



MACHINE MADE

A CENTURY
OF CHICAGO
POLITICAL LIFE



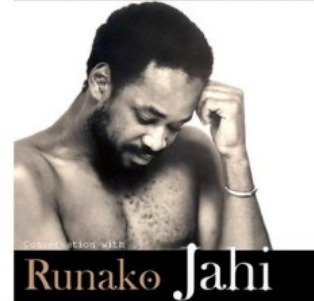
A WORLD PREMIERE
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY SHEPSU AAKHU

DEVELOPED BY
MPAACT'S PLAYWRIGHT'S LABORATORY

LEGACY

ARTISTS

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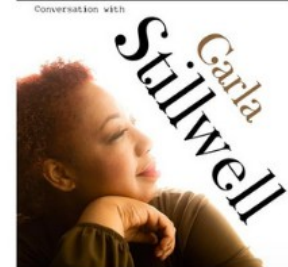


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& PERSONAL

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ABOUT THE PLAY

SETTING

Present day Chicago (3 locales).

- 1) *The Bullpen*, a university workspace where peers gather to offer support.
- 2) *The Parlor* of Chuck Thurman's home. The sitting room of one of Chicago's storied power brokers.
- 3) *The Liminal Spaces*, where memory, history, and personal need merge, with often unexpected results.

WRITER'S NOTE

Sometimes your phone rings, and answering the call unlocks a future that you did not anticipate. I received such a call from Nadia Pillay, almost two years ago. She wanted me to meet Chuck Bowen. I answered the call - and my life changed.

I was always a student of Chicago's history. I spent my career chronicling the lives of my family, my city, it's sometimes violent clashes of culture, race, class, and the politics interwoven therein. Meeting Chuck Bowen and the subsequent 6 months of interviews that we undertook together, turned my understanding upside down. I feel as though my creative life was the training ground that prepared me to meet the man and to grapple with the first-hand knowledge of his life inside the power structures of our city.

It has been the privilege of my life to have been invited into his company, and further still to have had the opportunity to engage with him about so much history that was unknown to me prior. This play represents but a fraction of what we explored together. It would take a cycle of plays to adequately cover the century plus of context needed to tell this story. In the end—there were so many amazing stories that were left on the cutting room floor.

- Shepsu Aakhu

CAST

Andre TeamerChuck Thurman
Nadia PillayAkiva Samuels
Cat Evans.....Understudy

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Before I was done writing the first draft of *Machine Made*, I was on the phone with my “mentor and theater papa,” Chuck Smith. “Chuck,” I said, “I have the perfect play for you. I need an experienced director who loves this city, and understands Black life here - first hand. I need someone in Chuck Bowen's peer group. Someone who understands the unspoken language of experience.”

Chuck Smith moved a few things around, and I had my perfect director, married to the perfect conversation about our living history. Unfortunately, Chuck Smith had to attend to the pressing matters of his personal health, but before he took a step back he shared - “You understand this world better than anyone. You are the bridge between these two viewpoints.”

And with that I stepped into the director's chair of *Machine Made*. The talent assembled to bring this world together is stellar. It was yet another privilege to collaborate with them and bring forth a layered story that was greater than any of us could have told alone.

At the core of this play is a story about the relationship of two people. Through them, we get a better look at how history is not behind us, but rather it is present even now, shaping how we talk to each other, care for one another, and move through our shared spaces.

- Shepsu Aakhu

PROFILES



Andre Teamer (*Charles Thurman*) has been a Chicago actor for over 30 years. He has performed with many Chicago theaters including: The Goodman, TimeLine, The Black Ensemble, Steppenwolf, Writer's Theatre, Victory Gardens, and MPAACT. He is a proud company member of MPAACT where he has originated iconic roles in *Dandelions*, *Tad in 5th City* (along side his son Destin), *Speaking in Tongues*, *Warm on the Coolin' Board*, *First Words* and *Kosi Dasa*. Voice work at MPAACT includes the podcast plays for *Dandelions*, *Black & Blue*, *Moon Women Eat Pecan Pie*, *Fascia*, *Speaking in Tongues*, *Kiwi Black*, and *BlaQ Market Monologues*. Television and film credits include; *The Christmas Tree*, *Love Shorts*, *Market Value*, *Spokes*, *The Playboy Club: Chicago Med*, *Chicago PD* (NBC), *Empire* (FOX), *The CHI* (Showtime). André is represented by Paonessa Talent.



