



CHICAGO PREMIERE

# KILL MOVE PARADISE

by JAMES IJAMES

directed by WARDELL JULIUS CLARK

**Timeline**  
Theatre Company

YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

BACKSTORY



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Chicago premiere of James Ijames' *Kill Move Paradise*, directed by TimeLine Company Member Wardell Julius Clark.

When Wardell introduced this play to our Company, we were knocked out. It was clear to our 17-member team that this play's urgent cry demanded an audience, presently. And it was also apparent that we'd found a kindred spirit in James, who asks, "Why not examine the road behind you to better understand the terrain ahead? I don't believe looking back prevents the march forward. I believe it makes our march forward one of gratitude."

Similarly, TimeLine's mission is not merely about looking back. Our gaze moves from past through present, toward what tomorrow might bring. While our plays often are rooted in, or were written in, days gone by, *Kill Move Paradise* is a contemporary work about issues all-too-current. Yet its historical lineage is undeniably apparent, illuminating the system that perpetuates an epidemic of lives tragically taken.

James has said that he writes "about the America I see, and the America I want to see." The impetus for *Kill Move Paradise* was stirred specifically in 2015, following the killing of nine Black parishioners at church in Charleston, South Carolina by a white supremacist. James' inspiration,

however, was already simmering from killings of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, and, in Chicago, Laquan McDonald, plus dozens of other senseless losses that perhaps had not captured the nation's attention.

"My approach to current events of things we don't want to talk about is find a way to elevate it to something more heightened, using theatricality—write something that must happen in a theater," James said. "I find it opens people up, and primes them to have a productive dialogue."

Set in an other-worldly, cosmic waiting room, *Kill Move Paradise* introduces us to four young men. All Black. All taken far too soon. And what transpires between them is both completely surreal and altogether all-too-real. It's astonishingly hilarious, utterly mesmerizing, and thoroughly theatrical.

"Every time I think we have reached a point where maybe this play is obsolete. It's suddenly not," James said. "And the violence with which that reality comes to me never ceases to take my breath."

Until that day when this play is obsolete, I am grateful for voices like James', for inspiring leaders like my colleague Wardell, for the impassioned team creating this production, and for plays like *Kill Move Paradise* to rouse us from complacency. And I thank you for joining us and for being active participants in the ensuing conversation this play will spark.

Lastly, as I write this letter, it is January 20—the MLK Day of Service—and I began the morning re-reading Dr. King's resounding "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Remembering that today is a call for service, not rest, I'll close with his letter's final, inspiring, and still-unfulfilled wish from 57 years ago:

"Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty."

**“The past is always haunting the present—especially the past that hasn’t changed very much.”**

— James Ijames

A self-described “messy writer” who strives for “excellence ... not perfection” and writing that is “wild and precise,” playwright James Ijames has always been interested in creating stories that push audiences to work together toward examining our collective histories, reflecting on what we inherit from those who came before us, and considering what we will leave behind for future generations.

Ijames received his BA degree in Drama from Morehouse College and an MFA degree in Acting from Temple University. He is based out of Philadelphia, Penn., where, in addition to his writing, he maintains an active career as a performer and serves as an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Villanova University.

Ijames is a 2011 Independence Foundation Fellow and a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, and is the recipient of the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist. He is a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia’s first playwright producing collective and a company member with Chicago’s Definition Theatre Company.

His plays include *Kill Move Paradise* (winner of a 2017 Whiting Award for Drama and a 2019 Kesselring Prize), *Youth, History of Walking, Matter Out of Place, White* (winner of the Terrence McNally New Play Award, which will receive its Chicago premiere later this season at Definition Theatre), *Moon Man Walk* (produced by Definition in 2018), *The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington* (an honorable

An image from the Wilma Theater production of James Ijames’ *Kill Move Paradise*. (Photo by Johanna Austin)



## THE TIMELINE: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA [ABRIDGED]

The history of Black people in the United States is taught and shared in ways that are often limited in scope, with just a handful of moments of excellence coming to represent the entirety of the Black lived experience. This timeline seeks to broaden the conversation by including lesser known “found” or “self-taught” moments of Black history that are less common to see in historical textbooks.

**1508** Juan Garrido, a free Black man, travels to the “New World” with Spanish Conquistadors. Over the next 30 years, he makes many return trips alongside Juan Ponce de León and Hernán Cortés. He is the first recorded Black person to travel to the Americas.

**1619** “20 and odd” enslaved Africans from present-day Angola arrive on the shores of Virginia, marking the start of slavery in what will become the continental United States.

**1644** The first Black legal protest in America occurs when 11 Blacks successfully petition the government of New Amsterdam for their freedom.

**1739** The Stono Rebellion, an early slave insurrection, leads to the deaths of at least 20 whites and more than 40 Blacks in Charleston, South Carolina.

**1780** Pennsylvania becomes the first state to abolish slavery.

**1827** *Freedom’s Journal* becomes the first Black-owned and operated newspaper in the United States.

**1837** Cheyney University of Pennsylvania (originally the Institute for Colored Youth) becomes the first Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in the United States.

**1847** Frederick Douglass begins publication of the abolitionist newspaper *The North Star*.



mention for the 2015 Kesselring Prize that will receive its Chicago premiere later this season at Steppenwolf Theatre) and *The Threshing Floor*.

His work has been produced nationally, including at The National Black Theatre (New York), Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon, Wilma Theater (Philadelphia), Ally Theatre (Washington, D.C.), and Shotgun Players (Berkeley). He has received development opportunities with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwrights Horizons, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, The Gulfshore Playhouse, Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre, The National Black Theatre, and Victory Gardens.

Inspired by the words of Paula Vogel, who says the job of the artist is to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar, Ijames seeks to use theatre to expose “the American experiment and how imperfect this place

is, in an effort to make ... a more perfect union.” In this quest, Ijames hopes that his plays serve as catalysts for collective action, moments where individuals might start to begin to build community and a new kind of legacy. He recognizes that his plays may cause discomfort in audiences, and hopes that this discomfort will cause people to “talk to [other] people and maybe see where they are implicated in the state of race relations. We all think the work has been done, but there is more to be done.”

*Kill Move Paradise* was developed, in part, through Victory Gardens’ Ignition Fest, where it received a reading in the summer of 2016 under the direction of Marti Lyons. The play received its world premiere in 2017 Off Broadway at the National Black Theatre in Harlem, where it was a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick. *Kill Move Paradise* received a second production at Philadelphia’s Wilma Theater in 2018, where critics celebrated the theatricality of the piece and Ijames’ project of “building a ritual rather than a drama.” TimeLine Theatre’s production represents the Chicago premiere of this piece, as well as director and TimeLine Company Member Wardell Julius Clark’s mainstage directorial debut.

On Wednesday, June 17, 2015, during an evening Bible study at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the oldest and largest Black congregations in the nation, nine black parishioners were killed when a white supremacist entered the building and opened fire. The names of The Charleston Nine—Tywanza Sanders, Susie Jackson, Cynthia Marie Graham Hurd, Ethel Lee Lance, DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Daniel Simmons, Sharonda Coleman Singleton, Myra Thompson, and Clementa C. Pinckney—were added to the list of countless Black lives lost to the violent and oppressive system of white supremacy in this country.



*The nine Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church members killed on June 17, 2015, during a Bible study in Charleston, South Carolina.*

The systemic nature of this violence is far from random though, and is in fact embedded in the institutions that currently make up the fabric of our society. According to a recent study released by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* providing a new analysis of deaths involving law enforcement officers, about 1 in 1,000 Black men and boys in America can

expect to die at the hands of police officers. In fact, police use of force accounted for 1.6% of all deaths of Black men between the ages of 20 and 24. This same study showed that Latino men and boys, Black women and girls, and Native American men, women, and children are also killed by police at higher rates than their white peers.

