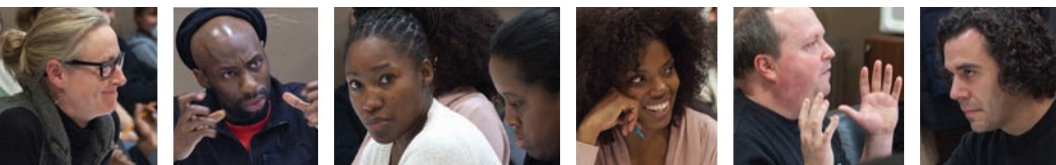


BACKSTORY



BY WINTER MILLER

IN DARFUR



Your behind-the-scenes look at TimeLine productions

YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

TimeLine
Theatre Company

a message



Dear Friends,

In March 2004 Nicholas D. Kristof, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* columnist wrote:

“For decades, whenever the topic of genocide has come up, the refrain has been, ‘Never again.’

“Yet right now, the government of Sudan is engaging in genocide against three large African tribes in its Darfur region here. Some 1,000 people are being killed a week, tribeswomen are being systematically raped, 700,000 people have been driven from their homes, and Sudan’s Army is even bombing the survivors.

“And the world yawns.”

And so began a series of searing, indispensable reports that would further distinguish Kristof’s career and, more important, shine a light on a mounting genocide.

“One of the lessons of history,” he wrote, *“is that very modest efforts can save large numbers of lives. Nothing is*

so effective in curbing ethnic cleansing as calling attention to it.”

And call attention he did.

Playwright Winter Miller had been working as a researcher for Kristof, and he agreed to let her accompany him on a trip to the Sudan/Chad border. There, she was immersed in bombed-out villages, watching people die and coming face-to-face with people who had lost their entire families.

She was on the ground, trying to learn, report, comprehend and aid. She also was wearing two hats—those of journalist and playwright—that often can intersect to create vibrant theater, and she started work on this script. She wanted to use theater to sound a rallying cry and help the people of Darfur. She has created a play admirable not only for its theatrical bravery and emotional impact but also for the activism it sparks and demands.

At TimeLine, I am indebted to my colleague David Parkes, who first called our attention to this play last year and championed it for production. Upon reading it, all of TimeLine’s Company Members were inspired

to learn more. To read up. To better understand an incredibly complex situation. To find ways to make a difference. And to put this story on our stage.

As we’ve conducted research in preparation for this production, led by Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling and dramaturg Maren Robinson, we’ve reached out to many extraordinary organizations and individuals doing important and tireless work. We’ve also discovered, to our discouragement, that many of the groups and movements supporting Darfur have dwindled in recent years as other worthy causes have garnered worldwide attention.

But Winter’s play, written in 2006 and set in 2004, has perhaps never been more important than now in early 2011.

As you read this, new chapters in Darfur’s history are being written, following a referendum scheduled for January 9, 2011, when south Sudan—which controls more than three-quarters of the country’s oil reserves—votes on whether to secede and form a new nation. The fallout could ignite the bloodiest war the world

may know this year and a new round of killing, adding to the millions of lives already lost.

The full story is yet to be written. But history has proved that waiting for the perspective of time and distance is no answer in a time of crisis, especially amid an ethnic cleansing.

TimeLine always has aimed to be a place that brings people together to engage in a conversation about our place in history, to discuss how the past and present connect. Often our

work transports you back decades or centuries. But sometimes history is being made before our eyes, in the here-and-now, with themes and storylines that ripple through time.

Our hope at TimeLine—and Winter’s hope in writing this daring play—is that you leave our theater with a hunger to learn more, talk more, do more and play an active role in impacting history. To aid that quest, we have included some starting points on where to gain information and

make a difference. This information can be found in a flyer included with your program book, in our lobby and online at timelinetheatre.com/in_darfur.

I offer my profound thanks to Winter for creating this work of art. We are proud to have her story on TimeLine’s stage.

And I thank you for being here to experience and discuss *In Darfur*.

Sincerely,

Special Events and Resources

the conversation

TimeLine invites you to take part in the array of resources and online communities inspired by the themes and issues of this production.

Check our website for additional discussions and special events still to be announced for *In Darfur*.

SUNDAY SCHOLARS

On **Sunday, Feb. 13**, attend this free one-hour panel discussion featuring experts talking about the play’s themes and issues.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

On **Thursdays, Jan. 27, Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24; Sundays, Jan. 30, Feb. 6 and 20; and Wednesday, March 2**, moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring cast and production staff.

