CHICAGO PREMIERE

RUTHERFORD AND SON

by GITHA SOWERBY directed by MECHELLE MOE

Timeline Theatre Company

BACKSTORY YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

A MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PJ POWERS

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the long overdue Chicago debut of Githa Sowerby's *Rutherford and Son.*

Written and originally produced to great acclaim in 1912, this was a play ahead of its time. It initially drew comparisons to dramas by Ibsen and Shaw and was hailed for its powerful exploration of gender, class, and family politics.

It's a play about—and set amidst—a moment of change. Tragically, its progressiveness also became its downfall, driven by a revelation about who exactly wrote the play.

Originally billed as being written by K.G. Sowerby, *Rutherford and Son* enjoyed tremendous success. However, once it was discovered that the playwright was, in fact, a woman—an almost unheard of occurrence at the time—skepticism rained down on the play and on Githa, causing both to live in relative obscurity for decades.

It wasn't until 1994 that the play once again was given a proper platform at the National Theatre of London, receiving praise and ultimately being recognized as one of the great plays of the 20th century.

More recently, a biography of Githa has been published, and revivals of the play in the United Kingdom have become quite common, including two major productions in London and Sheffield within the last year. Yet, here in North America, the play still has received only a handful of productions.

TimeLine is proud to try to undo that injustice, and I believe you'll find that the play has lost none of its power, bite, or relevance since it premiered 107 years ago.

Rather autobiographical and set in an industrial town in Northern England where Githa lived, the play explores the power dynamics within a family business that has been passed on from previous generations. Ruled now by an overbearing patriarch, the Rutherford glass factory is behind the times, suffering from a lack of innovation or technological advancement and facing a wave throughout the country of newly mobilized workers demanding fair wages. At the center of the business and the family is a man out of his league, incapable of empowering any of his children to be a part of a new revolution.

It is those more forward-looking potential heirs who are making tiny cracks in what was a traditional construct. They are challenging oppressive, paternal rule and the predetermined social norms that, in this home, stifle love, prosperity, and the ability for anyone to reach their full potential.

Githa's exploration of family dynamics also can be traced through the bodies of work by playwriting giants whom she pre-dated, such as O'Neill, Hellman, Odets, Hansberry, Miller, and more—all grappling with themes that remain timeless.

She suffered the indignity of not getting to see her play achieve its deserved place among those greats. Somewhere above, I imagine that she is gazing down on Chicago saying "What took you so long?" I'd have to agree, and I'm proud that TimeLine, under the direction of my inspiring colleague Mechelle Moe, is giving Githa and *Rutherford and Son* their due. At last.

Best,

PJ

THE PLAYWRIGHT
GITHA SOWERBY AND *RUTHERFORD AND SON*

"The truth is that the English people have in Miss Sowerby a positive genius, who has begun early but not abnormally, and who gives abundant evidence that she is destined to take rank with the world's best latter-day writers and thinkers."

– *Journalist Phil Farnum in* **Nash's Magazine***, 1912*

Githa Sowerby was born October 6, 1876 to the family of a prosperous glassworks in Gateshead in the north of England. During her life, her family's finances would veer from wealth to precarity and back. It is clear that many of the characters and concerns in her play are drawn from her family. Her great-grandfather and grandfather were formidable men and ruthless capitalists, and her grandfather John Sowerby grew the Sowerby's Ellison Glassworks into a glassmaking powerhouse in England and Europe.

Githa's father, John George Sowerby, was ousted from the glass company and started a new career as a painter, bringing his family into increasingly shabbier homes. Githa used the opportunity to take a flat in London with her sister Millicent, and they began earning a living writing children's books. Githa wrote the text and Millicent illustrated the books.

Portrait of Githa Sowerby by George Percy Jacomb-Hood, circa 1912.

London provided a relief to Githa, who was able to interact with new friends and escape the limited circle of acquaintances and family in Gateshead and the peripatetic life of her father. She sought to rectify what she felt were deficiencies in her education, since her father did not think his daughters should be formally educated. She began attending plays and lectures, including some at the Fabian Society, a socialist organization. Githa embraced socialism, abandoning the ruthless materialism in which she had been raised and joining the Fabian Society in 1905.

