize, a gift from Prince Charitable Trusts supporting the creation of new work. Now, in 2024, that original commission is fully realized and brought to life on our stage. We proudly present the world premiere of Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution.

Blending the historical and the personal with astonishing grace, Stokely depicts one man's rise to prominence—and the many people who made it possible—as he fights to preserve his legacy to inspire future generations.

Just days into the rehearsal process, Associate Director of Marketing Camille Oswald met with Playwright Nambi E. Kelley and Director Tasia A. Jones to discuss Stokely Carmichael, new play development, and whether the unfinished revolution can ever truly be complete. Below is an excerpt from their conversation.

Let's begin by discussing the historical figure at the root of this story: Stokely Carmichael, later known as Kwame Ture. What drew you to his narrative in the first place? What was it that made you want to learn more about Stokely, specifically?

Nambi: He was an inventor; he tried things, and if they didn't work, he tried something else, always with the bigger picture of freedom in mind. There was no ego.

Tasia: For me, I was drawn to his beginnings; I wasn't aware of his story until I read the play and started to do my research. I knew who he was, but I didn't know that he was an immigrant from Trinidad. That story was very familiar to me—my family came from the islands, as well—so I immediately wanted to know more about this person. And, as Nambi said: the lack of ego. What drives a person to be so invested and so selfless for a greater cause, a greater purpose beyond themselves?

Could you describe the development process for *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*?

Nambi: Usually, when I work on something, I start with research. There's a lot of stuff online about Stokely Carmichael—a lot of his speeches, a lot of the books that he had written—so I did a deep dive during the pandemic and then I just started writing! In those early drafts, I wrote whatever fell out of my spirit.

This play is grounded in Stokely's memories, but I didn't plan for it to be a memory play; I didn't outline it like that. I just read the material—ingested, digested the material—and, eventually, it took that shape. Maybe it happened that way for personal reasons: I've lost both my parents, so I think about ancestors a lot. I think about what drives me, what gets me out of bed, and the things that drove them. Maybe, in that way, this production is paying homage to my people.

Thanks to the Prince Prize, this commission was guaranteed to be staged and produced, so the next step in the process was finding a director. We knew we wanted them to be a part of the development process, and then we found Tasia, who was a perfect fit. From that point on, it was workshops, readings, more workshops, casting. Even now, a couple of days into rehearsal, we're still developing; I sent eight new pages today.

Tasia: It's constantly evolving. As Nambi said, during these first few days of rehearsal, we're constantly asking questions. A new play is always in process, but I really think every play is always in process, even once it's published and done. Every time new people get their hands on it, it becomes a new thing. We're really excited to take part in the evolution of this story, with these people, in this space.

Thinking about evolution, let's talk about Stokely Carmichael's transformation. As he became more influential, he became a target of the FBI's COINTELPRO program, which targeted other civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Carmichael then left the United States for Ghana (and later, Guinea); changed his name to Kwame Ture; and became a vocal proponent of Pan-Africanism.

Even though these names—Stokely Carmichael and Kwame Ture—belong to the same individual, they represent major personal and political shifts. What's the relationship between Stokely Carmichael, the man, and Kwame Ture, the legend?

Tasia: That's the central question of the play: we have Stokely Carmichael, and we also have Kwame Ture. There's a reason that this man changed his name and moved his whole life to Guinea, and there's so much to investigate about why that happened. We have his book, *Ready for Revolution*; we have a lot on paper that we can look to; we have accounts from his friends and family. We have all of this, but we still have the question of, What makes a person? What does it mean to build your legacy, and to consciously try to leave one?

Nambi: Which is why the play is so personal, so focused on his memories. Much of the history will be familiar to people, but it's still deeply personal in terms of how he experienced those moments. I've done my best to present Stokely, so the story is also told through my lens. As someone who witnessed 9/11; who watched the Gulf Wars; who sees what's happening in Gaza; sees what's happening to Black people on the South Side of Chicago, on the West Side of Chicago; who sees the struggles that are still here to this day—maybe all of that makes this play a conversation.

“I don't know that the revolution will ever end, but I know that with each step you take, you run your race. You grab the baton, you run as hard as you can, and you pass it back to whoever's behind you, knowing that—trusting that—the work will get done.”

The title asserts that the revolution is not yet complete. What does that mean to you?

Nambi: I don't know that the revolution will ever end, but I know that with each step you take, you run your race. You grab the baton, you run as hard as you can, and you pass it back to whoever's behind you, knowing that—trusting that—the work will get done. [To Tasia] You have a young child and I have a niece and nephew, who I love more than life. What world are they inheriting? So you keep running, because the people behind you deserve it, they need it. That's why we're here. Unfortunately, particularly for Black folks, we always have to think about who's coming behind us and who came before us. The burden of liberation is on every generation. Toni Morrison asks, “Who would you be without [racism]?” And we don't know. I dream of that, and I try to live my life in a way that feels free, but then microaggressions let you know that this isn't over. So you do your best, you run your race, and you trust. Faith is all it is. The ancestors believed in us, they dreamed us, so who are we dreaming? And what world are we leaving to them?

Tasia: Yes, all of that. I couldn't think about that and still have a child, and take them out into the world because it's ever-present. Do I think the unfinished revolution will ever be finished? I don't know what that would look like; I don't even know how to imagine that, actually—what that would feel like—because that's not our reality. But I do know that we do keep running. I do know that we have made progress. There's a reason that we're able to have this conversation right now, and that's because of those who came before us and the race they ran.

Nambi: And that's even as recent as somebody like Ron OJ Parson, who broke huge ceilings here at Court. Not too long ago, Court wasn't doing any plays by people of color and Ron has revolutionized this space. So revolution happens just by showing up. If he hadn't done that work, I wouldn't be here.

Tasia: Right. There are smaller revolutions happening all the time that *are* completed. I take solace in that. If I can complete my part of the revolution in the race I'm running—as Kwame Ture strives to do in this play—then I feel like I can pass that baton and feel like I've done my part, knowing that the work continues.

Nambi: Why did you say yes to directing this play?

Tasia: My personal mission—as a theatre artist and as a human being—is to tell stories that invite or incite change, and this story does that. It spoke to my personal mission, and I feel like I have something to contribute. What about you?

