



NTC

national theatre conference

2020 NTC Annual Meeting

December 4-6, 2020

Engines of Change

*connecting, supporting, and advocating
for america's theatres since 1925*

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT, DAVID FULLER



On behalf of the Officers and Board of Trustees, welcome to the first and hopefully last virtual annual meeting of the National Theatre Conference. When the pandemic began, we were not sure whether we should meet at all, but you, our members, overwhelmingly supported some kind of internet conclave. So your Board has met many times virtually and engaged skilled internet professionals to bring you what we believe will be an exciting, informative and fun three days. We know many, or perhaps most, of you have been glued to your computers for these past nine months, so we have strived to keep our

sessions short with plenty of breaks. We hope you will be moved to stay engaged, whether simply listening or actively participating in the conversations to follow. Some sessions are guided and some are free-form; all should leave you energized to move forward into the next year with less trepidation and more hope for the future of American Theatre.

After the post-election sighs of relief and the tears of joy for some, and the cries of anguish and tears of sorrow for others, a profound moment begins a new dawn and call for unity and collective work for the future of all of us. At the vanguard will be the Arts and the Artists. What we create, what we perform, and what we bring forth into this world is now more important than ever. Despite political differences, we have chosen the path of those who will strive to bring us together, in a vote of unprecedented numbers. There is fear on both sides, but fear is the absence of knowledge, nothing more. So, we in the Arts can help eradicate fear by helping to bring light to everyone. We are ready for a New Renaissance, a path into the future where everyone has a voice and a part to play. Let's all help lead the way. Let's build a new American Theatre that includes everyone from the ground up, the pit to the flies, backstage to front of house, box office to admin office. And, yes, Liberal and Conservative. For we have seen that the divisive rhetoric of "The Other" is a path to failure. Working together we can be Engines of Change with no limits to what we can accomplish.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Fuller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

President, National Theatre Conference

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NTC STAFF



KATIE PEDRO ASSISTANT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Katie Pedro is a Brooklyn based director/theatre maker/ collaborator. Recent work: *Models of Perfection* (Dare Tactic, Troy Foundry Theatre) *A Short Life of Trouble: A Play with Appalachian Folk Music* (Everyday Inferno) Samuel Beckett's *Play* (Troy Foundry Theatre), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Sarah Lawrence College), *The Cherry Orchard* (Dyckman Farmhouse Museum), *Love Stories My Mother Told Me* (Dixon Place). Associate Artistic Director, Troy Foundry Theatre. Director/ Dramaturg New Perspectives Women's Work Lab. BS Russell Sage College, MFA Sarah Lawrence College.
www.katiepedro.com



STARR KIRKLAND CONFERENCE STAFF/STAVIS ADMIN

Starr Kirkland is an actor and spoken word artist from California based in New York. Recent and favorite credits include *TJ loves Sally 4 Ever* (Jack), *Trapt* (Joe's Pub), *of the woman...* (Normal Ave), *HOTTENTOTTED* (The Tank), *Julius Caesar* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival), *Hephaestus* (LPAC), *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Columbia Stages), and *The Average-Sized Mermaid* (State of Play). She works with Realize Your Beauty promoting self-esteem and positive body image through theatre arts, and performs an original one-woman show promoting literacy at The Morgan Library and Museum as Belle da Costa Greene.
www.starrkirkland.com



PAULA MARCHIEL TECHNICAL MANAGER

Paula Marchiel is Managing Director of Seven Devils New Play Foundry. She was Company Manager for HBMG Foundation's National Winter Playwrights Retreat 2018. She is a long-time company member of Synaesthetic Theater, where she produced *The Empires New Clothes* on NYC's Theater Row and was Company Manager of *The Trial of K* at the Culture Project (NYC) and the International Arts Festival in Salamanca, Spain. Other past work includes TheatretworksUSA, the National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Theater Center, New York University. She graduated from of Tisch School of the Arts NYU.



ED BAKER TECHNICAL MANAGER

Ed serves the School of Performing Arts at Wichita State University by heading up the Stage Management Certificate in the Theatre Program and as the Technical Director for School Productions. He has spent the majority of his career as a professional entertainment technician in theatre, film/ television, concerts, and convention/exposition venues. Ed is an active member of the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) and the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT) as well as the Self Employment in the Arts Conference (SEA)

GOALS OF THE CONFERENCE

SERVE THE AMERICAN THEATRE. To explore the means of best serving the interests of the American Theatre, and to initiate, encourage and support projects of value and significance with a view to strengthening and broadening the influence of theatre in our country.

GATHER GREAT MINDS TOGETHER To bring the membership together at least once a year in a spirit of mutual helpfulness for the interchange of aims and ideals, and for the discussion of common problems and interests.

LEARN FROM THE BEST To provide opportunity for the membership, at its annual meeting, to hear the views of outstanding personalities in the theatre and to observe demonstrations of various techniques in order that the membership may profit thereby.

BLACK LIVES MATTER STATEMENT

On behalf of the membership of The National Theatre Conference, comprised of leading theater makers from across our nation, the NTC Board of Trustees avows and affirms that #BlackLivesMatter and that American systemic racism must end.

While we applaud the tenets of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives in our theatres and institutions of learning, we believe we must go further, not to just embrace EDI as a tangential modus operandi, but to act to bring real change to centuries old, out-moded, and dangerously lethal belief systems.