COMPANY MEMBER DISCUSSION

Our Company Members shape the artistic vision and choose programming for TimeLine. On **Sunday, Feb. 27**, join them for a free post-show discussion.

DRAMATURGY

A **study guide** is available at timelinetheatre.com.

BLOG AND MORE!

Find further information, insight and conversation on our blog, **Behind the ‘Line**, via timelinetheatre.com.

Find us on Facebook

For the latest, be a Facebook fan (**TimeLine Theatre Company**) and follow us on Twitter (**@timelinetheatre!**)

the context

Sudan is a country located in eastern Africa; it is bordered by Egypt, Libya, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2004 a 10-year civil war, between mostly Islamic groups in the north and Christian and Animist groups in the south, reached a cease-fire. In 2005, Sudanese presi-

dent Omar Al-Bashir signed a peace agreement with rebel leader John Garang that granted southern Sudan autonomy and set Jan. 9, 2011, as the date for a referendum on independence. The peace accord did not include the mostly poor tribal regions in the west part of Sudan known as Darfur.

The name Darfur comes from the word “Dar,” which

means land, and “Fur,” the name of one of the many tribal groups in west Sudan. The other main tribal groups in Darfur are the Zaghawa and the Masalit.

The conflict in Darfur has been hard for many to understand. In Darfur, African tribal farming groups live and trade with Arabic herding communities. Both groups are basically Islamic. Long intermarriage makes

“I’m still chilled by the matter-of-fact explanation I received as to why it is women who collect firewood, even though they’re the ones who are raped. The reason is an indication of how utterly we are failing the people of Darfur, two years into the first genocide of the 21st century. ‘It is simple,’ one woman here explained. ‘When men go out, they’re killed. The women are only raped.’”

— Nicholas D. Kristof writing in “A Policy of Rape,” *The New York Times*, June 5, 2005

them virtually indistinguishable, but ongoing violence has exaggerated the perceived differences between them. Many in the nomadic groups consider themselves Arab and better than their African counterparts.

The already arid climate of Sudan has been taxed with droughts and overgrazing of desert vegetation. This has led to further deterioration of the soil and an increase in deserts, a process known as desertification. Tensions rose as tribal farmers and Arab grazing communities vied for resources stretched by drought. Poverty and limited resources led many in the farming communities to campaign for more representation in the Sudanese government. This led to the formation of rebel groups such as the Suda-

nese Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

Starting in 2003, the Government of Sudan (GOS) began surreptitiously arming militias to help provide opposition to rebel groups like the SLA and JEM. The militias, known as Janjaweed, were drawn from the nomadic Arab groups. There is also a large civilian population that is affected by these groups’ activities.

In many cases it is difficult to distinguish whether atrocities committed in Darfur have been committed by the GOS or the Janjaweed, and often both are reported to be working together. Local police are a de facto extension of the GOS forces: International observers have reported that the police fail

TIMELINE: Conflict in Darfur and Sudan

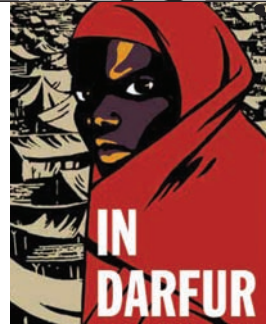
- **1984** Drought leads to famine in Darfur.
- **1987-1989** The Arab-Fur War. The first ethnic Arab militias are first organized at this time.
- **1989** In June, Omar al-Bashir takes control of the Government of Sudan through a bloodless coup.
- **1995-1999** The Arab-Masalit Conflict.
- **2002** Sudan’s vice president, Ali Osman, warns Darfur not to follow the path of the south into civil war.
- **2003** The Sudan Liberation Army and Justice and Equality Movement, Darfuri rebel groups, announce their existence and attack government military facilities because of political marginalization. The Government of Sudan responds with attacks on civilians from ethnic groups accused of supporting the rebel organizations. They use both the official military and the government-armed militias, known as the Janjaweed, in the attacks. The resulting displacement of civilians leads to more than 700,000 Darfuris being driven from their homes by the end of 2003.
- **2004** A cease-fire ends a 20-year civil war in Sudan that resulted in the deaths of two million people. The war was between the Muslim north and the Christian and Anamist south.