Nadia Pillay (*Akiva Samuels*) is a proud company member of MPAACT, where she was last seen in Shepsu Aakhu's *Spoken Word*, portraying Parisa. She is also a member of Theatre Y, having recently appeared in *Frontiers Sans Frontiers* and the Jeff-nominated *Rhinoceros*. Additionally, Nadia is part of Proboscis Theatre Co., specializing in devised physical theatre.

Her passion for the arts extends beyond performance; she serves as Casting Director for MPAACT and is a board member and Artist Liaison for Color Me Africa Fine Arts, an organization dedicated to providing international exposure for African artists from the continent and diaspora.

Production credits include *Stories of the Body* (Theatre Y.), collaborations with McKay Arts in *It's Okay to Say Goodbye*, and *Westloop Paradise*, *The Good Night Ladies* in a one-woman show *22nd Century*, Congo Square's *New Playwrights* and *Invisible Crowns*, and the critically acclaimed *Self-Accusation* (Theatre Y.).

Nadia's TV pilot "*The Dryver*" received "Winner" distinctions and awards for Best Pilot at the Global Film Festival and the Vegas Film Festival. Nadia is honored to be invited to collaborate with MPAACT's production of *Machine Made*, in the role of Akiva.



J. David Shanks (*Lu's Notebook Voiceover*) prides himself on being the contemporary renaissance man. He's a TV writer, producer, and actor with writing credits that include: *Alex Cross* (Prime) *Bass Reeves* (Paramount+), *Shades of Blue* (NBC) *Shots Fired* (Fox) *The Chi* (Showtime) and the critically acclaimed *Seven Seconds* (Nexflix) where his episode, *MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH* won the 2019 NAACP IMAGE AWARD for Outstanding Writing in a Television Drama. He's also a father of three amazing children and is watched over by his Guardian Angel, Nia Gabrielle, his dearly departed daughter. David is also a proud husband to his Beautiful Wife, Tiffany C. Shanks. A Chicago native and producing partner with Shepsu Aakhu—when we needed someone with the voice and precise memory for the legendary radio program *Lu's Notebook*—we knew exactly who to call.

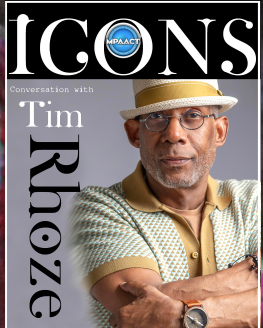
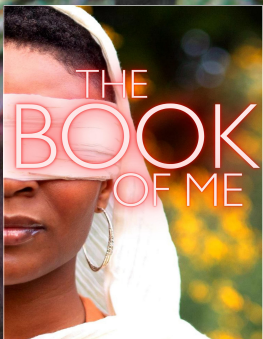


Cat Evans (*u/s Akiva Samuels*) is a three time Jeff nominee and BACA 2024 Black Excellence Award recipient. They are a Chicago based Actor and received their BFA in Acting from Northern Illinois University and are currently represented by Lily's Talent. Notable works: *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Babes with Blades), *JANE: Abortion and the*

Underground (Idle Muse), *Joan and the Fire* (Trap Door), *Medea Material* (Trap Door), *The Crucible* (Edge of the Wood). Cat was last seen at MPAACT in the BACA award winning role of Ms. Lady in *Tad in 5th City*. www.catrinaevans.com



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AN AUDIO MULTIVERSE



PRODUCTION



Shepsu Aakhu (*Playwright/Director*) A founding member, has penned over 30 critically acclaimed world-premiere works for MPAACT. Among them are: *Ride or Die*; *Red Summer*; *Spoken Word*; *Black & Blue*; *Never the Milk & Honey*; *By Association*; and *Starting Over*. Shepsu is a 2-time recipient of the Ted Ward Prize (*Ten Square & Kivi*

Black), a 2-time Artistic Fellow in Scriptworks (Illinois Arts Council - 2019 and 2004), a 7-time nominee for Best Original Work (BTAA) with awards for *The Abesha Conspiracy* and *Trouble The Water*. He is a 6-time nominee for the Joseph Jefferson Citation, with awards for Best New Work (*Speaking in Tongues/Babel*), and Original Music (*Kosi Dasa* and *Kivi Black*). *Cop Out!* and *Evolve* premiered for Red Door Theater (Portland, OR) in 2018 with writing credits shared by Shepsu and several Chicago writers. Currently, Shepsu has *The Companion*, the stage adaptation of his epic feature length-film on the Namibian holocaust in development at Georgetown University.

