



WORLD PREMIERE

RELENTLESS

by TYLA ABERCRUMBIE

directed by RON OJ PARSON

Timeline
Theatre Company

BACKSTORY YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS



Dear Friends,

Welcome back to a new beginning at TimeLine.

At long last, we're thrilled to launch our 25th Season with Tyla Abercrombie's *Relentless*, a passion project developed through our Playwrights Collective and heralded at our inaugural First Draft Festival.

Originally slated for its world premiere two years ago, we were days away from starting rehearsals when stages went dark in March 2020. Since then, among a sea of societal and industry uncertainty, two motivating lights that have guided TimeLine forward have been your unwavering support and our ardent belief in the power and importance of *Relentless*. And while history unfolded in the intervening months, the prescience and resonance of Tyla's writing only intensified.

For years, she's been known as one of Chicago's most esteemed actresses, with performances in *Paradise Blue* and *In Darfur* at TimeLine plus extensive credits across Chicago's major stages and an ever-growing body of work in TV and film, including a recurring role on Showtime's *The Chi*.

Now, her playwriting voice shines through in what already has the feel of an American classic, yet with a burning relevance that unmistakably illuminates our here-and-now.

Talking about her inspiration for *Relentless*, Tyla said: "As a child, my favorite literary period was the Harlem Renaissance. I was obsessed with

the artists, musicians, and revolutionaries of that time. I found myself learning a great deal about the American Black experience before then and during the Edwardian and Victorian era. Their existence had been ignored and often hidden, and seeing them in pictures made me want to know those people.

"Over the years, I became more surprised by the absence of awareness of this period. Even more disturbing was the belief that Black Americans hadn't contributed exponentially to the benefits we all enjoy today. The fact that those Americans were not slaves, and not poor, and not uneducated, became the spine of the journey to create *Relentless*. I tell this story, this way, because I feel it is necessary, and it's a beautifully rich period to be remembered, experienced, enjoyed, and relentlessly respected."

Set in 1919, the play reveals a nation reeling from two pandemics—the recent outbreak of influenza and the enduring scourge of racism. In a city on edge, two sisters gather together, in the wake of their mother's death, to settle her estate. Each on a course to change history, they're unprepared for what they uncover in a series of diaries left by the woman they thought they fully knew.

It's a story that exemplifies TimeLine's mission—providing a lens into how our culture was, juxtaposed with truths about how it is.

Following a prolonged hiatus from live performances, we're elated to return to the stage led by Tyla and her longtime collaborator and fellow TimeLine Company Member, director Ron OJ Parson.

Much has happened since we last welcomed you to the theatre, and we don't call the past two years any sort of an intermission. No respite was had; our work continued with deepened humility, attentive listening, full hearts, and immeasurable appreciation.

We begin a new chapter with eyes cast wider, arms open broader, and with a renewed reverence for this most-holy-of-platforms known as the theatre.

Here, we gather for revelation. For understanding. For questioning. And for celebrating our respective and collective humanity.

We've missed you dearly.
We're so glad you're here.

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'PJ' with a flourish.

“Here we are in 2022, still fighting against many of the same injustices that the characters in *Relentless* deal with” – Tyla Abercrombie

Playwright Tyla Abercrombie is a TimeLine Company Member and 2016-2018 Playwrights Collective member whose plays include *Who's Afraid of Deepak Chopra*, *Asylum (aka Life)*, *Psychological Terrorism*, *Only Women Bleed*, *Naked and Raw*, *Affair of Ambiguity*, *Normality*, and *The Straw*. Her work has been produced by Pittsburgh Playwright's Theatre, MPAACT Theatre, and Chicago Cultural Center, and she was a recipient of the Raven Theatre Playwrights Initiative 2021.

Relentless received its first public reading in December 2018 as part of TimeLine's inaugural First Draft Playwrights Collective Festival. In March 2020, rehearsals were about to begin for its planned TimeLine world premiere when the production was postponed due to COVID-19.

In September 2020, the play was showcased in an online event titled “*Relentless: The Journey from the Black Victorian to Black Lives Matter*” as part of TimeLine's virtual Setting the Stage public program series. An edited version of that program may be viewed at youtube.com/timelinetheatre.

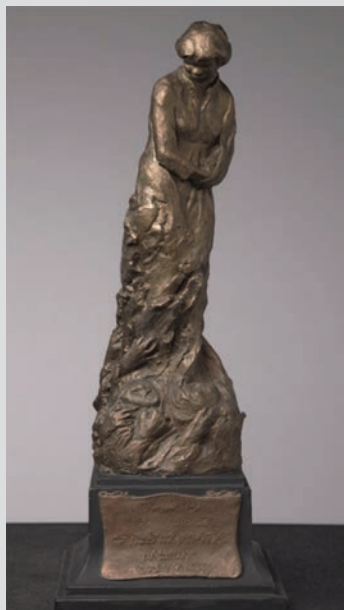
Relentless is the second play brought to full production through TimeLine's Playwrights Collective, launched in 2013 to support Chicago-based playwrights in residence and create new work centered on TimeLine's mission of presenting plays inspired by history that connect to today's social and political issues. The first was the 2018 world premiere of Brett Neveu's *To Catch a Fish*.

Playwright Tyla Abercrombie and Literary Manager Ben Thiem during a discussion following the first public reading of *Relentless* at the inaugural First Draft Festival in 2018.



THE TIMELINE: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE OF 1919

1919 Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, a sculptor and stage designer, debuts her sculpture, “In Memory of Mary Turner: As A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence,” in honor of the horrific lynching of Mary Turner and her unborn baby in 1918.



Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller's sculpture, “In Memory of Mary Turner: As A Silent Protest Against Mob Violence.” (Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket)

1919 Jesse Redmon Fauset becomes literary editor of *The Crisis* magazine, the official periodical of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As a literary editor, she will be credited with fostering the careers of several noted writers of the Harlem Renaissance, including Countee Cullen and Nella Larsen.

January 16 The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, prohibiting the “manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors,” is ratified.

Playwright Tyla Abercrombie explains that *Relentless*, at its core, is a story about family, loss, love, and revolution. Pretty much a mirror image of today. The difference is that the play takes place in 1919 with affluent African Americans.

After the sudden death of the matriarch, sisters Janet and Annelise return to their childhood home in Philadelphia. They discover who they are and who their mother was by taking a trip backward through her private and secretly kept diaries.

Around them, the world is changing. The first world war has just ended in 1918, the influenza virus—also referred to as the Spanish flu—is ravaging the country, race relations are strained, the suffragette movement is at its height, Red Summer is about to explode, Prohibition is less than a year away from becoming law, and newly freed Blacks are creating a new America.

In his seminal work published in 1903, *The Souls of Black Folk*, sociologist, historian, and activist W.E.B. Du Bois wrote, “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” While Du Bois was pointing out the gruesome experiences of Black Americans as a result of the devastating effects of racism, he also signaled the rise of activists committed to social equality. As such, the first quarter of the 20th century witnessed both an upheaval in racial tensions as well as a surge, to quote scholar Glenn C. Loury, in “enlightened legislation, courageous leadership, and greater progress than many Americans thought possible.”



The front page of the Chicago Defender on August 2, 1919, announced the turmoil in the city and listed the names of those who were slain and injured.