THE TIMELINE: ENGLAND AND THE SOWERBYS

1771 The first factory cotton mill opens in Britain. It is owned by Richard Arkwright in Cromford, Derbyshire.

1775 – 1783 The American War for Independence—also known as the Revolutionary War—is fought.

1788 The Protection of Stocking Frames, etc. Act is passed, designed to protect against the deliberate disruption of textile factory machines.

July 14, 1789 The French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille.

1792 Mary Wollstonecraft writes *A Vindication on the Rights of Women.*

1799 – 1800 Trade unions are outlawed in England. The English government will slowly and nearly completely lift the ban through successive acts in 1825, 1871, and 1906.

March 25, 1807 Britain abolishes the slave trade.

1811 – 1812 Textile workers in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire sabotage and in some cases destroy industrial machinery under the banner of their fictional leader "Ned Ludd," protesting two years of high unemployment. The British army is called to quell the protests.

1812 The Frame Breaking Act of 1812 is passed, making industrial sabotage—"machine-breaking"—punishable by death.

March 1815 The Corn Laws are passed in Parliament, increasing the price of food in England. These laws will not be repealed until 1846.

September 27, 1825 The world's first steam locomotive passenger service begins. This will usher in the rise of railways as an economic force and a fixture of British life.

In 1911, she went into rehearsal at The Royal Court Theatre for her first play, *Rutherford and Son*, which debuted in February 1912. It was an instant sensation—running for 133 performances in London and 63 performances in New York—and Githa was compared to Henrik Ibsen, Maxim Gorky, John Galsworthy, and Miguel Piñero. She also was frequently called a man in many reviews, since her name was listed as K.G. Sowerby in programs.

Although Githa enjoyed the success of *Rutherford and Son*, she did not want to appear in public, make speeches, or seek media attention. Despite that discomfort, when she was discovered to be a woman, she was subjected to countless members of the press seeking interviews about this "new woman playwright."

The playwright and journalist Keble Howard made her out to be a dimwitted debutante and marveled that she could write a play of such force. The very private Githa gave him little information. Indeed, she seems to have been having a little fun at his expense, as one could imagine she might, given his numerous expressions of surprise that such a play could be written by a woman.

Another interviewer sought out Githa without having seen the play and assumed she had written a fluffy comedy—only to be told by Githa that he should see or read the play first.

Journalists took her demurrals as evidence that she was naive, but the depth of her work, her dislike of the limelight, and her natural reluctance to discuss the autobiographical origins of the play offer more likely reasons why she declined to discuss her play with condescending male journalists.

After *Rutherford and Son*, Githa always referred to herself as a playwright and never as a children's author. Githa wrote more plays, including *Before Breakfast, A Man and Some Women, Sheila, The Stepmother*, and *Direct Action*. In addition to numerous children's books, she wrote plays for children: *Little Plays for School and Home* and *The Policeman's Whistle*. But the timing and subject matter of her plays, amidst changing public tastes and the lead up to World War I, were not a hit with audiences, and she never again enjoyed the same level of success.

Roger Allam and Anjana Vasan in the National Theatre's 2019 production of Rutherford and Son. *(Johan Persson)*

"Just the sort of young woman you may meet by the score on tennis lawns or up the river. Tall, fair, with a pretty face and a very pleasant voice, you might suspect her of eating chocolates and talking nonsense in the shade, but you would never dream that she could be the author of a play with the grim force of a Piñero in the story and the sureness of a Galsworthy in the characterization." *– Keble Howard in his interview with Githa Sowerby in the* Daily Mail

Rutherford and Son fell out of production after its initial runs. In 1980, it was revived in a shortened form by the feminist theatre group Mrs. Worthington's Daughters. A few theatres in England have performed it, including New End Theatre (1988) and the Stephen Joseph Theatre (1991). BBC's Radio 4 did an audio version in 1992, and there have been productions at the National Theatre (1994 and 2019); Crucible Theatre, Sheffield (2019); Salisbury Playhouse (2001); and Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester (2005). Outside of England, there was a production at the Mint Theatre in New York (2001) and the Shaw Festival in Ontario, Canada (2004).