Now, in the time of COVID-19, just as in the time of the HIV/AIDS crisis, we reiterate that Silence = Death. So, we stand with those whose voices are raised throughout the country demanding that the murder of George Floyd be not just the last straw, for there have been too many "last straws," but the Final Scene.

We pledge that together we will help be the Engines of Change.

NEW MEMBERS

NTC is comprised of distinguished leaders of the American Theatre. This year, we welcome eleven new members who were nominated by their peers and approved by the board of trustees.

PATRESHETTARLINI ADAMS PADAMS@WILMATHEATER.ORG



Patreshettarlini (Pat) Adams is the Resident Stage Manager at The Wilma Theater in Philadelphia. She has been with the organization since 1996. She is also a thirty-year member of Actors' Equity. Her career encompasses work on over 100 productions, including the Crossroads Theatre Company, New Brunswick, NJ; Freedom Theatre, Philadelphia, PA; New Victory Theater, NYC; Ford's Theater, Washington, DC; The National Black Theater Festival, Winston-Salem, NC; The National Black Arts Festival, Atlanta, GA.; the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa; and, of course, The Wilma!

MATT GUTSCHICK MATTG@ROSETHEATER.ORG



Matthew Gutschick is Artistic Director of The Rose Theater in Omaha. Recent directing credits include: *Howie D: Back In The Day* (World Premiere), *Prancer* (World Premiere), *Stupid F*&^ing Bird* (Parallel 45). Writing credits include *Van Gogh & Me*, and *The Little Engine That Could*. Under Matthew's direction, The Rose developed programming for PreK audiences and expanded its commitment to outreach, tackling gang violence, teen pregnancy, and youth incarceration. In 2020, The Rose opened a new 27,000 sq. ft. education space. Graduate of the School at Steppenwolf. Member of Lincoln Center Directors Lab BA: Wake Forest University MFA: Yale School of Drama.

TONY HAGOPIAN HAGOP9@GMAIL.COM



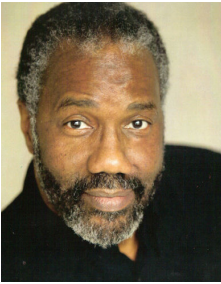
Tony Hagopian is a performer, instructor, producer, and arts administrator. As the Executive Director of the University Resident Theatre Association (URTA), he advocates for professional training of theatre artists, working closely with top theatre programs across the country. He speaks regularly with students about graduate school, professional practice, and navigating pathways to theatre careers. He has been part of the Broadway companies of *Frost/Nixon*, *Betrayal*, and *The Realistic Joneses*, performed at New York's Mint Theatre, Lucille Lortel, HERE, LaMama ETC, and Cherry Lane, The Old Globe, Cincinnati Playhouse; Pittsburgh Public; Shakespeare Theatre Co., and many others.

JANET HAYATSHAHI JHAYATSHAHI1@GMAIL.COM



Janet Hayatshahi is an actor, director, and educator. She served as Associate Artistic Director and ensemble member of San Diego's Sledgehammer Theatre and ensemble member of Chicago's Eclipse Theatre Company. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Randolph-Macon College. Directing credits include: *A Vast Hoard* (Chalk Rep), *A Man, his Wife, and his Hat* (Moxie Theatre), *9 Parts of Desire* (Mo'olelo PAC), *The Turn of the Screw* (Cygnet Theatre), directing assistant for Robert Woodruff on *Notes From Underground* (La Jolla Playhouse), and multiple productions at the university level.

RON HIMES RONH@THEBLACKREP.ORG



Ron Himes is the Founder and Producing Director of the Saint Louis Black Repertory Company and the Henry E. Hampton, Jr. Artist-in-Residence at Washington University. The Black Rep has developed a national reputation for staging quality productions from an African-American perspective. He founded the company in 1976 while still a student at Washington University, where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. He has produced and directed more than 200 plays at The Black Rep, including all ten plays written by August Wilson. Himes was appointed the first Henry E. Hampton, Jr. Artist-in-Residence at Washington University, a joint appointment of the Performing Arts Department, African and African American Studies.

RICHARD ROMAGNOLI ROMAGNOL@MIDDLEBURY.EDU



In 1986 he cofounded and remains the co- Artistic Director of the Potomac Theatre Project. For PTP/NYC, directed 35 plays, many by Howard Barker, Harold Pinter. Additional writers for PTP/NYC include Edward Albee, Gore Vidal, Vaclav Havel, Pavel Kohout, Snoo Wilson, Tariq Ali and Samuel Beckett. Directed regionally in D.C. and Boston. Developed new plays at The Young Playwrights Festival at the Public and the Shenandoah Playwrights Festival. An associate of Barker's The Wrestling School and co-founder of The Barker Project with Robert Emmet Lunney and Jan Maxwell. Professor Emeritus, Middlebury College; directed numerous productions, including four honored by the Kennedy Center and KCACTF. Ph.D. School of Theatre, Florida State University.

MARK SHANDA MARK.SHANDA@UKY.EDU



Mark Shanda is the University of Kentucky's Dean of the College of Fine Arts. He is the former Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities at The Ohio State University where he was a faculty member in the Department of Theatre for 31 years, including 5 years as Chair. Co-author of two widely used theatre technology textbooks, Shanda served as President of the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT). He has been technical director for over 200 productions and holds a BA in Political Science from Iowa State University and an MFA in Technical Production from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

JOANNA SHERMAN JOANNA@BONDST.ORG



Joanna Sherman, Artistic Director, Bond Street Theatre, has been directing theatre projects for social improvement globally since 1984. The company works primarily in post-war and disadvantaged communities, collaborating with local artists, and applying the arts in the peacebuilding process, with a focus on refugees, women, and marginalized populations. She received the 2014 Lee Reynolds Award, the 2015 Otto Award for Political Theatre, and the 2018 Public Service Award from Cooper Union. Ms. Sherman has a BFA from Cooper Union, and an MA in Theatre & International Studies from New York University.