Names like Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, and, here in Chicago, Laquan McDonald, represent high profile cases that have captured the national imagination. However, they represent just a fraction of the institutionalized violence that is the day-to-day reality for people of color living in this country. A *Washington Post* police-shooting database reported 933 individuals who were the victims of fatal shootings by a police officer in the line of duty in 2019 alone. Of these 933 individuals, 213 identified as Black.

In response to the events in Charleston, and in response to the epidemic of police shootings of people of color, specifically young Black men, James Ijames sat down and began to write what would eventually become the script for *Kill Move Paradise*. For Ijames, this story was a way to present “a portrait of the slain, not as degenerates who deserved death but as heroes who demand that we see them for the splendid beings they are.” For Ijames, “these characters embody all the ways in which [Black boys and men] try to be human. They are jealous, they are kind, they are maternal and paternal, they are pushed physically to the edge of something and then fall. You can’t deny their humanity. And they are all Black.”

While Ijames has spoken that he hopes the play will one day become obsolete, he also recognizes that with each new production, each new performance, the list of lives lost will have grown “unless we really begin to look at why this is happening. Structurally, psychically.”

**He goes on to say, “I think it’s Mark Twain who said that history doesn’t repeat, but it rhymes. A repeat you know how to deal with ‘cause you’ve seen it before. But rhyming just different enough to fool you into thinking it’s something new.”**

**1871** Tennessee passes the first of the “Jim Crow” segregation laws, segregating state railroads. Other Southern states will pass similar laws over the next 15 years.

**1873** Physician Daniel Hale Williams, a Black man, performs the world’s first successful open-heart surgery.

**1892** Ida B. Wells, a Black journalist, begins investigating the lynchings of African Americans after three of her friends are lynched in Tennessee.

**1899** Pianist and composer Scott Joplin publishes “The Maple Leaf Rag,” a major hit that helps popularize ragtime music.

**1900** On November 1, brothers James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson compose the song “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” commonly referred to as the Black national anthem.

**1903** Sarah Breedlove MacWilliams, better known as Madam C.J. Walker, starts an African American hair-care business in Denver and eventually becomes America’s first self-made woman millionaire.

**1909** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) forms. Its mission is “to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.”

**1919** A series of race riots across the country leaves at least 100 people dead. Sparked by white resentment of African Americans working in industry, and their large-scale migration from South to North, they will come to be known as the Red Summer Race Riots.

**1936** At the Summer Olympic Games in Berlin, Jesse Owens wins gold in the 100-meter sprint, 200-meter dash, broad jump, and 400-meter relay.

**1947** Jackie Robinson becomes the first Black man to play baseball in the major league.



## The Search for Freedom

Since arriving in this country through forced enslavement, Black Americans have been searching for freedom. Every movement of resistance has been propelled by this need for forward movement toward a place (both physical and metaphorical) free from the systemic, oppressive, and legal reality of the nation's history. As many of the earliest examples of Black resistance and liberation were steeped in the ethos of Christianity—a set of beliefs used as a tool of both oppression and liberation during slavery—this quest has often been described through religious imagery, with the end result of this journey of liberation often being referred to as “The Promised Land.”

## The Impact of Slavery

As slavery quickly became an essential part of this country's economy, it became virtually impossible for an enslaved person to escape bondage and lead a free life. As a result, many slaves turned to death as an escape, believing that the soul would be free to return home to Africa and heaven—a destination devoid of bondage or servitude.

Slaves were often prohibited from gathering for funeral services unsupervised, out of fear that they would organize and rebel against their enslavers. However, many still found secret ways to mourn the fallen and celebrate their “homegoing,” a phrase still commonly applied to Black funerals today. To this day, for many, a homegoing represents the religious connotation of the deceased “going home,” to heaven and to glory, and to be with the Lord and ancestors in The Promised Land.

**“We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now. Because I’ve been to the mountaintop ... And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”**

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

These homegoing ceremonies, like many other African American rituals that still exist today, were a hybrid of old African traditions and newfound American experiences. The center of a homegoing ceremony was an opportunity to come together as a community and mourn, allowing family and loved ones to host an elaborate celebration of life featuring music, prayers, reading from scripture, and sharing stories and memory of the deceased.

## The North

During the existence of slavery, the North became a physical manifestation of The Promised Land. Slaves would communicate information about the Underground Railroad (a network of abolitionists that assisted and harbored runaway slaves) through references to religious spirituals and Christian rhetoric. The Ohio River was commonly referred to as the “River Jordan” because just as the Israelites crossed the River Jordan into the Promised Land, runaway slaves could expect to find freedom after crossing it. However, the North still proved limiting in its ability to offer freedom, as Black people were restricted in the jobs they could take, and their freedom remained tenuous with the introduction of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850.

*Artist Jacob Lawrence's Harriet and the Promised Land, No. 10 (1967) depicting Harriet Tubman leading a group of escaped slaves to freedom.*





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**EXPLORING TODAY'S TOPICS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PAST**

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artistic director **PJ Powers** | managing director **Elizabeth K. Auman**

CHICAGO PREMIERE

# **KILL MOVE PARADISE**

by **James Ijames**

directed by **Wardell Julius Clark+**

scenic designer **Ryan Emens**

costume designer **Izumi Inaba, U.S.A.**

lighting designer **Jason Lynch**

sound designer and composer **Jeffrey Levin**

properties designer **Mealah Heidenreich**

intimacy and violence designer **Rachel Flesher**

movement choreographer **Breon Arzell**

dramaturg **Jared Bellot^**

stage manager **Miranda Anderson\***

featuring **Kai A. Ealy\***, **Charles Andrew Gardner\*+**, **Trent Davis**,  
**Cage Sebastian Pierre**, and **Donovan Session**

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**February 20 – April 5, 2020** (previews 2/12 – 2/19)

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*Developed by Victory Gardens Theater (Chay Yew, Artistic Director),  
Chicago Illinois, as part of IGNITION Festival of New Plays 2016*

*New York City world premiere produced by Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre,  
Harlem, NY, June 2017*



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

Those designers and scenic  
artists identified by U.S.A. are  
members of United Scenic Artists,  
IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO

+ TimeLine Company Member

^ TimeLine Associate Artist

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# CAST

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<b>Kai A. Ealy*</b>	Isa
<b>Charles Andrew Gardner*+</b>	Daz
<b>Trent Davis</b>	Tiny
<b>Cage Sebastian Pierre</b>	Grif
<b>Donovan Session</b>	Tiny ( <i>at select performances</i> )

Donovan Session performs the role of Tiny on Wednesdays 2/26, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, and 4/1 at 7:30pm, and on Wednesday 3/11 at 2pm.

Understudies: Stephen "Blu" Allen (*Isa*), Tamarus Harvell (*Grif*), and Londen Shannon (*Daz*). Understudies will never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is posted at the performance.