Near the end of her life, Githa was convinced that no one cared about her work. She burned all her papers and letters a few months before she died on June 30, 1970.

THE HISTORY

GENDER AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN ENGLAND

Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood (1863) by George Elgar Hicks.

Githa Sowerby's experience of misogyny after the premiere of *Rutherford and Son* can be seen as a microcosm of the societal tensions in England at the turn of the 20th century.

Prevailing ideas of gender at the time hinged on what the English saw as a fundamental difference between "public" and "private" space. Public space was the domain of men, while private space was the domain of women.

One cultural exemplar of this dichotomy was the figure of the "Angel of the House," taken from a narrative poem written by Coventry Patmore in 1854. Patmore's "Angel" was a woman who was a paragon of purity, domestic obedience, and complete devotion.

Concurrent to the publication of Patmore's poem was the formation of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, organized in the 1850s by the women of the Langham Place Group. Attitudes shifted, in large part due to the campaigning of women suffragists like these.

A number of landmark laws were passed (and others repealed) in the second half of the 19th century that changed the landscape of women's legal rights and protections. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 made divorce a civil rather than religious act, created a court to oversee divorces, and made them more affordable for middle-class women. The

1833 The first Factory Act is passed, restricting work hours for women and children in textile mills. Mill owners are required to show that children up to age 13 receive two hours of schooling, six days per week.

June 20, 1837 Queen Victoria ascends to the throne.

1838 Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist* is published.

July 1848 The Public Health Act is passed in an effort to improve urban health conditions and lower death rates. It soon will be repealed after pressure from mill and factory owners.

1851 Harriet Taylor Mill writes *The Enfranchisement of Women*.

1852 John Sowerby, Githa Sowerby's grandfather, opens Ellison Glassworks.

1857 The Matrimonial Causes Act is passed, making divorce a civil rather than a religious act, creating a court to oversee divorces, and making divorce more affordable.

1858 – 1864 *The English Woman's Journal*, a suffragette journal staffed entirely by women, is published as a means for discussing female employment and equality issues—in particular, manual or intellectual industrial employment and expansion of employment.

1864, 1866, 1869 Three Contagious Diseases Acts are passed, effectively criminalizing the presence of unchaperoned women in public spaces. All three will be repealed in 1886.

1872 The legal age for coal mining boys is officially raised to 12.

1873 The Panic of 1873 begins after the collapse of the Vienna stock market. It marks the first international economic crisis and sets off a decade-long depression that England will feel the effects of until 1896.

Married Women's Property Act of 1882 allowed women to own and control property after marriage. And the Contagious Diseases Act, which had essentially criminalized women's presence in public places, was repealed in 1886. This repeal also raised the legal age of consent for women from 12 to 16 years of age.

Access to education for women also improved in the late 19th and early 20th century. The University of London opened to women in 1878. Oxford and Cambridge, however, did not offer women degrees on an equal basis until after the first World War.

Full suffrage for women in England would not be granted until 1928, and class played a significant role in the amount of access that women had to the rights fought for and won in the 19th century. Despite the letter of the law, the spirit of it was not always felt.

The working class was often perceived as more prone to succumbing to "base desires," and therefore in need of supervision, control, and "civilizing." This perception extended to people of color in England, and in England's colonial slave empire. Combined with a fundamental disregard for women's capacity for logic, mature emotion, and intellectual rigor, this created fertile ground to foment socio-political change.

"It is men, only men, from the first to the last that we have to do with! To please a man I did wrong at first, then I was flung about from man to man. Men police lay hands on us. By men we are examined, handled, doctored."

– A prostitute's account, recorded by Victorian feminist and social reformer Josephine Butler

ABOUT THE SOWERBY PRODUCT

THE GLASS

Glass is as much a state of matter as it is a specific material. Because of its unique molecular structure, it is categorized as a rigid liquid. On an atomic level, it more closely resembles a liquid than a solid, with an amorphous rather than crystalline arrangement.