As the 19th century ended, Black women began to organize themselves into clubs due to being disenfranchised and, in some cases, left out of the clubs originated by the white women leading the women's suffrage movement, which aimed at fighting for the right of women to vote. For instance, in 1896, the National League of Colored Women and the National Federation of Afro-American Women joined together to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). At the helm of the association and its first president was Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954), an educator and activist.

While voting was a significant issue for Black clubwomen, their primary goal was to fight for social justice for all Black people. One example is the journalist and organizer of the Alpha Suffrage Club, Ida B. Wells, and her anti-lynching crusade. Other Black women leaders of the suffrage movement include Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), Janie Porter Barrett (1865-1948), and Mary Talbert (1866-1923), among others.

One of the first major events to mark a change in racial dynamics during the early 20th century was World War I. While more than 350,000 African Americans served in the war, fulfilling their patriotic duty with the hope that it would bring aid in their quest for equal rights on American soil, Black soldiers returned home to the mayhem of racial violence. Lynching continued. Poverty was rising. Housing discrimination remained.

However, Black Americans found ways to resist oppression and forge ahead by taking flight in the Great Migration, moving beyond the confines

of the South and seeking economic opportunities in major cities such as Philadelphia and Chicago. But while Blacks were making headway in their new cities, the angst of white people grew, and racial tensions increased.

A second event to mark the increase of racial tensions between Blacks and whites was the “Red Summer” of 1919—the months between April and November of that year when an outbreak of vicious riots and massacres occurred in major cities including Elaine, Ark.; Chicago, Ill.; and Washington, D.C.

For instance, a four-day riot took place in Washington, D.C. after a rumor that a group of Black men had assaulted a white woman, which impelled white mobs made up of primarily off-duty sailors and recently discharged veterans to incite violence within African American neighborhoods and onlookers on the street. During a parade celebrating the return of an all-Black troop from Europe, white mobs attacked the crowd and two Black servicemen were killed.

And on July 27 in Chicago, a riot erupted after a Black teenager drowned due to being hit with stones after drifting into the whites-only portion of the beach. Casualties from the Chicago riots included 38 deaths, more than 500 injuries, and about 1,000 Black families made homeless due to African American neighborhoods destroyed by fire.

James Weldon Johnson, the activist and writer most notably known for penning the lyrics to the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” coined the term “Red Summer,” referring to the bloodshed of these and other events during 1919.

During riots in Chicago, the police force—owing both to understaffing and the open sympathy of many officers with the white rioters—was ineffective. Only the long-delayed intervention of the Illinois National Guard brought the violence to a halt. (Photograph by Jun Fujita)



February 20 *The Homesteader*, a film by Oscar Micheaux, is released in Chicago. Micheaux will become a prominent Black filmmaker over the next 40 years, producing and directing 24 silent films and 19 films with sound.



Newspaper promotion for The Homesteader, 1919. (The Department of Afro-American Research Arts and Culture Archive)

March 2 Claude A. Barnett founds the Associated Negro Press on Chicago's South Side, a publication which will become the longest-lived Black news service, “supplying 150 Black newspapers in the United States—and another 100 in Africa—with opinion columns, reviews of books, movies, records, and poetry, cartoons, and photographs.”

March 17 Singer Nathaniel Adams Coles, who will become publicly known as Nat King Cole and father to singer Natalie Cole, is born.

April The NAACP publishes the pamphlet, “Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1898–1918,” a report to appeal to lawmakers to end the social, political, and economic terrorism associated with lynching.

May 3 The National Association of Negro Musicians is established.

May 10 Reports of the inciting incident will differ, but after a Black man allegedly wrongs a group of white

During the late 19th century, Black Americans began to adopt traditions and values associated with Victorian culture. It is no secret that these traditions and values were steeped in white American culture, which, subsequently, was the conduit to respectability politics for Black Americans. What may not be as evident is that Victorian culture in America was heavily influenced by Queen Victoria's reign of Great Britain (1837-1901).

In addition to mirroring white, upper-class culture, Black Americans were also introduced to Victorian culture by Blacks born in England who traveled to North America with white settlers. Even more, as slavery decreased (noting that slavery still existed even after the Emancipation Proclamation designated enslaved people as free), free Black people "maintained aristocratic appearances, based on their white employers or local culture."

Alden Whitman—a *New York Times* journalist who also wrote on American Victorian culture—notes that although it was imported from England, "Victorianism was nonetheless distinctively American in its manifestations here. For one thing, it was more intense, and for another, it was more diverse. Even so, although there were various subcultures and countercultures, the official culture was stoutly Victorian. It expressed itself in religion, art, literature science, public morality, the theater, and in public opinion."

Gender distinction, too, was a significant trope to emerge during the Victorian era, particularly as it pertained to Black women. Shirley J. Carlson, in her article "Black Ideals of

"Victorianism was nonetheless distinctively American in its manifestations here. For one thing, it was more intense, and for another it was more diverse."

— Alden Whitman

Womanhood in the Late Victorian Era," published in *The Journal of Negro History* in 1992, contends that much of the ideals of Victorian culture for Black folk can be observed through the experiences of Black women—notably referred to as Black Victoria.

"The ideal Black woman embodied the genteel behavior of the 'cult of true womanhood,' as espoused by the larger society," Carlson wrote. As such, Black Victoria, "like her white counterpart," was devoted to her role as a dutiful wife and mother, thus upholding a "virtuous and modest" home.

Carlson continues: "In addition, as an African American, her thoughts and actions exemplified the attributes valued by her own race and community. ... This ideal woman spent her leisure time in a variety of social activities, including attendance at teas and luncheons, parties and church activities, among others. Morally unassailable, she was virtuous and modest. Her personality was amiable—or 'sweet' to use Black parlance—she

Black activist Mary Church Terrell. (Library of Congress)





EXPLORING TODAY'S TOPICS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PAST

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

WORLD PREMIERE **RELENTLESS**

by **Tyla Abercrombie+**
directed by **Ron OJ Parson, SDC+**

scenic designer **Jack Magaw, U.S.A.**
costume designer **Christine Pascual, U.S.A.**
lighting designer **Heather Gilbert, U.S.A.**
original music and sound design **Christopher Kriz, U.S.A.**
properties designer **Jennifer Wernau**
projections designer **Mike Tutaj, U.S.A.^**
wig and hair designer **Megan E. Pirtle**
dialect director **Sammi Grant**
intimacy and violence director **Rachel Flesher**
dramaturg **Khalid Y. Long**
stage manager **Miranda Anderson***

featuring **Ayanna Bria Bakari*, Rebecca Hurd*, Xavier Edward King*,
Jaye Ladymore*, Demetra Dee, and Travis Delgado**

January 27 – February 26, 2022 (previews 1/21 – 1/26)

Relentless was originally developed through TimeLine's Playwrights Collective,
under the direction of Director of Playwrights Collective Ben Thiem.

Relentless
is supported
in part by



Additional support provided by **Douglas Bradbury** and **The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation**



The Director is a member of the
**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.



* 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

CAST

Ayanna Bria Bakari* Annelle, Mother
Rebecca Hurd* Mary Anna Elizabeth
Xavier Edward King* Franklin
Jaye Ladymore* Janet
Demetra Dee Zhuukee (also called Annabelle Lee)
Travis Delgado Marcus

Understudies: Sierra Coachman (*Zhuukee, also called Annabelle Lee*), Jordan Gleaves (*Marcus*), Jordan Ashley Grier (*Mary Anna Elizabeth*), Dylan Rogers (*Franklin*), Aja Singletary (*Janet*), Marlene Slaughter (*Annelle, Mother*). Understudies will never substitute for a listed player unless an announcement is posted at the performance.