MARK CLAYTON SOUTHERS AUSTINSILLS@COMCAST.NET

Mark Clayton Southers and his family reside in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. He is an award winning playwright, stage director, scenic designer, photographer and theatrical producer. He is the founder and producing artistic director of the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company where he has produced well over 150 full length and one act plays since 2003 including August Wilson's complete 10 play Pittsburgh Century Cycle. As a playwright he has penned more than seventeen full-length and one-act plays that have been produced locally, nationally and internationally. As a stage director his favorite directing credits include *Paul Robeson* for the Griot Ensemble Theatre Company; *Pill Hill* for New Horizon Theatre; *Dutchman* for Bricolage Theater Company; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *The Piano Lesson* for American Stage Theatre, *Gem of the Ocean* for Human Race Theatre; *Passing Strange* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* for Short North Stage Theatre; *PaPa Doc* and *Robeson* for Trilogy Opera Company, and *Dorothy Six*, *Seven Guitars*, *VALU-MART*, *Jitney* and *Fences* for The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. *A Gathering of Sons* for Pittsburgh Festival Opera and *The Battle of Homestead* for the BOH Foundation.

JON D. YOUNG JON.YOUNG-1@OU.EDU

Jon Young is a Full Professor of Scenic Design at the University of Oklahoma and a member of USA 829. Young was a recipient of the 2016 Rothbaum Presidential Professor of Excellence in the Arts from the University of Oklahoma and 2015 recipient of the Gold Medallion from the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Young has designed for Houston Shakespeare Festival, Stages Repertory Theatre, Creede Repertory Theatre, Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, Black Hills Playhouse, Unicorn Theatre Late Night Theatre and Coterie Theatre and over 30 productions at the University of Oklahoma. His designs for *Stupid F##king Bird*, *Sunday in the Park with George* and *The Odyssey* were published in TD & T. Designs.TD & T. You can follow his work on his work on the following social media sites: <https://www.youngscenicstudio.com> and @youngscenicstudio

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

- 12:30 PM **OPEN HOUSE**
Grab a cup of coffee and join for some casual conversation
A breakout room will be provided for those needing instructions, or even just a refresh, of ZOOM features and functions
- 1:00 PM **PRESIDENT'S WELCOME & NEW MEMBER RANTS**
Welcome: David Fuller
New Member Rants: moderated by Randy Reinholz
Followed by Q&A with New Members
- 2:15 PM BREAK
- 2:30 PM **STAVIS PLAYWRIGHT AWARD SESSION**
Stavis Chair Jean Bruce Scott presents the award to Erika Dickerson-Despenza
- 2:45 PM A Reading from Erika Dickerson-Despenza's Stavis winning play *cullud wattah* directed by Candis C. Jones
- 3:15 PM A Conversation between Erika Dickerson-Despenza and Candis C. Jones
- 3:30 PM BREAK
- 3:45 PM **SOCIAL JUSTICE: RACISM, ANTI-RACISM & THE AMERICAN THEATRE**
Utilizing Erika Dickerson-Despenza's *cullud wattah* as a jumping off point, this interactive session focuses on Social Justice: Racism, Anti-Racism and America's Theatre
- 4:45 PM BREAK
- 5:00 PM **PRESIDENT'S VIRTUAL RECEPTION**
BYO Cocktail, Mocktail, Coffee, or Cannabis (some states, anyway) for fun conversations in ZOOM break out rooms.

Suggested rooms (list not final): False Idol Hidden Tikki Bar (San Diego), Cheers (Boston), Manifesto Speakeasy (Kansas City), Vogue Bistro (Surprise, AZ), Chumley's (NYC), Ganja Gourmet (Denver)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

- 1:00 PM **OUTSTANDING THEATRE AWARD SESSION:
CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATRE**
OTA Chair David Feldshuh presents the Outstanding Theatre Award to Raymond Bobgan, Executive Artistic Director of Cleveland Public Theatre
- 1:15 PM CPT nominator Laurie McCants moderates a conversation and Q & A with Raymond Bobgan
- 2:00 PM **EMERGING PROFESSIONAL AWARD:
REGINALD L. DOUGLAS**
Raymond Bobgan presents the Emerging Professional Award
- 2:15 PM BREAK
- 2:30 PM **PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD SESSION:
TAYLOR MAC**
President David Fuller presents the Person of the Year Award
- 2:45 PM **PAUL GREEN AWARD:
GRAHAM KG GARLINGTON**
Taylor Mac presents the Paul Green Award
- 3:00 PM President David Fuller moderates a conversation, followed by a Q & A, with Taylor Mac
- 4:00 PM BREAK
- 4:30 PM **A SPACE TO TALK**
This networking session offers the opportunity to connect with friends, and ask for or offer advice. This session is divided into three parts, the Pitch Room, the Mentor Room and the Room Where it Happens
- 4:30 PM **THE PITCH ROOM**
A place to make, or listen to, pitches for collaboration, employment, co-production and all manner of theatrical adventure. Those interested in giving a pitch will be assigned a 2-minute slot. All participants asked to commit to being present for the full half-hour session. Conversations will be able to continue in breakout rooms in THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS.