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers  
+ TimeLine Company Member

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# PRODUCTION STAFF

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Assistant Director.....	<b>Sophie Hoyt</b>
Lobby Display Designer .....	<b>Dina Spoerl</b>
Production Assistant, Young Performer Supervisor .....	<b>Elizabeth VanHaren</b>
Assistant Costume Designer .....	<b>Joyanna Cox</b>
Intimacy and Violence Assistant Directors .....	<b>Lewon Johns, Thomas Russell</b>
Assistant Dramaturg.....	<b>Kenya Ann Hall</b>
Assistant Production Manager .....	<b>Krista Mickelson</b>
Marketing Consultant .....	<b>Am'Ber D. Montgomery</b>
Technical Director .....	<b>Stan Hicks</b>
Scenic Charge Artist .....	<b>Steph Charaska</b>
Costume Manager .....	<b>Elle Erickson</b>
Wardrobe Supervisor .....	<b>Anna Martin</b>
Master Electrician .....	<b>Michael Gobel</b>
Audio Engineer .....	<b>Matthew R. Chase</b>
Technical Crew .....	<b>Sibyl Ashcraft-Holt, Lena Aubrey, Billy Borst,</b> <b>Darren Brown, Caitlin Cash, Sage D. Derrig, Alexa Eisenberg,</b> <b>Blake Hardin, Alec Klimson, Kevin Knox Jr., Alec Medina,</b> <b>Sebastian Medina, Arik Mendelevitz, David Moreland, Jared Munro,</b> <b>Aidan Murphy, Daniel Salazar, Johnnie Schleyer, Abigail Schmitz,</b> <b>Mark Lee Simon, Michael Stults, Timothy Swaim, Chris Taylor,</b> <b>Devonte Washington, Molly Wickman</b>



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# PLEASE NOTE

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The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings (including photographs) of this production or distributing recordings on any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author's rights and actionable under United States copyright law.

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## CONVERSATION

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TimeLine Theatre is dedicated to exploring today's social and political issues through the lens of the past. We share information and provide inspiration for conversation through this *Backstory* program book, the interactive lobby experience, discussion events, our blog Behind the 'Line, and more. Explore all the resources available at [timelinetheatre.com/kill-move-paradise](http://timelinetheatre.com/kill-move-paradise).

The lobby experience for *Kill Move Paradise* has been sponsored in part by **Judith Barnard and Michael Fain**.

### FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

TimeLine Theatre is on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube at **@TimeLineTheatre**. Don't forget to tag us and use the hashtag **#KillMoveParadise** and/or **#TimeLineTheatre**.



### THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Visit your Apple or Android store and search "TimeLine Theatre" to extend our immersive and interactive theatrical experience to your mobile device with our free app!

With access anytime and anywhere, you'll be able to get updates and tickets for current productions, benefit from exclusive deals and offers, watch our latest videos, learn about special programs and events, enjoy behind-the-scenes features, and much more!

PLUS you can explore our custom "At the Event" section, specially designed to enhance your experience seeing TimeLine productions.

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## SPECIAL THANKS

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This production owes special thanks to numerous individuals and organizations for their time, talents and support; including: Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, The 4529 Prop Shop, Barbizon Lighting Company, The Chicago Green Theatre Alliance, ChicagoGaff, Chicagoland Truck Rental, Charles Andrew Gardner, The House Theatre, Jason Lynch, The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The Theatre School at DePaul University, North Park University Theatre, Abigail Schmitz, and Technmagic Designs LLC.

Special thanks to Windy City Ninjas and WorkUp Ninja for production assistance in support of actor wellness.

# BIOGRAPHIES



**KAI A. EALY** (*Isa*) returns to TimeLine, having previously appeared in *CARDBOARD PIANO* and the TimePieces reading of *NAT TURNER IN JERUSALEM*. He studied acting in Alabama before moving to Chicago to pursue his career. Kai was last

seen in *OEDIPUS REX* (Court). Other credits include *MARY STUART* (Chicago Shakespeare), *FRANKLINLAND* (Jackalope), *TWO MILE HOLLOW* (First Floor), 30th Annual Young Playwrights Festival (Pegasus), and *MIGRATION* (eta Creative Arts). Television credits include *CHICAGO FIRE* (NBC). Kai is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



**CHARLES ANDREW GARDNER** (*Daz*) is a Company Member at TimeLine, where he previously has appeared in *PARADISE BLUE* (BTAA nomination—Best Supporting Actor) and *MY KIND OF TOWN* (BTAA nomination—Best Actor), for which Chris Jones

of the *Chicago Tribune* named him as one of 2012's "Hot New Faces to Watch." He is also a Teaching Artist with TimeLine's Living History Education Program. Other Chicago theatre credits include *HIS SHADOW* (16th Street); *OBJECTS IN THE MIRROR, STOP. RESET.* (u/s), and *BUZZER* (u/s) (Goodman); *HOW LONG WILL I CRY* (Steppenwolf); *MACBETH* and *OTHELLO* (The Suitcase Shakespeare Company); and *THE GREAT FIRE* (u/s) (Lookingglass). Television credits include *THE CHI* (SHOWTIME) and *CHICAGO PD* (NBC), as well as multiple national commercials. Film credits include *LONG RIDE HOME*, *OLYMPIA* (currently streaming on Amazon), and *NOISE AND COLOR*. In addition to his work on stage and in front of the camera, Charles is President of the SAG-AFTRA Chicago Local and an Associate Board Member of the Gene Siskel Film Center. Charles is a graduate of Northern Illinois University with a BFA degree in Acting. For more information, visit [CharlesAndrewGardner.com](http://CharlesAndrewGardner.com).



**TRENT DAVIS** (*Tiny*) is making his TimeLine debut. He made his movie debut playing Little Demetrius in Spike Lee's *CHI-RAQ* (Amazon Films). Chicago theatre credits include *A WRINKLE IN TIME* and *FRANKENSTEIN* (Lifeline); *CAROLINE, OR CHANGE* (Columbia College); and *AN INSPECTOR CALLS* (Chicago Shakespeare). He also has done commercials for Clearasil and can be heard in a national Christmas commercial, where he did voiceover.



**CAGE SEBASTIAN PIERRE** (*Grif*) returns to TimeLine, where he last held the stage in *TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET*. Other credits include *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *Q BROTHERS CHRISTMAS CAROL*, *MACBETH*, and *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (Chicago Shakespeare); *A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN* (Writers); and *EURYDICE*, *COMEDY OF ERRORS*, *KING LEAR*, *PERICLES*, *MIDSUMMER*, and *CYRANO DE BERGERAC* (American Players Theatre; Spring Green, Wis.). Television credits include *CHICAGO PD* and *EMPIRE*. Cage holds a BFA degree from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre BFA Actor Training Program. "I'd like to thank my family, my agents (Stewart Talent), TimeLine, Wardell Julius Clark, my cast, and the ancestors—I am because of you. Axé."



**DONOVAN SESSION** (*Tiny, at select performances*) is making his TimeLine debut. Previous credits include *SUGAR IN OUR WOUNDS* (First Floor Theater), *BRING THE BEAT BACK* (Otherworld Theatre), *LEFTOVERS* (Something Marvelous), *NON-PLAYER CHARACTER* (Red Theatre), *QUEER EYE: MUSICAL PARODY* (Playground Theatre), *EVERYBODY* (Brown Paper Box. Co.), and *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* and *SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY* (Redtwist). Television credits include *WORK IN PROGRESS*. Donovan is an ensemble member with Redtwist Theatre and is a graduate from the University of Oklahoma.

# BIOGRAPHIES

**JAMES IJAMES** (*Playwright*), a Philadelphia-based playwright and performer, received a 2017 Whiting Award and the 2019 Kesselring Prize for *KILL MOVE PARADISE*. He is also a 2011 Independence Foundation Fellow, a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the 2015 winner of the Terrance McNally New Play Award for *WHITE*, and the 2015 Kesselring Honorable Mention Prize winner for *THE MOST SPECTACULARLY LAMENTABLE TRIAL OF MIZ MARTHA WASHINGTON*. His plays have been produced by Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon, Wilma Theatre (Philadelphia), The National Black Theatre (NYC), Ally Theatre (Washington, D.C.), Definition Theatre (Chicago), and Shotgun Players (Berkeley, CA), and have received development with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwrights Horizons, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, The Gulfshore Playhouse, Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre, The National Black Theatre, and Victory Gardens. Ijames has appeared regionally in productions at The Arden Theatre Company, The Philadelphia Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre Company, The Wilma Theatre, Baltimore Center Stage, Mauckingbird Theatre Company, and People's Light and Theatre. He is the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist recipient, and has also won two Barrymores for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Play for *SUPERIOR DONUTS* and *ANGELS IN AMERICA* and one Barrymore for Outstanding Direction of a Play for *THE BROTHERS SIZE* with Simpatico Theatre Company. Ijames is a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective. He received a BA degree in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, and an MFA degree in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, Penn. James is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Villanova University and resides in South Philadelphia.