Several of Shepsu's plays are available in audio at (MPAACTPLAYS.COM) and in print media - *The BlaQ Market* (*Sakhu*) and *Seven Black Plays* (*Northwestern Univ. Press*). In digital print media, Shepsu serves as editor-in-chief and as a regular contributor for *Listen* magazine - the companion magazine for podcast plays (the audio multiverse). Independent film projects abound with longtime collaborator Mark Spencer (Masmedia) including the 2024 premiere of *One Thousand Negative Confessions*. Content for television and film continues in development with producing partners J. David Shanks and Phillip Edward Van Lear. Shepsu recently served as a writer for series television with AMC/Charter, and HBO.

To Chuck Bowen and his entire support network (especially Soraya, Nadia, and Chuck Bowen Jr.), thank you for inviting me into this process. It has been an honor to chronicle your vast experiences in the "American experiment." To the cast, and the production staff - thanks for making the impossible possible. For my wife Hiwoté, baby sister Nina, my boys (really men now) family, friends, and the other victims of my emotional fall-out. ...nothing without you. *San Bra Fie ...Remember the Remembering*.



Lauren "LL" Lundy (*Production Stage Manager*) is MPAACT's Managing Producer, Director of Development, resident Director, and sometimes stage manager. Her favorite SM shows are always her most challenging. She reveled in the joys of *Red Summer*, our

Broadway-sized musical, complete with a live band, flying set pieces, and multimedia, along with the intimate multimedia production of *Ride or Die* by Shepsu Aakhu. LL will be back in the director's chair for the world premiere of *Squat* by Tina Fakhrid-Deen this coming winter. In the meantime check out her expanded catalogue in audio media, where she helped launch MPAACT into the digital marketplace with PODCAST PLAYS. She had the joy of re-imagining some of her favorite titles in "the Audio Multiverse" - *Warm on the Coolin' Board*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Spoken Word*, *Swamp Baby* and *Starting Over*.



Shariba Rivers (*Assistant Director*) is immensely grateful to have been asked to sit "on the other side of the table" as assistant director for such a profound piece of work. Previous directing credits include *Gabriel's Threshold* (MPAACT Podcast Play) and two staged readings of new plays. Shariba is a

Chicago-based actor and a company member at MPAACT, a member of Playground-Chicago, and part of Artemisia Theatre's Leadership Coalition. In addition to MPAACT, she has appeared on stages across Chicago, including Goodman, TimeLine, and Raven Theatres. TV credits include *The Chi*, *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago PD*, and *Empire*. Shariba is an award-winning actor for her role as Lilian Harper in the BBC award-winning audiodrama, *Unwell: A Midwestern Gothic Mystery*. Recognition includes being the 2024 3Arts Stan Lipkin & Evelyn Appell Lipkin award winner and being listed as one of Newcity's 50 Players for both 2023 and 2025. Shariba is represented by Gray Talent Group and is a proud member of both SAG-AFTRA and AEA. www.sharibatheactor.com



Shawn Wallace (*Composer*) returns to MPAACT on the heels of the premiere staging of *Red Summer* and a successful revival of *Warm on the Coolin' Board*. A multi-talented musical artist in styles ranging from Gospel to Jazz to Hip-Hop and beyond; as keyboardist, Shawn has worked with

luminary artists such as Common, Ice Cube, Little Brother, Bobby Brown, Dwele, Johnny Gill, Jon B., Bilal, Estelle, Julie Dexter, Erykah Badu, Rene Neufville, Rakim, Eric Roberson, and Maggie Brown just to name a few. Arrangement and composition for theatre include Ifa Bayeza's *Amistad Voices* (Chicago Shakespeare) *Kid Zero* (Chicago Center for Performing Arts) and *Charleston Olio* (National Black Theatre Festival) Shepsu Aakhu's *Warm on the Cooling Board* (MPAACT 2014/2025) and Carla Stillwell's *Lawd the CVS is Burning...a Gospel Musical Stage Play* (MPAACT 2015), *When Good Broccoli Goes Bad* (MPAACT), *Middle Passage* (Lifeline 2022) and *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* (Pegasus 2017). Independent film score credits include *Severed Ties* (Showcase Productions/Lions Gate Films), *Puzzle Love* (Storybox Productions) and *Son of America* (Tanskin Productions/N'Spire Entertainment INC). Sound Design credits include *N* (GLP Productions 2019), *Single Black Female* and *Lady Day at Emmerson's Bar and Grill* (Congo Square 2018-2019), *Love Child* (Live Bait /Chicago Theatre Co.), and *Love Talk* (Chicago Theatre Company). Commercial credits include work for Jet Magazine, Mississippi Rick's Restaurant, Huffly Bicycles, Arby's and Sprint.



