

# Blackboard Plays and PAAL

In partnership with...

Bishop Arts  
Theatre Center

Detroit  
Public Theater

Oregon  
Shakespeare Festival

Repertory Theatre  
of St. Louis

present...



May 20 - June 14, 2021

Streaming on [bmpfest.veeps.com](https://bmpfest.veeps.com)

# JUSTIN'S SIDE

BY EUREKA LEWIS

**May 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>**

*A typical day at Roman Middle School takes a drastic turn, when an incident amongst classmates warrants a parent/principal meeting.*

featuring



Alvin  
Christmas



Troi  
Coleman



Ezra  
Knight\*

directed by



Ellen  
Valencia

Production Stage Manager: **Alexis McKay**





# WHAT IF...?

by Cynthia Grace Robinson

**May 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>**

*A young woman's need to fight for justice unleashes her mother's fears for her child's life.*

featuring



Morgan  
Calhoun



Tonya  
Pinkins<sup>tm\*</sup>

directed by



Mary E.  
Hodges

Production Stage Manager: **Kristina Jackson**

# THIRTY

by Melda Beaty

June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>

*Thirty is an explosive look at a family generation of Black women caregivers grappling with family secrets.*

featuring



Pat  
Bowie\*



LaKeisha  
Randle



Nikkole  
Salter\*



Dee  
Selmore\*

directed by



Dawn  
Monique Williams

Production Stage Manager: **Alexis McKay**







# *The Break*

*by Julie Taiwo Oni*

**June 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Jade, a single early-twenties Black boy-mom and influencer, challenges herself to a day sans social media.*

featuring



Camille  
Thomas

directed by



Anita  
Dashiell-Sparks

Production Stage Manager: **Kristina Jackson**



# TALKBACK SCHEDULE

## Justin's Side

Monday, May 24, 2021

4:30pm PDT / 6:30pm CST / 7:30pm EST

Register Here: [bit.ly/bmptalkback1](https://bit.ly/bmptalkback1)

## What IF...?

Thursday, May 27, 2021

5:30pm PDT / 7:30pm CST / 8:30pm EST

Register Here: [bit.ly/bmptalkback2](https://bit.ly/bmptalkback2)

## Thirty

Monday, June 7, 2021

4:30pm PDT / 6:30pm CST / 7:30pm EST

Register Here: [bit.ly/bmptalkback3](https://bit.ly/bmptalkback3)

## The Break

Monday, June 14, 2021

4:30pm PDT / 6:30pm CST / 7:30pm EST

Register Here: [bit.ly/bmptalkback4](https://bit.ly/bmptalkback4)





# COMPANY

\* denotes Actor appearing courtesy of Actors Equity Association.



\* **PAT BOWIE** Credit: TV – *That Damn Che*; *Ray Donovan*; *Search Party*; *New Amsterdam*; AT&T. THEATER – *On Golden Pond*; *Trip to Bountiful* (Cicelys' understudy) Broadway; And many many more. I'm still a work in process! <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0101160/>



**MORGAN CALHOUN** has appeared in over thirty film, television and commercial projects. You may have seen her in *So Undercover*, the CW's *Walker* or in Bishop Arts Theatre's audio drama *Before You Get Married*. Morgan studied Radio Television & Film at The University of Texas at Austin, graduating with a Bachelor of Science. She is passionate about authentic storytelling and recently wrote, produced and starred in her first film 'Broken Pieces.' To follow Morgan's journey visit [www.morganscalhoun.com](http://www.morganscalhoun.com).



**ALVIN CHRISTMAS** is excited to once again be working with the wonderful Eureka Lewis and company to help bring *Justin's Side* to life. A current student of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting, Alvin began his acting career in Starkville, Mississippi after receiving a degree in Theatre from Mississippi State University. A Mississippi native, he had the fortuitous opportunity to move to New York to continue his acting training and build upon his craft with the talented people this city harbors. Alvin would like to thank the BMP festival and Eureka Lewis for allowing him this opportunity. He would also like to thank his beautiful fellow cast and crew members and his fiancée, Caroline, for her love and patience. Let's break a leg!