**WARDELL JULIUS CLARK** (*Director*) made his TimeLine debut in 2013, appearing in the acclaimed production of *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*, and became a TimeLine Company Member in 2018. He previously directed a TimePieces reading of *NAT TURNER IN JERUSALEM* and the First Draft Festival reading of Maureen Gallagher's *KENT STATE JACKSON STATE* at TimeLine. His Chicago directing credits include *SHEEPDOG* (Shattered Globe); *HOODOO LOVE* (Raven Theatre); *HIS SHADOW* (16th Street); *DUTCH MASTERS* (Jackalope); *THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM-1963* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *THE SHIPMENT* (Red Tape); *SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY* (Redtwist); and *INSURRECTION: HOLDING HISTORY* (Stage Left). He was associate director for *GUESS*

*WHO'S COMING TO DINNER* and assistant director for *GEM OF THE OCEAN* and *SATCHMO AT THE WALDORF* (Court). Chicago acting credits include *FLYIN' WEST* (American Blues); *SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER* (Raven); *SILENT SKY* (First Folio); *APARTMENT 3A* (Windy City Playhouse); *INVISIBLE MAN* (Court); *THE WHIPPING MAN* (Northlight); *WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT...* and *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JAMES* (Victory Gardens); *THE BEATS* (16th Street); *GHOSTS OF ATWOOD* (MPAACT), for which he received the Black Theater Alliance Denzel Washington Award for Most Promising Actor; and *TOPDOG/UNDERDOG* (American Theater Company/Congo Square Theater). His television and film credits include *SHAMELESS* and *CHICAGO FIRE*. Originally from Fairfield, Alabama, Wardell earned his BFA degree in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. He also serves as a Teaching Artist in TimeLine's Living History Education Program.

**RYAN EMENS** (*Scenic Designer*) is making his TimeLine debut. Previous work includes *KENTUCKY* (The Gift Theatre), *DUTCH MASTERS* (Non-Equity Jeff Award –Scenic Design) and *LIFE ON PAPER* (Jackalope), *NATIVE SON* (Yale Repertory), *OTHELLO* and *THREE SISTERS* (Yale School of Drama), *THE GUIDE TO BEING SINGLE* (Undercore), *WELCOME TO AMERICA* (Prologue), *ROTPETER* (Mercy Street), *COROLINE* (Black Button Eyes Productions), and *EMPEROR OF THE MOON*, and *LOTTO FEVER* (St. Sebastian Players). He holds an MFA degree in Scenic Design from Yale School of Drama.

**IZUMI INABA** (*Costume Designer*) is making her TimeLine debut. Recent Chicago credits include *VERBÖTEN* (The House), *HOW A BOY FALLS* (Northlight), and *A DOLL'S HOUSE* (Raven). Regional credits include work with Long Wharf (Conn.), Milwaukee Repertory, The Repertory of St. Louis, City Theatre (Penn.), Baltimore Center Stage, and Kirk Douglas (Calif.). She is looking forward to working on another Ijames play, *THE MOST SPECTACULARLY LAMENTABLE TRIAL OF MIZ MARTHA WASHINGTON*, at Steppenwolf this spring.

**JASON LYNCH** (*Lighting Designer*) is making his TimeLine debut. Other Chicago credits include *LOTTERY DAY* and the upcoming *SCHOOL GIRLS; OR, THE AFRICAN MEAN GIRLS PLAY* (Goodman); *THE FIRST DEEP BREATH* (Victory Gardens); *HOW A BOY FALLS* (Northlight); and *SHEEPDOG* (Shattered Globe). Regional credits include *HAIRSPRAY* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival);

# BIOGRAPHIES

A DOLL'S HOUSE, DRAG ON, THE WILD PARTY, and A DOLL'S HOUSE, PART 2 (Denver Center for the Performing Arts), and FEEDING BEATRICE (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis). He is also the recipient of the 2019 Michael Maggio Emerging Designer Award, which recognizes emerging theatrical designers within the Chicago area. Jason is a proud member of The Association of Lighting Designers and alumnus of The Santa Fe Opera. Visit [jasondlynch.com](http://jasondlynch.com).

**JEFFREY LEVIN** (*Sound Designer and Composer*) returns to TimeLine, having previously designed sound for A SHAYNA MAIDEL. Selected credits include PHOTOGRAPH 51 (Court), THE BROTHERS SIZE (Steppenwolf), TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS (Victory Gardens), SMALL MOUTH SOUNDS and GREY HOUSE (A Red Orchid), FIRST LOVE IS THE REVOLUTION and HOOKMAN (Steep), KISS (Haven), and THE HAIRY APE (Oracle Theatre, Jeff Award). Regional credits include SCAPINO (Gulfshore Playhouse), TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (Hope Summer Repertory), and THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE (Children's Theater of Madison). Upcoming credits include INTIMATE APPAREL (Northlight) and THE GREAT LEAP (Asolo Repertory). Jeffrey is the recipient of the Edes Foundation Prize for Emerging Artists, one Jeff Award and 10 Jeff Award nominations. He holds an MM degree in Music Composition from DePaul University and a BMus degree in Music Composition from Columbia College Chicago. Visit [jeffreylevinmusic.com](http://jeffreylevinmusic.com).

**MEALAH HEIDENREICH** (*Properties Designer*) is making her TimeLine debut. Some of her previous designs include THE OLD FRIENDS and CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY (Raven); A WONDER IN MY SOUL, NATIVE GARDENS, and FUN HOME (Victory Gardens); IN THE HEIGHTS and DREAMGIRLS (Porchlight Music Theatre); and CITY OF CONVERSATION and FACELESS (Northlight). Mealah is an ensemble member with Hell in a Handbag Productions.

**RACHEL FLESHER** (*Intimacy and Violence Director*) returns to TimeLine, having previously worked on RUTHERFORD AND SON and IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY. Rachel is an Instructor with the Fight Directors Canada; and a Lead Instructor, Intimacy Director, and Intimacy Coordinator with Intimacy Directors International. Select Chicago credits include TWILIGHT BOWL (Goodman); I AM NOT YOUR PERFECT MEXICAN DAUGHTER, THE BURIALS, and CONSTELLATIONS

(Steppenwolf); HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF (Victory Gardens); THE PILLOWMAN, WOLF PLAY, and HANGMAN (The Gift); HOODOO LOVE and HOW I LEARNED TO DRIVE (Raven); FIRST LOVE IS THE REVOLUTION (Steep Theatre); DUTCH MASTERS (Jackalope); and THE NICETIES (Writers). Her Intimacy Coordination is featured on NETFLIX, FX, FOX, HBO, HBO MAX, MGM PARAMOUNT, CBS, HULU, and SHOWTIME.

**BREON ARZELL** (*Movement Choreographer*) is making his TimeLine debut. His breakout, and award-winning, premiere as a Chicago choreographer came with Oracle Productions' THE HAIRY APE. Developing his own style of dance and storytelling (with hip-hop, jazz, modern, lyrical, contemporary, West African, and body percussion), non-musical movement credits include THE LEOPARD PLAY (Steep); THE FIRST DEEP BREATH, RIGHTLYND, and THE HOUSE THAT WILL NOT STAND (Victory Gardens); THE BROTHERS SIZE and WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT... (Steppenwolf); BACK IN THE DAY (UrbanTheater); VOYEURS DE VENUS (Northwestern); INSURRECTION: HOLDING HISTORY (Stage Left); DONTRELL WHO KISSED THE SEA and MIKE PENCE SEX DREAM (First Floor); WIG OUT (DePaul); and more. A Detroit native, his talents have allowed him to work across the United States, Canada, England, Italy, Germany, Denmark, Singapore, and Malaysia. Visit [breonarzell.com](http://breonarzell.com).