Abboyé Lawrence (*Media Artist*) is happy to be back with MPAACT. Having spent the last two decades working in the company as a stage hand, sound operator, sound designer, and photographer, Abboyé is proud to put his digital filmmaking degree (DePaul University) to work as a media artist for his home theater. His media design credits with

MPAACT include *Pulled Punches*, *Red Summer*, and *Ride or Die*. Other credits include *Smart People* (*Lydia Diamond*) and his recent work on *Coronation* with Refracted Theatre Company which earned him a Jeff

Award. Abboyé continues to refine his skills in film and television production. During the pandemic, he worked as part of the film crew for two seasons of *61st Street* (AMC) and served as a freelance photographer for several independent artists. His photography has also been featured in MPAACT's media campaigns for Podcast Plays and Red Summer. In addition Abboyé is a principle photographer *Listen Magazine*. Check out his work at www.abboyelawrence.com.

Jessica Kuehnau Wardell (*Set Design*) is a scenic and costume designer, educator, and artist based in Chicago. As Artistic Associate with MPAACT since 2006, Jessica has designed countless productions including *Red Summer*, *Pulled Punches*, *Spoken Word*, *Speaking in Tongues* (BTA Award - Best Set Design), *Warm on the Coolin' Board*, and *Ten Square*. Recent Chicago credits include *Heartsellers* (Northlight Theatre), *Top Dog/Underdog* (The Gift Theatre) *Miss Bennett Christmas at Pemberley* (Buffalo Theatre Ensemble); *What the Constitution Means to Me* (Timeline Theatre); *Lela & Company*, *Brilliant Adventure* (Steep Theatre); and *Noises Off* (Windy City Playhouse). Regionally Jessica has designed immersive theatrical cocktail experiences across the country with Fever Originals and two national tours of the new TYA productions *Hero: The Boy from Troy* and *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (First Woman Productions). International credits include costume design for the UK premiere of Andras Visky's *Juliet* presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Edinburgh, Scotland) and costume design for *Reprise* (Adventure Stage Chicago) commissioned for the Far and Away Festival at the National Theatre of Scotland. Jessica holds an MFA in stage design from Northwestern University and is resident designer at Roosevelt University. jesskdesign.com



Lauren Wells-Mann (*Costume Design*) is a proud company member with MPAACT. In addition to her work as an award winning director, actor, and teaching artist, Lauren finds the time to put on her "costume designer hat" and help her company bring another show to life. Mrs. Wells-Mann holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Theater/Acting (Columbia College Chicago) and a Masters in Secondary Education (Univ. of Phoenix).

Aidan Lynn Smith (*Lighting Design*) is grateful to be back designing for MPAACT. His selected lighting credits include: *[Title of Show]* (PrideArts), *Warm on the Coolin' Board*, *Blackademics*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Ride or Die* (MPAACT), *The Birds*, *Escanaba in da Moonlight* (The Playhouse at White Lake), *A Happy Life*, *Medea* (Underground Theatre), and *Junie B. Jones The Musical* (ACWL). When Aidan isn't perched on a ladder deep in thought you can find him cooking or making ceramics. Aidan gives all his love to his partner, family, and friends. Check out more of his work at aidanlynsmith.com

Caro Arana (*Props*) is excited to be working with MPAACT again following *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Warm on the Coolin' Board*, and *The Book of Me*. She would like to thank her friends, family, and partner for supporting her artistic endeavors.

Desta Sound (*Sound Design*) returns to MPAACT on the heels of a fabulous run with designs for the post-pandemic premieres of, *The Promotion*, *The Book of Me*, *Pulled Punches*, *Red Summer*, *Ride or Die*, *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Dandelions*, and *Tad in 5th City* (revival). Anchored by Shepsu Aakhu, this design team continues to make MPAACT's "sound" the most distinctive in the city. Most recently, Desta 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 own imagination.



Igolo Obi (*Asst. Stage Manager*) is excited to be joining MPAACT for *Machine Made*. A graduate of the University of Chicago, Igolo has a background in creative strategy and storytelling. This is her first production with MPAACT, and she's proud to be a part of Chicago's vibrant arts community.



