



SEASON REVIVALS 32
TAD

IN
TH
5
CITY

DIRECTED BY CARLA STILLWELL





Sheppu Akhu

MPAACT has been producing live theater for 32 seasons. It's an amazing

achievement considering our modest beginnings. We have endured economic downturns, funding cycle armageddons, a pandemic, and so much more. Still, we treasure producing a full season of new work alongside extensive live and digital programming.

One of the things we think about a fair bit, is how to get more of you to invest in our work here. Our industry is struggling more than usual - with theaters of all shapes and sizes closing their doors forever. We know that you value our work because you come to the theater, you read our newsletters, and you subscribe to our podcast plays and *Listen Magazine*. Your support is vital to our sustainability.

We have doubled down on our investment in artists - crafting art. From live production to digital audio, from touring programs to arts education—MPAACT continues to support a diverse community of artists and stakeholders with a unique voice, grounded in our cultures and our collective experiences.

Consider telling a friend, bringing them to a show, gifting them an audio subscription or donating to MPAACT below. In doing so, you'll help us continue to provide quality cultural art. Your contributions will help to ensure another spectacular season of world premiere work.



DONATE

32 SEASONS

24 ARTISTS

87 WORLD PREMIERES

104 STAGED PRODUCTIONS

4 PUBLISHED ANTHOLOGIES

288 HONORS & AWARDS

2 BROADWAY PRODUCED WRITERS

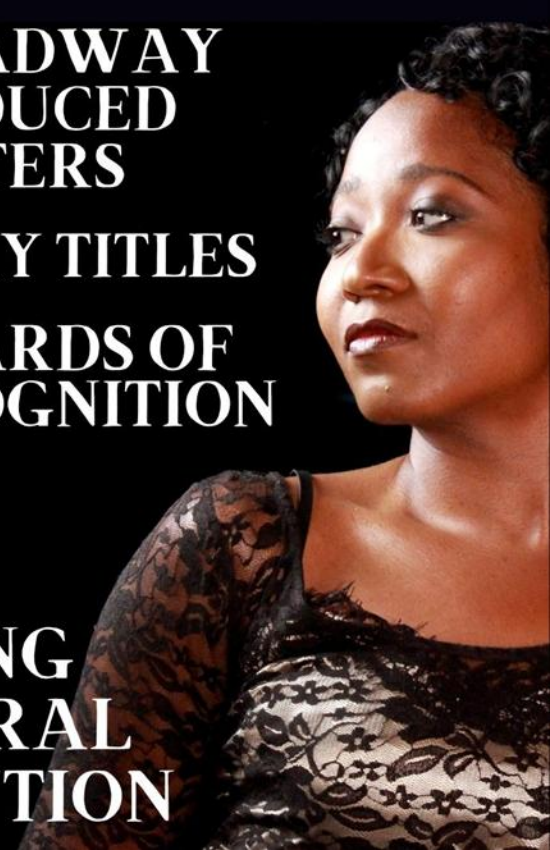
80 PODCAST PLAY TITLES

54 AWARDS OF RECOGNITION



is...

1 AMAZING CULTURAL INSTITUTION



CAST

(in alphabetical order)

Cat Evans *Miss Lady*
 Tamarus Harvell..... *Pimp/ Dealer et. al.*
 Darren Jones..... *Uncle Brotha*
 Jelani Julyus..... *Pappa Daddy*
 Reason Dailey Lewis..... *Tad*
 Kendall Mallett..... *James*
 Kandice Robins..... *Mama*

VOICE

Shirley Carney *Hospital Administrator*
 Shepsu Aakhu..... *Mac*
 Ian Custer..... *Doctor, Police Officer*

SETTING

5th City - A Westside neighborhood - Chicago - Circa 1978.

ABOUT THE PLAY

MPAACT has always been an artist first collective. Plays are created from a body politic that has no overlords. We stage that which moves us - and in doing so, we hope to move you. Little more than a decade ago, Orron Kenyetta stepped into our consciousness. He traveled with our touring shows, he performed at our *Underground Poetry Jam* and through our time together, we came to feel the passion for which he was known. The “West Side” spoken of in his canonical *The Tad Poems*, moved us to such a degree, that we adapted it – then staged it. Here again we delight in opportunity to introduce our audiences to the world as lived by Orron Kenyetta..

THE SOUNDSCAPE

Original Music, Samples & Effects

MPAACT endeavors to create a lush soundscape textured with new compositions and electronic elements. The soundscape does not beg to be noticed, but rather exists as a catalyst, harnessing the director's interpretation, the playwright's intent, and the actor's urgency, planting the emotional content deep within the core of the viewer. In the end we do not wish to be heard, we wish to be felt.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I wrote this Director's Note 13 years ago. Well before Covid or MAGA or Floyd and Black Lives Matter, and yet I don't feel a need to change a word...

This play sits firmly in the middle of November 1978, on Chicago's West Side. Unlike Los Angeles and New York, the history of my hometown has not reached the world - except for the stories of legendary gangster Al Capone. It is a history that I celebrate with every -2° winter day and every 98°, 100% humidity summer day that I enjoy in “The Chi.” It is this history that drew me to Orron Kenyatta's poetry. Because we were raised to fear and judge each other - West Side Negro and South Side Negro. But what I found in his poetry was a love, respect and honesty about the shared human history that exist for many a Chicagoan of color.