**JARED BELLOT** (*Production Dramaturg*) is a dramaturg, educator and Associate Artist at TimeLine, where he has worked on CARDBOARD PIANO; SUNSET BABY; THE LAST WIFE; PARADISE BLUE; THE AUDIENCE; and IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY. Select Chicago credits include WHITE, NO CHILD, and AN OCTOON (Definition), THIS IS MODERN ART (Steppenwolf for Young Adults), INSURRECTION: HOLDING HISTORY (Stage Left), THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS (Porchlight), and COLUMBINUS, BLOOD AT THE ROOT, and SNACK BREAK (The Yard). Jared is a company member with Definition Theatre and a Resident Artist Mentor with The Yard. Jared received his BA degree in Theatre and American Studies from Brown University.

**MIRANDA ANDERSON** (*Stage Manager*) returns to TimeLine, having previously stage managed IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY. Recent Chicago credits include productions with The House Theatre of Chicago, First Folio, Rivendell, and The Hypocrites. She spent several years touring with The Hypocrites' Gilbert and Sullivan productions to regional theatres including Olney Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Skirball Center



# BIOGRAPHIES

at NYU, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and American Repertory Theatre in Boston. Miranda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

**SOPHIE HOYT** (*Assistant Director*) is making her TimeLine debut. Chicago acting credits include *GHOSTS* (Redtwist), *FOR THE CULTURE* (Bechdel Fest), *LA RONDE* (ATC Core), and *SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY* (Redtwist). Television credits include *SOUNDTRACK* (Netflix) and *CHICAGO MED* (NBC). Film credits include *EAST OF MIDDLE WEST*, *COME AS YOU ARE*, and *SOUL SESSIONS*. She holds an honors BA degree in English from the University of Chicago.

**DINA SPOERL** (*Lobby Display Designer*) returns to TimeLine, where her recent credits include *TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET*, *CARDBOARD PIANO*, *A SHAYNA MAIDEL*, *TO CATCH A FISH*, *THE AUDIENCE*, *PARADISE BLUE*, and *A DISAPPEARING NUMBER*, among others. She has many years of graphic design and exhibit design experience. Past and current clients include The Winnetka Historical Society, Greeley School, Children's Home & Aid, the American Library Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, The National Museum of Natural History, The Newberry Library, FINRA, Nextbook, and Indiana State Museum. She also has an MA degree in Medieval History from Loyola University Chicago. She sends love and immense gratitude to Mark, Jack, and Zoe.

**ELIZABETH VANHAREN** (*Production Assistant, Young Performer Supervisor*) returns to TimeLine, having previously worked on *TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET*. Previous Chicago credits include *HOODOO LOVE* (Stage Manager, Raven) and *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (Stage Management Intern, Chicago Shakespeare). She has a BFA degree in Stage Management from Western Michigan University, where past credits include *CYMBELINE* (Assistant Stage Manager), *THE COUNTRY WIFE* (Assistant Stage Manager), and *BABY WITH THE BATHWATER* (Stage Manager). Elizabeth would like to thank her family for all their support and encouragement while pursuing her career.

**PJ POWERS** (*Artistic Director*) was a co-founder of TimeLine in 1997 and became Artistic Director in 1999. Since then, he has overseen the production of more than 75 plays, including 10 world premieres and more than 35 Chicago premieres. During his tenure, TimeLine has garnered 56 Jeff Awards, including 11 for Outstanding Production, as well as awards for excellence in arts management, including the 2016 MacArthur Award

for Creative and Effective Institutions. PJ also has been instrumental in establishing TimeLine's home on Wellington Avenue in 1999; expanding the company's programming to include productions in numerous other venues, including the Broadway Playhouse; creating the TimePieces play reading series and First Draft Festival of new work; launching the Living History Education Program in Chicago Public Schools under the direction of TimeLine co-founder Juliet Hart; and planning for TimeLine's new home in Uptown. As an actor, he has appeared in 18 productions at TimeLine, most recently *THE APPLE FAMILY PLAYS: THAT HOPEY CHANGEY THING*, as well as *THE FRONT PAGE*, *THE FARNSWORTH INVENTION*, *FIORELLO!* and *HAUPTMANN*. He also has appeared at Writers, Northlight, and Shattered Globe, among others. A graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University, PJ has served on the Board of Directors for the League of Chicago Theatres, was awarded the Meier Achievement Award for mid-career artists, and received a Goldman Sachs Senior Fellowship at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. He recently directed the Chicago premiere of J.T. Rogers' *ONE GIANT LEAP: THE APOLLO 11 MOON LANDING* in a one-night event at the Broadway Playhouse.

**ELIZABETH K. AUMAN** (*Managing Director*) joined TimeLine Theatre in October 2007 and since then has overseen a tripling of TimeLine's budget; the largest capital improvements in the company's history; extended runs of multiple shows; the expansion of TimeLine's programming to additional venues, most recently *MASTER CLASS*; *IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY*; and *BAKERSFIELD MIST* at Stage 773 and *OSLO* at the Broadway Playhouse; and multiple awards for excellence in arts management, including the 2016 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. Prior to TimeLine, Elizabeth spent 15 years at Victory Gardens Theater, the last 12 as general manager. During that time, she helped guide Victory Gardens through major transitions and accomplishments, including budget growth from \$1.2 million to \$3 million, an \$11.8 million capital campaign, receiving the Tony Award for Regional Theatre in 2001, and the move to the Biograph Theater. She also has held administrative positions at Chicago Shakespeare and DePaul University's Blackstone Theatre (now the Merle Reskin Theatre). She has a BFA degree in Theater from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington and was the recipient of Eclipse Theatre's 2010 Corona Award.

# ABOUT TIMELINE

## OUR MISSION

TimeLine Theatre Company presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues. Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

From the moment in 1997 that six founders each pitched in \$50 to launch this company, TimeLine has worked to become one of Chicago's leading cultural institutions by creating theatre that is more than just a few hours in a seat. Our team of Company Members works collaboratively to present riveting stories that link our past, present, and future—exploring today's social and political issues through the lens of the past and inspiring ourselves to re-imagine tomorrow. And the TimeLine experience extends well beyond the stage, encompassing meticulously researched and interactive lobby experiences, opportunities to discuss the show with artists, ways to take action on whatever the art inspires, and more.

It is a mission unique in Chicago, and beyond.

Our work has been recognized in Chicago and elsewhere with more than 50 awards for artistic and business excellence, including the prestigious 2016 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions. And we have been honored with 56 Jeff Awards, including an award for Outstanding Production 11 times.



Jed Feder (left) and Anish Jethmalani in the company's production of OSLO, 2019.

## A NEW HOME



Preliminary rendering by HGA of TimeLine's new home in the Uptown neighborhood.

TimeLine has purchased property located at 5033–5035 N. Broadway Avenue in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood to be the site of a renovated facility to house our future operations and to support and expand TimeLine's mission.

The purchase of this property and the recent selection of HGA as the project architect are just initial steps on our path to creating TimeLine's new home. There is much to do as we undertake overlapping design, fundraising, and construction phases. A completion date is still to be determined, but we hope to be welcoming audiences within three years.

In the meantime, TimeLine will continue to maintain our operations and present the majority of our productions at our current home at 615 W. Wellington Avenue.

For more about TimeLine's history and programs, please visit [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com)

# LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM



Living History students at a matinee performance of *CARDBOARD PIANO*, 2019.