Nambi: What made me say yes to this commission? It's simple. My daddy, Dr. Don Kelley, was a historian. As a child of a historian, I have been steeped in history and our leaders for my entire life. My daddy gave me heroes when I was a young girl. Stokely was one of them.

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THE STUDY IS THE STRUGGLE, THE STRUGGLE IS THE STUDY

BY DR. THEODORE R. FOSTER III, PHD; ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND BLACK
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Floyd McKissick, Stokely Carmichael
in Canton, Mississippi, July 1, 1966 (Alamy/Everett Collection).

Kwame Ture, who many knew as Stokely Carmichael, functions in the popular memory of the Black Freedom Movement as a larger-than-life racial icon abstracted from the local people, global communities, and grassroots organizations that made him one of the key political and intellectual figures of the twentieth century. As a racial icon, Ture's life defies conventional narratives of the Black past and confronts simplistic progress narratives of a nation that both denigrates and venerates Black life. As an organizer, Ture's legacy remains a potent source of radical transformation and reinvention for Black youth who still consume his charismatic college campus speeches on YouTube in the twenty-first century. How to critically understand the Blackness of such a complex human in the face of a concerted effort to malign and misremember him is the work of artists, academics, organizers, and—importantly—the community of unnamed footsoldiers getting ready for revolution through ongoing study and struggle.

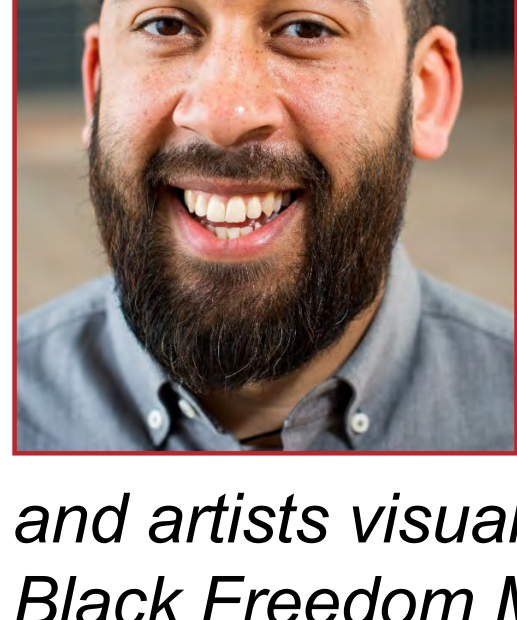
A new play chronicling Kwame Ture's life—*Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*, by Nambi E. Kelley—joins this chorus of creative cultural production. In the play, Kelley positions Ture in relation to other well-known icons of the Black Freedom Movement: James Baldwin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Malcolm X, Ella Baker, and Diane Nash, among many others. However, the central lens through which the audience reads Ture's humanity and mortality is through the care of his mother, Mabel Florence Charles Carmichael, as he struggles with terminal cancer and records memories of a lifelong commitment to revolutionary struggle. Kelley skillfully provides pivotal glimpses into the evolution of a man moved by social movements—a man with a distinct gift of moving others to transcend themselves in the face of real fear of death—as he grapples with his own imminent transition in Conakry, Guinea.

In a powerful 1966 speech in Chicago, Ture implored the audience to “study Black history, but don't get fooled,” recognizing the dangerous misrepresentation of Black life and politics which remains a problem today as it was then sixty years ago. Indeed, Ture is the individual most often associated with the late 1960s' turn toward a politics of Black Power, frequently misunderstood through false binaries of violence/non-violence, civil rights/self-determination, and integration/separatism. These false choices fool the public through individualism, inclusion, and celebrity worship and narrow the scope of freedom dreams conjured by everyday Black people struggling to forge a decent life in a fundamentally racist society. As Ella Baker said of Martin Luther King Jr., it is “the movement that made Martin, not Martin who made the movement.” The same applies to Kwame Ture; his vision of Black Power emerges from grassroots struggle with native Mississippians such as Mukasa Dada (Willie Ricks), who first coined the phrase “Black Power” alongside Ture during the June 1966 March Against Fear.

From the Caribbean island of Trinidad where he was born in 1941, to his youth and adolescence as a Black immigrant in 1950s New York City, to his radicalization at Howard University as a student activist in NAG (Nonviolent Action Group) and his organizing work with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the 1960s, Ture confronted fear directly and always in, and for, community. Grounding Ture's early life in these contexts is important for the play and, more broadly, for understanding the phalanx of committed Black youth organizers alongside whom he frequently put his life on the line. Though Ture became chairman of SNCC in 1966, his Howard roommate (and fellow NAG and SNCC comrade) Cleveland Sellers is quick to point out that “SNCC” and “leadership” were not always terms that went together. Instead, Sellers argues that “when we talk about leadership, we talk about it in the context of his ability to organize” young and old, college students and rural Black native Southerners in Mississippi and Alabama, all united against domestic, legalized systems of white supremacy and imperialism abroad in the U.S. Vietnam War. In this way, the play works to dismantle what SNCC veteran Julian Bond termed the “Master Narrative” of the civil rights movement that takes a top-down approach and focuses on individual charismatic leadership specifically eschewed by this Black youth organization committed to a radical participatory democracy.

The late 1960s' globalization of the Black Freedom Movement is reflected in the evolution from Stokely Carmichael to Kwame Ture, from a national demand for Black Power to a global Pan-Africanism capable of uniting diverse religious, linguistic, and ethnic peoples racialized as Black. The dismantling of Jim Crow segregation could no longer be viewed as separate from anti-colonial movements for African independence in Ghana and Guinea. As such, it was through the influence of figures like Kwame Nkrumah and Sékou Touré that Stokely Carmichael would evolve as the co-founder and president of the All African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP). This global vision and evolution of Ture's grassroots organizing are essential to understanding the context of his charisma, humor, fearlessness, and commitment to an unfinished revolution.

What does it mean to be “ready for revolution,” which is both the title of Kwame Ture's autobiography and a salutation through which he was known and sought to know others? Performances begin on May 24th, one day before African Liberation Day (celebrated annually on May 25th) which the A-APRP commemorates as “a day to reaffirm our commitment to Pan-Africanism, the total liberation and unification of Africa under scientific socialism.” Like African Liberation Day, the play is both a memorial and a commemoration: of the evolution from Stokely Carmichael to Kwame Ture; and the women, communities, and politics that shaped him. To be ready for revolution is to understand theatre and art as a lens through which we struggle to study—and study to struggle—Black history, Black life, and Black liberation.