Winter Miller and *In Darfur*

production history

Winter Miller is a playwright and journalist whose plays include *In Darfur*, *The Penetration Play*, *Conspicuous* and *Cake and Ice Cream*. She is working on *Paternity*, mentored by Craig Lucas with the Cherry Lane Mentor Project; *The Arrival* as a 2010 Sundance Institute Playwriting Fellow; a musical called *Amandine*; and a play, *Home/Away*. Her grandmother’s cousin was Ben Hecht, whose play *The Front Page* will close TimeLine Theatre’s 2010-11 season. For more information, visit wintermiller.com.

Miller visited the Chad/Sudan border with *The New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof in 2006. She wrote *In Darfur* as part of the “Two-Headed Challenge Project” co-commissioned by the Guthrie Theater and The Playwright’s Center in Minneapolis. *In Darfur* premiered in New York City at The Public Theater, directed by Joanna Settle, followed by a standing-room-only performance at the Public’s 1,800-seat venue in Central Park, a first for a play written by a woman. *In Darfur* also has been performed at Theatre J in Washington,



Poster image from the 2010 production of *In Darfur* at Theatre J in Washington, D.C.

D.C.; the Horizon Theatre in Atlanta; the Mosaic Theatre in Plantation, Fla.; the Theatre Awakening in Toronto, Canada; and in benefit readings nationwide. TimeLine’s production is its Chicago premiere.

the leader

to investigate attacks on Darfuris and, in some cases, obstruct the work of the international monitors sent to report on the violence.

Additionally, race has been used as a pretext for violence. The tribal farmers are referred to as Africans and denigrated as “not Arab” or “too dark.”

During attacks on villages, men and male children are killed. Women are raped, gang raped and often mutilated with weapons. The rapes, including those of the elderly and children, often result in death or permanent mutilation of the victims. Rape is used as a weapon of war, as women who survive rape are often ostracized by their families or villages. Thus the systematic use of rape not only harms the victims but also is intended to destroy entire family units.

The rapes continue to occur, even in and around aid camps, and women who are treated for rape have been accused of being adulterers and punished or intimidated by local police forces. In 2005, the aid organization Doctors Without Borders issued a report that it had treated 500 cases of rape in a four-month period. In

response to the report, the GOS arrested an Englishman and a Dutchman working for Doctors Without Borders.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, by 2010 there had been 2.6 million to 2.7 million people internally displaced in Sudan, and 250,000 had sought refuge in neighboring Chad. An estimated 300,000 people have died of violence and disease.

The violence also has exacerbated the limited resources in Darfur. Villages and crops have been burned and the few bushes and trees have been stripped for firewood by displaced persons, thus accelerating the process of desertification.

The issue of oil is further exacerbating the problems in Sudan. Eighty percent of the country's oil production is purchased by China. China needs to acquire oil reserves for its expanding domestic economy and has been willing to deal with countries shunned by the international community because of human-rights violations. Chinese firms have built roads and infrastructure for Sudan's



Image from Darfur by British photographer Jon Nicholson. View more of Mr. Nicholson's portfolio at jonnicholson.co.uk.

oil pipeline and provide security. These roads are used by the Sudanese military, and guarding the pipeline is used as a pretext for attacks on area villages. According to a BBC Investigative report, *Panorama: China's Secret War*, aired on July 14, 2008, funds from China have been used to support the war in Darfur and China has sold equipment and weapons to the Sudanese Army.

Today, oil is still responsible for tensions in Sudan because the oil reserves are concentrated in the south. The peace deal that ended the civil war between the north and south mandates the south can vote to secede from the country on January 9, 2011. Many international observers fear President Bashir will not be willing to lose the oil reserves and that violence will be reignited.

Omar Hassan al-Bashir is the President of Sudan. He was born in 1944 in an area north of Khartoum, the country's capital. He studied at military academies in Khartoum and Cairo, graduating in 1966. He fought against Israel as an Egyptian paratrooper in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. He is married to a cousin, Fatima Khalid, and also has a second wife, Widad Babiker. He has no children.

In 1989, he led a bloodless coup in Sudan and ousted Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi. As part of the coup he suspended political parties and trade unions and instituted a version of Islamic law that included many provisions not based on traditional Islamic law, such as restrictions on free assembly and freedom of the press. Sudan effectively became a military dictatorship. He appointed himself

Sudan President Omar al-Bashir.



president in 1993, returning the country to civilian rule. Under Bashir, al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was invited to set up a base in Sudan. Bashir was reelected in 1996; he was the only candidate.