5:00 PM

THE MENTOR ROOM

Senior NTC members (solicited in advance) will answer questions, offer advice and share their wisdom. Conversations will be able to continue in breakout rooms in THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS.

5:30 PM

THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS

Recognizing the need for more relaxed open-ended social conversation, we encourage members to use this time to continue connecting with each other. NTC's ZOOM platform will be open and available for those who want to connect using ZOOM breakout rooms. Members are also encouraged to connect with each other using their own favorite platform for communication whether it be through ZOOM, Face Time, SnapChat, WhatsApp, your cell phone or a good ol' land line.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH

12:00 PM

NTC BUSINESS MEETING

Treasurer's Report
Committee Reports
Vote on New Trustees and Officers
President's Report

12:30 PM

ENGINES OF CHANGE: COPING, CREATING AND SUCCEEDING IN A NEW AMERICAN THEATRE

This session will be a proactive, optimistic and aspirational discussion of Leadership, Programming, Hiring, Producing and Play Development that will fuel, as the NY Times wrote, "The Birth of a New American Theatre.

- What are we doing, and what can we do, as the paradigm has shifted politically, socially and culturally to a future framed by COVID-19 and the coalitions built out of protests against violence towards BIPOC humanity?
- How can we aim for a future that doesn't simply give out bigger slices of the pie, but actually creates a whole new, joyful pastry?

2:00 PM

BREAK

2:30 PM

TIME TO CONNECT: THANK YOU'S & GOODBYES

An opportunity for members to gather, re-connect, give thanks and bid each other adieu, until we meet again.

OUTSTANDING THEATRE AWARD: CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATRE

Established in 1996, the Outstanding Theatre Award recognizes outstanding achievement by a not-for-profit theatre.



Cleveland Public Theatre's mission is to raise consciousness and nurture compassion through groundbreaking performances and life-changing education programs. CPT develops new, adventurous work; and nurtures Northeastern Ohio artists—particularly those whose work is inventive, intelligent, and socially conscious.

CPT's acclaimed education programs engage communities in devising new works that speak to contemporary issues, and empower participants to work for positive change in our community. www.cptonline.org



Left: Cleveland Public Theatre's *Cleveland Act* Now performing at Station Hope 2016. Photo by Steve Wagner.

Right: Cleveland Public Theatre's *Breakout Session* (or *Froggorse*) by Nikkole Salter (2020). From left: Jess Moore, Nicole Sumlin*, Enrique Miguel, Tina D. Stump*. *Actor appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association Photo by Steve Wagner.



2020 Outstanding Theatre Award Committee: David Feldshuh (Chair), Vivienne Benesch, Kirsten Brandt, Deborah Brevoort, Mindi Dickstein, Courtney Sale

EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: RAYMOND BOBGAN

Raymond Bobgan creates new performances that are bold, multilayered, and highly physical through an ever-evolving ensemble process. Raymond's work has been seen in Romania, Brazil, Denmark, Serbia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Canada, and has been featured in American Theatre magazine, Canadian Theatre Review, Theatre Journal, and in Lisa Wolford's book *Grotowski's Objective Drama Research*. Raymond has created many works for CPT including: *Feefer Rising*, with Faye Hargate; *Rusted Heart Broadcast*; *Insomnia: The Waking of Herselves*, with Holly Holsinger and Chris Seibert; *Cut to Pieces*, with Chris Seibert; and *Blue Sky Transmission: A Tibetan Book of the Dead*, co-produced by CPT and La MaMa ETC (Off-Broadway).



Raymond founded the Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP), a job-training theatre program for teens, and co-created the Y-Haven Theatre Project with James Levin which engages formerly homeless men in writing and performing theatre, and initiated Station Hope, a community arts festival exploring contemporary issues of social justice. With Faye Hargate, Raymond initiated Teatro Público de Cleveland, CPT's resident Latino theatre company, and Masrah Cleveland Al-Arabi مسرح الدنالفيلك حرسم, a group dedicated to creating and performing theatre from Arabic-speaking communities. Raymond's professional troupe, Cleveland CORE Ensemble, recently toured *Red Ash Mosaic*, a surreal journey through projection to purpose. They are currently working on a new project, *Candlelight Hypothesis #1-12*.

Raymond was the first recipient of the Cleveland Arts Prize in the discipline of Theatre. He is a two-time winner of the Creative Workforce Fellowship and a recipient of the Ohio Arts Council Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG)'s Early Career Development Program for Directors, and of the National Theatre Artist Residency Program (Pew Charitable Trust and TCG). Raymond also received the Cisgender Ally Award at Cleveland's Transgender Day of Remembrance and Equality Ohio's Ally Award. In 2018, he was honored with the Cleveland Foundation's Homer C. Wadsworth Award and in 2017, his administrative leadership was recognized with The Governor's Award for the Arts in Ohio.

He was the President of the Board of Directors for the National New Play Network from 2018-2020, and currently serves on the Executive Committee; serves on the Theatre Communications Group Board of Directors; and is the Chair of the Board of the Gordon Square Arts District Cleveland Improvement Corporation. This is Raymond Bobgan's 15th season in the leadership position at Cleveland Public Theatre.

EMERGING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

REGINALD L. DOUGLAS

Presented to persons demonstrating exemplary promise in a professional organization. The winner is selected by the leadership of NTC's Outstanding Theatre.