Ashley Coney (*Production Assistant*) hails from Louisville, KY where she graduated from the Youth Performing Arts School (YPAS). Passionate about the arts, In 2009 Ashley earned her BA in Theatre with a concentration in Acting from Point Park Univ. She knew CHITOWN was her town, so she relocated and soon found her first gig as a *Summer on the Nile* drama teacher at ETA. Ashley has performed in various shows around the city and has discovered a calling for the technical side of things. She most recently stage managed the premieres of *Ezekiel's Wheel*, *Ride or Die* and *Pulled Punches* (MPAACT) and *The Billboard* (GLady/16TH Street Theater), a Jeff award recipient. Ashley would like to thank the cast and production staff for their amazing talent!

FEATURE ARTICLE



Birth of a Dream

by Shepsu Aakhu

Nostalgia is a dangerous thing. If you linger in it too long, you change everything - or maybe just the important things. We here at Listen are taking the challenge of chronicling our history. We are writing down those decades of living, that helped form the institution of MPAACT. But more importantly, we look to capture an honest look at the era, the people, and forces that helped shape us.

It's not nostalgia. We don't want to make it all warm and fuzzy for you, nor do we wish scrub clean the blemishes. We just want to tell it - as best we remember it - rather than leave our stories to someone else.

So with that in mind, we'll make you a promise... this is us... the way it happened - with all the joys and sorrows that that came with the journey.

PRODUCTION STAFF

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
Information Technology.....Jelani Pitcher
Web Design.....Lauren "Clutch" Lundy
Marketing.....Joshua X. Miller & Tamarus Harvell

DirectorShepsu Aakhu
Playwright.....Shepsu Aakhu
Production Stage ManagerLauren "LL" Lundy
Assistant Director.....Shariba Rivers
Set Design.....Jessica Wardell
Media Design.....Abboye Lawrence
Composer.....Shawn Wallace
Costume Design.....Lauren Wells-Mann
Sound Design.....Desta Sound
Lighting Design.....Aidan Lynn Smith
Properties Design.....Caro Arana
Technical Director.....Shepsu Aakhu
Dramaturgy.....Shepsu Aakhu
Asst. Stage Manager.....Igolo Obi
Production Photographers.....Abboyé Lawrence/Shepsu Aakhu
Production Manager.....Lauren "LL" Lundy
Production Assistant.....Ashley Coney



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Color Me Africa Fine Arts Gallery supports, cultivates and promotes the diverse contribution of Africa in the arts, through exhibitions and programs that serve to educate and enrich the communities we serve. We create and provide professional development and public programs that invite discussions about African American and African art and its place in the global art market.

Featured artists include...