**TROI COLEMAN**, Texas-native, found her love of acting in the 6th grade drama club. She began her acting career in the theatre performing in numerous productions such as her role as the Shaniqua, the step sister in the African adaptation of *Cinderella* at the Ensemble theatre and her role as Truvy in *Steel Magnolias* at another local community theatre. She went on to train at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Los Angeles, California, studying acting for film. Then, went on to be cast in feature films and webseries such as *The Saga Continues* and *Big Joe and the Fam*. As an educator, she spreads the love of performing through theatre to generations to come as she continues to pursue her career in television and film.

# COMPANY (cont'd)

\* denotes Actor appearing courtesy of Actors Equity Association.



\* **EZRA KNIGHT** is an accomplished actor of stage film tv. he was seen most recently as roosevelt in the critically acclaimed world premier of *coal country* at the public theatre. broadway: *mean girls*, *pretty woman the musical* (original cast), *cymbeline* (lincoln center). off-broadway: *toni stone* (original cast); roundabout theatre, *merchant of venice*, *the jew of malta*, *oroonoko*; tfana. regional: ivo van hove's *a view from the bridge*; goodman theatre, *playing the assassin*; penguin rep, etc. tv: *wu tang*, *murphy brown*, *daredevil* (s3), *quantico*, *billions*, *the blacklist*, *the following*, *blue bloods*, *law&order*. film: *ADDicted*, *the abandoned*, *lost cat carona*, *straight outa tomkins*, *one tough cop*, *symposium* (short film). ezra resides in harlem nyc. [activepitch.com/ezraknight](http://activepitch.com/ezraknight)



\* **TONYA PINKINS™** is a Tony award winning actress and an Award winning filmmaker for her debut feature the sociology-political horror film, *RED PILL* ([www.redpillmovie2020.com](http://www.redpillmovie2020.com)). She is the author of *GET OVER YOURSELF: How to drop the drama and claim the life you deserve* and has a podcast *YOU CAN'T SAY THAT* (BPN.fm/YCST) where she and her guests have remarkable, honest conversations.



**LAKEISHA RANDLE** is grateful to have been blessed with the opportunity to create in a festival produced by women of color that celebrates both artistry and motherhood. She is a recent graduate from the University of Houston with a Master's Degree in Non-Profit Arts Business Management. As a performer she has won a Houston Broadway World award for Best Actress in *Lady Day* (Billie Holiday)(Sankofa Collective), and the following years, was nominated for Best Actress in a Musical for her roles in *Next To Normal* (Diana) and for her portrayal of Nina Simone in *Simply Simone* (Nina 2)(Ensemble Theatre). When not acting or learning, Lakeisha enjoys playwriting for theatre for youth, teaching Theatre to children with special abilities and acting as community engagement coordinator for her family owned business @ TheShackHOU. For more information [www.lakeisharandle@yahoo.com](mailto:www.lakeisharandle@yahoo.com)



\* **NIKKOLE SALTER** is an award winning actress, playwright, educator and arts advocate. For her work she has received the OBIE, a Outer Critics Circle Award, a Global Tolerance Award from the Friends of the United Nations. a Selfdes-Kanin fellowship from the Theatre Hall of Fame, and most recently a Lily Award for her contributions to the betterment of the theatre field. Her writing has been produced on 3 continents in 5 countries, and been published in 12 international publications and has been featured on the WNET program "Theatre Close-Up." She is a graduate of Howard University and NYU. [www.nikkolesalter.com](http://www.nikkolesalter.com)



# COMPANY (cont'd)

\* denotes Actor appearing courtesy of Actors Equity Association.