Reginald L. Douglas is a director, producer, and advocate dedicated to creating new work and supporting new voices, and the Associate Artistic Director at Studio Theatre in Washington, DC. His passion and acumen for both new play development and re-investigating the classics have led him to theaters across the country, including directing work at Eugene O'Neill Center, TheaterWorks Hartford, Contemporary American Theatre Festival, Everyman Theatre, Weston Playhouse, Pittsburgh CLO, Theatre Squared, Playwrights Center, Profile Theater, NNPN/Kennedy Center, NNPN Showcase at B Street Theatre, McCarter, Florida Rep, Luna Stage, Harlem Stage, Wild Project, Signature Center, Drama League, The Lark, New York Theatre Workshop, where he was a 2050 Directing Fellow, and City Theatre Company, where he served as the Artistic Producer from 2015-2020. He has developed and directed plays and musicals by Dominique Morisseau, Cori Thomas, Angelica Chéri, Nikkole Salter, Kemp Powers, Jen Silverman, Ngozi Anyanwu, Matt Schatz, Amy Evans, Zakiyyah Alexander & Imani Uzuri, Brian Quijada, Dave Harris, Chisa Hutchinson, Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm, Josh Wilder, Harrison David Rivers, Korde Arrington Tuttle, a.k. payne, Craig "muMs" Grant, Jessica Dickey, Laura Brienza, Kevin R. Free, Micah Ariel Watson, and several others. Reginald currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the National New Play Network; regularly serves on the selection committees for local and national fellowships and grants; has spoken at several national conferences and festivals; and is a guest lecturer at the O'Neill's National Theatre Institute. Reginald is a proud graduate of Georgetown University and member of SDC.

Upcoming: An audio version of *Mlima's Tale* by Lynn Nottage (Profile Theatre); developmental workshops of *Somewhere Over the Border* by Brian Quijada (Arizona Theatre Company) and *ALAIYO* by Micah Areil Watson (NNPN/Kennedy Center); the short film *Rita* by Josh Wilder (Weston Playhouse One Room series); and an episode of the new media series *The Gaze...No Homo* by Larry Powell.

BARRIE AND BERNICE STAVIS PLAYWRIGHT AWARD

ERIKA DICKERSON-DESPENZA

Recognizing an outstanding emerging playwright, the Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwright Award was established in 1988 to honor the work of playwright Barrie Stavis. Each year, NTC sends out a call to artistic directors and literary managers & play development organizations across the country inviting submissions.

CULLUD WATTAH

It's been 936 days since Flint has had clean water. Marion, a third generation General Motors employee, is consumed by layoffs at the engine plant. When her sister, Ainee, seeks justice & restitution for lead poisoning, her plan reveals the toxic entanglements between the city & its most powerful industry, forcing their family to confront the past-present-future cost of survival. As lead seeps into their home & their bodies, corrosive memories & secrets rise among them. Will this family ever be able to filter out the truth?

Nominated by: **The Lark**

2020 Stavis Award Committee: *Jean Bruce Scott (Chair), Risa Brainin, Kirsten Brandt, Elizabeth Van Dyke, Nicole A. Watson.*

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: ERIKA DICKERSON-DESPENZA



Erika Dickerson-Despenza is a Blk, queer feminist poet-playwright and cultural-memory worker from Chicago. She is a 2020 Grist 50 Fixer and was a National Arts & Culture Delegate for the U.S. Water Alliance's One Water Summit 2019. Awards: Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award (2020), Thom Thomas Award (2020), Lilly Award (2020), Princess Grace Playwriting Award (2019). Tow Playwright-in-Residence at The Public Theater (2019-2020), New York Stage and Film Fellow-in-Residence (2019), New Harmony Project Writer-in Residence (2019), Dramatists Guild

Foundation Fellow (2018-2019), The Lark Van Lier New Voices Fellow (2018). BYP100 Squad Member, Ars Nova Play Group (2019-2021), Youngblood Collective (EST). Commissions: The Public Theater, Studio Theatre & Williamstown Theatre Festival. Productions: *cullud wattah* (2019 Kilroys List) originally slated at The Public Theater, 2020; Victory Gardens Theater, 2021. Erika is developing a 10-play Katrina Cycle, including *shadow/land* and *[hieroglyph]* (2019 Kilroys List), focused on the effects of Hurricane Katrina and its state-sanctioned, man-made disaster rippling in & beyond New Orleans. *cullud wattah* was developed during the Lark Play Development Center's 2018 Van Lier New Voices Fellowship tenure (John Clinton Eisner, Artistic Director) & received its first staged reading in October 2018 at Jackalope Theatre in Chicago (Gus Menary, Artistic Director; Nora Leahy, Managing Director). *cullud wattah* received a Public Studio workshop production in March, 2019 at The Public, where it was slated to have its world premiere in July 2020 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director). The regional premiere of *cullud wattah* is scheduled for April 2021 at Victory Gardens Theater.