Dr. Theodore Foster III, PhD is a *Black Studies* scholar specializing in the production of historical memories of the modern civil rights movement, Black visual culture, and neoliberalism within Black political thought. His research focuses on how memorials, commemorations, activists, politicians, and artists visualize and narrate the history of the 1960s Black Freedom Movement through divergent political lenses. His book project is titled *The Firehose Next Time: Civil Rights Memory, Neoliberalism, and Black Visual Culture*. Dr. Foster is an Assistant Professor of African American History and Black Studies at University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

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Hattori Tadasaburō (d. 1939), lamp globe with phoenix, ca. 1910. Plique-à-jour enamels. Private collection. Image Courtesy Orientations Gallery.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LOVE

BY ADAM GREEN, PHD; ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF RACE, DIASPORA, AND INDIGENEITY AND HISTORY, AND THE COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



Bernard Lee, Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and Willie Ricks on the Meredith March, 1966 (Bob Fitch photography archive, © Stanford University Libraries).

A phrase emerges above all others in Stokely Carmichael's reflections on his life and work: undying love. Love for those who nurtured him: parents and family; elders like Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, Martin Luther King Jr.; comrades and friends gained through movement-making reaching back to his student years. Love for a life devoted to organizing, which for Stokely meant linking arms and breaking bread; debating yet listening—as long as it took—to recognize another's hopes and dreams; mobilizing proudly, but only when it would advance the power of those seeking a greater measure of justice and change. Love for struggle; for ongoing struggle, waged through labor, social provision, education, creativity, and the arts; for the defense of self and communities. Love for seeking what is right, even when—especially when—it required defying the authority or norms of a society unwilling to confront the crushing weight of its own contradictions. Love, finally, for the people—all people who stood for justice and humanity—but especially his people, Black people, whom he came to know in Trinidad, his birthplace, and the Bronx; at Howard University and at Parchman Farm prison in Greenwood, Mississippi and Lowndes County, Alabama; in Cuba and in Guinea. The first thing, then, to remember about Stokely was that he fought for something. And that something was what he came to know he loved.

Stokely Carmichael's effect on history and politics was galvanic and more enduring than we in this country have appreciated. Though he led the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) for only a year, he was among its most enthusiastic and effective members in advocating for the prioritization of organizing over mobilizing. His was a program of building relationships, seeking consensus around goals and tactics, and sustaining participation and commitment, especially in the face of threats to safety. That exemplifies the ordinary history of the Freedom Movement: the day-to-day struggle that mattered most to the nameless thousands who participated, too often forgotten in the face of the legend and clutch of deities we index as epitomizing the civil rights movement today.

Stokely is often counted—and criticized—as one who sought to become larger than life. But that reflects how he came to be called out of his name, and contributions by the state, the media, and a general public averse to his vision of change. His participation in the controversial 1966 Mississippi March Against Fear, where he supposedly sundered the civil rights coalition, saw the registration of over five thousand new Black voters—a fact often overlooked in the historical record. The idea thought to have introduced those divisions—Black Power—provided a talisman to Black youth in the U.S. and globally. It inspired leaders and grassroots organizers in Cuba and decolonizing African nations while helping scale up political consciousness and activism within Black Caribbean communities in Britain and apartheid South Africa. Back in the U.S., the idea was dismissed as quixotic and even reactionary. Older and wiser figures at the time—Toni Morrison, C.L.R. James, Shirley Graham DuBois, and Kwame Nkrumah, to name a few—recognized the concept's transformative value and cherished it as historic in meaning. Their assessment was that Stokely had not fallen out of step with his times. Rather, he had quickened the stride of an entire era.

We cannot reclaim this version of Stokely Carmichael unless we refuse the caricatures that have redacted him from history and memory. Doing so requires not confusing his spirit and passion with blinding anger, and recognizing his egalitarianism, rather than uncritically recycling his reputation for demagoguery. It requires consulting those who struggled with him and cared about him. The writer Nambi E. Kelley offers us the opportunity to recover this Stokely Carmichael with her play *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*.

In its form, content, and—most of all—its profound feeling, it recalls Stokely Carmichael as he lived: brilliant, unafraid, caring, and ever-inspired. His story, reconstructed here through both his experiences and those closest to him (particularly the women who mattered most in his life), reminds us of the opportunity and responsibility to tell our stories as we know and feel them so they can sustain our capacity to love, in life as well as in struggle.

ADAM GREEN is an Associate Professor in Departments of Race, Diaspora and Indigeneity, and History, at the University of Chicago. He received degrees the University of Chicago and from Yale University.

Author of Selling the Race: Culture and Community in Black Chicago, 1940-1955 (Univ. of Chicago Press: 2006), he also co-edited Time Longer than Rope: Studies in African American Activism, 1850-1950 with Charles Payne (New York University Press: 2003). His current research addresses the Black struggle for happiness and its relationship to Black ethical ambition and human capability.

Adam has worked extensively on projects joining public history and social change, including the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial Project, the campaign to mark the site of the 1961 Rainbow Beach Wade-In, as faculty partner for the Chicago Section of the Obama Presidency Oral History Project, and as a member of the City of Chicago's Monuments Project. He is currently co-chairing the Council on University/Community Relations, examining the University of Chicago's historical, contemporary and future relations to surrounding South Side communities.

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This is ***East Texas Hot Links***: a lyrical masterpiece, a nuanced character study, and the first production of the upcoming **2024/25 season**.

Director and Resident Artist Ron OJ Parson reflects: “*East Texas Hot Links* by Eugene Lee was my inaugural production in Chicago upon my arrival from the Big Apple, New York City. It was also the first production of Onyx Theatre Ensemble, co-founded by myself and Alfred H. Wilson in 1994. Even though 30 years have passed since that Onyx production, this play is perpetually relevant. Filled with love, humor, passion, and suspense—with the rhythm, timing, and lyricism reminiscent of the poetry of August Wilson—*East Texas Hot Links* will have you on the edge of your seat. The intimacy of Court Theatre only adds to the intensity and impact of this moving play finally coming to the South Side. Welcome home.”