He has denied arming the Janjaweed, although the African Union and other international observers have seen Janjaweed militias with government issued weapons and uniforms and have seen government planes attack villages in advance of Janjaweed attacks.

On March 4, 2009, Bashir became the first sitting head of state to be indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague. However, the ICC has no authority or power to extradite or incarcerate him. After the ICC decision, Bashir expelled 13 foreign-relief organizations and three Sudanese aid organizations from the country, eliminating medical aid for numerous internally displaced persons.

On April 26, 2010, Bashir was reelected after the other candidates withdrew from the election, alleging voter fraud.

■ **2004** U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan visit Darfur. One camp of displaced persons is removed before Annan can see it and he is urged to see the better camp visited by Powell.

In September, Powell testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and calls the atrocities in Sudan genocide.

The U.S. government calls the situation in Darfur genocide.

The African Union deploys a peacekeeping mission to Darfur.

The United Nations declares Darfur the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

Almost 1.2 million Darfuris are driven from their homes. One million are internally displaced, and more than 150,000 refugees flee to neighboring Chad.

■ **2005** President Bashir signs a peace agreement with rebel leader John Garang, granting southern Sudan autonomy, and a referendum on independence is scheduled to take place Jan. 9, 2011.

The United Nations Security Council approves sanctions on those who impede the peace process.

The United Nations estimates 300,000 have died in Darfur since 2003.

The International Criminal Court at The Hague opens investigations in Darfur.

The number of internally displaced Darfuris rises to 1.85 million.

the crimes

“Call it civil war; call it ethnic cleansing; call it genocide; call it ‘none of the above.’ The reality is the same. There are people in Darfur who desperately need the help of the international community.”

— Secretary of State Colin Powell, Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony, Sept. 2004

Genocide is defined by the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide at the Hague as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

As initial reports about violence in Sudan emerged, many in the international community seemed reluctant to call the events taking place genocide. Naming the

atrocities for what they are helped draw international attention to the violence in Sudan. However, it also sparked a debate about whether the events in Darfur were genocide, which distracted the international community and delayed international action on Darfur.

The International Criminal Court includes this in its definition of **war crimes**: “Wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or

devastation not justified by military necessity” and the “attack, or bombardment, by whatever means, of undefended towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings.”

According to the ICC, **crimes against humanity** are crimes enacted against a civilian population, including “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape, persecutions on political, racial and religious grounds.”

the word translates roughly as “devils on horseback” and is used to describe the Arab militias armed by the Sudanese government to carry out attacks.

JEM (Justice and Equality Movement) When Bashir staged the 1989 coup, he was supported by Hassan a-Turabi of the National Islamic Front, a Sudanese political party. Turabi recruited African Muslims from areas like Darfur and offered them roles in the government. In 1999, Turabi introduced a bill into the General Assembly to reduce presidential powers. Bashir dissolved the assembly, and Turabi’s supporters, including African Muslims, were purged from the government. Those purged organized the Justice and Equality Movement. Although the JEM and the Sudanese Liberation Army have worked together against the Janjaweed, they are separate entities and not free from disagreements.

Masalit Another African farming tribe in the Darfur region of Sudan.

NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) This general term refers to the various international aid or humanitarian organizations that go to countries during crisis.

SLA (Sudanese Liberation Army) The rebel army grew out of the militias founded by the Fur; members also were recruited from the Zaghawa and Masalit when the GOS started arming Arab nomadic communities and did not follow through on peace agreements to have Arabs pay blood money for tribal deaths. They began launching attacks on Sudanese government locations in February 2003. SLA Secretary-General Minni Arkou Minnawi said, “The objective of the SLA is to create a united democratic Sudan.” The SLA always has been a group of loosely allied military units with a variety of military leaders. The political arm is known as the SLM (Sudanese Liberation Movement) and the two acronyms are often used interchangeably.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) This refugee agency was organized in the wake of World War II to respond to humanitarian crises related to the displacement of people around the world.

Zaghawa One of many farming communities in the Darfur region, it also refers to the language spoken by the Zaghawa tribe.

■ **2006** The Government of Sudan signs the Darfur Peace Agreement with a faction of the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Minnawi, but other factions of the SLA and the Justice and Equality Movement abandon the peace talks. Because not all rebel groups agree to the peace, fighting worsens.