I am, like Mrs. Obama, a native South Side(r). However, you cannot call yourself a true Chicagoan if you don't know the history of the entire city (a history you learn if for no other reason than to explain to outsiders why you refuse to live more than 5 miles away from the hospital you were born in, or to explain your undying devotion to the Cubs or Sox).

A bit of the history of 1978 - Michael Anthony Bilandic was the Mayor after the death of the equally revered and feared Richard J. Daley, who died in office two years prior. A little blizzard a month after the time of this play cost Mayor Bilandic the re-election in 1979 (ask a native Chicagoan to tell you this story, we find it amusing - snow removal is very serious to us).

Ten years prior to the time of this play, after the assassination of Dr. King, on April 4, 1968, violence erupted on Chicago's west side, eventually consuming a 28-block stretch of West Madison Street. Looting and arson took place primarily in the corridor between Roosevelt Road on the south and Chicago Ave. on the north - and this historical event changed the landscape of the city and an entire generation. The generation that walks through the world of *Tad in 5th City*. A generation of young men and women who as Mr. Kenyatta writes, “watched the genesis of the ghetto sphere” evolve. The ghetto of many of today's rappers imaginations grew out of this very reality. And for the parts of Chicago's West Side that have survived gentrification, still exist.

This is the history that is still primarily oral. With *Tad in 5th City*, Orron and I have begun the process of documenting the Chicago that shaped our generation.

- Carla Stillwell

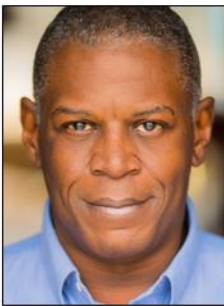
PROFILES



Cat Evans (*Miss Lady*) a Chicago based actor, is a 2 time Jeff nominee. They received their BFA in Acting from Northern Illinois University. Notable works: *Joan and the Fire* (Trap Door), *Laughing Song* (Theatre Y), *Medea Material* (Trap Door), *The Crucible* (Edge of the Wood). www.catrinaevans.com



Tamarus Harvell (*Pimp/Preacher/Dealer*) is a MPAACT company member. He was last seen in MPAACT's production of *Ezekiel's Wheel*, which was nominated for a Black Excellence Award for best production. He has worked with several theatre companies in Chicago including Black Ensemble, Raven and The Gift Theatre. He has starred in several short films that have premiered in different festivals across the United States, including Chicago's Black Harvest Film Festival. He is currently represented by Big Mouth Talent Inc. He would like to thank his wife and parents for their love and support.



Darren Jones (*Uncle Brotha*) won the 2023 Outstanding Actor Award for his role as Baba in the MPAACT production of *Ezekiel's Wheel*. Recent Chicago credits include *The Trial in the Delta: The Murder Of Emmett Till* (NBC/Collaboration) which is a double Emmy Award winning production for 2022; 2023; *American Son* (Fleetwood-Jourdain); *Richard III* (Promethean); *Wellesley Girl* (Compass); *Hamlet* (Invictus); *American Son* (Beverly Arts Center); *Labyrinth* (Broken Nose); *King Lear* (Redtwist); *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *One 4 The Road*, *Never The Milk And Honey* (MPAACT); *Crime and Punishment*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black* (Shattered Globe), where he is an Artistic Associate. Television credits include *Chicago PD* (NBC), *Chicago Fire* (NBC). Movie credits include *Hyde Park*, *Chi-Raq*, *Hood*, *Mo' Money*. He has done commercials for Walgreens, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Anheuser Busch, State Farm, Northwestern Medicine, Rivers Casino and Metlife along with training and industrial films for Careerbuilder, Accenture and Sears Auto Center. Darren is represented by Lily's Talent Agency.



Jelani Julyus (*Papa Daddy*) believes in the power of story to transform society and possesses a unique ability to find the hope nestled at the heart of any story. Recently, he originated the role of Larry in the world premiere of *In the Back/ On the Floor* (Stage Left), and was blessed to perform as the understudy for Guy in *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Remy Bumppo). Jelani trained at Black Box Acting Studio, where he completed The ACADEMY. Jelani cannot express enough gratitude for the opportunity to work with MPAACT, this incredible cast, and our exceptional creative team. Jelani is represented by 10 Management, and you can follow him @jelanijulyus on Instagram or at jelanijulyus.com. He dedicates his career as an actor to his children in hopes they learn that it's never too late to pursue your dreams.



Reason Dailey Lewis (*Tad*) is in sixth grade! He is extremely excited to be a part of *Tad in 5th City*. He was most recently seen in Sydney Miller's production of *Bessie Coleman: Airplane Adventures*, at the South Shore Cultural Center. He has a passion for acting and would like to thank his family for the help to get him where he is now.



Kendall Mallett (*James*) is a trained actor and storyteller out of Chicago, who enjoys bringing his characters to life for the world to see. Kendall has spent time studying at Acting Studio Chicago and is always eager to learn more. Kendall recently performed in a stage reading of *Coronary Artery* (*Perceptions*) and is now working on ideas to combine acting with his love of poetry. Outside of the arts Kendall is a personal trainer and an advocate for functional fitness.