**T**imeLine's mission has always had an educational component, driven by our belief that live performance can intimately connect people and illuminate ideas.

Founded in 2006, TimeLine's Living History Education Program brings that mission to Chicago Public Schools, working with students on creative exercises related to historically inspired stories on TimeLine's stage and elsewhere in literature.

Living History is an arts integration residency that features curriculum designed to teach theatre skills while fostering the capacity to think creatively, to make connections, and to provide new ways of understanding history and the world around us. Over six to 13 sessions, students explore connections between history, art and their own lives, developing critical thinking and communication skills.

**“It made me feel that I was part of that moment in history.  
As if I was experiencing it firsthand. It made me understand it better.”**

During Living History residencies, TimeLine teaching artists and classroom teachers collaborate on lesson plans that illuminate the themes of the play and their connection to each classroom curriculum. Students work on several scenes from a TimeLine production and are provided with a study guide. They experience visits from the production's actors and dramaturg and attend a student matinee of the play that includes a post-show discussion with the cast. Through TimeLine's program, students can become engaged in exploring connections between history, art and their own lives.

Since its inception, more than 7,600 students have actively explored history through Living History. TimeLine currently partners with nine schools to present the program.



Living History Director Juliet Hart (center) during a residency for *SUNSET BABY*, 2016.



Tiffany Fulson (right) with a member of the TimeLine South ensemble during the 2019 summer program.

## TIMELINE SOUTH

And in 2018, Living History launched a new program, TimeLine South—a unique arts program that provides teens a safe space for self-expression, creativity, and ensemble building on the south side of Chicago. Offered free of charge for six weeks during the summer, TimeLine South promotes leadership in the arts and teaches teens that theatre can also be a vehicle for social justice.

Major supporters of Living History include The Crown Family, Joseph & Bessie Feinberg Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, John and Jessica Fullerton, A.L. and Jennie L. Luria Foundation, Robert and Eleanor Meyers, Polk Bros. Foundation, and multiple anonymous contributors, as well as the donors to TimeLine's Annual Fund and Step Into Time gala. TimeLine South is sponsored by Anita Samen and David Follmer in memory of their son, Daniel Samen Follmer.

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# COMPANY MEMBERS



*Company Members are the artistic leaders of TimeLine Theatre Company, working collaboratively together to shape the artistic vision and choose the programming for the organization.*

Tyla Abercrombie | Will Allan | Nick Bowling | Janet Ulrich Brooks  
Wardell Julius Clark | Behzad Dabu | Charles Andrew Gardner | Lara Goetsch  
Juliet Hart | Anish Jethmalani | Mildred Marie Langford | Mechelle Moe | David Parkes  
Ron OJ Parson | PJ Powers | Maren Robinson | Benjamin Thiem

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# ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

*TimeLine's Associate Artists have made enormous contributions to the work on TimeLine's stage, and they also have been leaders off stage, making the company a better place to work and serving as ambassadors in the community. The group plays an important role in shaping TimeLine's artistic growth.*

Jared Bellot | Brian Sidney Bembridge | Eva Breneman | William Brown | Aaron Carter  
Andrew Carter | Louis Contey | Charles Cooper | John Culbert | Mikhail Fiksel  
Megan Geigner | Dennis William Grimes | Terry Hamilton | Andrew Hansen  
Jerod Haynes | Josephine Kearns | Kymberly Mellen | Danica Monroe | Mike Nussbaum  
Keith Parham | Andre Pluess | Collette Pollard | Mark Richard | Chris Rickett  
Kimberly Senior | Demetrios Troy | Mike Tutaj | Ann Wakefield | Alex Weisman

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# PLAYWRIGHTS COLLECTIVE

*TimeLine has an ongoing commitment to developing the work of established as well as emerging playwrights. The Playwrights Collective, under the leadership of Benjamin Thiem, offers a supportive environment over multiple years for a group of Chicago-based playwrights to develop new plays that are inspired by history and explore the social and political events of today.*

## 2016 - 2018 Collective

Tyla Abercrombie | Will Allan | Maureen Gallagher | Calamity West

## 2013 - 2016 Inaugural Collective

Alice Austen | John Conroy | Emily Dendinger  
Frances Limoncelli | Susan McLaughlin Karp | Brett Neveu



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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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---

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Maggie Fullilove-Nugent  
*Production Manager*  
Benjamin Thiem  
*Literary Manager*  
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### LIVING HISTORY

### EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Tiffany Fulson  
*Program Assistant; Program Director, TimeLine South*  
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*Ushering*

# YOUR ROLE

**WHAT IF YOU ONLY HEARD A MONOLOGUE  
NOT A DIALOGUE?**

**WHAT IF THE ACTORS SAID  
EVERY OTHER WORD ...  
... OR SKIPPED EVERY OTHER LINE?**

**WHAT IF THE PLAY WAS FORCED  
TO END HALFWAY THROUGH?**

**THERE WOULD BE NO CHANCE  
TO COMPLETE THE STORY.  
NO CHANCE TO MAKE HISTORY.**

Your ticket purchase is only half the story. TimeLine Theatre—like our peers in Chicago's vibrant community of not-for-profit theatres—depends upon the support of patrons like you to thrive.

Ticket sales cover about 45% of our total income during the season. Donations are vital to ensuring TimeLine's continued success. Without the generosity of our dedicated supporters, we would not exist!

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

Donate online today:  
**[TIMELINETHEATRE.COM/DONATE](https://TIMELINETHEATRE.COM/DONATE)**

Consider a recurring gift for continuing impact!

*TimeLine Theatre Company is a 501 (c)(3) Not-for-Profit organization.  
Your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

# CORPORATE, FOUNDATION & GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

TimeLine is proud to recognize the corporations, foundations and government entities that generously support our general operations and Living History Education Program. This list recognizes donations and pledges received January 23, 2019, through January 23, 2020.

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## **\$1,000 - \$9,999**

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*This project is partially supported  
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# CAMPAIGN FOR TIMELINE'S FUTURE

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TimeLine is grateful for the support and confidence shown by the early investors in the campaign for our new home. Though space limitations prevent us from listing them all, we're pleased to recognize the following donors who have made leadership gifts of \$50,000 or more.

Anonymous (5)	Tom Gosline and Bill Fritz	Bill and Penny Obenshain
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If you'd like more information about this special campaign, please contact Director of Development Kimberly A. Montroy at [kimberly@timelinetheatre.com](mailto:kimberly@timelinetheatre.com) or 773.281.8463 x26.

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## HISTORY MAKERS

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We are honored to recognize TimeLine's History Makers—supporters who make tax-deductible donations of \$1,000 and more annually to support TimeLine's general operations. History Makers help TimeLine continue the Chicago tradition of companies that started small, dreamed big, and developed into prominent arts organizations. Members of the History Makers Society receive exclusive privileges designed to bring our most generous individual supporters closer to the art they make possible at TimeLine. This list recognizes donations and pledges received January 23, 2019 through January 23, 2020.

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# HISTORY MAKERS

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John Yonover

# INDIVIDUAL GIVING

We are honored to recognize the following individual donors for their tax-deductible gifts in support of TimeLine Theatre. This list recognizes donations and pledges received January 23, 2019 through January 23, 2020. We regret that due to space limitations we are unable to list donors of up to \$99. Please accept our heartfelt thanks and know that every gift makes a difference!

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***We strive to keep our donor lists accurate and up-to-date at all times. Please contact  
 Ebony Chuukwu at 773.281.8463 x18 with any questions or concerns.***

# STEP INTO TIME GALA

We are honored to recognize the following sponsors, table and ticket buyers, and auction prize purchasers at TimeLine's annual gala benefit Step Into Time, which took place on March 15, 2019. TimeLine is also grateful to those who purchased raffle tickets to support Step Into Time. We regret that we are unable to list everyone. Please accept our heartfelt thanks and know that your participation made a difference!