READING EXCERPT: CULLUD WATTAH



CANDIS C. JONES (DIRECTOR)

Candis C. Jones is a director and rising artistic leader. Select credits include: *Nike* (A.C.T.-New Strands Festival), *Visions From Eartha* (Williamstown Theatre Residency), *Eradication* (Rattlestick-F*cking Good Plays Fest.), *Gloria* (American Academy of Dramatic Arts), *Cullud Wattah* (The Lark), *Awakened* (NYU Grad Musical Theatre), *The Fire This Time Fest* (Kraine Theater), *Name Calling* (The Kennedy Center-Page to Stage), *Brother Rabbit* (New Black Fest), *Colony* (The Movement/NYU Festival of Voices), *48hrs in Harlem* (Harlem 9, NBT), *The Homecoming Queen* workshop (New Harmony Project), *New Shoes* (Drama League Directorfest), *Morning in America* (Primary Stages), *Black Girl Magic* (National Black Theatre), *TEMBO!* (Zanzibar International Film Fest). Assistant Director: *Oedipus El Rey* (The Public Theater), *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (NY City Center), *The Death of the Last Black Man* (Signature Theatre). Awards and Fellowships: NY Women's Foundation Lilly Award, Drama League Alum, Women's Project Theater 2018-2020. Candis currently serves as the Playwrights Lab Manager at New Dramatists in NYC. www.candiscjones.com



STORI AYERS (MARION)

Stori Ayers is a New York--based actress, director and producer from Washington, DC. She has a passion for stories that challenge social norms, create conversations in the community, and ignite within her generation a spirit of activism. Stori is an original cast member/producer of Dominique Morisseau's *Blood at the Root*. Stori played Regina on the TBS hit series *The Last O.G.* Other credits include: *The Christians* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Gem of the Ocean* (Round House Theatre); *Travisville* (Ensemble Studio Theatre); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Indiana Repertory Theatre, Syracuse Stage); *Detroit '67* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Jitney* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park); *Yellowman* (Anacostia Playhouse)



STARR KIRKLAND (STAGE DIRECTIONS/US)

Starr Kirkland is an actor and spoken word artist from California based in New York. Recent and favorite credits include *TJ loves Sally 4 Ever* (Jack), *Trapt* (Joe's Pub), *of the woman...* (Normal Ave), *HOTTENTOTTED* (The Tank), *Julius Caesar* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival), *Hephaestus* (LPAC), *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (Columbia Stages), and *The Average-Sized Mermaid* (State of Play). She works with Realize Your Beauty promoting self-esteem and positive body image through theatre arts, and performs an original one-woman show promoting literacy at The Morgan Library and Museum as Belle da Costa Greene. Thanks, Loves! www.starrkirkland.com



LIZAN MITCHELL (BIG MA)

Lizan Mitchell has performed on Broadway in *Electra*, *Having Our Say*, *So Long on Lonely Street*; Off Broadway in *Passage*, *The First Noel*, *brownsville song*, *Cell*, *Rosmersholm*, *Passage*, *Gum*, *Ma Rose*, *Salt*; in Regional Theater in *Skeleton Crew*, *Richard III*, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actress), *The Tempest*, *The House That Will Not Stand*, *Dead and Breathing* (UK premiere), *The Trip to Bountiful*; on Film and Television in *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *Detroit*, *Deadbeat*, *John Adams*, *The Good Wife*, *Law&Order*, *The Human Stain*, *Sesame Street*, *The Wire*.



ANDREA PATTERSON (AINEE)

Andrea...self described as a human/woman/artist who's recently fought a hard battle to see herself for herself. To fill Ainee's shoes meant filling her own shoes with her own feet. Andrea has done an array of theatre in NYC and regionally as well as television. Current day she is first herself, then a human trying to be. Ainee gave Andrea the perfect opportunity to try and be honest. This journey ironically years in the making yet at the beginning. From Detroit soil with roots grown in Highland Park. Andrea joins this cast with a full heart possessing the gift of Love and Gratitude.



ALICIA PILGRIM (PLUM)

Alicia Pilgrim was born and raised in Washington, DC. This past May, she earned her BFA at SUNY Purchase. Before attending SUNY Purchase. Alicia attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts for Theatre. At Ellington, she was able to learn the moral obligations of being an actor. Alicia would love to thank her ancestors, family, and friends for their endless love and support.



RENIKA WILLIAMS (REESEE)

Renika Williams is a New York based actor originally from Dayton, Ohio. She recently made her Off- Broadway Debut in *All the Natalie Portmans* by C.A. Johnson at MCC Theater. Off Broadway: *The Climb* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *Sweet* (National Black Theatre) Select Regional Theatre: The World Premiere of Dominique Morisseau's *Mud Row* (People's Light Theatre), *Pipeline* (Actor's Theatre of Louisville & Indiana Repertory Theatre), Toni Morrison's *The Blues Eye* (Arden Theatre Company), *Antigone* (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), & *A Raisin in the Sun* (Cincinnati Shakespeare Company). Her television debut will be on the series *Intrusion* in 2021 on all streaming platforms. BFA in Acting from Wright State University www.renikawilliams1.com Matthews 5:14.

PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD TAYLOR MAC

Awarded annually to an individual who has made an outstanding and noteworthy contribution to the theatre.

Taylor Mac (who uses “judy”—lowercase—as a gender pronoun) is a playwright, actor, singer-songwriter, performance artist, director and producer. Mac’s many works have garnered judy a MacArthur Fellow, a Tony Award nomination, a Pulitzer Prize Finalist citation, the Kennedy Prize, a NY Drama Critics Circle Award, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Guggenheim, the Herb Alpert in Theater, The Booth Award, the Peter Zeisler Memorial Award, the Helen Merrill Playwriting Award, two Bessies, two Obies, two Helpmann’s, and an Ethyl Eichelberger Award. An alumnus of New Dramatists, judy is currently the resident playwright at the Here Arts Center where this past spring Mac co-originated *The Trickle Up NYC*, a subscription series created to give \$10,000 commissions to artists affected by COVID-19 cancellations.