Kandice Robins (*Mama*) was born and raised in the Chicago-land area. She has been a performer since the age of 4, performing in dance recitals, school plays, musicals and school bands. Her TV credits include *The Chi* (Showtime) and *Chicago Fire* (NBC). Her theater credits include *Fairview* (Definition - Jeff Recommended) and *F.O.P.* with (Collaboration). She is represented by Stewart Talent.



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PRODUCTION



Carla Stillwell (*Director/Adaptor*) is an award-winning actor, playwright, producer, artistic director and has been an arts-in-education teacher for three decades. She began her professional career as an actor in Chicago's storefront theatre community and quickly became inundated with the anti-black sentiments of the scene.

She found herself cast in a show with an Afrikan Centered theatre company that was new to Chicago called MPAACT, which she made her artistic home for 22 seasons. In that time, she became a resident playwright and went on to spend my last 10 years with the company as the artistic director until 2018.

In 2019 Ms. Stillwell founded The Stillwell Institute for Contemporary Black Arts. This organization moves with a mission to recruit, develop and support contemporary Black artists and to teach art making in the Black community as a healing practice, a vehicle for social change and a viable career opportunity.

Carla spent 20 years working with Victory Gardens Theatre, Steppenwolf, MPAACT, CAPE and eta Creative Arts Foundation in grades k-12 teaching all aspects of the making, performance and production of the theatrical discipline. In 2021 she joined the adjunct staff at The Theatre School at DePaul University. Most recently, she is also the Managing Director of Collaboraction Theatre for Social Change where a mission of working to engage people in empathy, thought, dialogue and action on critical social issues where she recently won 2022 and 2023 Regional Emmys for her work as the producer on *The Last Story of Emmett Till: Trial in the Delta*, a collaboration between Collaboraction and NBC Universal/Chicago.



Orron Kenyatta I (*Poet/Writer*) is a critically acclaimed Poet/Author/Playwright/Activist/ and Educator who has applied his discipline for over 35 years throughout his hometown of Chicago and across the country.

Now residing in Maui, Hawaii, this artist is a Fifth City Chicago thoroughbred. Orron is also an alumni of the famed

Second City, which is renowned for its artist development, producing some of the most recognized names in the business.

During his tenure at the institute, his offerings were given in the critically acclaimed show *Word on the Street* (2002). He also has a very close with MPAACT where he found allies in Shepsu Aakhu and Carla Stillwell in adapting two poetry anthologies - *Tad Brown at the Door of Lunacy* and *Fifth City Iron Man?* into his freshman play *Tad in 5th City*. This work is critically acclaimed (in the top ten throughout Chicagoland), Jeff Award nominated, and widely circulated in academia.

Under the direction Carla Stillwell, *Tad in 5th City* was captured in the audio format for MPAACT's podcast plays in 2021. Under the direction of Shepsu Aakhu, Orron added to that body of work with *My Name is Orron Kenyetta* which features Kenyetta in interviews and selected readings of his canonical poems.

Kenyetta is significantly published. His offerings can be found in textbooks and publications in *Africana Studies* and *Museum/Curatorial Practice* where he authored the introduction for the textbook *Black Male Studies* by Serie McDougal III. Kenyetta has also authored *Outlasting Denial; a Case Study in Curatorial Activation*. His work has been extensively exhibited at The Milwaukee (WI) Art Museum and The Birmingham (AL) Museum of Art.

Currently Kenyetta considers himself The Voice of the 37.5 Black People living on Haiku's Hills (HI).

Laura Courtney (Production Stage Manager) graduated from Illinois College in 2008, with a B.A. in Fine Arts. After-which she has worked mainly in the Chicago area with local companies such as Pulse Theater, Chicago Human Rhythm Project, Kuumba Lynx and other Chicago based performers in both guerilla theater and professional theater settings. Taking on roles of stage manager, road manager and Chicago Hip Hop Theater Fest (CHHTF) Co-Coordinator. Laura has worked on such performances as *Watch Me Move*, *Watch me Juke: Footwork Thru the Trauma*, *FILLING: Put Some Respect On It*, *Race to the Finish*, and other works from the CHHTF. MPAACT credits include the world premiere of *Dandelions* by Tina Fakhrid-Deen and a concert reading of *Bourbon on the Boarder* for the Pearl Cleave Festival. Laura is beyond thrilled to be working on this production for MPAACT with an extremely talented cast and crew.

Shepsu Aakhu (*Set Design/Tech Director*) has been a designer and T.D. with MPAACT for more than three decades. His most recent work was *Balckademics* (2023 revival) *Dandelions*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Ride or Die*, *Pulled Punches*, *Spoken Word*, *One 4 the Road* and *Swamp Baby*. His favorite designs for MPAACT include *Never the Milk and Honey*, *Swamp Baby*, *Tad in 5th City*, *Beneath A Dark Sky* (2008 revival), *MiLK* (2008 revival), and *Notes from the Bottletree*.