We’ll save a place for you at Top O’ the Hill Café.

Subscriptions to the **2024/25 season**—including ***East Texas Hot Links***—are on sale now.

Purchase online or by calling the Box Office at (773) 753-4472, and individual tickets to this production will be on sale later this summer.

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HONORING LEGACY



*Director of Engagement Kamilah Rashied recently met with Raquel Flores-Clemons, archivist and head of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection at the Woodson Regional Library, to discuss the necessity of preservation, a key theme of both Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution and the **Black Power Series**.*

Intended to complement Stokely, the Black Power Series explores the monumentality of Black contributions to American history. Below, Kamilah and Raquel invite us to consider the role of information and community in the history of Black Chicago, setting the stage for the Black Power Series and—ultimately—Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution.

Kamilah: Can you tell us about your role and the Woodson Regional Library?

Raquel: I am an archivist, a librarian, and I currently serve as the head of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, the largest collection of African-American history and literature in the Midwest and the second-largest of its kind in the nation in a public library setting. We have over 4,000 linear feet of archival materials, including documents and ephemeral material. In 1932, Vivian Harsh, Chicago Public Library’s first Black library director, opened the George Cleveland Hall Branch in Bronzeville—the first library in CPL to serve a predominantly Black population—and she started the Collection. Vivian Harsh and her staff developed programming that supported intellectual engagement, economic development, and provided a varied set of resources to the community. When Vivian Harsh retired in 1958 and later passed away, the Collection remained at the Hall Branch, but it had started to fall into disrepair. The community understood its importance, so they advocated for it to be in better condition. When the Woodson Regional Branch was being built, it came here, which is fitting because Carter G. Woodson—the branch’s namesake and a University of Chicago alumnus, funnily enough—was a colleague of Vivian Harsh.

Kamilah: I think that’s such a smart, beautiful connection between the Collection and the Woodson Library. Vivian Harsh became a librarian for the Chicago Public Library system one hundred years ago, in 1924, and she started the Collection at the Hall Branch after becoming Chicago Public Library’s first Black Library Director in 1932, as you mentioned. So, almost one hundred years in, what does the Harsh Collection look like today?

Raquel: We were fortunate to receive a \$2 million grant from Mellon for the Renaissance Project, which offers support as we process collections that don’t yet have full access privileges. We’re also doing some digitization work. Our collection is a good mixture of material from folks who are nationally recognized and folks who are significant to local Black history. As we get more of these collections in a state where they can be researched—and the door opens wider for folks to come in, produce scholarship, and produce artwork—we hope more creatives explore interesting ways to apply these materials and make it immediately relevant to the national dialogue.

I was really excited when you asked us to participate in the Black Power Series and, by extension, *Stokely*. It’s really great to see the Collection being used and amplified in this way. We hope to continue that work and, as more archives are made available from the Collection, we’ll be able to see more and do more.

Kamilah: What does it mean for you to be the steward of almost one hundred years of Black history, and to make that available to Chicago and the world?

Raquel: I feel very privileged to be in this role. I’m the first woman since Vivian Harsh to lead this unit formally, and I just simply love *us*. I love Black people, so I’m very careful with the Collection. I always want it to be true to the wide array of experiences of the Black community. Collections are made in particular spaces in time, and the Harsh Collection was developed almost one hundred years ago. Things were very different then, so there are some limited narratives, and it’s worth noting that the geographical makeup of the city in the Collection isn’t very diverse, either. Black Chicago history is often told through a South Side lens, but I’m from the West Side, so I definitely came in like, “Where we at?” When I’m able to intentionally grow the Collection, I look for those histories that tell a more inclusive story of the Black experience in Chicago. I became an archivist specifically to amplify and preserve Black history and culture in Chicago, because that’s the journey and experience that I know. That’s where I’m from. And this is a part of the fabric of American history. I feel very lucky that I get paid for something that I really, really enjoy doing.

Kamilah: Black people need to see their history, they need to know where they come from, and they need to have access to these resources. But also, all Americans need to see Black history and have access to these resources. Everyone needs to know what the Black experience has been, and I feel like archival ephemera is level one. It’s so material. It is literally what happened.

Raquel: You’re never going to get the full picture of history. You just can’t—there are too many people involved, no matter what—but archives bring you closer to a more accurate history. These stories belong to the community, so it’s really important to let people know that this is their space, too. As much as we love researchers who produce scholarly work, I’m excited when I see community members—small business owners, entrepreneurs, or even parents with kids—use the material for their personal journeys. They’re part of the legacy of what inspired Vivian Harsh. For her, it was really about the community. She wasn’t only invested in introducing new information about the community to itself; she also wanted to help folks live day-to-day and build a better quality of life.

Kamilah: That’s the difference between having this information in a public library rather than a museum. Anybody can make a reservation, explore the list of what’s in the Collection, and ask for those things to be pulled so that they can engage them. Here, nothing’s ever out of circulation. And now, thanks to that funding you mentioned, you all have more resources to continue digitizing things so that people have even more access. That’s why I admire Vivian Harsh so much. It was revolutionary for her to say, “Information is powerful, and I want to preserve our culture—for practical reasons, for historical reasons, for spiritual and cultural reasons—and I want to put that in a space open to anyone.” That’s such a beautiful legacy project.

Raquel: Collections are only useful if they’re being used. Folks like you who are interested in the Collection are why it’s still here. We’re really excited to partner with you on this project.

We invite you to join us for the **Black Power Series. All events in the Black Power Series are free and open to the public.**

Raquel Flores-Clemons is Head of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection at the Woodson Regional Branch of the Chicago Public Library. In this role, she also serves as Vice-Chairperson for the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC). An advocate for equity and access, Raquel maintains a deep commitment to capturing historical narratives of communities of color and engages hip-hop as a method of archival praxis. Raquel is passionate about connecting community members and organizers to valuable primary resources and is intentional in ensuring that historical gaps are filled by documenting and amplifying the often underrepresented historical narratives and contributions of BIPOC communities to better support efforts to create a more equitable society.

Kamilah Rashied is the Director of Engagement at Court Theatre. Rashied is an arts administrator, producer, educator, and artist with 20 years of experience in cultural production, education, and community outreach. Cultivating a broad range of programs for the public, Rashied has contributed to the development of programs at venerable arts and culture organizations across Chicago.