Setting: 1919 West Philadelphia. Childhood home of sisters Janet and Annelle.

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

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant Director.....	Tiffany Fulson
Production Assistant	Hannah Weiss
COVID Compliance Officer	Sophie Goddard
Dramaturgical Display Designer	Dina Spoerl
Marketing Consultants	Carmen Gardner, Aaron Mays
Assistant Scenic Designer	Lindsay Mummert
Assistant Costume Designer	Emily N. Brink
Assistant Lighting Designer	Conchita Avitia
Assistant Sound Designer	Brett Ashleigh
Assistant Projections Designer	F. Grant Palmer
Assistant Wig and Hair Designer	Amanda May
Assistant Intimacy and Violence Director	Thomas Russell
Assistant Dialect Director	Destin Lorde Teamer
Assistant Dramaturg	Maddi Keaton
Scenic Paint by	Altman Art Haus
Scenic Supervisor	Alex Little
Costume Supervisor	Rosalie Arends
Wardrobe Supervisor	Jennifer Giangola
Lighting and Projections Supervisor.....	Mark Brown
Audio Supervisor	Averi Paulsen
Assistant Production Manager	Paul Cook
Technical Consultant	Bek Lambrecht

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CONVERSATION

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 (with elements available in person at the theatre as well as online), discussion events (in-person and virtual), our blog Behind the 'Line, and more. Explore all the resources available at timelinetheatre.com/relentless.

VISIT THE ONLINE LOBBY EXPERIENCE FOR *RELENTLESS*



Our space here at Theater Wit is limited, so we've created an expanded lobby experience for you to explore online!

Scan the QR Code at left or visit timelinetheatre.com/relentless-lobby to find additional content and interactive activities, including:

- An exploration of playwright Tyla Abercrombie's inspirations for the play's chapter titles, plus an opportunity to share your own literary inspirations
- An invitation to post photos from your family's past and view faces from across generations by using the hashtag #RelentlessFamilyPhoto on social media
- Ways to take action inspired by the themes and contemporary relevance of *Relentless*, including resources for donating, shopping, and volunteering
- Plus videos, audio tours, and much more!

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 **#RelentlessTL** and/or **#TimeLineTheatre**.



JOIN *RELENTLESS* VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS

Mark your calendar for these online conversations and stay tuned closer to each date for information about how to reserve and participate. These events are FREE and open to all, but reservations are required. Visit timelinetheatre.com/relentless for information and reservations.

VIRTUAL POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

Tuesday, February 8 and Tuesday, February 22 at 7pm (via Zoom)

A 30-minute informal discussion hosted by a TimeLine Company Member and featuring members of the production team and special guests.

VIRTUAL SUNDAY SCHOLARS PANEL

Sunday, February 20 at 7pm (via Zoom)

A one-hour panel discussion featuring experts on the themes and issues of the play alongside a member of the production team in a moderated discussion.

BIOGRAPHIES



AYANNA BRIA BAKARI

(Annelle, Mother) returns to TimeLine, having previously appeared in *TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET*. She graduated with a BFA degree in acting from The Theatre School at DePaul University. Select theater credits include

AS YOU LIKE IT (Chicago Shakespeare), *THE ORIGINALIST* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), *SUDDENLY LAST SUMMER* (Raven), *HOW TO CATCH CREATION* (Goodman), and *STICKFLY* and *THE NICETIES* (Black Theater Alliance Award, Writers). Television and film credits include *WU-TANG: AN AMERICAN SAGA* (HULU); *THE CHI* (Showtime); *CHICAGO PD*, *CHICAGO FIRE*, and *EMPIRE* (FOX); and *HOLIDAY HEIST* (BET). Ayanna Bria is proud to be a governing ensemble member of The Story Theatre and is represented by Stewart Talent.



REBECCA HURD

(Mary Anna Elizabeth) is very grateful to be back on stage and making her TimeLine debut. Favorite Chicago credits include *TOP GIRLS* (Remy Bumpoo), *SOMETHING ROTTEN!* (Marriott), *MAMMA MIA!* (Drury Lane), *AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE*

(Goodman), *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST* (Writers), and *SHORT SHAKESPEARE! TWELFTH NIGHT* (Chicago Shakespeare). Regionally, she has worked with the Guthrie, Milwaukee Repertory, and American Players Theatre, among others. Television credits include *NEXT* (FOX) and *CHICAGO P.D.* (NBC), and she holds a BFA degree in Acting from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theatre. When she is not acting, she is a private acting coach for young adults. For more information, visit rebeccamariehurd.com or follow @thehurdstudio.



XAVIER EDWARD KING

(Franklin) is excited to be making his TimeLine debut. Select theatre credits include *THE WINTER'S TALE* (Goodman), *TITANIC!* *COMMISSIONERS INQUIRY* and *HERE WE ARE* (Court), *DRACULA* (Actors Theatre of Louisville),

THE STAR (ACT; Seattle, Wash.), *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST* and *PERICLES* (Notre Dame Shakespeare), *HAMLET* and *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis), *THE TEMPEST* (Island Stage Left; San Juan Islands, Wash.), and *TOPDOG/UNDERDOG* (Jones Theatre). Television credits include *61ST STREET* (AMC).



JAYE LADYMORE

(Janet) is a Georgia native who calls the Midwest home. TimeLine credits include *TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET*, for which she won the 2019 Black Theater Alliance Award for Best Featured Actress in a Play. Select Chicago credits include *STICK*

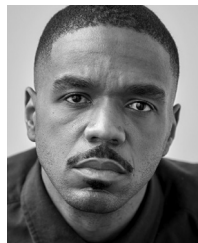
FLY, *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*, and *TWELFTH NIGHT* (Writers), *BERNHARDT/HAMLET* (Goodman), and *WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT...* (Steppenwolf). Jaye can currently be seen on the new CW series *4400* as Claudette.



DEMETRA DEE

(Zhuukee, Annabelle Lee) is elated to be making her TimeLine debut. Chicago credits include *THE LAST PAIR OF EARLIES* and *CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY* (Raven), *MIDDLE PASSAGE* (Lifeline), *BE HERE NOW* (Shattered Globe), *COM-*

FORT STEW and *MIGRATION* (ETA Creative Arts), and *THE GREEN BOOK* (Chicago Dramatist). She has a BFA degree in Acting from East Carolina University and is represented by DDO Chicago.



TRAVIS DELGADO

(Marcus) is honored to make his TimeLine debut. He graduated from Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi and now lives in Chicago. He is best known for playing Jurgis in Oracle Productions' *THE JUNGLE* as well as *The Founding Father*

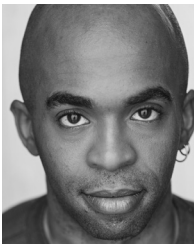
in *THE AMERICA PLAY* (Actor in a Principal Role - Play, Non-Equity). Theatre credits also include Mary Zimmerman's *TREASURE ISLAND* (Lookingglass). Film and television credits include *CHICAGO P.D.* and *CHICAGO FIRE* (NBC), *2 IN THE BUSH* (Amazon Prime), and *GIRL ON THE 3RD FLOOR* (Netflix). Travis would like to thank his mother, father, brothers, and girlfriend for their love and support.