Casey Diers (*Lighting Design*) Recent MPAACT credits include *Pulled Punches*, *Leaves Trees Forest*, *Speaking in Tongues* [BTA Award – Best Lighting Design], *Ghosts of Atwood* [BTA Award – Best Lighting Design], *Zulu Fitz*, *Tad in the 5th City* [BTA Award Nomination], *First Words*, and *Ten Square*. Other recent credits include *First Kings of Europe* (Field Museum), *Death: Life's Greatest Mystery* (Field Museum), *Stones in His Pockets* (Northlight) and assistant lighting designer for *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 25th Anniversary Concerts* (Madison Square Garden), *Kafka on the Shore* (Steppenwolf) and *Kafka Fragments* (Lincoln Center, Inc). For more information visit: www.CaseyDiers.com and <http://www.morlights.com/>

Lauren “LL” Lundy (*Costumes, Prop Design, Scenic Painter*) began working with MPAACT several seasons ago with *Quark*. She has directed, designed, stage managed, costumed, programmed and painted on a lifetime of shows in her near decade with the company. The titles change, the stories change, venues even... but the joy and the sense of family—never. Sometimes we call her “LL” but of late her new moniker is “CLUTCH.” You can guess why... because she always comes through with what you need—when you need it most.. *Clutch* fell in love with the company and has been attached to MPAACT ever since. Good

Lenora Inez Brown (*Original Dramaturg*) first worked with MPAACT on the Jeff-nominated production of Nambi E. Kelly's *MiLK*, and Shepsu Aakhu's *Ten Square*. In Chicago she has worked on Lydia Diamond's award-winning adaptation *The Bluest Eye* (Steppenwolf) Karen Zacarias' *Mariela And The Desert* (The Goodman), which went on to receive the Francesca Primus Award. She also develops scripts for young people, and worked on José Cruz Gonzalez' *The Blue House* (Adventure Stage Chicago/Chicago Children's Humanities Festival). Her work has garnered her invitations to the Sundance Theatre Lab, South Coast Rep's Pacific Playwright's Festival, the Kennedy Center's New Vision/New Voices, and The Bonderman. She is the former head of the Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism program. She currently serves as the president for Theatre for Young Audiences/USA Board, and has an MFA in Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama.

Destia Sound (*Sound Design*) returns to MPAACT on the heels of a fabulous run with designs for the post-pandemic premieres of *Pulled Punches*, *Red Summer*, *Ride or Die*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Dandelions* and *Blackademics*. Anchored by Shepsu Aakhu, this design team continues to make MPAACT's “sound” the most distinctive in the city. Most recently, Destia Sound has had the privilege of designing sound for many of the audio titles in MPAACT's catalog of podcast plays. Sign-up and take a listen to the worlds that can be built entirely with sound and your imagination.

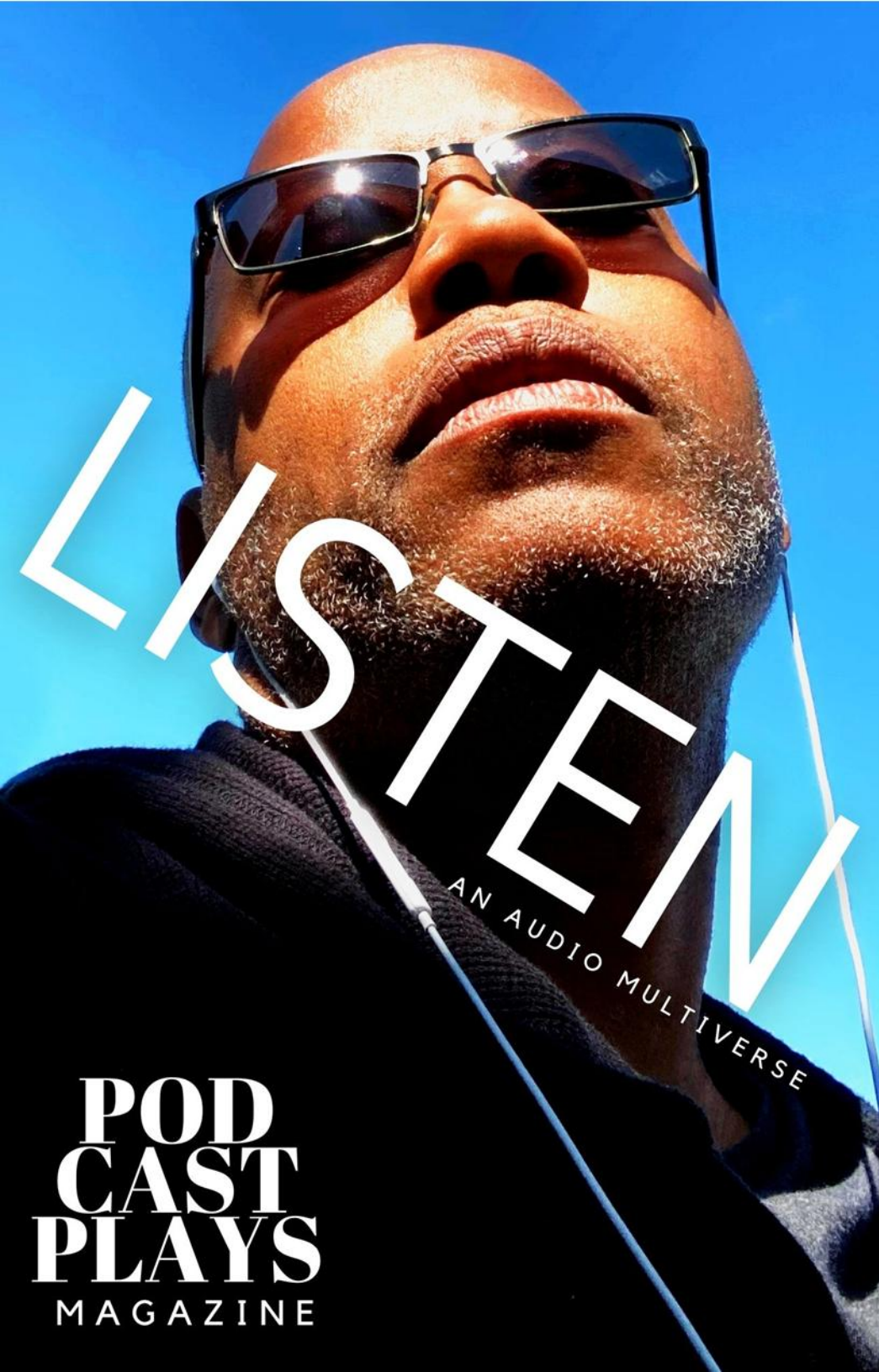
Jessica Kuehnau Wardell (*Original Scenic Painter*) is a scenic and costume designer, teacher, and artist based in Chicago. As Artistic Associate with MPAACT since 2006, Jessica has designed countless productions including *Pulled Pushes*, *Spoken Word*, *Speaking in Tongues* (BTA Award - Best Set Design), *Ghosts of Atwood* and *Ten Square*. Other recent Chicago credits include *Noises Off* (Windy City Playhouse); *End Game* (Hypocrites); *Lela & Company* (Steep), and *The African Company presents Richard III* (Oak Park Shakespeare Fest). Her designs have been seen internationally with the production *Reprise* commissioned for the National Theatre of Scotland's Home Away Festival and *Juliet: A Dialogue About Love* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival). Regionally, Jessica is currently designing immersive theatrical cocktail experiences across the country with Fever Originals, and her scenic design for the new TYA production *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (First Woman Theatre) concluded its tour at The New Victory Theatre on 42nd Street in New York. jesskdesign.com