\* **DEE SELMORE** received her BA from Florida A&M University in Theatre Performance. She received her MS from Florida State University in Theatre. Dee is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. She is a co-founder of the ETA performance group and the owner of Oluse Performing Arts. Dee has performed in productions such as *Letters to Kamala* (Charlotta Bass, American Stage), *Skeleton Crew* (Faye, American Stage), *A Skeptic and a Bruja* (Priscilla, Urbanite Theatre), *Sister Act* (Deloris Van Cartier, Round Barn Theatre), *The Color Purple* (Sofia, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe), and *The Drolls* (Florida Studio Theatre). Dee has also performed several readings at the National Black Theatre Festival. Dee is the 2020 Theatre Tampa Bay Award winner for Outstanding Performance by a Lead Actress in a Play.



**CAMILLE THOMAS** calls herself as a creative. Initially she called herself an actor, then an actor-writer, then an actor-writer-deviser and now she's an actor-writer-deviser-producer- activist which is a lot to type so now she just calls herself a creative. As an actor she last performed in May in 3030 at the Publick Playhouse in Maryland and as a playwright her most recent play *At God's Back* was produced with LimeArts Theatre in May. In June she will be performing an original spoken word piece with Sparks Theatre Company in San Diego California.

## STAGE MANAGERS



**KRISTINA JACKSON** is so thrilled and honored to be working with the amazing creative writers, talented performers, and hard working production team of the First Annual Black Motherhood & Parenting New Play Festival! She has been a Stage Manager for ten years splitting her time in London, Virginia, DC, Hawaii, and California. She has stage managed shows Such as; *Vegas! The Show*, *King Lear*, *Legally Blonde*, *Peter and the Star Catcher*, *South Pacific* and many many more. But her favorite thing about stage managing is seeing how all the pieces come together. Everyone's passion to bring words alive is such a joy and she can not wait for you to see how magical these productions are!

# STAGE MANAGERS (cont'd)



**ALEXIS 'LEXI' MCKAY** (She/her/hers) is a mixed woman whose main focus is a stage manager around Atlanta. She is also the Production Manager at Out of Hand Theater, an administrator for Atlanta Theatre Artists for Justice, on the board of SheNYC Arts, and loves to teach technical theater to kids whenever she can. When she's not working, she is finding a quiet corner to curl up with her dogs and try to get her next play written.

# PLAYWRIGHTS



**MELDA BEATY** is a passionate playwright, author, and assistant professor, Melda Beaty resides in Chicago, Illinois with her three gifted daughters. Melda has written five stage plays and a short film. Her first play, *Front Porch Society*, enjoyed a world premiere at The Ensemble Theatre in Houston, TX and was a finalist for Best New Plays by Houston Press. She is also a freelance contributor to Black Masks magazine and the author of two books. Her latest play is an epic exploration of 19th century sterilization laws in America and the impact on Black women. Melda earned her B.A. in Broadcast Communications at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her M.A. in English at Illinois State University. <https://meldacreates.com>.



**EUREKA LEWIS** resides in New York, but is a native of Detroit, MI. She's written & directed numerous plays, including (but not limited to) *Sorry If I Let You Down*, *Aunt Salley's Remains*, *Finally Made It*, *Too Far To The Left*, *The Jagged Rose* & a 10-week run of *What They'll Remember*; which received rave reviews in The Huffington Post & Broadway World. From hundreds of entries, she was twice selected a featured writer for Billie Holiday Theatre's *50IN50* writer's series. Her onstage credits began over thirty years ago at The Hilberry Studio Theater of Wayne State University, in *Portraits In Black*. She's also had lead or pivotal roles in *Tambourines To Glory*, *Don't Bother Me*, *I Can't Cope*, *God's Trombones*, *For Colored Girls*, *Raisin In The Sun*, *In The City*, *One Monkey Don't Stop No Show* & *Herstory* to name a select few. Eureka believes writing is one of the greatest platforms to evoke change.