While glass does occur naturally, humans have been making glass for a variety of purposes since antiquity. Earliest examples of human-made glass date back approximately 5,000 years, though glass does not begin to resemble our modern equivalent until much later, through advancements in composition and shaping techniques.

Examples of Sowerby glass, obtained via eBay by the Rutherford and Son *production team.*

Glass is composed primarily of silica, which is the main component in quartz sand. Other ingredients—such as sodium carbonate, calcium oxide and lead oxide—are added to change the melting temperature, color, durability, and clarity of the glass.

At the time of *Rutherford and Son*, these ingredients were heated and kept in ceramic pots—in a molten state thanks to a furnace—until glassmakers were ready to use it. Glassmakers would extract the molten glass using various methods, and shape the glass by blowing, pouring, stamping, or otherwise manipulating it. This process had been industrialized in the 19th century, and chemical and mechanical advancements resulted in the widespread availability of glass for a variety of social classes.

The Sowerby family's glassworks are primarily known for having produced pressed glass—a more affordable alternative to cut glass—which involved the placement of molten glass into a metal mold. The glass was then pressed to fill and take the shape of the mold. Sowerby's was known for producing ornamental glass, as well as luxury glass for daily use.

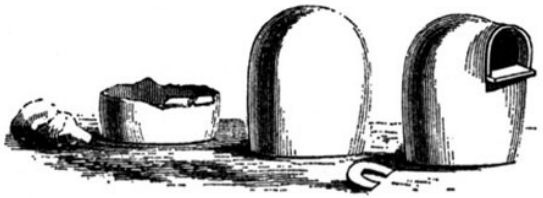


Illustration of pot arches from Curiosities of Glass Making *(1849) by Apsley Pellatt.*

Glassmaking requires a high amount of skill and strength, as well as ready and affordable access to necessary materials like coal, potash, silica, etc.

Here are a few terms that you will hear Githa Sowerby's characters use during the play:

Colliery A coal mine and its associated structures, equipment, and workforce.

Lear An oven open at both ends, used for heating ceramic pot-arches in preparation for placement in a furnace. Ceramic will break if subjected to thermal shock and must be preheated in order to withstand the heat of a glassmaking furnace.

Lear man Personnel in charge of a lear oven.

Metal Here, another word for glass, or specific glass recipe.

Muffle furnace Here, a smaller table-top furnace used for small-batch glassmaking.

Pot-arch, Pot A ceramic container used to hold and maintain glass in a molten state.

Potash Potassium carbonate, at the time derived from certain plant ashes.

Pot-loft An area for the storage of pots and pot-arches.

Pot-setting The process of preparing the pots.

White metal The specific kind of clear glass for which John Rutherford, Jr. has discovered the recipe.

January 1876 John George Sowerby, Githa's father, registers the trademark of Sowerby's Ellison Glassworks.

October 6, 1876 Githa Sowerby is born in Gateshead, England.

1878 The University of London is opened to women. Oxford and Cambridge will not open to women for another 40 years.

1879 John Sowerby dies. He is succeeded by John George.

August 2, 1880 School attendance is made mandatory from ages 5 to 10.

1882 The Married Women's Property Act is passed, allowing women to control property they bring into a marriage.

December 1884 Based on previous Reform Acts of 1867 and 1868, the Third Reform Act creates a uniform franchise qualification. Roughly two-thirds of adult males in England and Wales, three-fifths in Scotland and half in Ireland are granted the right to vote in parliamentary elections. This stops short of creating a true democracy for men, as many adults who are servants, members of the armed forces, and children living in their parents' houses remain disenfranchised.

1909 In the West Stanley Pit disaster, explosions from two illegal lamps kill 160 men in a coal mine, 59 of them under age 20.

1910 – 1914 During the Great Unrest, union membership increases dramatically in England, and tensions between workers and owners rise. The British government intervenes in several strikes, even going so far as to deploy the armed forces.