VOICE

Shepsu Aakhu (*Mac*) does most of his voice work for MPAACT's podcast plays. He can be heard in *Beneath A Dark Sky*, *Moon Women Eat Pecan Pie*, and several *Icons* and *Backstage* titles.

Shirley Carney (*Hospital Administrator*) is the author and voice actor. Her voice work is featured in *Sweet Tea* on MPAACT's Podcast Plays Ms. Carney is a graduate of Roosevelt University in Chicago. She currently divides her time between Houston, TX and Chicago, IL, where she spends as much time with her two grandsons as possible.

Ian Paul Custer (*Doctor/Police*) is the author and voice actor. Her voice work is featured in *Sweet Tea* on MPAACT's Podcast Plays Ms. Carney is a graduate of Roosevelt University in Chicago. She currently divides her time between Houston, TX and Chicago, IL, where she spends as much time with her two grandsons as possible.



**POD
CAST
PLAYS
MAGAZINE**

ARTIST PROFILE

AARON TODD DOUGLAS

Within his own acting career, Douglas has challenged those same boundaries, thereby examining and redefining what constitutes being a classically trained actor.

Describing his process as "eclectic" at times, he asks, "Was that even possible? Such revelations would have to wait until the final moments of the third act - or the James Franco report of 2013.

Do you think you know me? I certainly did. When I began the iconic interviews, I was sitting down with artists that I've known for decades, repeat collaborators that have shared spaces with me, and still I rely on them.

Why? Because the business of living is rise, as is the business of art-making. There is just so much going on. And the more I share all of that, the more I realize that I am, our time in this interview space, is a shared space with one - and still I rely on me - the assumption -

CONVERSATION

THE GRACE OF DEMETRIA THOMAS

Meet Demetria Thomas at an audition for my play *Fancia* in 2001. She walked in and immediately took my breath away. At nearly 5'10", she carried herself with the lines and grace of a dancer. Then she performed her audition piece, and I was hooked - forever.

OF WATER AND MOON

WATER SPIRITS AND BLACK CULTURE

There is little in my life that is crazier (or more affirming) than trying to piece together the

Lydia Diamond

PRESSURE MAKES DIAMONDS

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS EXCERPTED FROM "THE INTERVAL" MAGAZINE FEBRUARY 16TH, 2016

This interview was conducted just as Lydia's Latest play *Smart People* was set to open. *Smart People* concerns a neuroscientist doing a controversial play for a group of people pursuing their ambitions, *Jeux de Venus*, and *The Bluest Eye*, among other *Smart People*, her writing process, plans for the future.

I read that *Smart People* started when you read an article about science and

(A) I would say the latter, about this particular scientist read Susan Fiske's article.