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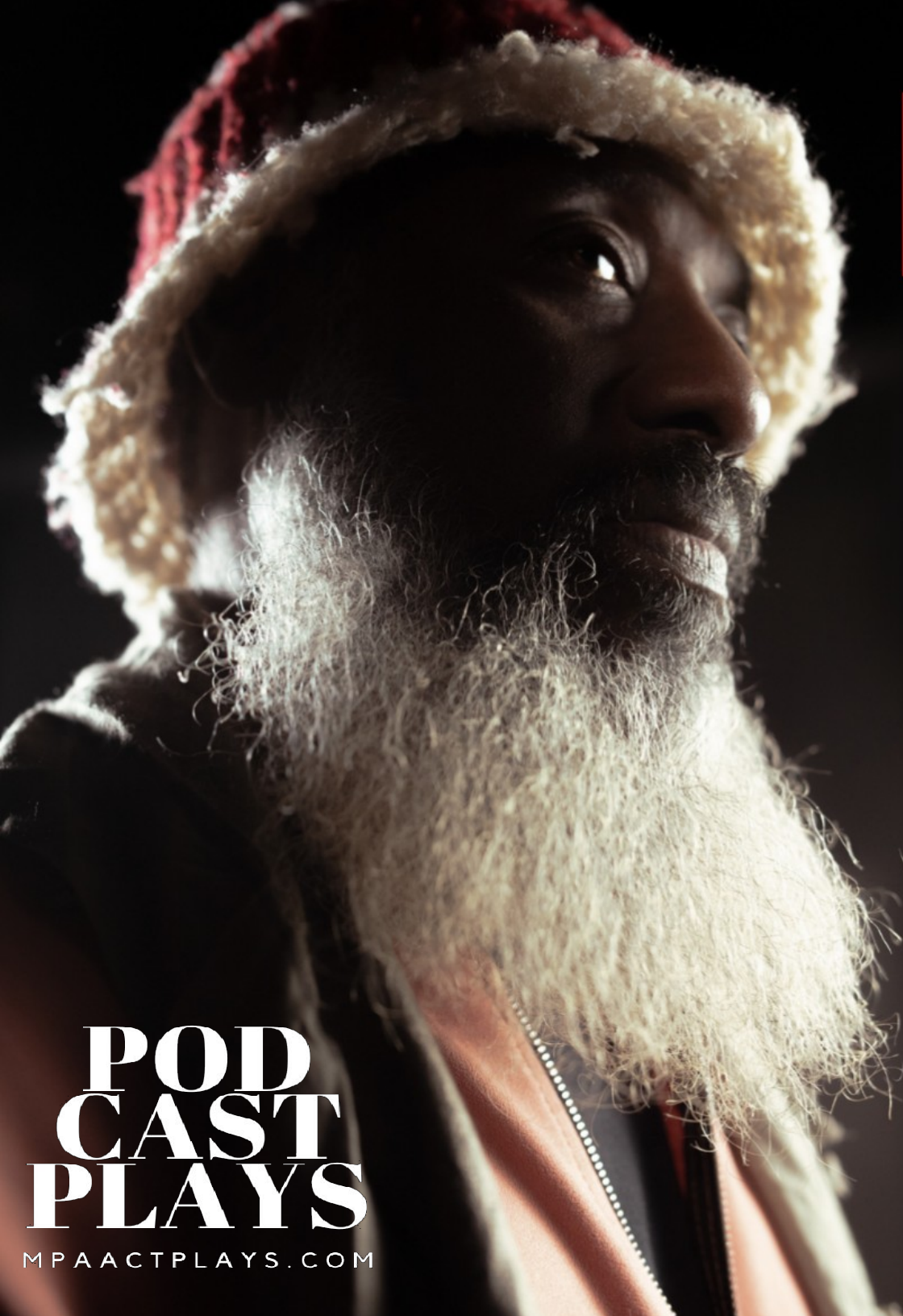
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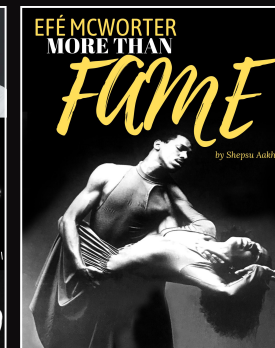
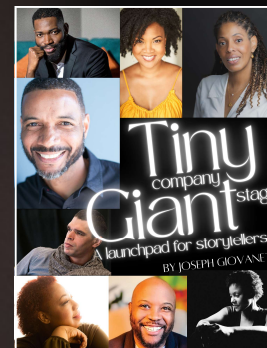
LISTEN MAGAZINE

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ARTFUL CONVERSATION

POD
CAST
PLAYS

MPAACTPLAYS.COM



THE COMPANY

* Denotes Founding Member



MISSION

The Ma'at Production Association of Afrikan Centered Theater (MPAACT) is a professional, not-for-profit theater association founded in 1990. 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.

MEMBERS

Shepsu Aakhu*	Melanie McCullough
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Brittany Davis	Sean R. Neron*
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Mark Franklin	Nadia Pillay
Joseph Giovannetti	Jelani Pitcher
Lauren Wells-Mann	Aum Mu Ra
Tamarus Harvell	Shariba Rivers
Leonard House	Carla Stillwell
Eddie Jordan III	André Teamer
Lauren "LL" Lundy	Shawn Wallace*

EMERITUS

Carl Barnett*	William S. Carroll*	Nambi E. Kelley
Georges Blaise*	Daryl Charisse	Danjuma Gaskin

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES

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

ANGELS

Lennal "Sati" Word	Sharlet Webb	Larry Nance
Ron White	Terry Cullers	

POD
CAST
PLAYS

PRODUCTION STAFF

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Sound Engineer.....	Sean Neron
Sound Engineer.....	Mark Franklin
Sound Editor.....	Shepsu Aakhu
Sound Design.....	Desta Sound
Subscription Services.....	Lauren “LL” Lundy
Platform Management.....	Jelani Pitcher
Voice Talent.....	The Company
Content Producer.....	Shepsu Aakhu