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BLACK POWER series

The **Black Power Series** complements Court Theatre's world premiere of *Stokely: The Unfinished Revolution*. Join us to explore Black contributions to American history and culture. **All events are free and open to the public.**

agora conversation

Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 5:30pm

Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S Halsted St

Theodore R. Foster III, PhD, Roy Kinsey, Damon Locks, Faheem Majeed, and Kamilah Rashied discuss how invoking Black archives preserves Black culture.

An Evening with Roy Kinsey: A Legacy Project

Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 7pm

Poetry Foundation, 61 W Superior St

Rapper and librarian **Roy Kinsey** shares new music and discusses the Black storytellers who have been essential to shaping his craft.

A Special Presentation by Damon Locks: Past, Present, and Future

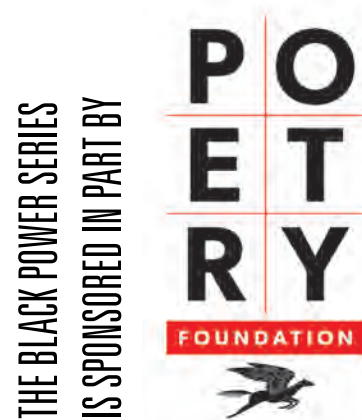
Monday, June 10, 2024 at 6:30pm

Blanc Gallery, 4445 S Martin Luther King Dr

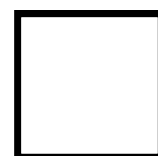
Artist **Damon Locks** responds to themes of collective memory, Black history, activism, and artistry.

To register for events, visit

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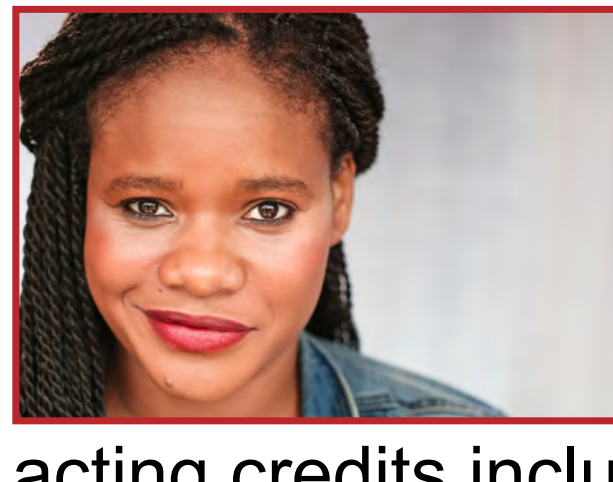
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CAST PROFILES



DEE DEE BATTEAST (*Cecilia Carmichael/Ensemble*) received her MFA in acting from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Recent regional acting credits include: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Royale* (American Players Theatre); *Clyde's* (Studio Theatre); *A Christmas Carol*, *Ohio State Murders* (Goodman Theatre); and *Detroit '67* (Clarence Brown Theatre). Regional directing credits include *The Thin Place* (Gloucester Stage); *People Where They Are* (Clarence Brown Theatre); *The Revolutionists*, *Skeleton Crew* (Farmers Alley Theatre). Television credits: *Chicago Fire*, *Shining Girls*, and *Chicago Med*.



MELANIE BREZILL (*Tante Elaine/Ensemble*) is thrilled to return to Court Theatre! Previous Court Theatre credits include *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*; *Man in the Ring*; and *Caroline, or Change*. Broadway and national tour credits: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *The Book of Mormon*, and *Mamma Mia!* Select regional credits: *Beautiful* (Marriott); *The Comedy of Errors*, *As You Like It* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Northlight Theatre); *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights* (Writers Theatre). TV & film credits: *Reporting for Christmas*, *Empire*. Melanie is the creator of *The Grandmother Project* and *Pearls & Pocketbooks* series on YouTube. She would like to thank her family, friends, and Stewart Talent for their support.



ANTHONY IRONS (*Stokely Carmichael*, later *Kwame Ture*) is thrilled to return to Court Theatre where he last appeared as Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*. Anthony is an ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre, where he has performed in or directed over 20 productions. Other Chicago credits include Goodman Theatre, Shattered Globe Theatre, and The Second City. Film and television credits include *Chicago Med*, *South Side*, *Empire*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Let's Go to Prison*. He is the creator and director of *The BLACKSiDE*, Congo Square Theatre's YouTube comedy series. Anthony is proudly represented by Stewart Talent.



KELVIN ROSTON JR. (*Adolphus Carmichael/Ensemble*; u/s *Stokely Carmichael*) is excited to be back at Court! Court credits: *The Gospel at Colonus* (Oedipus), *Oedipus Rex* (Oedipus), *King Hedley II* (King Hedley), *Five Guys Named Moe* (Four-Eyed Moe), and many others. Recent credits include: August Wilson's *Fences* (Trinity Repertory Company); *Clue* (Mercury Theater); *The Color Purple* (MSMT); *The Wiz* (Fulton Theatre). Chicagoland: Congo Square, Paramount, Marriott, Goodman, ITC, eta, Writers, Black Ensemble, TimeLine, Northlight, Steppenwolf. International: Orb (Tokyo, Japan); Festival Hall (Osaka, Japan). Television: *Chicago Med*, *Chicago P.D.*, *South Side*. Film: *Get a Job*, *Princess Cyd*, *Breathing Room*. Awards: Jeff Award, three BTAA Awards, two Black Excellence Awards, NAMI Award. AEA, Paonessa Talent.



WANDACHRISTINE (*Mabel Charles*, later *May Charles*) has starred on many stages throughout the country in such notable productions as *Fences*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Gee's Bend*, *Thyestes*, *The Old Settler*, *Familiar*, and *A Wonder in My Soul*. In recognition of her work in *Beauty's Daughter* at American Blues Theater, she was awarded the Ruby Dee/Black Theater Alliance Award for her solo performance. Her novel, *I Love You More...Than Shoes!*, about four actresses over 50, is available on Amazon. In the fall, she will star in American Blues Theater's production of Stephen Kings's *Misery*.