1911 – 1912 Britain loses a combined 41 million working days to the various strikes across the country.

February 1912 Githa Sowerby's play *Rutherford and Son* premieres at The Royal Court Theatre, London.

THE ECONOMY

ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF WORKING CLASS ENGLISH PEOPLE

While the industrial revolution drastically shifted England's economy during the 19th century and facilitated the growth of a middle class, the quality of life for working class English people did not significantly improve until the end of the century. A combination of new and more dangerous working conditions, high food prices, an increase in demand for unskilled low-wage labor, and periodic economic contractions contributed to slow improvement.

People of all genders, as well as children as young as 4 years old, have been recorded working in factories, coal mines, and other industries during this time. It was not until 1872 that the legal age of coal mining boys was raised to 12, and there is evidence that younger children continued to be illegally employed. Schooling beyond the age of 10 was not universally compulsory at this time, and education was not often accessible for the working class.

Between 1840 and 1890, the median life expectancy for middle-class Britons was lower than 50 years of age. Working-class Britons' life expectancy was half that. The turn of the 20th century would see the emergence of germ theory, and shifting attitudes about hygiene and cleanliness signaled the beginning of a dramatic rise in life expectancy and falling rates of infant mortality through to the 21st century.

Workers often had little to no redress for poor working conditions and low wages. Trade unions in England had been outlawed in 1799, partially in response to the French Revolution. Parliament incrementally lifted the ban on trade unions throughout the 19th century. Under the ban, however, one of the few ways that workers could exert pressure on mill and factory owners was through mechanical sabotage (machine-breaking). The Luddite movement is the most famous example. Between 1811 and 1812 the English government sent the British army to suppress Luddite activity in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire. Those apprehended were given a mass trial and levied severe punishments upon any conviction, including execution and penal transportation. The Frame Breaking Act of 1812 would go on to make industrial sabotage a capital crime.

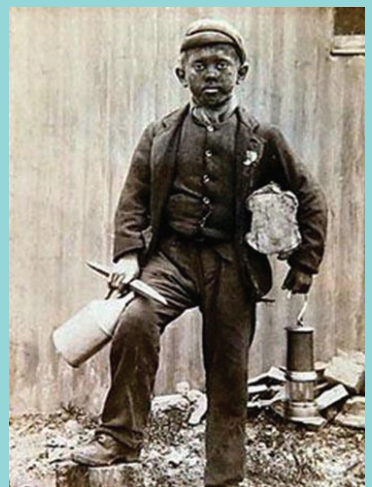
Though a century apart, these events would become part of the groundwork for the Great Unrest, a period between 1910 and 1914 that saw a dramatic rise in union membership, military intervention in worker strikes, and rising tensions between workers and owners. Between 1911 and 1912, 41 million working days were lost to strikes.

To provide a better understanding of the economic realities in *Rutherford and Son*, here are some comparisons of money amounts, adjusted for inflation to today and converted to U.S. dollars:

£1 = £113 ($145)
£10 = £1,133 ($1,453)
£100 = £11,327 ($14,532)
£1,000 = £113,275 ($145,336)

The standard working-class weekly household budget in 1904, as reported in 1922, was 22 shillings 6 pence. Before 1971, a British pound (£) was worth 20 shillings. Each shilling was worth 12 pence.

John Davies, 12 years old, at work at the Rhondda Valley coal mine, 1909.



THE INTERVIEW

A CONVERSATION WITH THE WOMEN OF *RUTHERFORD AND SON*

Pictured from left: Mechelle Moe, Jeannie Affelder, Christina Gorman, and Rochelle Therrien.

During rehearsals for *Rutherford and Son*, director Mechelle Moe (MM) and cast members Jeannie Affelder (JA), Christina Gorman (CG), and Rochelle Therrien (RT) chatted about the play and their responses to it.

(MM) Githa Sowerby—our playwright—has been kind of erased from theatrical history. *Rutherford and Son* debuted in 1912 in England during the time of the Great Unrest. And it was quite a hit at the time, produced by the Royal Court Theatre as part of its New Play Series. It was only scheduled to run for four shows and ended up running for 133 performances with an extension in New York City. Something I learned that was very fascinating to me is that the play itself was advertised by Sowerby's initials, K.G. Sowerby—and that actually wasn't her choice.