BIOGRAPHIES



SIERRA COACHMAN (*Zhuu-kee, also called Annabelle Lee U/S*) is thankful to be making her TimeLine debut. She holds a BFA degree in Acting from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with a minor in Africana Studies. Theatre

credits include *THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME* (CCM) and *REVOLT. SHE SAID. REVOLT AGAIN.* (Falcon). Television credits include *THE BIG LEAP* (FOX). Sierra is represented by Gray Talent Group.



JORDAN GLEAVES (*Marcus U/S*) is making his TimeLine debut. Credits include *SUNSET BABY* (Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre), *ALOFT* (Collaboraction), and *BEST OF ENEMIES* (Open Door Theater). Regional credits include *MACBETH* and *JULIUS CAESAR* (The Nashville Shakespeare Festival), and *OTHELLO* and *LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST* (Montana Shakespeare in the Parks). Short-film credits include *CIG* by Jordan Tragash, *THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL* by Jamie Kreppein (releasing this year), and *DOWNSTATE* by Jordan and Jordan Tragash (filming February 2022). Jordan holds an MFA degree in Acting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a BA degree in Drama from Morehouse College. He is represented by Stewart Talent.



JORDAN ASHLEY GRIER (*Mary Anna Elizabeth U/S*) is thrilled to be making not only her TimeLine debut, but her Chicago debut as well! She recently received her MA degree in Classical Acting from the London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art. Before

living in London, she was a Canadian transplant in Los Angeles, where she worked in film and television. She has an elderly cat with her incredible partner, Alex. Jordan would also like to thank her family and her wonderful team at Stewart Talent.



DYLAN ROGERS (*Franklin U/S*) is an actor, model, and Chicagoland native making his TimeLine debut! He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Aurora University, and has trained at Acting Studio Chicago and Second City. His theater credits include

performances and choreography coordination in *SHE KILLS MONSTERS*, *SLED HILL*, *THE BLUEST EYE*, *EURYDICE*, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*, and *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*. He has also appeared in the films *CRSHD*, *POST*, and *CROSSING*, starred in the upcoming television series *FRAME OF REFERENCE*, and worked on various shows filming in Chicago including *ELECTRIC DREAMS* and *EMPIRE*.



AJA SINGLETARY (*Janet U/S*) is an actor, dancer, and choreographer originally from Philadelphia, and is making her TimeLine debut. She received her BA degree in Theatre Performance from Fordham University. She is also a 2019 School at Steppenwolf

graduate, and moved to Chicago after feeling the warmth and support from the Chicago arts community. Chicago credits include *DANCE NATION* (u/s, Steppenwolf), *ECLIPSED* (Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination - Ensemble, Pegasus Theatre), *THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION* (Theatre Unspeakable), and *AS YOU LIKE IT* (Eclectic Full Contact Theatre). Aja would like to thank her family, friends, and the *RELENTLESS* cast for their support! Proudly represented by Gray Talent Group.



MARLENE SLAUGHTER (*Annelle, Mother U/S*) is a Houston native living in Chicago, Ill. She began her career in the arts in high school, winning gold at the NAACP ACT-SO competition for Drama in 2015. She earned her BFA degree in Acting

and Media Entertainment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Before graduation she secured professional representation with Gray Talent Group

BIOGRAPHIES

and her first two professional jobs, a commercial for Blue Cross Blue shield and a cross country tour with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Television credits include 61ST STREET and AMERICAN GREED. Marlene also opened her own production company, POV Productions, LLC that produces commercials, logos, personal content videos. She is so very inspired by this story and is extremely grateful to be a part of this cast!

TYLA ABERCRUMBIE (*Playwright*), is a TimeLine Company Member and 2016-2018 Playwrights Collective member whose plays include WHO'S AFRAID OF DEEPAK CHOPRA, ASYLUM (AKA LIFE), PSYCHOLOGICAL TERRORISM, ONLY WOMEN BLEED, NAKED AND RAW, AFFAIR OF AMBIGUITY, NORMALITY, and THE STRAW. Her work has been produced by Pittsburgh Playwright's Theatre, MPAACT Theatre, and Chicago Cultural Center, and she was a recipient of the Raven Theatre Playwrights Initiative 2021. She has appeared on stage at TimeLine in PARADISE BLUE and IN DARFUR, as well as at Huntington Theatre, Goodman, Court, Northlight, Victory Garden, Chicago Shakespeare, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. Television credits include THE CHI, THE BIG LEAP, SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE, UTOPIA, PROVEN INNOCENT, CHICAGO PD, CHICAGO MED, SHRINK, EMPIRE, EASY, CRISIS, MOB DOCTOR, DETROIT 187, CHICAGO CODE, and SHAMELESS, among others. You may also have seen her at comedy clubs around town testing jokes for her stand-up show, NAKED & RAW 3 (THE TAKERS AND THE TOOKEN). She is a poet, invited to showcase her work at venues, events, and media outlets around the country, presenting before respected keynote speaker The Reverend Jesse Jackson and radio and media mogul Cathy Hughes. She holds a BA degree from Columbia College and is a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA.

RON OJ PARSON (*Director*) is a Company Member at TimeLine, where he has previously directed TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET, TO CATCH A FISH, PARADISE BLUE, SUNSET BABY, and A RAISIN IN THE SUN. He is a native of Buffalo, New York, and a graduate of the University of Michigan's professional theater program. He is the co-founder and former Artistic Director of Onyx Theatre Ensemble of Chicago and a co-founder and co-director of Ripe ManGo Productions. Ron is a Resident Artist at Court Theatre and an Associate Artist with Teatro Vista, and an Associate Artist at Writers Theatre. Since moving

to Chicago from New York in 1994, he has worked as both an actor and director. His Chicago credits include work with The Chicago Theatre Company, Victory Gardens, Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Dramatists, Northlight, Court, Black Ensemble Theatre, Congo Square, Urban Theatre Company, City Lit Theater, ETA Creative Arts, and Writers. Regionally, Ron has directed shows at Studio Arena Theatre, Alliance Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Milwaukee Repertory, South Coast Repertory, Pasadena Playhouse, Geva Theatre, Virginia Stage, Roundabout Theatre, Wilshire Theatre, The Mechanic Theatre, CenterStage, St. Louis Black Repertory, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, Signature Theatre (New York), Kansas City Rep, Portland Stage, and American Players Theatre, among others. In Canada, he directed the world premiere of PALMER PARK by Joanna McClelland Glass at the Stratford Festival. He is a member of AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and SDC. For further information, visit ronojparson.com.

JACK MAGAW (*Scenic Designer*) returns to TimeLine, having previously designed ALL MY SONS. Recent Chicago and regional credits include THE AGITATORS (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), INDECENT (Arena Stage, Baltimore CenterStage and Kansas City Rep), LEGACY LAND and FRANKENSTEIN (Kansas City Rep), AMERICA V. 2.1: THE SAD DEMISE AND EVENTUAL EXTINCTION OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO (Barrington Stage), THE SCARLET IBIS (Chicago Opera Theatre), APPROVAL JUNKIE (Alliance Theatre and Audible Theatre Off-Broadway), BLOOMSDAY (Remy Bumpo) and TALLY'S FOLLY (Peninsula Players). Upcoming projects include TWO TRAINS RUNNING (Court), AMERICAN JADE (Bucks County Playhouse), and CABARET (Music Theatre Heritage-Kansas City). Jack is an Adjunct Professor of Design at The Theatre School at DePaul University and he resides in Chicago. More at jackmagaw.com.