# PLAYWRIGHTS (cont'd)



**JULIE TAIWO ONI** is a Los Angeles-based playwright, English professor, and proud boy mom with roots in Bakersfield, California and Nigeria. She sees her work as a playwright and educator as interconnected, for the stories that she creates are inspired by areas of focus in her research and teaching, including American pop culture, intercultural misconceptions, and the African diaspora. Recent works include *Sown* for MaiM Theatre Company and *Son of Semele* (2019), *The Hotel Play* with Playwrights' Arena (2017), *Bunk and Denim* for Son of Semele's Company Creation Festival (2014–2015), *nat&EM* for Company of Angels (2013), *Tether* for Doorway Arts Ensemble in Washington, D.C. (2011), and workshops, readings, and festivals across LA. Her current research and writing deals with Black albinism in the U.S. and Africa. Oni is associated with The Robey Theatre Company's Playwrights' Lab, Son of Semele Scribes, and Center Theatre Group's Community Stories. She holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from the USC School of Dramatic Arts, and teaches composition, dramatic literature, and playwriting at Pepperdine University. [www.julietaiwooni.com](http://www.julietaiwooni.com)



**CYNTHIA GRACE ROBINSON** is a Writer and Educator. She uses her platform as a Creative to publicly support human transformation, to inspire social change, and to raise awareness through entertainment. Her plays include *Dancing on Eggshells* (The Billie Holiday Theatre), *Peola's Passing* (New Perspectives Theatre Company), *When Night Falls* (Eugene O'Neill semi-finalist), *Gold Star Mother* (EstroGenius Festival), *Ascension* (National Black Theatre Festival; NYC Fringe), *Thunder: A Musical Memoir* (NYC Fringe), *Nightfall* (The Fire This Time Festival), *Rome in Love* (48 Hours in...Harlem), *Freedom Summer* (North Carolina Black Repertory Company), *In this Life* (in development), *Roses of the Willamette: A Musical* (in development), TV pilot (in development). Awards and honors include the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center Playwriting Conference (Semi-finalist), Rivers Writers Unit at The Lark, Playwrights of Color Summit/Quick Silver Theater Company, Rising Circle Theater Collective/INKTank Residency, AUDELCO Award Nominee, Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Finalist, Calvin B. Grimes Scholar-in-Residence Inaugural award (NYU), Tribeca All-Access Open Stage Inaugural award and the Best New Play IRNE Nominee. Publications include *She Persisted*, *Monologues from Plays by Women Over 40* and *The Book of Estrogenius 2012: A Celebration of Female Voices*.

# PRODUCTION STAFF



**Garlia Cornelias Jones (Executive Producer)** is a writer, producer, photographer and mother from Detroit, MI. In 2008, Garlia founded Blackboard Plays, a monthly series devoted to Black Playwrights. She is one of the founding producers of Harlem9, OBIE Award winners for, *48Hours in...TMHarlem*. Her Essays and articles have appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, Salon.com and American Theatre. Her work as a playwrights has been supported by the cell, The Fire This Time Festival and #24viralmonologues. She is currently a guest artist at Wayne State University. She worked on an MA in African American and African Diaspora studies at Indiana University before coming to New York for her MFA in Playwrighting which she earned at The New School for Drama. Garlia is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America and the Producing Director of PAAL, where she also received one of their first childcare grants in 2019. Finally, Garlia is a Line Producer at The Public Theater (*Socrates*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, (filmed for Great Performances on PBS), *Mojada*, *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enough* and *Coal Country*). Garlia was the Co-Creative Producer of #ToBeBlack, released on Juneteenth and Co-Producer of *Forward Together* a Virtual event, in support of The Public. Most recently, Garlia was the co-developer and Curator of the #Saytheirnames projection installation. She is the Executive Producer of the Black Motherhood and Parenting New Play Festival.