The United Nations Security Council approves a peacekeeping mission in Darfur of 17,000 peacekeepers.

The number of internally displaced Darfuris reaches 2.4 million.

■ **2007** The number of internally displaced Darfuris reaches 2.6 million.

The International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for war crimes and crimes against humanity for Sudan’s humanitarian-affairs minister and a militia leader.

■ **2008** A hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission replaces the African Union mission.

The Justice and Equality Movement and government forces clash in Omdurman, a city near Khartoum, the country’s capital.

The number of internally displaced Darfuris rises to 2.7 million.

■ **2009** United Nations-African Union lead efforts to resume peace talks.

On March 4, the International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for President Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is the first time such charges have been brought against a sitting head of state.

Organizations and Groups in Sudan and In Darfur

the players

AU (African Union) A pan-African institution set up like the United Nations to help monitor incidents in African nations. Established Sept. 9, 1999, its goals are “to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development; to safeguard the

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.” The conflict in Darfur was one of the first tests of the AU monitors.

FRD Playwright Winter Miller created this acronym to stand for the acronyms of aid organizations, to protect their anonymity.

Fur One of the African farming tribal groups in Western Sudan. Darfur means land of the Fur.

GOS (Government of Sudan) Sudan is a military dictatorship. There is little distinction between the Sudanese military and local police forces.

Janjaweed Believed to come from the words jinn (spirit) and jawad (horse),

the interview

Early in the rehearsal process for *In Darfur*, TimeLine Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling (NB), who is directing the play, interviewed playwright Winter Miller (WM). They discussed why she is so passionate about the people in Darfur, what is happening to them and how she conceived the play.

(NB) How did you get involved in writing plays?

(WM) Slightly accidentally. When I was 15, my dad read a book report I wrote on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and told me I was good at writing dialogue. I ignored this praise; I positively wanted to be an actor. After many high school and college productions I landed in New York City, thoroughly unprepared. I was too much in my head. I kept getting cast as a boy or a very clean-shaven young man in mostly terrible productions. Seeking agency, I wrote myself a screenplay, which came in handy a few months later. I applied to two graduate schools, one for acting, the other for playwriting. Let fate decide. I was mailed someone else's rejection letter to NYU's acting school and was accepted into Columbia's playwriting program.

(NB) Your play, *In Darfur*, came out of a trip you took with Nicholas Kristof, the well-known *New York Times*

columnist. How did that trip come about, and can you describe the experience?

(WM) I was working as Nick's researcher at the *Times*, and he was writing about Darfur before anyone else really was, at least with a wide audience. I began to know about atrocities most people I knew had no idea were going on, and I couldn't stop thinking about what could I do to bring awareness to this conflict—assuming that if we knew what was happening, the world collectively would intervene. False assumption on my part.

I thought about what I could bring to the table and came up with the idea to write a play about Darfur. It was my good fortune to win the commission from the Playwrights Center and the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis called the Two Headed Challenge. This gave me some money to cover my plane fare to Chad and the guts to believe I could write a play that



Playwright Winter Miller. Photo by Sherri Brown, Los Angeles Airport.

wasn't a dark comedy and didn't have my family in it. Oh, and was about genocide in Africa, in a place few had heard of yet.

Nick didn't want to take me with him; he said it was too dangerous. I explained that just as he isn't an armchair reporter, I was not an armchair playwright and to write about something so unfamiliar to me, I needed to go there. I needed to breathe in the dust, feel the ground, look into people's eyes and just feel what it felt like to be there, or else I felt in danger of writing an academic treatise rather than a play with the intention to open hearts.

The experience was life-altering. To experience firsthand the resilience of the refugees I met along the Chad/Sudan border, to see what they had survived and were still trying to survive each day taught me things I didn't know about the human spirit.

It was difficult to be powerless to actually do anything on the ground that would save a life. We were told the Janjaweed were coming to the exact soil we were standing on and we had to leave a town full of the elderly, children and the ill—all those who weren't strong enough to flee and had been left—to face the Janjaweed on their own. We looked at their faces, I took a photo of them standing there in a ring around us and wondered if this would be the last evidence that they'd lived. We got in the car and drove away. We had no other choice. As we drove in silence, I was painfully aware of how vulnerable they all were and the privilege we were born into and that we weren't going to be heroes.