CHRISTINE PASCUAL (*Costume Designer*) returns to TimeLine, having previously designed OSLO, TO CATCH A FISH, PARADISE BLUE, BAKERSFIELD MIST, SUNSET BABY, and HANNAH AND MARTIN. Previous design credits include I, CINNA (Chicago Shakespeare), HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF and THE FIRST DEEP BREATH (Victory Gardens), DANCE NATION and LA RUTA (Steppenwolf), THE TOTAL BENT and THE DISPLACED (Haven), LADY IN DENMARK and FEATHERS AND TEETH (Goodman), DUTCH MASTERS and THE LIGHT FANTASTIC (Jackalope), CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY (Raven), EAST TEXAS HOT LINKS (Writers), and PUT YOUR HOUSE

BIOGRAPHIES

IN ORDER (The Roustabouts). Christine holds an MFA degree from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is a member of United Scenic Artist Local 829.

HEATHER GILBERT (*Lighting Designer*) is a Chicago based lighting designer. Previous designs for TimeLine include NOT ENOUGH AIR, MASTER HAROLD...AND THE BOYS, and THE FRONT PAGE. Broadway credits include THE SOUND INSIDE (Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Tony Award nomination). In Chicago, Heather has designed at Steppenwolf, Goodman, Writers, Northlight, Victory Gardens, Court, Steep, and many storefronts near you. Regional credits include work with Center Theatre Group, Studio Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Alley Theatre, American Repertory Theater, Magic Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pasadena Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Olney Theatre Center. She is the Head of Lighting Design at Columbia College Chicago and received her MFA degree at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

CHRISTOPHER KRIZ (*Original Music and Sound Design*) is an award-winning composer and sound designer based in Chicago. TimeLine designs include TOO HEAVY FOR YOUR POCKET, PARADISE BLUE, SUNSET BABY, MASTER HAROLD AND THE BOYS, and ALL MY SONS. Chicago credits include work with Goodman, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Court, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Writers, Remy Bumppo, Victory Gardens, First Folio, Shattered Globe, The Gift, and many others. Regional credits include work with Seattle Repertory, Kansas City Repertory, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory, Montana Shakespeare, Theatre Squared, and many summer seasons at Peninsula Players. A winner of five Joseph Jefferson Awards with a total of 22 nominations, Kriz is a proud member of United Scenic Artists 829. To hear more of his work, please visit christopherkriz.com.

JENNIFER WERNAU (*Properties Designer*) is a freelance properties designer in Chicago, originally from New York. She's returning to TimeLine, where she previously worked on CARDBOARD PIANO. She has worked for companies like Metropolis Performing Arts Center and Peninsula Players. Past credits include LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, BASKERVILLE, ANYTHING GOES, and A CHRISTMAS CAROL (Metropolis Theatre); SUNSET BOULEVARD and GYPSY (Porchlight); DARKNESS AFTER DAWN (Factory Theatre); HOODED, OR BEING BLACK FOR DUMMIES

(First Floor); THE ARC TRIALS (Mudlark Theater Company); and SMALL WORLD (The New Colony).

MIKE TUTAJ (*Projections Designer*) is an Associate Artist at TimeLine, where his work has included sound, projections and/or video design for more than a dozen productions, including OSLO, CHIMERICA, SPILL, 33 VARIATIONS, MY KIND OF TOWN, A WALK IN THE WOODS, IN DARFUR (Equity Jeff Award – Projections/Video Design), and MARTIN FUREY'S SHOT (Non-Equity Jeff Award – Projections/Video Design). He has designed projections and/or sound at numerous theaters, including Goodman, Court, Writers, Steppenwolf, Chicago Shakespeare, Victory Gardens, and Silk Road Rising. Mike can also sometimes be seen performing with Barrel of Monkeys, where he is a proud company member.

MEGAN E. PIRTLE (*Wig and Hair Designer*) is excited to return to TimeLine, having previously designed the wigs for RUTHERFORD AND SON. Other theatre credits include HER HONOR JANE BYRNE (Lookingglass); SONGS FOR NOBODIES (Northlight); THE LAST PAIR OF EARLIES and CRUMBS FROM THE TABLE OF JOY (Raven); and THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA, MADAGASCAR, and SHREK: THE MUSICAL (Marriott). In addition to freelancing, Megan works as a backstage wig runner and makeup artist for the Lyric Opera. She received a BFA degree in both Costume Design and Costume Technology from DePaul University and is a licensed cosmetologist of Illinois having graduated from Tricoci University of Beauty Culture. For more, visit meganpirtledesign.com.

SAMMI GRANT (*Dialect Director*) returns to TimeLine, having previously assisted with dialects for INANA. Other Chicago credits include CHRISTMAS CAROL (Goodman); CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, and LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (Drury Lane); BILLY ELLIOT (Porchlight Music Theatre); GRAPES OF WRATH and UNSEEN (The Gift); SOUTHERN GOTHIC (Windy City Playhouse); and many more. Film and television credits include RESCUED BY RUBY (Netflix), PATRIOT (Amazon Prime); and THE EXORSIST (FOX). Sammi is a voice/speech teacher for The Theatre School at DePaul University and Access Acting Academy. Sammi holds an MFA degree with Distinction in Voice Studies from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

BIOGRAPHIES

RACHEL FLESHER (*Intimacy and Violence Director*) is a fight director, intimacy director, intimacy coordinator, SAG-AFTRA stunt performer, actor, director, and teacher. TimeLine credits include *IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY*; *KILL MOVE PARADISE*; and *RUTHERFORD AND SON*. Rachel is part of the collaboration team advising SAG-AFTRA on their effort to standardize, codify, and implement guidelines for on-set intimacy coordinators. You can see Rachel's intimacy coordination on HULU, FX, FOX, CBS, SHOWTIME, NETFLIX, HBO, Apple, and more. Rachel is a Certified Fight Director and Certified Fight Instructor with Fight Directors Canada, an Instructor with Tactics on Set, an Intimacy Coordinator, and Intimacy Director with Intimacy Directors and Coordinators. Rachel's fight direction and intimacy direction have been featured at Goodman, Steppenwolf, Woolly Mammoth, Shakespeare Dallas, Steppenwolf for Young Adults, and many more.

KHALID Y. LONG, PhD (*Dramaturg*) is an assistant professor of theatre and coordinator of theatre studies at Columbia College Chicago. Khalid's dramaturgical credits include *NATIVE SON* and *MILK LIKE SUGAR* (Mosaic Theatre; Washington, D.C.); *SUNSET BABY* (REPStage; Howard County, Md.); *OCTAVIA'S BROOD* (Dance Place; Washington, D.C.); *MOM, HOW DID YOU MEET THE BEATLES* (Forward Theatre; Madison, Wis.); *INTIMATE APPAREL* and *TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES* (1992 University of Maryland; College Park, Md.); *SPACE* (Columbia College); and *KILL MOVE PARADISE* (REPStage, Howard County, Md.).