VERONDA CAREY (u/s *Mabel Charles/Ensemble*) is very excited to be working with Court Theatre. Chicago credits include *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Intimate Apparel* (Northlight Theatre); *Runaway Home*, *Seven Guitars* (Congo Square Theatre); *Spoken Word* (MPAACT); *Dandelions* (Theater on the Lake); *Mourning Becomes Electra* (Remy Bumppo Theatre); *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre). Veronda would like to thank her family, friends, colleagues, and members of The Collective Theatre for their continued support.

WHITNEY DOTTERY (u/s *Cecilia Carmichael/Tante Elaine/Ensemble*) is absolutely ecstatic to make their Court Theatre debut! Most recent credits include: *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Buffalo Theatre Ensemble); *Is God Is* (A Red Orchid); and *Avenue Q* (Music Theater Works). Whitney is also an audiobook narrator, and an avid reader and baker. They earned a BA in Musical Theatre from Columbia College Chicago. To learn more and order some delicious French macarons from them, feel free to find them on Instagram @_whitofalltrades. Many thanks, as always, to their wonderful agents at NV Talent. Visit whitneydottery.com.

JOSHUA L. GREEN (u/s *Adolphus Carmichael/Ensemble*) is a Chicago-based stage/TV actor and is excited to be part of his first production at Court Theatre. Recent credits: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Sweat* (Copley Theatre); *Champion* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Birthday Candles* (Northlight Theatre); *A Distinct Society* (Writers Theatre); *Dreamgirls* (Paramount Theatre); *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Lorraine Hansberry Theatre). TV: *Paper Girls*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Empire*. Training: University of California-Los Angeles (MFA), British Academy of Dramatic Arts (Oxford). Represented by Big Mouth Talent. SAG-AFTRA.



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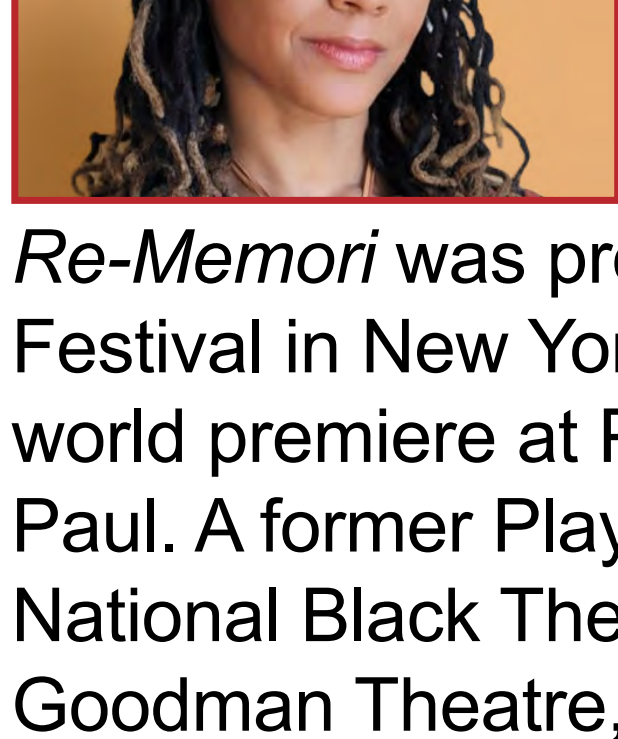
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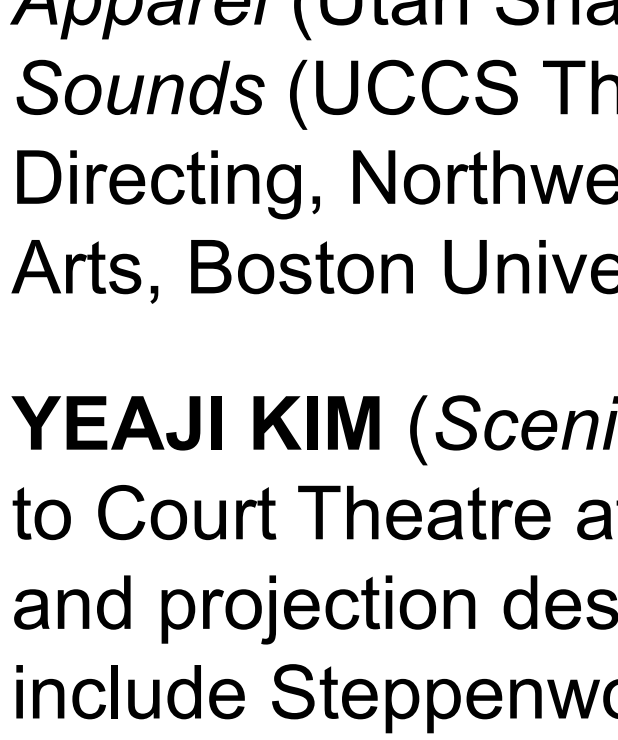
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ARTIST PROFILES



NAMBI E. KELLEY (*Playwright*) is developing multiple projects for Broadway. She received The Prince Prize and an NNPN commission, where her play *Re-Memori* was presented at WP Theater's Pipeline Festival in New York City and recently celebrated a world premiere at Penumbra Theatre Company in St. Paul. A former Playwright-in-Residence at the National Black Theatre, Dramatists Guild, and Goodman Theatre, Nambi was chosen by Toni Morrison to adapt her novel *Jazz*. Her adaptation of Richard Wright's *Native Son* (Sam French, Concord Theatricals) was originally commissioned by American Blues Theater and Court Theatre and has been produced across the country; *Native Son* had its New York premiere at The Duke on 42nd Street (The Acting Company, producer). It went on to receive a Drama League nomination (Best Revival) and an AUDELCO Award (Best Production). Most recently, Nambi served as a writer/co-producer on Peacock's *Bel Air*. Previous television credits include: *Lady In The Lake*, *Our Kind of People*, and *The Chi*. Also an award-winning actress, Kelley has been seen on television and has graced stages all across the world. Visit nambikelley.com.



TASIA A. JONES (*Director*) is a director, performer, and educator focused on social justice and civically engaged theater practices. She is also an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Boston University. Chicago credits include: *1919* (Co-Director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Pass Over* (Assistant Director, Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Intimate Apparel* (Northlight Theatre); *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights* (Writers Theatre); *Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (Associate Director, Goodman Theatre); *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* (Assistant Director, Lookingglass). Regional credits include: *A Raisin in the Sun* (American Players Theatre); *Intimate Apparel* (Utah Shakespeare Festival); *Small Mouth Sounds* (UCCS Theatreworks). Education: MFA Directing, Northwestern University; BFA Theatre Arts, Boston University. Visit tasiaajones.com.