I saw a young man dying, because he was fighting on behalf of the Janjaweed, and he and his horse had been shot. His friend said they had gone against their tribe because they were going

to be paid \$200, and they needed the money. I understood the desperation it must have taken for him to betray his neighbors. I also knew, we weren't going to put him in our car and drive him to the hospital because he'd crossed a line; he'd made a decision, and he was going to have to, in that moment, live and die with it.

(NB) When you took that trip, did you already have an idea what story you wanted to tell? How did the idea evolve during your research and writing of the play?

(WM) I knew the plot and the three main characters. In order to submit to the Two Headed Challenge, an outline was required.

The main character was based on a woman Nick had written about in one of his columns, Hawa, a college-educated English teacher. She was chained to a hospital bed because she had been raped, and the aid worker who had helped her had reported to the UN

We were told the Janjaweed were coming to the exact soil we were standing on and we had to leave a town full of the elderly, children and the ill to face the Janjaweed on their own. We looked at their faces, I took a photo of them standing there in a ring around us and wondered if this would be the last evidence that they'd lived.

■ **2009** The Sudanese government expels 13 international humanitarian aid organizations and three internal-aid organizations, creating huge gaps in medical and humanitarian aid in Darfur.

The United Nations' military commander in Darfur declares the conflict is over despite continued violence.

■ **2010** 4.7 million of Darfur's 6 million inhabitants remain adversely affected by the ongoing conflict.

Peace talks continue, but without progress. 2.6 million to 2.7 million Darfuris remain displaced.

For more information and suggested further reading about the complicated situation in Sudan, please read TimeLine's In Darfur Study Guide, available online at timelinetheatre.com/in_darfur/resources.htm

that she'd been raped. The Sudanese police, sent by the government, came and arrested her, because being raped is a crime of adultery.

I wanted Western characters in the play because I wanted an American audience to resonate with what was happening in Darfur, and I thought it would be most accessible if I presented people and scenarios that I and people I know could relate to. I wanted this to be a play that would be seen. Or else, why write this one at all?

(NB) In the play, you deal with the ethical challenges a journalist faces in getting a story out without compromising the people who are acting as sources. Did you have to resolve similar challenges in bringing this story to the stage?

(WM) Well, I wanted Carlos, the aid worker, to be affiliated with a particular aid group that is well known worldwide. But when this aid organization read the play—I had them fact-check it, along with a lot of other people—they said, you can't name our organization; you will endanger our people, you will jeopardize our freedom to be there if we are seen as taking a political stance.

In terms of my sources, I protected all of them; I let nothing be traceable to any one particular person. I imagined all the journalist and aid-worker stuff based on things that actually could happen—I interviewed a lot of journalists and aid workers. I don't think you can really compare a play that is a work of fiction based on some true events with a journalist's role, which is to tell the story with true facts. What I did was look for emotional truth and then back it up with stuff that could have happened.

(NB) Interesting. Can you say more about how you view the role of a journalist versus that of a playwright?

(WM) To me, it's two sides of the same coin. As a journalist or a playwright your ultimate goal is to tell a good story. The first requires factual information, attributions about who said what and what happened chronologically, and a real attention to perceiving a situation as objectively as possible. As a playwright, I seek emotional truth; people need to do actions and feel emotions that are believable or else the story is a hollow shell. I can play with who said what and make it more dramatic, but I'm still going for the same goal, to tell a particular truth.

(NB) What did you wish to accomplish with this play?

(WM) I wanted to point out the complexity of the conflict, that it isn't simply Arabs vs. Africans, Christians vs. Muslims. That those delineations don't take into account the way the culture is lived, nomads and farmers. That there are linguistic and cultural differences, but that they also happen on a continuum. That what made this appear like an X vs. Y conflict was the propaganda of the Government of Su-



Journalists Ann Curry and Nicholas Kristof in the field. Both have given information about the situation in Darfur airplay in the United States. Photo courtesy Winter Miller.

dan, its desire to destabilize and get rid of entire groups of people. I thought if collectively we saw what was happening to humans—to us—we could feel outside our comfort zone, raise our voices and demand leadership from world leaders and the UN.

I wanted to be a part of a movement that, along with journalists and activists, was and is seeking to bring about an end to genocide in Darfur and to those genocides that are brewing in other hot spots. I wanted to say, "Look, here it is, you know what's going on. What you do about it is your choice, but you can't say you didn't know."