MIRANDA ANDERSON (*Stage Manager*) is so happy to return to TimeLine! Previously at TimeLine she stage managed *KILL MOVE PARADISE* and *IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY*. Other Chicago credits include productions with Rivendell Theatre, First Folio Theatre, and The Hypocrites. She spent several years touring with The Hypocrites' Gilbert and Sullivan productions to regional theaters including Olney Theatre Company, Pasadena Playhouse, Skirball Center at NYU, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and American Repertory Theatre in Boston. Miranda is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

TIFFANY FULSON (*Assistant Director*) is an actor, director, and community arts curator from the South Side of Chicago. In 2018, Fulson led the effort to launch TimeLine's first summer arts program, TimeLine South, and

in 2021, she became TimeLine's first Artistic Producer of Innovative Partnerships. She is also currently the Director of The August Wilson Monologue Competition Outreach Program Chicago in collaboration with Goodman Theatre. Directing credits include *THE ANGRY BRIGADE* (University of Illinois at Chicago); *TWISTED MELODIES, THE CHRISTIANS*, and *FUN HOME* (Assistant Director, Baltimore Center Stage); *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY* (Assistant Director, Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *TWISTED MELODIES* (Associate Director; Baltimore Center Stage; Apollo - New York, New York; Mosaic - Washington, D.C.). Tiffany holds a BFA degree in Theatre Performance from University of Illinois at Chicago and also studied abroad at Arcadia University for Global Studies in London, England.

DINA SPOERL (*Dramaturgical Display Designer*) returns to TimeLine, where her recent credits include *KILL MOVE PARADISE*, *RUTHERFORD AND SON*, *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 is currently Exhibits Team Leader at Naper Settlement. She sends love and immense gratitude to Mark, Jack, and Zoe.

HANNAH WEISS (*Production Assistant*) is a 2021 graduate of Columbia College Chicago earning her Bachelor's degree in Theatre concentrating in Stage Management. She is beyond excited to be working with TimeLine for the first time. Past credits include *THE SNOW QUEEN* (Assistant Stage Manager, The House Theatre), *TALES OF BERLIN* and *MR. BURNS: A POST-ELECTRIC PLAY* (Production Stage Manager, Columbia College Chicago), and *THE 33RD ANNUAL YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL* (Assistant Stage Manager, Pegasus Theatre Chicago).

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 38 Chicago premieres. During his tenure, TimeLine has garnered 58 Jeff Awards, including 11 for Outstanding Production, as well as awards for excellence in arts management, including the 2016 MacArthur Award

BIOGRAPHIES

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 Time-Pieces 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 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 *OSLO* at the Broadway Playhouse and *MASTER CLASS*; *IN THE NEXT ROOM, OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY*; and *BAKERS-FIELD MIST* at Stage 773; 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.

CREW & SPECIAL THANKS

Electricians	Sebastian Chrzanowski, Josiah Croegaert, Jack Goodman
Stitchers	Lucy Elkin, Chol�� L��vy, Jannelle Manno, Yvette Wesley
Wig Knotters	Miguel A. Armstrong, Jennifer Lightfoot, Hailey Rakowiecki
Carpenters	Bobby Barnett, ��rko Grbi��, Sage Huston, Robert Kristan, Robert Noe, Johnnie Schleyer, Matthew Super
Painters	Steven Abbott, Emily Altman, Liz Hadden, Tara Huffman, Trent Jones, Jessica Wardell
Properties Crew	Lonnae Hickman
Audio Crew	Forrest Gregor

THIS PRODUCTION OWES SPECIAL THANKS to numerous individuals & organizations for their time, talents & support, including Chabad of East Lakeview, The 4529 Prop Shop, Chicago Children's Theatre (Will Bishop & Andrew Chien), The Chicago Green Theatre Alliance, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (Cathy Tantillo), Cincinatti Playhouse (Gordon DeVinney & Josh Escajeda), Conscious Costumes (Kristen P Ahern), Liz Gomez, The Goodman Theatre (Eileen Clancy & Heidi McMath), Stan Hicks, Lookingglass Theatre (Sarah Burnham & Melissa Perkins), Loyola University (Austin Pettinger), Marriott Theatre (Meg Love & Sally Zak), Milwaukee Repertory (Jared Clarkin & Jim Guy), Northlight Theatre (Emily Kneer & Colleen Schuldeis), Liviu Pasare, Rivendell Theatre (Tara Mallen), St. Louis Stages (Brad Musgrove & Josh Aune), The Theatre School at DePaul University (Sally Dolemba & Randy Handley), and Jessica and Brandon Wardell.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

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 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:

- *Relentless* — Friday, February 18 at 7pm
- *Relentless* — Saturday, February 19 at 2pm
- *The Chinese Lady* — Friday, June 10 at 8pm
- *The Chinese Lady* — Saturday, June 11 at 4pm



Audio Description

Audio description is a service that 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.

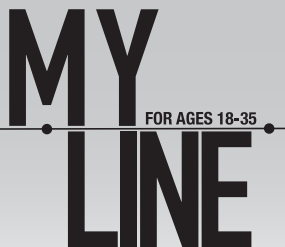
Upcoming Audio Described performances are:

- *Relentless* — Friday, February 25 at 7pm
- *The Chinese Lady* — Friday, June 17 at 8pm

If you would like to suggest services that you believe would make our theatre more accessible, please contact Audience Services Manager Kellyn Henthorn at kellyn@timelinetheatre.com.

FOR ANYONE AGE 18 TO 35

MyLine is TimeLine's low-price ticket program. It's free to join and gets you exclusive access to \$15 tickets for all TimeLine shows!



Membership is FREE.

But you must sign up to become a member.

**LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP AT
TIMELINETHEATRE.COM/MYLINE**

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

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.*

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.



Pat Tiedemann (from left), PJ Powers, and Juliet Hart in TimeLine's inaugural production SUMMIT CONFERENCE, 1998.

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.

As we launch our 25th Anniversary Season, TimeLine has presented 82 productions, including 10 world premieres and 38 Chicago premieres.

Our work has been recognized in Chicago and beyond: TimeLine received the prestigious 2016 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions and has been named "Company of the Year" in *The Wall Street Journal* (2010), one of the American Theatre Wing's top 10 emerging professional theatre companies nationwide (2011) and *Chicago* magazine's "Best Theatre" in the city (2011). And we have been honored with 58 Jeff Awards, including an award for Outstanding Production 11 times.



Cage Sebastian Pierre (from left), Kai A. Ealy, and Charles Andrew Gardner in KILL MOVE PARADISE, 2020.

We work to match artistic excellence with sophisticated business management, and these efforts also have been recognized. TimeLine was the first arts organization to receive the Alford-Axelson Award for Nonprofit Managerial Excellence of a small company, and we have received the Association for Strategic Planning's Richard Goodman Strategic Planning Award in the Non-Profit category.

For more about TimeLine's history and programs, please visit timelinetheatre.com

TimeLine Theatre is a member of the League of Chicago Theatres, Chicago Cultural Alliance, Choose Chicago, the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce, Uptown 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.

LIVING HISTORY PROGRAM



Living History students in the lobby at a matinee performance of CARDBOARD PIANO, 2019.

TimeLine'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 beyond.

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 and post-show discussion with the cast.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Living History revisioned its play- and field trip-centered residencies to respond to the unique needs of students and teachers who are living through history and looking for ways to express their experiences. The need for partnership, collaboration, and creative problem-solving is more important than ever, and Living History has provided virtual and real-time opportunities to use theater-based exercises to amplify student voices, challenges, hopes, and dreams.

Since its inception, more than 8,400 students have actively explored history through Living History. TimeLine currently partners with nine schools to present the program.



Tiffany Fulson (right) with a TimeLine South ensemble member in 2019.