**Amber Gray (Associate Producer/Production Manager)** is a Theatre Producer, Administrator, Choreographer and Performer. She received a BFA Musical Theater degree from Rockford University and she is a very proud Texan. Her first major performances began at a very young age performing all over Houston and surrounding areas for weddings, concerts, the Opening of the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Superbowl XXXVIII Pre-game show with Josh Groban, for previous Presidents and much more. During college and after graduation Amber performed in the Chicago area receiving her Equity Membership Candidacy. Amber then returned home to Houston and began directing, choreographing, teaching Musical Theater and later becoming the Studio Director at one of the largest dance studios in the Houston area. Amber's career then led her to Washington DC where she was the Company Manager at Arena Stage Theater. Following DC, Amber then found herself in New York City as the Assistant Line Producer at The Public Theater.



**GABRIELLE 'GABBY' HENDERSON** (Sound Designer) is a Chicago based Sound Designer, Composer, and Musician.



# PRODUCTION STAFF (cont'd)



**BRIANNA PIPPENS** (Graphic Designer) Brianna Pippens is a Visual and Performing Artist based in Washington, DC. Artistically known as Banana Peppers, she creates illustrations, paintings, drawings, animations, and cut out work that focuses on race, nostalgia, and the nuances of black identity and experiences. She is a self-taught visual artist that began sharing her visual artwork in 2010. As a trained singer and dancer, Brianna has been able to tap into those modes of expression to influence her art style and dedication to honing her craft. Brianna has displayed her art at pop-up events and in local galleries in the DMV area as well as provided visuals for many small and large organizations. She creates from the heart and aims to share artwork that impacts others positively.



**JOHN SLOAN** is a Detroit based arts professional and community organizer. After studying musical theatre at The University of Michigan, Sloan spent over fourteen years working in New York, LA, several regional theatres, and on the national tour of Disney's The Lion King. He is the Founding CEO/Artistic Director of GhostLight Productions, and Producing Artistic Director of The Obsidian Theatre Festival. Sloan is a Composer and Lyricist whose most recent credits include Hastings Street and #24viralmonologues. He currently serves as lead organizer for Black Lives Matter Detroit, and is the Director of Operations for The Detroit Safety Team.



**KATIANA WEEMS** (Marketing & Trailer Editor) is an award winning director, cinematographer, and editor. Her work has been screened internationally and featured in the New York Times. An alumni of Syracuse University's Film Production Program, she graduated a VPA scholar- the college's highest undergraduate honor. She has studied film internationally at FAMU University and holds an AA in Film Studies. The stories she tells on screen are dynamic and seek to process and unearth raw emotion. As an educator, she encourages this same authenticity in her students- to help them develop the skills to communicate through film in a way that resonates with themselves, their communities, and the world at large. She currently teaches film at Baltimore School of the Arts.

# PARTNER THEATRES



Nestled in the heart of Dallas' Oak Cliff community, the **Bishop Arts Theatre Center** is an award-winning, multidisciplinary arts organization. Founded in 1993, the mission of the organization is to cultivate a diverse and vibrant arts community while creating opportunities for local and emerging artists through performances and education. BATC is the recipient of Theater Communications Group 2019 Peter Zeisler Memorial Award, several Irma P. Hall Theater Awards and most recently Dallas Business Journal Leaders In Diversity Award. The company offers a full season of theatre performances, jazz concerts, a speaker series, and year-round arts education programs impacting over 35,000 people nationwide.



**Detroit Public Theatre** produces nationally recognized plays and programs with world-class writers, directors, actors, and designers in the heart of Detroit's cultural district. We create bold, relevant, work that illuminates the thrills, joys, and challenges of our shared humanity. For more information about Detroit Public Theatre, visit [www.detroitpublictheatre.org](http://www.detroitpublictheatre.org) or call (313) 974-7918.