Mac is the only American to receive the International Ibsen Award, considered the Nobel Prize for Theatre, presented biennially to an individual or company that has brought new artistic dimensions to the world of drama or theatre. That award ceremony, a digital celebration, will kick off a special live-streamed event entitled *Taylor Mac’s Holiday Sauce...Pandemic!* on Dec. 12 at 8pm EST.

Right: *A 24-Decade History of Popular Music* is a 24-hour long performance art concert. Its creation began in 2010 and it was performed in 2016 at St. Ann’s Warehouse and subsequently in four 6-hour chapters. It won The Kennedy Prize, an Obie, two Bessies, a Drama Critics Circle Award, and was a Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.



PAUL GREEN AWARD

GRAHAM KG GARLINGTON

Presented each year to a promising new talent in the professional theatre, and chosen by the winner of the Person of the Year Award.



Graham KG Garlington is a trans non-binary singer-songwriter, activist, experimental musical theatre composer, and drag artist. He's been assistant directing off-Broadway and performing (*Till*, NYMF, 2019; *Only Human*, 2019; *Chance in America's Favorite All-Boy Band*, The Tank, 2018; *Countee in the Crocus Eaters*, Trans Lab, 2018; *Kitt in Beasts of Warren*, The Syndicate & Scottish Rite Theatre, 2018 & 2020) since graduating Sarah Lawrence College in 2018.

They are currently working on their third musical while working and performing with Reverend Billy and the Stop Shopping Choir. They look forward to a future where the police are abolished and the capitalist white supremacist state falls in favor of BIPOC queer/trans liberation.

ABOUT THE PAUL GREEN AWARD

Paul Eliot Green, March 17, 1894 – May 4, 1981

The Paul Green Award recognizes and encourages excellence in new professional theatre talent and is presented to a young theatre artist selected by the National Theatre Conference's Person of the Year. It has been given since 1988.

This award is named for Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paul Green, who served as the National Theatre Conference President in 1941 and '42 and served on the Executive Committee in 1944 and '45. Paul Green was on the drama faculty at the University of North Carolina, one of the 1925 original theatre department organizers of what was to become the National Theatre Conference. Paul Green was a remarkable man: Dramatist Laureate of North Carolina, humanist, Hollywood screenwriter, essayist, professor of philosophy and drama at the University of North Carolina, novelist, poet, singer and writer of songs, human rights activist and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright for the Broadway production, *In Abraham's Bosom*. Green is considered the "father of symphonic outdoor drama" with his production in 1937 of *The Lost Colony*. He went on to write 16 more outdoor dramas and in 1963 he founded the Institute of Outdoor Drama to support historical dramas across the country. Now named the Institute of Outdoor Theatre, it works with all types of outdoor theatre in the United States and in countries throughout the world.

In 1981, Paul Green died at age 87 leaving a legacy of literary works and good works that touch the lives of many thousands of people. In 1982 the Foundation was formed to carry on his work, and each year the Trustees award grants in the areas of the arts and human rights.

OUTSTANDING THEATRE AND EMERGING PROFESSIONAL AWARD HISTORY

Year	Outstanding Theatre	Emerging Professional
2019	The New Georges	Deadria Harrington
2018	National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene	Raquel Nobile
2017	The Acting Company, NY	Kelley Curran
2016	Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, PA	Rebecca Remaly
2015	Illusion Theater, MN	Isabel Nelson, Diogo Lopes
2014	Yale Repertory Theatre, CT	Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
2013	Oregon Shakespeare Festival, OR	Ed Sylvanus Iskandar
2012	New Federal Theatre, NY	Eric Lockley
2011	Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, OH	Terah Herman
2010	Playwrights Horizons, NY	No Award
2009	The Living Theatre, NY	No Award
2008	El Teatro Campesino, CA	Kinan Valdez
2007	The Creede Repertory Theatre, CO	Jeff Carey
2006	The Public Theatre, NY	Andi Stover
2005	The Dell'Arte Company, CA	Keight Gleason, Tyler Olsen
2004	The Black Rep, MO	Xosha Roquemore
2003	Signature Theatre, NY	Sarah K. Bartlo
2002	American Repertory Theatre, MA	Ryan McKittrick
2001	The Goodman Theatre, IL	Jay Paul Skelton
2000	The Children's Theatre Company, MN	Andrew D. Madsen
1999	South Coast Repertory, CA	Terrance Winston
1998	Roundabout Theatre, NY	Mary Grace Landiver
1997	Old Globe Theatre, CA	Brendon Fox
1996	Steppenwolf Theatre, IL	Ian Barford