(NB) There will be a great deal of political activity happening between northern and southern Sudan in 2011. How may this affect Darfur?

(WM) The entire country may be destabilized. There may be another genocide

unfolding in south Sudan, and Darfur will potentially be further forgotten. These people who are living scattered in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced persons—they don't have their lives or their livelihood back, and they have not been given safety. If all hell breaks loose in southern Sudan, then you've simply got more bodies to bury, more children without parents—and peace slips further away.

(NB) In just the few years since the play was written, the situation in Darfur has changed dramatically. How do you think this affects our experience of the play?

(WM) It has and it hasn't changed. People are living and dying in camps. It's genocide in slow motion if you're dying from malnutrition and disease. The villages are burned, so you can't keep burning and looting what isn't there to loot. But the rapes continue.

Children in Farchana Refugee Camp along the Chad/Sudan border. Around their necks they wear gris-gris, amulets to protect from harm. They are pieces of the Koran, wrapped in leather. Photo courtesy Winter Miller.



It's not safe in the camps. If you're in the audience and you think that just because people aren't being shelled every day, there's enough peace to rebuild—then you don't have the full story. When it chooses, the Government of Sudan still perpetrates violence on people who are unprotected.

I chose to set this play in 2004 and keep it in that time frame. But just because it ends there doesn't mean that the violence isn't still a daily threat. It's stasis in a very horrible situation.

(NB) What's next for you?

(WM) Good question! I have no idea. Is there a suggestion box?

On a trip to Uganda to write plays for former child soldiers in an Internally Displaced Persons camp, I realized that theater—or art—can nourish in a way that is just as necessary as medicine, food, shelter and safety. I saw how when

people tell their stories, when they experience their aliveness in art, that sustains them through the darkest of times. It provides a memory, an escape.

I'd like to manifest some kind of "Playwrights Without Borders," where a team of artists goes into places of deep conflict and works to allow the expression of that trauma and conflict in a way that addresses human resilience and beauty. So I'd like to facilitate a lot more storytelling among people as a means of bridging our differences and opening our hearts. It sounds Pollyanna-ish, but I'm willing to be mocked for something I've seen with my own eyes. When we put ourselves in another's shoes, most of us—many of us—find compassion.

(NB) Is there anything else you would like to share about *In Darfur* or yourself?

(WM) My gratitude to Time-Line for this production and to you, the audience, for receiving the work, however it lands with you and wherever you take it. Thank you.

This is an edited version of a longer interview with Winter Miller. To read the full text, visit timelinetheatre.com/in_darfur/resources.htm.

backstage



TimeLine Theatre Board President Paul Knapp and Nancy Knapp.

TimeLine Theatre is pleased to recognize Paul and Nancy Knapp for their tremendous support of the theatre.

Paul and Nancy first came to TimeLine in 2001 with a theatre group from the International Women Associates, a group that Nancy has been a past president and active member of for many years. Their first TimeLine experience was Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, a production that is still their favorite to this day.

When asked what inspires them to support TimeLine, Paul and Nancy replied: "From that first play we have been stimulated by TimeLine's mission of producing plays that deal with history and have been impressed with the artistic capabilities and achieve-

ments of the company. TimeLine has the most consistency in producing plays that we find interesting and well done (and well done in virtually all areas) of any theatre we have regularly attended. These things, plus the people—the members of the Board, the Company, the staff, the artists, the supporters—are the reasons we want to provide funding to help TimeLine."

Paul and Nancy don't only support TimeLine as generous donors. As a member of TimeLine's Board of Directors for five years—serving the last three as president—Paul has played an instrumental role in guiding TimeLine through a crucial period of growth. Paul's business and executive experience (much of which

TimeLine's 2001 production of The Crucible was Paul and Nancy Knapp's first experience at TimeLine, and still their favorite.



has been at his current company DST Systems, Inc.) has helped him develop an understanding of the operational and management requirements for a growing organization, equipping him with the skills needed to lead the Board.

As donors and leaders in our organization, Paul and Nancy are helping to build TimeLine's future. "We see TimeLine continuing to grow and serve a bigger audience. It's hard to say that we see better work in the future because the work is already so good, but we do anticipate there will be more of it. TimeLine is an increasingly important name in Chicago theatre. That position will grow, as will TimeLine's reputation on a regional and national basis."