(ALL) Ohhhhh ...!

(CG) I assumed it was a pen name and that she was just trying to avoid the discrimination ...

(MM) That's what I thought as well—she was just trying to mindfully advance her work by making that choice. But in fact it was the Royal Court Theatre that made that choice—

(JA) —a man that made that choice.

(MM) Yeah! That's very much it. But that decision actually may have saved the play. Because had it gone on as her full name, it a) may not have been produced at all, and b) certainly wouldn't have been met with the praise the critics bestowed upon the play itself.

The fact that they didn't use her name was a point of contention for her. So, when it was discovered that it was a female playwright, it was the talk of the town. Scandalous—*how could a woman possibly write about the themes of this play!*—the intimate knowledge she had in order to write the scope and depth of this piece.

(CG) I read it and was completely sucked into the world of the play, and it wasn't until I got to the last scene that I thought "Who was this playwright?" I know there were a bunch of awesome male playwrights who championed women's rights but still I thought "Whoa, whoa, this is really interesting, who could have ... OH it's a woman!" It just made sense to me. I was pleasantly surprised and thought it was kind of revolutionary that she was writing at this time period.

(MM) Yes. It's a huge criticism of capitalism and industry at the time, really examining gender roles, the strikes, and everything that was happening with all these industries and unions rising up. And at a time when it wasn't fashionable to be educated. Even Githa herself didn't receive an education. She was pretty much self-taught when she moved to London. But everything else on stage at the time was from a male perspective and often female writers were really pushed out and discriminated against and not lifted up.

(JA) Good playwrights have to get inside every character in the play and work through every character's point

Director Mechelle Moe during a rehearsal.

Rochelle Therrien and Christina Gorman during a rehearsal for Rutherford and Son.

of view, and I think Githa is a really good playwright. She represents Rutherford and his desire to keep the business going, his loyalty to his ancestors, his desire to have his business continue with his children. She also writes sympathetically about the members of the family who don't care about the business, who want to throw it to the river. She writes the perspective of the people in the house looking into the town and the people in the town looking into the house, and she makes everybody a hero in their own life. Everybody stands on their own two feet, and I think that's admirable.

(CG) Githa's story is really interesting and her family story is fascinating. You can see how she draws from so much of her own life and her own family history. It's so rich with drama and heartbreak and, from what I've read of the biography *Finding Githa* by Patricia Riley, not a lot of joy. But it is a wonderful look into the idea of taking charge of one's own life. That was not done a lot back then, yet we see it with the characters in the play and in Githa's life.

(MM) She wrote this play when she was 35. The Sowerbys were a glass-making family. She very much modeled Rutherford off her grandfather and great-grandfather, and it was her father who mirrors the younger son in our play. Githa's father really rejected the glass-making industry, wanted nothing to do with the factory—he wanted to be an artist. He eventually left the company and sold most of his shares to support himself as an artist. Githa ended up taking care of their family herself, not only supporting her mother—who she didn't have a good relationship with—but also her sisters. She was always forced into roles by her father that she didn't desire herself.

(CG) I love the idea of legacy—business and personal legacy, and how we interact with our family members. It's such a complex issue to dive into because it is so multi-layered.

(RT) There's also something in the *why* behind a legacy. What is driving each character's desire for a legacy, or their desire to rid themselves of it? And the idea of *duty* in this time period—I don't think we can really wrap our heads around it in 2019—this sense of duty to family, to the family legacy that's been created for you, to your loved ones, to your spouse, to your children. It's another way for the audience to look through our play.

The stakes were just so much more extreme. When you get to see the Rutherford adult children trying to take charge of their own lives—that's a huge deal, a huge revolt against what was expected of them at that time.