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# OUR COMMITMENT

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TimeLine is committed to helping all our patrons understand the full impact of their support. All non-profit organizations are products of and for the communities they serve. Without the support of our dedicated community we would not exist. We pledge to do all we can to make sure that every dollar we receive is invested wisely. To do this, it is crucial for us to focus on what makes TimeLine unique—our mission to produce plays that explore today through the lens of the past and spark conversation with you, our audience, about the times we live in. We want TimeLine to be a place that encourages thought, emotion, and discourse, and that can only happen with your involvement.

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## ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

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TimeLine is working to make our productions accessible to all patrons. The following are only a few of the services available; we invite you to visit [timelinetheatre.com/accessibility](http://timelinetheatre.com/accessibility) for a complete list of offerings.



### **Assistive Listening Devices**

TimeLine offers RF assistive listening devices for those who request them. Ask the Box Office and provide an ID to check out a listening device.



### **Open Captioning**

Open captioning is a text display of words and sounds heard during an event. The display is positioned in such a way that it is open for anyone to see in a particular seating area.

Open captioning is a service primarily provided for people with hearing disabilities who use assistive listening devices, hearing aids, cochlear implants, sign language, and lip reading. It is a service you may choose to use or ignore during the performance.

Upcoming Open Captioned performances are:

- *Kill Move Paradise* — Saturday, March 7 at 4pm
- *Kill Move Paradise* — Thursday, March 26 at 7:30pm
- *Relentless* — Saturday, June 6 at 4pm
- *Relentless* — Thursday, June 11 at 7:30pm



### **Audio Description and Touch Tours**

Audio description is a service which allows patrons who are blind or low vision to access the visual experience of our performances. A live narrator gives verbal descriptions of actions, costumes, scenery, and other visual elements via a handheld device delivered to patrons upon request before the show. A pre-show program, including a “touch tour” of the set and props and an artistic discussion will precede any audio-described performance.

Upcoming Audio Described performances with Touch Tours are:

- *Kill Move Paradise* — Friday, March 20 at 8pm
- *Relentless* — Friday, June 19 at 8pm

If you know of any services that you believe would make our theatre more accessible, please contact Audience Services Manager Kellyn Henthorn at [kellyn@timelinetheatre.com](mailto:kellyn@timelinetheatre.com).

*TimeLine Theatre is a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, Chicago Cultural Alliance, Choose Chicago, the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce, Lakeview's Belmont Theater District, the Chicago Green Theatre Alliance and Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.*

# FOR ANYONE AGE 18 TO 35

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# MY LINE

FOR AGES 18-35

During the Great Migration—the mass exodus of Black Americans from the South to the North and West from 1916 to 1970—the North was again seen as a type of promised land for Black Americans. Black newspapers in northern cities, notably the *Chicago Defender*, began advertising the potential wealth and safety Black people could expect to find in the North, where there were higher paying jobs and no Jim Crow laws. In 1916 the *Defender* ran a poem called “Bound for the Promised Land” by M. Ward depicting the freedoms one could hope to find in the North. The paper estimated that 250,000 Black people left the South the following winter. Again, this Promised Land proved limited, as racial tensions rose with the influx of Black people into white neighborhoods, leading to numerous riots and deaths.

### The Civil Rights Movement and Beyond

Through the Civil Rights Movement, a vision of a new Promised Land arose, this version much more metaphorical in nature: a country devoid of segregation and filled with equal opportunity.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. employed this metaphor in his famous and final speech where he boldly proclaimed that while he might not be there to see it, “we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.” Dr. King was one of the most prominent Black public figures to give Black people hope in a better tomorrow. While unquantifiable progress was made in the Civil Rights Movement, there are still many aspects of institutionalized racism and police brutality that prevent us from truly being in the Promised Land he preached about.

In Ta-Nehisi Coates’ book *Between the World and Me*, he refers to the entity of the Dream, another version of this unattainable Promised Land:

**“And for so long I have wanted to escape into the Dream, to fold my country over my head like a blanket. But this has never been an option because the Dream rests on our backs, the bedding made from our bodies.”**

The way racism is entangled in the fibers of this country make the metaphor of “The Promised Land” one that continues to live on in perpetuity. The influence of this hope for an unattainable haven can still be seen in Black art, literature, cinema, theatre, political movements, and everything in between.

**1950** Ralph J. Bunche becomes the first Black Nobel Peace Prize recipient, for his role as mediator in the Palestinian conflict.

**1957** Martin Luther King, Jr. and others set up the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a leading engine of the Civil Rights Movement.

**1964** The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation, led by Fannie Lou Hamer, is denied seating at the Democratic National Convention.

**1965** Malcolm X is assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City.

**1966** Stokely Carmichael becomes chairman of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and publicly embraces the concept of Black power.

**1967** Thurgood Marshall is sworn in as the first Black Justice on the United States Supreme Court.

**1968** Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

**1969** Chicago police kill Black Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clarke.

**1970** The first issue of *Essence* magazine is published.

**1971** 1,200 inmates seize control of half of the New York State Prison at Attica, in what will become known as the Attica Prison Riot.

**1972** New York Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm makes an unsuccessful bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. She is the first Black politician to campaign for the nomination.

**1979** The Sugar Hill Gang records “Rapper’s Delight” in Harlem.

**1982** Michael Jackson’s album, *Thriller*, is released. It will eventually sell 45 million copies worldwide, becoming the best selling album in music history.

**1983** Harold Washington is elected the first Black mayor of Chicago.

**1984** *The Cosby Show* debuts. It will run for eight seasons and become the most successful TV series in history to feature a mostly African American cast.



In *Kill Move Paradise* there is a space that contains a myriad of items, many of which pertain to particular aspects of Black American culture. From the many significant contributions Black people have made to popular and political American culture, to the knowledge and practices that have been passed down through generations, Black American culture is a sprawling and multi-faceted institution. The following is a select list of categories within its spectrum that some of the items presented in *Kill Move Paradise* fall under, introduced by lines spoken by the character Daz in *Kill Move Paradise*:

#### The Complex History

**“... a portrait of Abraham Lincoln randomly ... Saartjie Baartman’s ass ... Kunta Kinte’s toes ... tap dancing”**

Black culture and history is full of contradictions. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, but only to win the Civil War. Saartjie Baartman was displayed and dehumanized throughout Europe for having a big butt, one of today’s most coveted standards of American beauty. The depiction of Kunta Kinte having his foot chopped off after attempting to run away from slavery is a part of *Roots*, one of the most significant masterpieces of American television. Tap dancing, a form of dance steeped in minstrelsy and blackface, has led to some of the most iconic dance performances of all time.

#### The Media Archives

**“... all these newspapers and magazines and books ... boxes of VHS tapes of old**

**recorded re-runs of *A Different World*, *Living Single* and *Martin* ...”**

A staple in many Black households and beauty salons is a stack of old *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines (even though *Jet* is no longer in print). *The Cosby Show* spin off, *A Different World*; *Living Single* (which the sitcom *Friends* arguably whitewashed); and the comedically explosive *Martin* are just a few of the Black TV shows to come out of the Black sitcom golden age of the 1990s and early 2000s.

#### The Hair

**“... cornrows ... Jamaican fucking castor oil, Just For Me ... box braids ...”**

One of the most visible and undeniable aspects of Black culture is the styling of hair. Cornrows and box braids are two examples of protective braiding styles that are best executed with a tightly coiled curl pattern. Jamaican castor oil is often lauded for its restorative, moisturizing and strengthening properties, and “Just for Me” is a line of hair products used mainly for detangling children’s hair (often featuring adorable little Black girls on the packaging).