BARRIE AND BERNICE STAVIS PLAYWRIGHT AWARD HISTORY

Year	Playwright	Title of Play
2019	Donnetta Lavinia Grays	<i>Last Night and the Night Before</i>
2018	Jessica Huang	<i>The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin</i>
2017	Nathan Alan Davis	<i>Nat Turner in Jerusaem</i>
2016	Mia Chung	<i>You For Me For You</i>
2015	Jessica Dickey	<i>The Guard</i>
2014	Jeff Augustin	<i>Cry the Old Kingdom</i>
2013	Jackie Sibblies Drury	<i>We Are Proud to Present...</i>
2012	Dominique Morisseau	<i>Detroit '67</i>
2011	Danai Gurira	<i>The Convert</i>
2010	Peter Sinn Nachtrieb	<i>Bob: A Life in Five Acts</i>
2009	Aditi Brennan Kapil	<i>Love Person</i>
2008	David Davalos	<i>Wittenberg</i>
2007	Kate Fodor	<i>100 Saints You Should Know</i>
2006	Colin McKenna	<i>The Secret Agent of Trees</i>
2005	Julia Cho	<i>Durango</i>
2004	Brian Dykstra	<i>Hiding Behind Comets</i>
2003	Carson Sarah Kreitzer	<i>The Lovesong of J. Robert Oppenheimer</i>
2002	Eric Coble	<i>Bright Ideas</i>
2001	Naomi Iizuka	<i>36 Views</i>
2000	Thomas Gibbons	<i>Bee-Luther-Hatchee</i>
1999	Nilo Cruz	<i>Two Sisters and a Piano</i>
1998	Richard Helleeson	
1997	Keith Glover	
1996	Dennis Covington	
1995	Eduardo Machado	
1994	Theresa Rebeck	
1993	Edwin Sanchez	
1992	Octavio Solis	
1991	Erin Cressida Wilson	
1990	Anthony Clarvoe	
1989	Ezra Goldstein	

PERSON OF THE YEAR AND PAUL GREEN AWARD RECIPIENTS

2019	Robert O'Hara	Jeremy O. Harris
2018	Sarah Ruhl	Tori Sampson
2017	Molly Smith	June Schreiner
2016	George Takei	Elena Wang
2015	Polly Carl	Mary Kathryn Nagle
2014	Wendall K. Harrington	Amelia Roper
2013	Lynn Nottage	Chisa Hutchinson
2012	Elizabeth McCann	Micheline Auger
2011	Emily Mann	May Andrales
2010	August Wilson	Jade King Carroll
2009	Tony Kushner	Marsha Stephanie Blake
2008	Lois Smith	Darci Picoult
2007	Jack O'Brien	Benjamin Endsley Klein
2006	Suzan-Lori Parks	Bonnie Metzgar
2005	Michael Kahn	David Muse
2004	Lanford Wilson	Steven Drukman
2003	John Guare	Christopher Shinn
2002	Estelle Parsons	Gioia Marchese
2001	Marian Seldes	Kathleen Early
2000	William Ivey Long	Kate Levering
1999	Sir Peter Hall	Hamish Linklater
1998	Jerry Bock	Deborah Brevoort
1997	Edward Albee	Kevin Cunningham
1996	Zoe Caldwell & Robert Whitehead	Laura Hembree
1995	Terrence McNally	Tim Sheridan
1994	Anna Deavere Smith	Shay Youngblood
1993	George Wolfe	Suzan-Lori Parks
1992	Lynne Meadow	Mark Brokaw
1991	Norris Houghton	Annie Brockway
1990	Wendy Wasserstein	Peter Parnell
1989	Colleen Dewhurst	Tracy Copeland, Garrett Dillhunst
1988	Robert Wilson	Jennifer Rohm
1987	Greg Mosher	Clark Gregg

PERSON OF THE YEAR 1967 - 1986

1986	Martha Coigney	1977	Danny Newman
1985	Ming Cho Lee	1976	John Houseman
1984	Jon Jory	1974	Paul Green
1983	Adrian Hall	1973	Ruth Mayleas
1982	Peter Zeisler	1972	Tennessee Williams
1981	Ellen Stewart	1971	Zelda Fichandler
1980	Lloyd Richards	1970	Roger L. Stevens
1979	Douglas Turner Ward	1969	Joseph Papp
1978	Gordon Davidson	1968	Rosamond Glider

NTC HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- 1925: A group of leaders from top university programs call for a series of conferences that led to the founding of the National Theatre Conference (NTC).
- 1931: At a conference at Northwestern University, the NTC is organized and adopts its name.
- 1936: NTC membership is limited to 25 distinguished leaders.
- 1939: NTC membership is increased to 50 distinguished leaders.
- 1941-'45: NTC receives a five-year grant from the Rockefeller Foundation and initiates the War Bond Project, producing shows at community theatres nation wide. The purchase of a War Bond was the price of admission. After the war, NTC presents shows at army hospitals and conducts a program for veterans.
- 1946 -'51: In recognition of NTC's efforts, the Rockefeller Foundation presents NTC with another, long term grant of \$155,000.
- 1947: NTC initiates several large projects: The New York Tryout Studio, where young actors who were unemployed during the war were given the opportunity to present productions to agents; the successful NTC Touring Company (eventually the Brown County Playhouse of Indiana); The overseeing of six regional theatre conferences throughout the U.S.
- 1961: NTC's Appraisal Project studies significant alterations to the American theatre since the end of WWII.
- 1967: Person of the Year Award is established.
- 1975: The now annual NYC meeting relocates to The Players.
- 1987: The Paul Green Award is created.
- 1988: Membership is increased to 120 distinguished leaders.
- 1989: The Barrie and Bernice Stavis Award is created to honor an emerging playwright.
- 1996: The Outstanding Theatre Award and the Emerging Professional Award (Formally NTC Scholarship Award) are created.
- 2010: The Women Playwrights Initiative is launched. Membership is increased to 150 distinguished members.
- 2013: Phase 1 of the Women Playwrights Initiative is completed.
- 2015: Phase 2 of the Women Playwrights Initiative is completed.