THE LYRICAL LANDSCAPES OF ADDAE MOON

Addae Moon is an extraordinary writer, defined as much by his lyrical writing as he is his deeply moving characters. His relationship with MPAACT began in the early '90s during those solitary years when he was just beginning his professional career. In the three decades since, Addae has developed a formidable body of work, often steeped in the dizzying traditions of the American South. Addae is the Associate Artistic Director at Theatrical Outfit and a co-founder of the performance collective *Hoah Harbor Lab*. He was the recipient of the 2015 International Theater Award for his dramaturgical work on *"The Master Class"* and the 2008 John Lipicky Award from the International Movement Theatre Alliance (IMTA) for his immersive play *Four Days of Fury, Atlanta 1906*. This winter we had the honor of co-producing *Earle's Wheel* - live on the marriage *Breakers Year* "Addae experience" with a short film, "Moon Women," now available in

THE SUBLIME SHAWN WALLACE

It is where it happens, and music for Shawn might be inspired by "the same place socks go in" but it is certainly collaborative with an extensive career and composer. Wallace, with an accompanying Chicago's music scene, has accompanied an elite roster of artists from Common to Dwele and Obba Babatundé to Ugochi and the 30+ Soul Ensemble (A.S.E.). Since its inception in 2010, MPAACT has collaborated with Shawn's and producing style to create a unique blend of and storytelling.

Shawn's initial writing sessions with fellow creatives Akhu and Andrew White, the compositions of Red were realized.

As a play with music, not a musical, Wallace defied Summer's arrangements avoiding the pitfalls of "hard hitting and honest to historic, brutal context, core manages to melodically relieve listeners with rhythmic motifs and singable choruses. Such is the juxtaposition of songs like "Just a Few Bits" and "Tan."

By conceptualizing stages, song ideas, chord progressions, and melodies were brought to Wallace lyrically while he lyrically ruly an jam session, here there, I

DEEP INSIDE THE BLUES

I've battled depression on more than one occasion in my life. In the middle of my sophomore year in college, my home life - always a source of instability - utterly collapsed. My mom hit a rough patch and careened into a mid-life crisis that it would take years to course correct. I was set adrift again - no reliable place to lay my head - and yet another round of high anxiety overtook me. I was food insecure, lodging insecure, love insecure. A 20-year-old Black man/child alone in the world (no cause for concern there).

That would be my last during the college years. I learned to stay on campus during the summers thereafter. On campus I had food, shelter, a job, and perhaps more alone time than was healthy for me.

I spent most of my college years self-medicating. Not with sex, weed and alcohol - the drugs of choice for most of my peers - I overdosed on playing basketball. Eight to ten hours every day - until I could hardly walk home. Then I would drag myself back and do the same thing again the next day.

My studies came second. That's a bold-faced lie. I didn't study. I barely went to class. I was adrift, for me school provided shelter and a fleeting sense of wellbeing. Classes and grades were of little consequence.

Student activism gave me a sense of purpose. Standing up - vociferously - for our place as Black people on a racist campus got me focused. The power of

LISTEN

PODCAST PLAYS MAGAZINE AN AUDIO MULTIVERSE

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SEASON 32 REVIVAL

THE COMPANY

Shepsu Aakhu*	Shariba Rivers	Danjuma Gaskin	Ashley Coney
Sean R. Neron*	Nadia Pillay	Eddie Jordan III	Caren Blackmore
Lauren Wells-Mann	Jelani Pitcher	Aum Mu Ra	Michaelyn Oby
Lauren "LL" Lundy	Tina Fakhrid-Deen	Tamarus Harvell	Joshua X. Miller
Brittany Davis	Renee Lockett	Vada Briceno	Melanie McCullough
Leonard House	André Teamer	Jared Gooding	Mark Franklin

EMERITUS

Daryl Charisse	Georges Blaise*	Carl Barnett*	Shawn Wallace*
	William S. Carroll*	Nambi E. Kelley	

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES

Chuck Smith	Razor Wintercastle	Casey Diers	Lisa J. Willingham
Andrea J. Dymond	Jessica Wardell	Runako Jahi	Evelyn Danner
Deidre Searcy	Abboyé Lawrence		

ANGELS

Lennal "Sati" Word Sharlet Webb Ron White

** Denotes Founding Member*

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director	Carla Stillwell
Adaptors.....	Carla Stillwell & Orron Kenyetta
Production Stage Manager	Laura Courtney
Set Design.....	Shepsu Aakhu
Lighting Design.....	Casey Diers
Sound Design.....	Destia Sound
Costume Design/Properties.....	Lauren "LL" Lundy
Scenic Painters	Jessica Kuehnau Wardell and Lauren "LL" Lundy
Production Photographers.....	Abboyé Lawrence and Shepsu Aakhu
Production Manager.....	Lauren "LL" Lundy



LISTEN MAGAZINE STAFF

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Principle Photographer.....	Shepsu Aakhu
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Feature Writer	Lauren Wells-Mann
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SPECIAL THANKS

The Ancestors, Orron Kenyetta, Hiwoté Tamrat, Hilal Tamrat, Shirley Carney, Efè McWorter, Dennis & Piedad Lundy, Razor Wintercastle, The Greenhouse Staff, GBG INC, Julia Van Vliet, J. David Shanks, Erica Faye Watson (R.I.P.) The Theater School at DePaul University, Ael Diem and Ayla Donchin



INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Kay Kretzschmar, Tiffany Trent, Leonard House, Sean Neron, Mark Franklin, Kimberley Crutcher, Miriam Ex, J. Shayne, Hiwoté Tamrat, Hilal Tamrat, Shirley Carney, Efè McWorter, Chuck Smith, Dennis & Piedad Lundy, Julia Van Vliet, Shariba Rivers, Reginald Lawrence, Yocab Abdi & Hillina Tamrat, Tina Fakhrid-Deen, Lauren Lundy, Marcus Lawrence, Yomileigh Abdi, Sabona Abdi, Yvonne and Jason Lee, Lana Rogachevskaya, Charls S. Hall, Phil Kholmetz, Nic Dimond,



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MISSION

The Ma'at Production Association of Afrikan Centered Theater (MPAACT) is a professional, not-for-profit theater association founded in 1990 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Our mission is to develop, nurture, and sustain original Afrikan Centered Theater (ACT) as a multi-disciplinary art form of American Theater. ACT is a genre of artistic expression grounded in the many cultures and traditions of the Afrikan continent and its Diaspora. With a vision focused upon new works and collaborative art, MPAACT shall produce and educate with the goal of bringing forth an understanding and appreciation of Afrikan Centered Theater and its inter-related disciplines.

MPAACT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Executive Director/Producer.....	Reginald Lawrence
Managing Producer.....	Lauren "LL" Lundy
Literary Manager.....	Tina Fakhrid-Deen
Casting Director.....	Nadia Pillay
Graphic Design.....	Shepsu Aakhu
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Group Sales.....	Lauren "LL" Lundy

SUPPORT MPAACT

From live production to digital audio, from touring programs to arts education... MPAACT continues to support a diverse community of artists and stakeholders with a unique voice, grounded in our culture and our collective experiences. Your contributions will help to ensure another spectacular season of world premiere work. Thank you for making another season possible.



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32 SEASONS

<i>Blackademics</i>	Revival	2023
<i>Dandelions</i>	World Premiere	2023
<i>Ezekiel's Wheel</i>	World Premiere	2023
<i>Ride or Die</i>	World Premiere	2022
<i>Red Summer</i>	Premiere Staging	2022
<i>Pulled Punches</i>	World Premiere	2022
<i>Podcast Plays</i>	Established	2021
<i>Spoken Word</i>	World Premiere	2020
<i>The Master Comic</i>	World Premiere	2019
<i>One 4 the Road</i>	World Premiere	2019
<i>Swamp Baby</i>	World Premiere	2019
<i>Black and Blue</i>	World Premiere	2018
<i>Blood Mural</i>	World Premiere	2018
<i>Mother of the Dark Water</i>	World Premiere	2018
<i>100 Acts of Resistance</i>	Established	2018
<i>Burf of a Nation</i>	World Premiere	2017
<i>Never the Milk & Honey</i>	World Premiere	2017
<i>By Association</i>	World Premiere	2017
<i>Starting Over</i>	World Premiere	2016
<i>Feral</i>	World Premiere	2016
<i>Upstate</i>	World Premiere	2016
<i>Lawd The CVS is Burnin'</i>	World Premiere	2015
<i>Divine Order of Becoming</i>	Revival	2015
<i>Softly Blue</i>	Revival	2015
<i>The Inside</i>	Revival	2014
<i>Without Trace</i>	World Premiere	2014
<i>Quark</i>	World Premiere	2014
<i>Signature Showcase Series</i>	Established	2014
<i>Summer Jams</i>	Established	2014
<i>Warm on the Coolin' Board</i>	World Premiere	2013
<i>When Good Broccoli Goes Bad</i>	World Premiere	2013
<i>Reality Check</i>	World Premiere	2013
<i>Leaves Trees Forest</i>	World Premiere	2013
<i>Blackademics</i>	World Premiere	2012
<i>Bodies</i>	World Premiere	2012
<i>Sweet Home</i>	World Premiere	2012
<i>Extended Jams</i>	Established	2012

<i>Speaking in Tongues/ Babel</i>	World Premiere	2011
<i>A Brown Tale (Da-da Re...)</i>	World Premiere	2011
<i>The Last St on Sugar Hill</i>	World Premiere	2011
<i>Ghosts of Atwood</i>	World Premiere	2011
<i>Solo Jams</i>	Established	2011
<i>Dance Jam</i>	Established	2011
<i>Zulu Fits</i>	World Premiere	2010
<i>Film Jam</i>	Established	2010
<i>Sketch Jam</i>	Established	2010
<i>Tad in 5th City</i>	World Premiere	2010
<i>First Words</i>	World Premiere	2010
<i>Ten Square (w/Pegasus)</i>	World Premiere	2009
<i>Radical Hearsay...</i>	World Premiere	2009
<i>Stage Black</i>	World Premiere	2009
<i>No Experience Necessary</i>	World Premiere	2008
<i>BlaQ Market Monologues</i>	Established	2008
<i>She Calls Up The Sun</i>	Revival	2008
<i>Beneath A Dark Sky</i>	Revival	2008
<i>MiLK</i>	Revival	2007
<i>Trouble the Water</i>	World Premiere	2007
<i>Blaxploitation 2...</i>	World Premiere	2007
<i>Panther Burn</i>	World Premiere	2006
<i>Softly Blue</i>	World Premiere	2006
<i>Blaxploitation: The Remix</i>	World Premiere	2005
<i>Bus Boyz (w/Prop Thtr)</i>	World Premiere	2005
<i>The Divine Order of Becoming</i>	World Premiere	2005
<i>Relevant Hearsay...</i>	World Premiere	2004
<i>Notes from the Bottletree</i>	World Premiere	2004
<i>SOST</i>	World Premiere	2003
<i>Scorched Earth: Fertile Ground</i>	World Premiere	2003
<i>Kiwi Black</i>	World Premiere	2003
<i>Ekomo Akyede</i>	Established	2003
<i>She Calls up the Sun</i>	World Premiere	2002
<i>Defending Myself</i>	World Premiere	2002
<i>Mahalia & ME</i>	B-cast Premiere	2002
<i>Kosi Dasa</i>	World Premiere	2002
<i>Fascia</i>	World Premiere	2001
<i>The Alibi Transcripts</i>	Established	2001
<i>Urban Griot Project</i>	World Premiere	2001