#### The Cool

**“... at least fifty pairs of Jordans ... a pimp cup ... Being cool is in there ... Stylin’ is in there, Profilin’ is in there ... They got soul in there ...”**

As evidenced by Black American culture’s massive contributions to mainstream popular culture across the globe, Black people are pretty cool. From the Sunday promenades of the Harlem Renaissance to the Yard at any HBCU (Historically Black College or University), Black people have valued looking good and being seen or “stylin’ and profilin’.” Jordans and other brands of sneakers remain a status symbol in many Black urban neighborhoods and the popularization of sneaker brands through hip hop culture has created a multi-billion dollar industry. Hip hop culture is also responsible for the heavily decorated chalices known as pimp cups.



Director Wardell Julius Clark on the cover of Newcity's January issue as Chicago theatre's "Player of the Moment."

During rehearsals for *Kill Move Paradise*, TimeLine (TL) chatted with director and Company Member Wardell Julius Clark (WJC) about choosing this play to direct now, and what audiences can expect on its ride.

(TL) Can you give us a little overview? How do you describe *Kill Move Paradise*?

(WJC) *Kill Move Paradise* is a play about a cosmic waiting room that four young Black men enter as they prepare to go to their final ascending place. And it is about four Black men who have been victims of police brutality and how they find their way at this particular waystation. It is a place prepared for by ancestors for new ancestors on their way to paradise. Inside, rules exist that allow those new victims to become their full new self, their spiritual ancestral selves, in paradise.

(TL) What was the process like to choose this play for TimeLine's season?

(WJC) I saw a reading of the play at the Ignition Festival at Victory Gardens a few years ago and just fell in love. I thought it was pretty incredible and groundbreaking and powerful, so it's the first play that I pitched to TimeLine as a director. We had Company discussions about the different textures of this play compared to work that we usually do. I thought it was important as we move forward as a company to bring this kind of work, because this too is our history and the whole of American history. And if we're a theatre company that specializes in looking at the past to move forward, there is no better play for Black Americans at this moment.

(TL) This is not a play that is set hundreds of years in the past. It's kind of in our current state, yet it *is* historical.

**1986** Oprah Winfrey becomes the first Black woman to host a nationally syndicated talk show with *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

**1987** August Wilson's play *Fences* wins a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award.

**1989** General Colin L. Powell is named chair of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, the first Black man to hold the post.

**1992** A Simi Valley, Calif. jury acquits the three officers accused of beating Rodney King. The verdict triggers a three-day uprising in Los Angeles that results in more than 50 people killed, 2,000 injured, and 8,000 arrested.

**1993** Toni Morrison becomes the first Black writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for her novel *Beloved*.

**1995** After an eight-month trial, O.J. Simpson is acquitted of the charges of murder in the deaths of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

**2002** Halle Berry (*Monster's Ball*) and Denzel Washington (*Training Day*) win Oscars for Best Actress and Best Actor.

**2005** Hurricane Katrina hits the Gulf Coast, taking an estimated 1,700 lives—the vast majority in Louisiana, including heavily African American New Orleans.

**2009** Barack Obama is sworn in as the 44th President of the United States.

**2013** The FBI promotes Assata Shakur, a former member of the Black Liberation Army granted political asylum and living in Cuba, to a list of "most wanted terrorists."

**2016** Beyoncé releases *Lemonade*, her sixth studio album, which critics and fans hold up as an unapologetic celebration of her Blackness.

**2019** A Pew Center study shows that 78% of African Americans say the United States hasn't gone far enough when it comes to giving Black people equal rights with whites, and 50% say it's unlikely that the country will eventually achieve racial equality.

(WJC) I think it is a celebration and a call to action and a kind of living history of what is happening in our country.

This play is the opposite of a character assassination, which is often what young Black and Brown people experience when they are victims of police brutality. In this play, we get to experience them as full human beings.

Also, police brutality in America is a cancer and a problem. It's a very specific, acute problem for people of color, but it's also a problem at large for America. We need ways to receive that, understand that, digest that. One of our hashtags is "you have to be a witness." You can see this play and then go out and witness to other people about what the problem is and how we can collectively, as human beings, find a solution.

(TL) The play deals with real issues, but it is not a realistic play. What can audiences expect to experience?

(WJC) Our playwright is quoted as saying it is his "birthright to wrestle with form in the theatre." And so this play is not realism. It is completely expressionistic. There are moments of really intense emotion. We will see Black men be incredibly vulnerable and open and raw. And we as audiences are asked to watch,

*Clark during a rehearsal for Kill Move Paradise.*

and be, and experience that with them. There are lots of moments of silence in the play, moments where we just sit and exist in this world with our characters. There is quite a bit of direct address.

The audience in *Kill Move Paradise* is the final character. They are as much a part of the play as the actors on the stage. It's a play that literally cannot function without the audience, with moments unlike anything I've ever seen in the American theatre.

(TL) You mentioned that we get to see these fully realized humans. We're seeing more than just grief, sorrow, tragedy. We're seeing joy, laughter, silliness, all of these range of emotions.

(WJC) Yes. *Kill Move Paradise* is a complete roller coaster of a journey that has the full Black experience in some way microscopically throughout the play. Black people are filled with joy even in our worst moments. We have a kind of light and a vibrance that exudes from our pores about who we are as Black people, particularly Black people in America. And we experience so much of that in the play—that experience of persisting and rising above and celebrating ourselves. There is so much incredible laughter and silliness and goofiness.

It is a non-stop, powerful kind of thing—the ride of life. We get high highs of ecstasy, of celebration, and joy, and we get really really low lows, and back again. By the end, we arrive at a kind of literal paradise which is hopeful for everyone, but it is a ride. I think our audiences are gonna be jazzed by it.

(TL) Ultimately, what do you hope people get from seeing this play?

(WJC) I hope people are affected in a variety of ways. That regardless of their race, they'll be able to look at themselves and see how they view the average Black man they come in contact with on a daily basis, and self check, self-realize, self actualize what their biases are. I hope we can get our audiences to see our experiences, our joys, our pains, our laughter, our sorrows, our depression, our exhilaration—and that we all share those things collectively as human beings. And that people who leave this play will go into the world and see people of color, Black people, as human beings.





Jared Kaplan and Maridee Quanbeck.

### **We're delighted to recognize Maridee Quanbeck and Jared Kaplan.**

The couple was initially drawn to TimeLine by our 2010 production of *The Farnsworth Invention*. They quickly became subscribers, then donors, and in fall 2019 we welcomed Maridee to TimeLine's Board of Directors.

Maridee and Jared are avid arts supporters, and count Chicago Symphony Orchestra and The Art Institute among the many groups they champion. They regularly combine their love of travel and theater with trips to London, New York, and Canada's Shaw and Stratford festivals. "We saw *The Front Page* this summer at The Stratford Festival and thought how much better we liked TimeLine's in 2010. TimeLine's was funny without being farcical or slapstick. And we're always impressed by how TimeLine can cram so much action into such a small space."

Their broad-based love of fine arts informs their connection to TimeLine. "When people think of paintings or musical compositions, they naturally accept their understanding of the work is made deeper by placing it in historical context. TimeLine shows us how plays and the stories they tell are also enriched by that process. We always leave a TimeLine play aware that we learned a lot, but always so painlessly."

**"We're always impressed by how TimeLine can cram so much action into such a small space."**

Looking forward to TimeLine's future, Maridee and Jared are enthusiastic about the plans for a new home. "It's exciting to be part of this new phase of TimeLine's life. The new building is a huge challenge, but it feels like the right time. It's going to be fun to see it come together."

Maridee and Jared are already making plans to shape a new generation of arts aficionados by bringing their two grandchildren to shows in the new building after it opens. We can't wait to welcome them all.

## **BACKSTORY:** THE CREDITS

*Dramaturgy & Historical Research by*  
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### **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 and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.



our Biggest event of the year!



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