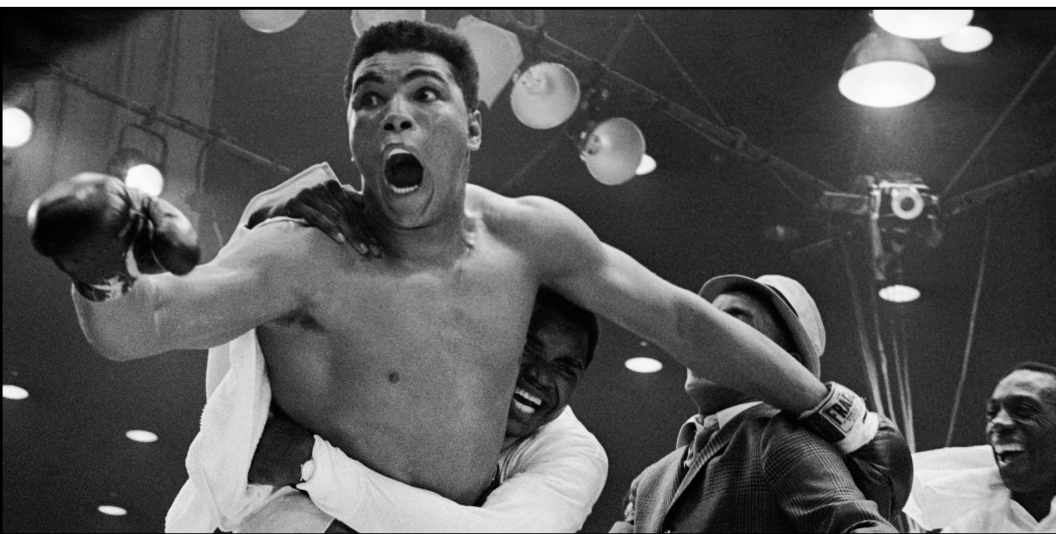
LISTEN

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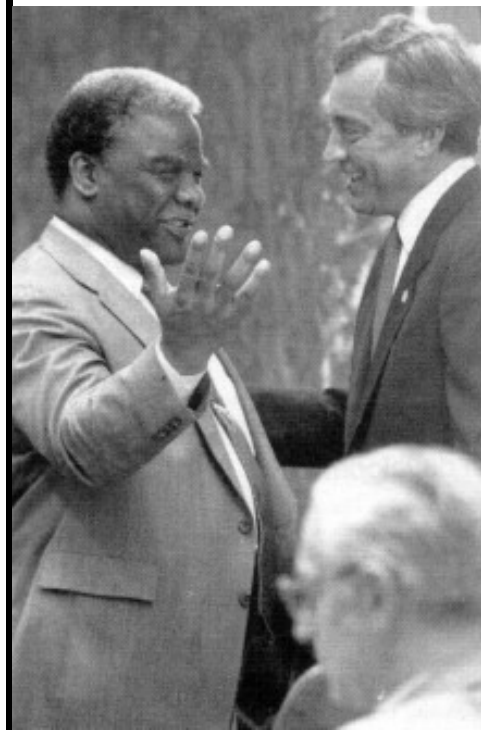
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34 SEASONS

<i>The Promotion</i>	World Premiere	2025
<i>The Book of Me</i>	World Premiere	2024
<i>Warm on the Coolin' Board</i>	Revival	2024
<i>Tad in 5th City</i>	Revival	2024
<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>Extended Jams</i>	Established	2012
<i>Bodies</i>	World Premiere	2012
<i>Sweet Home</i>	World Premiere	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>Chris T.</i>	World Premiere	2000
<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

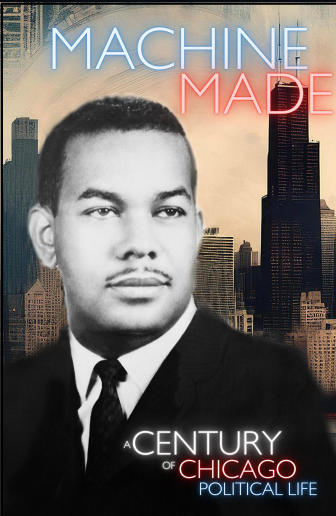
MPAACT is committed to the development of original works.

Unsolicited scripts are encouraged.