(MM) This is a very compelling family drama and as with anything well-written, there's a lot of love, a lot of humor, and we've found opportunities to embrace those and lift those up. Which is one of the reasons TimeLine chose this play. There are so many issues that pop off the page. You can go to this play regardless of your background and find something you're intrigued by, because there's a little something for everyone.

This is only a portion of these artists' conversation. Check out the complete version online at timelinetheatre.com/blog.

"When you get to see the Rutherford children trying to take charge of their own lives—that's a huge revolt against what was expected of them at that time."

We're delighted to recognize one of TimeLine's Board members, Anne Voshel.

Anne is founder of AVA Consultants, an owner's representative services firm, where clients have included Ameritech, The University of Chicago, Auditorium Theatre, Art Institute of Chicago, Newberry Library, and Lincoln Park Zoo. She has served in numerous volunteer leadership roles for Landmarks Illinois and is a trustee of Fourth Presbyterian Church. An avid traveler, Anne enjoys exploring architectural gems and nature in equal measure.

Anne saw her first TimeLine production, *The History Boys*, in 2009, and was instantly hooked. "I was so struck by the way the set design made me feel immersed in the show and its emotions. I thought to myself, I've got to keep coming back." Since then, she's found plenty of TimeLine shows to enjoy: "*The Normal Heart. 33 Variations. A Walk in the Woods.* Anything with Janet Ulrich Brooks." Anne made the transition from audience member to donor after hearing Artistic Director PJ Powers make a speech during the Step Into Time gala, and her involvement with the company has continued to grow.

Anne's commercial real estate background has been a tremendous asset to TimeLine. "I joined the Board because I thought my business expertise could add value to the design and construction process as TimeLine builds its new home. Serving on the Board has been far more edifying than I could've imagined. Before this, I hadn't been exposed to the inner workings of the theatre. I feel honored and blessed to become acquainted with all the brilliant minds required to bring a performance together."

Looking ahead, Anne is particularly keen to see TimeLine move into a home of its own. "I'm looking forward to seeing how the company grows when it finally has a space where it can use all of its gifts and share them with a wider community. The relationships the company's already built with artists like *Oslo* playwright J.T. Rogers are impressive. TimeLine's leadership team is amazing and I know once they're in the new building they're going to bring even more wonderful things to Chicago."

"Before this, I hadn't been exposed to the inner workings of the theatre. I feel honored to become acquainted with all the brilliant minds required to bring a performance together."

Anne Voshel in March at TimeLine's 2019 gala Step Into Time: Peace, Love, and Music 1969.

BACKSTORY:
THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy & Historical Research by Lucas Garcia *and* Maren Robinson

Written by Lucas Garcia *and* Maren Robinson, *with contributions by* PJ Powers, Kimberly A. Montroy, *and* Lara Goetsch

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Backstory is published four times each 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.

THE TIMELINE FLEXPASS

THE BEST WAY TO SEE AND SAVE ON THE REST OF TIMELINE'S SEASON

STILL TO COME
IN TIMELINE'S 2019-20 SEASON!
EXPLORING TODAY THROUGH THE LENS OF THE PAST

TimeLine's Chicago premiere of the Tony Award-winning OSLO by J.T. Rogers, directed by Nick Bowling, 2019. Featuring (from left) Bri Sudia, Scott Parkinson, Jed Feder, and Anish Jethmalani. Photo by Brett Beiner Photography.

JAMES IJAMES

WARDELL JULIUS CLARK

CHICAGO PREMIERE

KILL MOVE PARADISE

BY JAMES IJAMES

DIRECTED BY **WARDELL JULIUS CLARK**

FEBRUARY 12 – APRIL 5, 2020

Inspired by the ever-growing list of slain unarmed black men and women, this *New York Times* Critic's Pick is a powerful, provocative reflection on recent events.

TYLA ABERCRUMBIE

RON OJ PARSON

WORLD PREMIERE

RELENTLESS

BY TYLA ABERCRUMBIE

DIRECTED BY **RON OJ PARSON**

MAY 6 – JUNE 27, 2020

Developed through TimeLine's Playwrights Collective, this startling and vibrant world premiere weaves a complicated tale of family, legacy, and progress.

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