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 Crown Family Philanthropies, Joseph & Bessie Feinberg Foundation, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, John and Jessica Fullerton, Robert and Eleanor Meyers, Stanley and Vivian Nitzberg, 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.

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

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

PLAYWRIGHTS COLLECTIVE

TimeLine has an ongoing commitment to developing the work of established as well as emerging playwrights. The Playwrights Collective, founded under the leadership of Ben 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.

2013 - 2016 (Inaugural) Collective

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

2017 - 2018 Collective

Tyla Abercrombie | Will Allan | Maureen Gallagher | Calamity West

2020 - 2021 Collective

Dolores Díaz | Kristin Idaszak | Osiris Khepera | David Rhee

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Associate Artistic Director
Maggie Fullilove-Nugent
Production Manager
Maren Robinson
Resident Dramaturg

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Director of Living History
Tiffany Fulson
*Artistic Producer of
Innovative Partnerships*
Mary T. Christel
Curriculum Consultant
Adia Alli
Wardell Julius Clark
Tiffany Fulson
Charles Andrew Gardner
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Marketing Assistant*

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Ushering

IT'S TIME: THE CAMPAIGN FOR TIMELINE'S NEW HOME



ART ON STAGE | ENGAGEMENT OFF STAGE | LIVING HISTORY | EMBRACING UPTOWN

TimeLine is laying the foundation for our next era. After 25 years of adapting within rented facilities, we're establishing the first home of our very own in Uptown at 5035 N. Broadway, creating a new cultural asset for Chicago. Far more than just a theatre, this inviting and accessible facility will be a welcoming gathering space for entertainment, education, and community engagement.

Joining other venerable performance venues in the historic Uptown Entertainment District, TimeLine's new home—anticipated to open in early 2024—will feature:

- An intimate and flexible 250-seat black box theatre that can be reimagined for every show
- Exhibit galleries that enhance the production experience
- Dedicated space for education and community programming
- Expanded social spaces, including a bar and café open day and night
- Office and production space for our growing staff
- Plus opportunities for future expansion, and much more!

We hope you'll join us in taking this bold step together toward a new home, where everyone is welcomed and where great artistry collides with topics relevant to today's social and political issues.

**"It's Time to create a space to grow and innovate
... a space where past and present intersect and where collaboration
and togetherness will lead us to a better future."**

— Artistic Director PJ Powers

IT'S TIME

MAKE HISTORY WITH US

This once-in-a-lifetime project is a private and public funding partnership, with private philanthropy making up 60% of the \$35 million project cost. **If you'd like more information about how you can help support this special campaign, please contact Chelsea Smith, Director of Major Gifts, at chelsea@timelinetheatre.com or 773.281.8463 x16.**

Explore more about this thrilling project—including interior and exterior design renderings—on pages 10-11 of the *Relentless Backstory* and online at timelinetheatre.com/its-time.

IT'S TIME: THE CAMPAIGN FOR TIMELINE'S NEW HOME

TimeLine is grateful for the support and confidence shown by the investors in the campaign for our new home.

\$1 MILLION AND ABOVE

Anonymous

Abe and Ida

Cooper Foundation

Joseph and Bessie

Feinberg Foundation

Peter and Alicia Pond

Forum Fund

Contributing members include:

Diane Dean, Jim and Karen Frank, Marvin and Judy Herb, Richard and Debbie Jelinek, John and Judy Keller, Jim Leider, Barry MacLean, Andy McKenna, Andrew and Jeanine McNally, David Moscow, Michael and Suzanne Moscow, and Gordon and Carole Segal

\$250,000 - \$999,999

Crown Family Philanthropies

Mary and Bruce Feay

Brenda and James Grusecki

Sonia T. Marschak

Bill and Penny Obenshain

Anonymous (3)

\$100,000 - \$249,000

Christine Albright and Lawrence Gill

Mr. and Mrs. Gilberto Arias, Jr.

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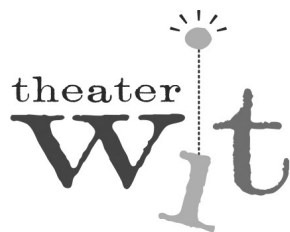
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Ida B. Wells in Chicago in with her children, circa 1909.
(Archivio GBB/Redux)

was also altruistic and pious. In appearance she was well groomed and presentable at all times. Her hair was carefully arranged and her costume was immaculate and appropriate for the occasion. In public she wore the traditional Victorian attire: A floor-length dress, with fitted bodice, a full skirt, and long sleeves often trimmed with a ruffle or lace. ... She was a 'lady.'"

Notwithstanding, race played a significant factor in how Black Victorian women navigated the social world. Make no mistake about it: Black American women who embodied Victorian ideals and beliefs did not simply aim to emulate white women.

Carlson again: "Black Victoria had other qualities: Qualities which were emphasized by her own Black community. First and foremost, she was intelligent and well-educated. She displayed a strong community and racial consciousness, often revealed in her work—whether paid or unpaid ... Self-confident and outspoken, she was highly esteemed by her community which frequently applauded her as a 'race woman' and role model for young people. In these areas, the Black community's expectations of the ideal woman differed from those of the larger society."

Thus, many Black Victorian women were enlightened activists committed to uplifting the Black race. Notable Black Victorian women include Black suffragists, anti-lynching activists Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell, and opera singer Marie Selika Williams.

sailors in Charleston, S.C., the sailors go to a local Black restaurant to find the man. Upon leaving the restaurant, they attack multiple Black people on King Street, shooting and killing two men and destroying a barbershop.

May 25 Madam C.J. Walker, an entrepreneur of hair care products and the first African American woman self-made millionaire, dies.



Madame C.J. Walker.

June 4 The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote, is approved by Congress. Though this amendment will mean women can vote, Black women still face many challenges when it comes to getting to the polls.

July Harlem Renaissance poet Claude McKay publishes his poem, "If We Must Die," in *The Liberator Magazine*.

July After local distributor and school teacher Samuel L. Jones is concluded to be the author of an article in the *Chicago Defender* detailing the lynching of Lemuel Walters as part of the Longview, Texas Race Riot, he is targeted and beaten by a white mob, who also burn down his house.

July 27 Eugene Williams, a 17-year-old African American, drowns in Chicago's Lake Michigan after being hit with rocks by white beachgoers who are offended that Williams drifted to the white side of the shoreline.

September 28 The Omaha Race Riot begins after the lynching of Will Brown, a Black man accused of raping a white woman who is given no opportunity to defend himself.



During rehearsals for *Relentless*, dramaturg Khalid Y. Long (KL) posed a few questions to playwright Tyla Abercumbie (TA) about her inspiration for writing the play, being gobsmacked by the parallels between 1919 and today, and how this story fits into a larger narrative still to come.

(KL) What was your inspiration for writing *Relentless*?

(TA) My inspiration for *Relentless* was a love of the Harlem Renaissance. That might sound odd, but my favorite time in literature was the Harlem Renaissance. As a young girl, I read all the poets and authors and writers of that time, but what became significant was when I read the works of Zora Neal Hurston, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and so many more. I became fascinated with how they came to be. Where did this amazing generation of poets and writers descend from, and how were they inspired?

That led me backward to the Victorian Era, Edwardian Era, and so on. I discovered on my own that my heritage was so much more elaborate, intriguing, extraordinary than just bondage. The system we currently learn under and teach the kids of the future perpetuates lies that suggest Black folk had three—

now four—central moments in history: slavery/bondage, civil rights, Obama, and now, George Floyd. We are and have always been so much more than that. Our place in history begins with the beginning of time.