P.O. Box 10039 - Chicago, IL 60610 - (661) 373-3089

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**WRITTEN/DIRECTED
BY SHEPSU AAKHU**

OCT. 17 – NOV 24, 2025

In this tour de force, Shepsu Aakhu explores the memories of Chuck Bowen, a “machine made” public servant who rose to prominence in the Democratic Party of the 1950’s and who now in his early-90’s, continues to have the ear of the powerful. Covering his entrance into the party during the same period as Harold Washington, Chuck’s story covers the intersection of policing, organized crime, the policy racket, housing and urban development, the patronage system and the uneasy bargains that helped to define a century of life in this city.

Through his unique perspective we glimpse the epic moments of his life and that of Chicago, with humor, warmth, wisdom, and an honesty that only a political insider can provide.



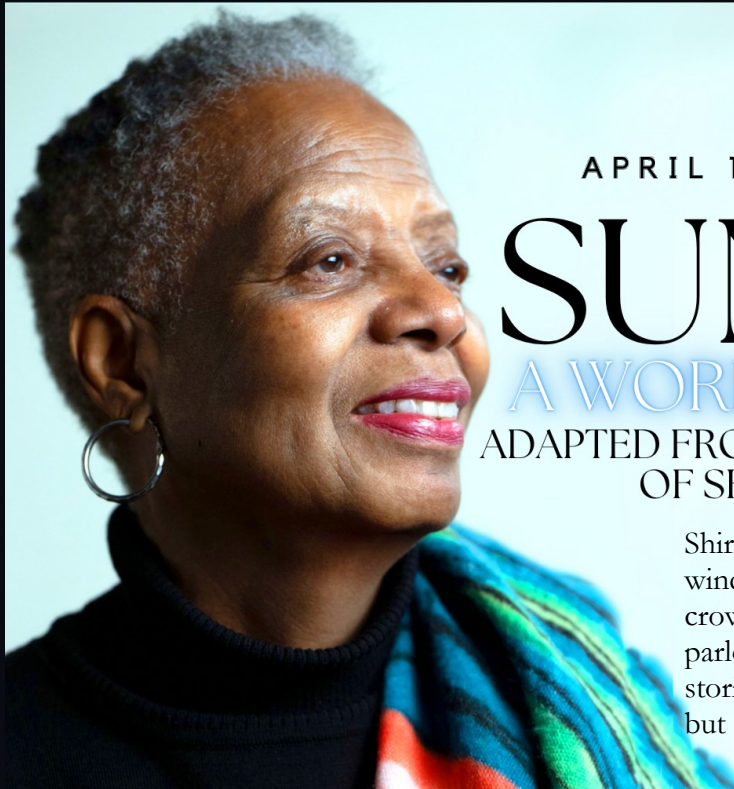
JAN 16 - MAR 1, 2026

SQUAT

A WORLD PREMIERE

BY TINA FAKHRID-DEEN

A couple finds out that their attractive new neighbor, a social media fitness influencer, might not be who she claims to be. As they investigate her life, theirs go under the microscope. Will their revealed secrets lead to clarity, transformation or their collective demise?



APRIL 17 - MAY 31, 2026

SUN TEA

A WORLD PREMIERE

**ADAPTED FROM THE SHORT STORIES
OF SHIRLEY CARNEY**

Shirley Carney’s stories unspool like a winding highway, traveling from crowded urban barrooms to the front parlors of small towns. These are not stories of violence and powerlessness, but those of hope and bravery.

34 SEASONS

299 HONORS

108 STAGED PRODUCTIONS

89 WORLD PREMIERES

120 PODCAST PLAY TITLES

55 AWARDS

34 ISSUES OF LISTEN

22 ARTISTS

**4 PUBLISHED
ANTHOLOGIES**

**2 BROADWAY
PRODUCED
WRITERS**

**1 AMAZING
CULTURAL
INSTITUTION**

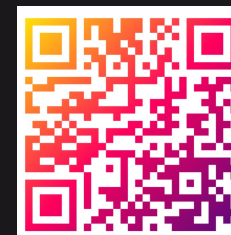


MPAACT has been producing live theater for 34 seasons. It has been a year of great challenges and great art making, but the business of bringing you this art has certainly gotten more difficult.

Your investment is vital to our sustainability. We are asking that you invest in the cultural art that we create - honest examinations of our shared history, our culture, our values, and our struggles to manifest the best of ourselves in times of crisis.

In the current political climate, our work has taken on added importance. We seek to expand the space for dialogue, we wish to continue presenting challenging and nuanced ideas that facilitate understanding, personal, and societal growth. We can't do this work without your investment.

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.



**INVEST
HERE**