YEAJI KIM (*Scenic Designer*) is excited to return to Court Theatre after *The Island*. Yeaji is a scenic and projection designer. Her recent Chicago credits include Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Remy Bumpo Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, American Blues Theater, Definition Theatre, and more. Her work has been seen at Geva Theatre and Kitchen Theatre Company in New York. She enjoys thinking about people's experiences with stories, and she is particularly interested in visualizing new work. Her love of combining stories and technology has brought her frequent collaborations as a projection designer. Yeaji's video projection work has been nominated for Jeff Awards in 2023 and 2020. More information at yeajikimdesign.com.

GREGORY GRAHAM (*Costume Designer*) is a Chicago costume designer and milliner. His credits include: *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* (Court); *Short Shakespeare! Romeo and Juliet* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Mothers* (Gift); *The Writer* (Steep); *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Remy Bumpo); *The Porch on Windy Hill* (Northlight); *Once* (Writers); *Is God Is* (A Red Orchid); *From the Mississippi Delta* (Lifeline); *1919* (Steppenwolf); *Enough to Let The Light In* (Teatro Vista); *Private Lives* (Raven); *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me, Rent* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *On the Greenbelt* (Strawdog); *The Facts of Life: Satan's School for Girls* (Hell in a Handbag). Education: BA in Theatre Design, University of Illinois at Chicago.

DAPHNE AGOSIN (*Lighting Designer*) is a lighting designer originally from Santiago de Chile. Some of her designs include *Wakka Wakka: Dead as a Dodo* (The Biograph); *The Snow Queen* (Marriott Theatre); *Albert Herring* (Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture); the United States premiere of *Texas Land* (Chicago Dramatists); *Circus Quixotic* (The Actors Gymnasium); and *Above The Water* (Den Theatre). She co-designed *Intimate Apparel* (Northlight Theatre). She holds an MFA from Northwestern University. She is the recipient of a Non-Equity Jeff Award for *Texas Land*.

WILLOW JAMES (*Sound Designer*) is a Chicago-based artist, educator, arts leader, and DJ who centers his work around exploring Black identity, new works, and activism. He currently serves as the Civic Engagement Director at Definition Theatre, where he is also an ensemble member. He is also a Court Theatre Teaching Artist, Resident Sound Designer at Artemisia Theatre, and represented by Dream Team Talent Agency. Court: *Antigone*. Chicago: *The Penelopiad* (Goodman Theatre); *Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Chlorine Sky* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Alaiyo* (Definition Theatre); *The Band's Visit* (Writers Theatre). Regional: TheatreSquared, American Players Theatre, NAATC, Alleyway Theatre, and Phoenix Theatre Indianapolis. Visit worksbywillow.com.

SAMMI GRANT (*Dialect Designer*) is thrilled to be making her Court Theatre debut. Other Chicago dialect design/coaching credits include: *Black Sunday*, *Notes from the Field*, *The Lehman Trilogy*, *Campaigns Inc.*, *Relentless* (TimeLine Theatre); *A Christmas Carol* (Goodman Theatre); *West Side Story* (Lyric Opera); *The Band's Visit*, *Once* (Writers Theatre); *Galileo's Daughter* (Remy Bumpo Theatre); and many more. Film/TV coaching credits include: *Rescued by Ruby*; *Patriot*; *The Exorcist*. Sammi is an Adjunct Professor of Performance at The Theatre School at DePaul University. She holds an MFA with Distinction in Voice Studies from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

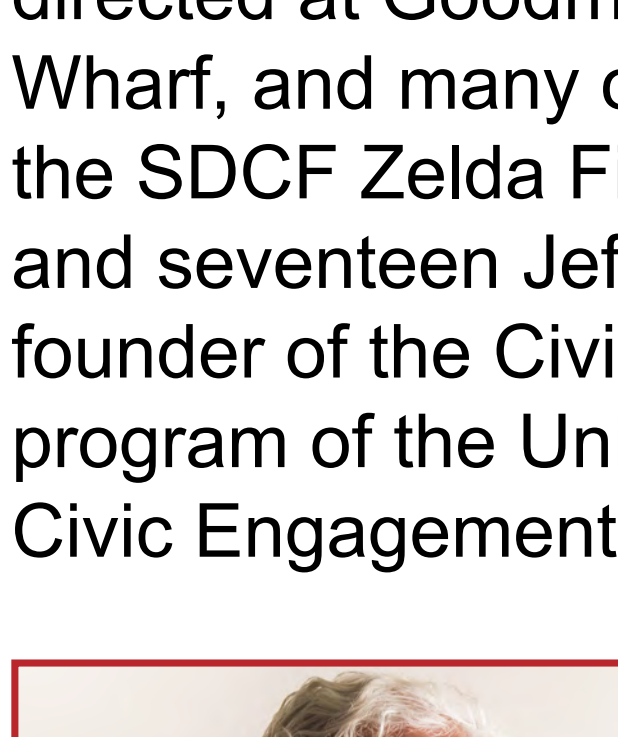
SHERYL WILLIAMS (*Fight Consultation and Intimacy Designer*) is originally from Phoenix, Arizona. She received her BA in Musical Theater from Columbia College Chicago and has been working in and around Chicago since 2017. In addition to working as an intimacy professional for several universities (such as Roosevelt, North Central, and DePaul), she has worked on a number of theatrical productions. Recent credits include: *Anything Goes*, *Cabaret* (Porchlight); *The Nacirema Society* (Goodman); *Spring Awakening* (Roosevelt CCPA); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Antigone*, *Fen* (Court); and more. She has also been published as a contributor on staging violence and intimacy for the stage. Visit her website for more info: iamsherylwilliams.com.