<i>Tere-tocha-chew:</i>	World Premiere	2000
<i>Exoskeletal Blues</i>	World Premiere	2000
<i>The Glow of Reflected Light</i>	World Premiere	2000
<i>Within the Dream</i>	World Premiere	1999
<i>The Abesha Conspiracy</i>	World Premiere	1999
<i>Beneath A Dark Sky</i>	World Premiere	1998
<i>The Inside</i>	World Premiere	1998
<i>The Empire Festival</i>	World Premiere	1998
<i>The Scott Joplin Story</i>	B-cast Premiere	1998
<i>Piece-Meal Clan</i>	World Premiere	1997
<i>Tales from an Urban Empire</i>	World Premiere	1997
<i>The Underground Poetry Jam</i>	Established	1997
<i>Afrosynthesis</i>	World Premiere	1997
<i>Screams w/out Consciousness</i>	Wkshop Prod.	1997
<i>A Kwanzaa Carol</i>	World Premiere	1996
<i>Short Orders: One Acts Fest.</i>	Established	1996
<i>Girl to be Named Later</i>	World Premiere	1996
<i>Otherworld Lovers</i>	World Premiere	1996
<i>From Funk 2 Fusion</i>	World Premiere	1996
<i>MiLK</i>	World Premiere	1995
<i>Slices</i>	Established	1995
<i>A Night of Jazz Fusion</i>	World Premiere	1995
<i>Tales of the Kitalogo</i>	World Premiere	1994
<i>Vital Signs</i>	World Premiere	1994
<i>Continuum: Visions/Yetunde</i>	World Premiere	1993
<i>Restore the Rhythm</i>	World Premiere	1992

SUBMISSIONS

MPAACT is committed to the development of original works.

Unsolicited scripts are encouraged.

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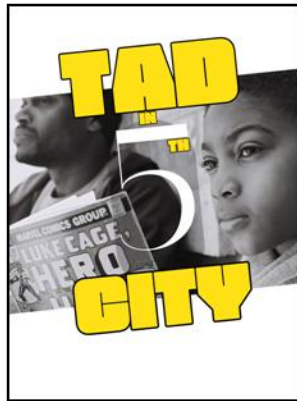

 SEASONS
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OCT. 6 – NOV. 19
2023

BLACKADEMICS

BY IDRIS GOODWIN / DIRECTED BY LAUREN WELLS-MANN

There's something strange about the trendy new restaurant in town. When Ann and Rachelle meet there for dinner, there's already tension in the friendship they've built on their common experience navigating academia as black women: While Ann just got tenure at her tony liberal arts college, Rachelle's struggling to find her place at the less prestigious state university. So at first it's easy to overlook odd things like the single water glass they're offered, or the mysterious server who keeps assigning points to their conversational gambits. But as the hunger sets in, the two professors find themselves the unknowing stars of an absurdist dinner theater performance of black plight. Somebody's got to get the first bite, after all. A sharp, surreal satire about who gets a place at the table.



JAN. 19 – MAR. 3
2024

TAD IN 5TH CITY

ADAPTED FROM THE WORKS OF ORRON KENYETTA MARSHALL / DIRECTED BY CARLA STILLWELL

After the assassination of Dr. King on April 4, 1968, violence erupted on Chicago's west side, consuming a 28-block stretch of West Madison Street. This traumatic moment changed the landscape of the city and an entire generation. That generation of young men and women "watched the genesis of the ghetto sphere" evolve. The ghetto of many of today's rappers imaginations grew out of this reality. Told through the eyes of 10-year-old Tad Brown, *Tad in 5th City* illuminates his daily life in the aftermath of those riots, chronicling Tad's journey as he navigates a post-rioting city amidst the effects of gang violence, poverty and addiction.



APRIL 19 – JUNE 2
2024

WARM ON THE COOLIN' BOARD

BY SHEPSU AAKHU / DIRECTED BY LAUREN "LL" LUNDY/ MUSIC BY SHAWN WALLACE

Everybody has a plan, and Day is no exception. He has a plan for his baby brother Brian. Trouble is - Brian is off plan. He's taking a break from college and picking up the family business, stripping the Roseland community to the bone. This decaying community is being pillaged by its own inhabitants, its politicians, and its few remaining businesses. As Day and Brian work to find their place in a community that is literally being picked clean, they struggle to come to grips with whether they are hastening the process, or part of the restoration.