# PARTNER THEATRES (cont'd)

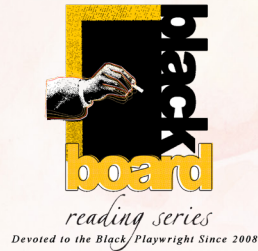


Led by Artistic Director Nataki Garrett and Executive Director David Schmitz, the **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** (OSF) was founded in 1935 and has grown from a three-day festival of two plays to a nationally renowned theatre arts organization that presents a rotating repertory season of up to 11 plays and musicals, including both classics and premieres. OSF productions have been presented on Broadway, internationally, and at regional, community, and high school theaters across the country. The Festival presents more than 800 performances annually and draws an audience of more than 400,000 to its home in Ashland, OR. In 2020, OSF launched O!, a new digital platform featuring performances, groundbreaking art, and mind-expanding discussions that can be accessed from anywhere in the world. O! attracts more than 10,000 views per month from audience members in over 50 countries. OSF invites and welcomes everyone, driven by a belief that the inclusion of diverse people, ideas, cultures, and traditions enriches not only the creation and experience of the work the organization presents onstage, but also our relationships with each other. OSF's mission statement: "Inspired by Shakespeare's work and the cultural richness of the United States, we reveal our collective humanity through illuminating interpretations of new and classic plays, deepened by the kaleidoscope of rotating repertory."



**The Rep** is the St. Louis region's most honored live professional theatre company. Founded in 1966, **The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis** is a fully professional theatrical operation belonging to the League of Resident Theatres, The League of St. Louis Theatres and is a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, Inc., the national service organization for the not-for-profit professional theatre. Visit [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org) for more, and find The Rep on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

# PRODUCING ORGANIZATIONS



Since 2008, **Blackboard Plays** has been devoted to Black Playwrights throughout the African Diaspora. Blackboard Reading Series was incubated at nancy manocherian's the cell in Chelsea's Manhattan as a resident series for 10 years, before making their new physical home in The Mary Rodgers Room at The Dramatists Guild in 2018. Feature Readings and Community Nights are two ways that Blackboard supports the development of new work by Black Playwrights. Blackboard was founded by Garlia Cornelia Jones.

**Parent Artist Advocacy League (PAAL)** is a national advocacy organization serving as a resource hub, community, and solutions generator for caregivers in the performing arts and media and the institutions who support them. PAAL created the first all-gender, all-discipline national PAAL Childcare Grants for individuals and institutions. PAAL has participated internationally in think tanks, on panels, and facilitated workshops on parenting in the arts at multiple gatherings, including the national TCG conferences, BroadwayCon, Actors Equity Association, Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, and the first national conversation on caregiving in the Latinx community at the Latinx Theatre Commons Annual Convening, Miami in Motion, in 2019. PAAL commits to anti-racist roots in structure, practice, policy, principle, and production, through Vertical 50/50, centering support on BIPOC artists, and gathering resources for active anti-racism in caregiver support. PAAL is a transgender and non-binary affirming space. All language referencing "mother," "parent," "dad," "caregiver," and their derivatives include and refer to any

**Ghostlight Productions Inc** is a Detroit-based, full service production company specializing in the creation of original film, theatrical, and performance content; offering high end wrap around event production services at a Broadway calibre. For more information, please visit: [www.ghostlightinc.com](http://www.ghostlightinc.com)



# THEATRE AUTHORITY

We wish to express our gratitude to the  
Performers' Unions:

*ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION*

*AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS*

*AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS*

*SAG-AFTRA*

through **Theatre Authority, Inc.** for their  
cooperation in permitting the Artists to  
appear on this program.



Joyful Muse Co was founded by  
Lucretia Marie Anderson to help  
give people back the power of  
themselves. We provide  
dynamic life, artist and anti-  
racist coaching, speaking, and  
workshop opportunities that  
inspire, motivate, and  
encourage all people to thrive.

*Lucretia Marie Anderson*

(SHE / THEY / THEM)

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