RUEBEN D. ECHOLES (*Hair and Wig Design Concepts*) is an accomplished playwright, director, choreographer, illustrator, and costume and wig designer. He has worked with Black Ensemble, eta, MPAACT, Congo Square, Porchlight, Drury Lane, Skylight Milwaukee, Writers, Paramount, Theo Ubique, Invictus, Goodman, Phoenix Theatre Company, and Studio One. He most recently created wig and hair design concepts for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* here at Court. Rueben has designed wigs for *Rent* at The Muny and for *Dreamgirls* at Paramount and North Carolina Theatre Company. He also designed the costumes for *You Can't Fake the Funk* (Jeff Award – Costume Design) and for four episodes of WTTW's *Chicago Stories*, two of which ("Ida B. Wells" and "The Birth of Gospel") won Emmys for Best Production. Rueben would like to thank Christ his Savior for everything!

MARTINE KEI GREEN-ROGERS (*Production Dramaturg*) is the dean of The Theatre School at DePaul University, a freelance dramaturg, and President-Elect of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Her dramaturgical credits include *The Greatest with the Louisville Orchestra*; *The Lion in Winter*, *Radio Golf*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Mountaintop*, *Home*, and *Porgy and Bess* (Court Theatre); and *Twelfth Night*, *The Book of Will*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *UniSon*, *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Fences* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival).

KATE OCKER (*Production Stage Manager*) is thrilled to be back at Court Theatre. Regional credits include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Antigone*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Fen*, *The Island*, *An Iliad*, *The Adventures of Augie March*, and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Court Theatre); *It Came From Outer Space*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *As You Like It* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); *Six Corners*, *BUDDY – The Buddy Holly Story*, and *The Spitfire Grill* (American Blues Theater); *Noises Off* (Asolo Rep); *A Christmas Carol*, *The Odd Couple*, and *An Inspector Calls* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma); *Red* (Resident Ensemble Players).

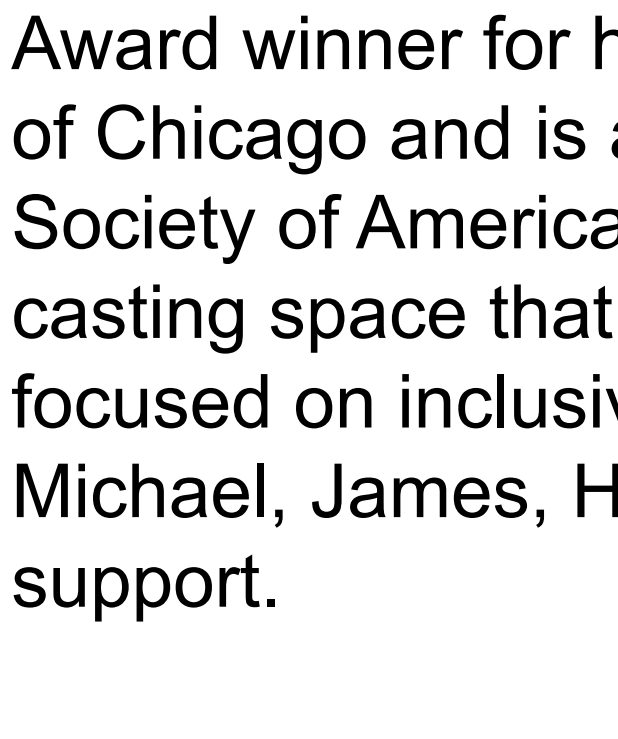
LAUREN PETERS (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is excited to return to Court, having previously worked on *The Lion in Winter*. Select Chicago credits include: *Native Gardens* (Williams Street Repertory); *Last Night and the Night Before*, *Seagull*, *1919*, *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *Welcome to Matteson!* (Congo Square Theatre Company); *Mr. Burns: a Post-Electric Play* (Theatre Wit). Much love and thanks to her family, friends, and Zach.



CHARLES NEWELL (*Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director*), together with Angel Ysaguirre, accepted the 2022 Regional Theatre Tony Award on behalf of Court staff and artists. Recent directorial credits include *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; *The Gospel at Colonus*, co-directed with Mark J.P. Hood; *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, co-directed with Gabrielle Randle-Bent; *Oedipus Rex*; and *The Adventures of Augie March*. Charlie has directed at Goodman, Guthrie, Arena Stage, Long Wharf, and many others. Awards received include the SDCF Zelda Fichandler Award, four Jeff Awards, and seventeen Jeff nominations. Charlie is a co-founder of the Civic Actor Studio, a leadership program of the University of Chicago's Office of Civic Engagement.



ANGEL YSAGUIRRE (*Executive Director*) has been Court's Executive Director since 2018. Prior to this role, he served as Executive Director of Illinois Humanities. During his tenure there, the organization established a number of new programs demonstrating the contribution that the humanities can make in addressing today's most pressing challenges. Previously, he was the Director of Global Community Investing at Boeing and a program officer at the McCormick Tribune Foundation. He has served on the boards of the Theatre Communications Group, Donors Forum of Chicago, the Illinois Center for the Book, Horizons Community Services, Blair Thomas and Company, and Next Theatre.



GABRIELLE RANDLE-BENT (*Associate Artistic Director*) is a mother, director, dramaturg, and scholar. Her directorial highlights include *Antigone*, *The Island*, and *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* (co-directed with Charles Newell) at Court Theatre; *1919* (Steppenwolf); and *The Year of Magical Thinking* (Remy Bumpo). She is a co-founder of the Civic Actor Studio, a leadership program of the University of Chicago's Office of Civic Engagement. She has a BA in Drama from Stanford University, an MA in Performance as Public Practice from the University of Texas at Austin, and is a PhD candidate at Northwestern University.



BECCA MCCRACKEN (*Director of Casting and Artist Cultivation*) has spent 19 years casting in Chicago, covering the Midwest market working on TV/film, commercial, and theatre projects. Becca is an Artios Award winner for her casting work at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and is a proud member of the Casting Society of America. She is committed to creating a casting space that empowers the artist and is focused on inclusivity and humanity. Thank you to Michael, James, Hayes, and Luna for their love and support.

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Winner of the 2022 Regional Theatre Tony Award, Court Theatre reimagines classic theatre to illuminate our current times. In residence at the University of Chicago and on Chicago’s historic South Side, we engage our audiences with intimate and provocative experiences that inspire deeper exploration of the enduring questions that confront humanity and connect us as people.

Court Theatre defines classic theatre as texts from any culture, tradition, or era that resonate throughout time and speak to our present moment.

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