Researching backward from the Harlem Renaissance inspired me profoundly when I saw the affluent, educated, well-traveled, intensely well-versed, Black Victorian.

(KL) Although *Relentless* is set in 1919, the play is quite relevant today.

(TA) When I began writing *Relentless* during my time with TimeLine's Playwrights Collective in 2016 and completed it in 2018, I had no way of knowing how prescient the work would be. In fact, after we were postponed in 2020, as the news of the pandemic and unrest, women's movement, Times Up, and Black Lives Matter unfolded, we were constantly gobsmacked by the literal mirror image of the time. I chose 1919 for *Relentless* because it was such a pivotal year in the escalating change after the end of World War I. So much was on the horizon, including hope, but so much change exploded. 1919 was a time to be reckoned with; the world woke up in 1919 just as the world woke up in 2020.

(KL) Are there any playwrights who inspire your style of playwriting?

(TA) Wow! Great question. Yes. Lorraine Hansberry first and foremost inspires me. I was introduced to her by my elder sister, and *A Raisin in the Sun* remains my favorite play to this day.

I, of course, love August Wilson and all he gave me in the last 20 years in my theatre experience.

The Relentless cast and production team gather—masked in the room and remotely via Zoom—for the play's first rehearsal at TimeLine in December.



“1919 was a time to be reckoned with; the world woke up in 1919 just as the world woke up in 2020.”



Tyla Abercrombie at the first rehearsal of Relentless.

I also loved novels whose characters lived inside their novels like plays. I read Langston Hughes' Jesse B. Semple, and every chapter was like the scenes of a play. Other playwrights include P.J. Gibson, Pearl Cleage, and Zora Neale Hurston. But too ... I really love the work of Tennessee Williams. And Shakespeare. Damaged people navigating life and circumstance. That's who I want to watch on stage.

(KL) What do you hope audiences take away from a play so steeped in history?

(TA) I hope audiences take away so much intrigue that they go home moved to learn more about the period. I want the conversations over dinner after the show or after the second time seeing these excellent actors perform, that they ask serious questions about what they have perceived to be true in history and why they are enlightened by what they now know. I want audiences to have a good time but a visceral reaction; they won't let the play leave them for a few days. It's to be discussed, lived, digested, experienced.

(KL) *Relentless* is part of a larger trilogy. Can you share what audiences can expect in the future?

(TA) Well ... I researched these characters and created such complete backstories, it felt unfair for that work to be mine and not shared. Thus, it became the inspiration to start a conversation between generations. Just like we're examining 1919 in the theatre now, many other plays are steeped in history this season. I am intrigued by the conversation continuing. The second play explores the descendants of *Relentless*. Thus, how do we set our lineage up to succeed or fail? And what does that look like in 2022? The third play is a mystery.

October 1–3 In Elaine, Arkansas, the bloodiest race riots of this “Red Summer”—as the period of racial violence between late winter and early autumn of 1919 will become known—break out. Mob violence quickly ensues after a shooting incident at a Progressive Farmers and Household Union meeting. While the exact number of deaths will remain unknown, an estimated 200 or more African Americans lose their lives in Elaine.

October 14 Civil rights activist Marcus Garvey is shot by George Tyler in an assassination attempt.

December 23 Alice H. Parker files a patent for her natural gas furnace invention.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

*Dramaturgy & Historical Research
by Khalid Y. Long*

*Written by Khalid Y. Long, with
contributions by PJ Powers, Chelsea
Smith, and Lara Goetsch*

*Editing and Graphic Design
by Lara Goetsch*

*Relentless promotional
image design by Michal Janicki*

*Event and Rehearsal Photography
by Jenny Lynn Christoffersen*

*Backstory is published to
accompany each production
during the season*

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.



Even a pandemic couldn't deter TimeLine's progress toward establishing the first home of our own. Since purchasing property at 5033-5035 N. Broadway Avenue (near the corner of Broadway and Argyle) in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, we've deeply engaged with architect HGA on the creative design process, worked on developing stronger community connections in Uptown and beyond, and continued to build tremendous fundraising support from our community of supporters who believe in creating this new cultural asset for Chicago and laying the foundation for TimeLine's next era.

TimeLine's \$35 million new home will fully support and enhance TimeLine's mission, featuring:

- 250-seat flexible black box theatre
- Dedicated space for education and further engagement beyond the stage
- Exhibit galleries to enhance the production experience
- Expanded social spaces, including a bar and café open day and night
- Office space for our growing staff
- Plus opportunities for future expansion, including a second theatre
- All in the heart of the historic Uptown Entertainment District.

We're excited to create a space and an organization where artists are supported in doing their best work, where the community can thrive, and where the next generation can see themselves throughout this welcoming, gathering place.

You can read more about this thrilling project—anticipated to be completed in early 2024—on page 16 of the *Relentless* program book, and online at timelinetheatre.com/its-time.

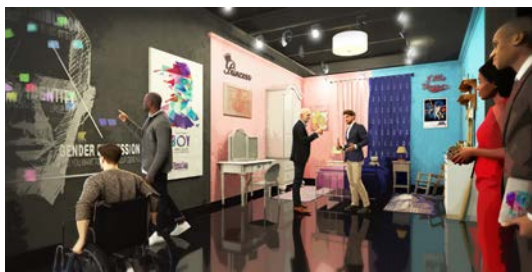
To learn more about supporting TimeLine's new home project, please contact Chelsea Smith, Director of Major Gifts, at chelsea@timelinetheatre.com or 773.281.8463 x16.

IT'S TIME

THE CAMPAIGN FOR TIMELINE'S NEW HOME

“This new building is an investment in the future of TimeLine—a home for artists, audiences, and community members that will ensure the company and its mission can endure”

— Managing Director Elizabeth K. Auman



At TimeLine's new home, you'll experience:

A TRANSFORMATIVE PERFORMANCE SPACE

Pictured at right: Various configurations of the 250-seat flexible black box theatre. (Renderings by Jeffrey D. Kmiec)

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ARRIVE EARLY AND STAY LATE

Pictured above, top: First-floor lobby bar and café. (Rendering by HGA)

AND AN AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE TAILORED FOR INTIMACY

Pictured above, middle and bottom: Historical lobby exhibits that are a TimeLine hallmark, plus space for education, engagement, and community events. (Renderings by Jeffrey D. Kmiec and HGA)



OUR BIGGEST
EVENT OF THE YEAR
RETURNS!

AND THIS TIME
WE'RE CELEBRATING

25

STEP INTO TIME: CHICAGO 1997

CELEBRATE TIMELINE'S MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

by stepping back 25 years for an unforgettable evening that raises funds vital to our work. We'll return in-person to the Ritz-Carlton to look back at that not-that-long-ago (but wow-so-long-ago) time when six founders each threw \$50 into a hat to launch a new venture called TimeLine. Join us for an elegant evening of cocktails, dinner, and special entertainment created exclusively for this anniversary event and culminating in a 1990s dance party. **Help us celebrate the moment that put TimeLine Theatre on Chicago's theatrical map, and the indelible memories that have defined 25 years (and counting!) of making history.**

Friday, March 11, 2022 | 6:00-10:30 pm

THE RITZ-CARLTON | 160 EAST PEARSON STREET | CHICAGO

INFO & TICKETS

timelinetheatre.com/step-into-time