Paul and Nancy are also active members elsewhere in the community. Paul serves on the Board of Trustees of Columbia College Chicago and on the Board of Directors of the Bay Harbor Foundation in Bay Harbor, Michigan. And in addition to her involvement in International Women Associates, Nancy serves on the Women's Board of the University of Chicago Cancer Research Foundation.

Dessert on Stage – Oo la la!

On Friday, November 5 TimeLine supporters packed the house for a performance of *To Master the Art* and dessert on the stage. Following the performance guests got a closer look at scenic designer Keith Pitts' set while mingling with the artists and the production team over champagne and sweet treats. Led by Director of Education Jeff Santicola, students from Chicago's famous culinary school, Le Cordon Bleu, whipped up a Parisian feast for the evening, even using Julia's kitchen to create treats for guests on the spot. TimeLine is grateful to all of our donors who make world premiere productions like *To Master the Art* possible. To learn more about the benefits of being a TimeLine donor please visit timelinetheatre.com/donate.

Guests at TimeLine's Dessert On Stage event mingle and enjoy treats prepared in Julia Child's Paris kitchen on November 5, 2010.



ENTER TO WIN: 7-nights in Maui

Raffle tickets are on sale now! The Grand Prize is: Accommodations for seven nights in a beautiful one-bedroom condo in Hawaii, plus \$1,000 good toward the purchase of airfare.

- \$25 for one raffle ticket
- \$100 for five raffle tickets

Winner will be drawn at TimeLine's Step Into Time benefit on March 25, 2011. Winner need not be present at the time of the drawing. **Order now!** Use the form included with your program or call 773.281.8463 x26.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy @ Historical Research by Maren Robinson

Written by Maren Robinson, PJ Powers, Lydia Swift and Lara Goetsch

Edited by Karen A. Callaway & Lara Goetsch

Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch

In Darfur Photos by Ryan Robinson

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Actor Kelli Simpkins; actor Eddie Jordan III; actors Mildred Marie Langford and Ebony Wimbs; actor Tyla Abercrombie; director Nick Bowling; and actor Gregory Isaac.

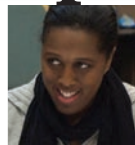
Pictured on back cover (from left): Properties designer Julia Eberhardt and production manager John Kearns; actor Gregory Isaac with set design model by scenic designer Amanda Sweger; actor Brian-Alwyn Newland; close-up of set model; actor Ebony Wimbs; and video and projections designer Mike Tutaj.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories **inspired by history** that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre that engages, educates, entertains and enlightens.

the play



January 22 - March 20, 2011

previews 1/18 - 1/21

by **WINTER MILLER**

directed by **NICK BOWLING**

Chicago Premiere!

Playwright Winter Miller's experiences accompanying Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof in Sudan inform this provocative account of the horrors of genocide. In a camp for internally displaced persons in Darfur, three lives intertwine—an aid worker trying to save lives, a Darfuri woman searching for safety and a journalist who believes that one front-page story can help stop the madness. Together they tell an intense, inspired-by-real-life story that demands international attention.

Cast

Tyla Abercrombie**
 Kelli Simpkins**
 Gregory Isaac
 Eddie Jordan III
 Mildred Marie Langford
 Brian-Alwyn Newland
 Ebony Wimbs

**Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Production Team

Amanda Sweger: *Scenic Designer*
 Lindsey Pate: *Costume Designer*
 Nic Jones and Jesse Klug, U.S.A.: *Lighting Designers*
 Andrew Hansen: *Sound Designer and Original Music*
 Mike Tutaj: *Video and Projections Designer*
 Julia Eberhardt: *Properties Designer*
 Maren Robinson: *Dramaturg*
 Cheney Tardio: *Stage Manager*
 John Kearns: *Production Manager*
Those designers and scenic artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO

JANUARY 2011

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2011

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

MARCH 2011

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20						

- Regular Performance**
- Preview Performance**
- Opening Night *Sold Out***
- Post-Show Discussion** with cast & production crew **Free**
- Sunday Scholars** a one-hour post-show panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play **Free**
- Company Member Discussion** a conversation with TimeLine's Company members **Free**

SHOW TIMES

PREVIEWS 8 PM
 OPENING NIGHT 7 PM
 WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS 7:30 PM
 FRIDAYS 8 PM
 SATURDAYS 4 PM & 8 PM
 SUNDAYS 2 PM