

The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company presents:

10th Annual
THEATRE FESTIVAL
IN
BLACK & WHITE
December 5-17
Holiday Edition!

For play descriptions, please go to our website at www.pghplaywrights.com

Program A:

JUST JESUS
BY MARLON ERIK YOUNGBLOOD
DIRECTED BY KAITLIN MAUSSER

TRUE MEANING
BY ANDREW ADE
DIRECTED BY RITA GREGORY

AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT
BY LISSA BRENNAN
DIRECTED BY CHERYL EL WALKER

ST CLAIR XMAS
BY WALI JAMAL
DIRECTED BY MARCUS MUZOPAPPA

CORNUCOPIA
BY TAMMY RYAN
DIRECTED BY ASHLEY SOUTHERS

Program B:

WE NEED A RAMADAN
BY AASIYAH EL-RICE
DIRECTED BY VINCE VENTURA

HANUKKAH IN THE BACK COUNTRY
BY JUDY MEKSIN
DIRECTED BY KIM EL

WHERE I FIRST SAW THE LIGHT
BY DR. TAMEKA CAGE CONLEY
DIRECTED BY T.C. BROWN

CHRISTMAS STAR
BY RAY WERNER
DIRECTED BY MONTEZE FREELAND

AN UBUNTU HOLIDAY
BY KIM EL
DIRECTED BY STEPHEN SANTA

Festival Coordinators: ERIC A SMITH & MARK CLAYTON SOUTHERS

Tickets available at:
www.pghplaywrights.com/bwfest

Festival Coordinators: Mark Clayton Southers and Eric A. Smith
Stage Managers: Imaani Ronee, Caitlin Skaff,
Greg Davis, Mont Jones and Kate Marchewka
Sound Design: Mark Whitehead
Sound Technician: Greg Davis
Light Design: Eric A. Smith, Roger Randolph,
Mark Clayton Southers
Light Technician: Roger Randolph
Set/Properties: Lonzo Green and Diane Melchitzky

The idea for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's Theatre Festival in Black & White developed from a dream of Artistic Director Mark Clayton Southers in 2002. Mark had a dream one night after observing the lack of diversity in Pittsburgh Theater onstage and in the audience. In his dream he saw an audience, a mixed audience laughing and enjoying a show together. When he woke he wondered, what it was that they were enjoying. That's when he decided to create a festival where a play written by a white playwright is directed by a black director, and a play written by a black playwright be directed by a white director causing an interaction behind the scenes that allow diversity to grow? The festival grew to where he would do eight one acts allowing for more playwrights and more actors to get involved. Although you will see great work on stage this evening; the experience that the playwrights, directors, actors and production staff has learned from have allowed the mission of the festival to be realized even before they hit the stage. The plays in the festival do not necessarily have to deal with black and white issues; it is about the experience of the festival. Sit back and watch as you see 10 years of history diversifying Pittsburgh Theater unfold before you. Thank you for coming out this holiday season.

PROGRAM A

JUST JESUS

Reebie Bottom has come home for winter break fresh off of her first college semester emboldened by a personal mission and a passion for African studies. She suggests that her quasi-Christian-conservative, dysfunctional middle class African-American family celebrate Kwanzaa this holiday season. After initially resisting Reebie's ideas, the Bottom family inadvertently becomes introspective about their lackluster embrace of one another and their ethnic identity.

Marlon Erik Youngblood (Playwright) – Marlon is a writer who engages in various literary genres from science fiction and urban drama to non-fiction social commentary and poetry. His subject matter most often revolves around the lives and circumstances of African American characters from all walks of life. A native Pittsburgher, Marlon is originally from Braddock and now currently resides in Rankin with his wife Lisa and three children Demetrius, Amon and Niyah.

Kaitlin Mausser (Director) – This is Kaitlin's third year with the Theatre Festival in Black & White. She made her debut in Ray Werner's Felled Family Tree in the 2011 festival. She won best director in the 2012 festival for her directing of The Vows by Devon Goode. She is excited to be back directing Marlon's Just Jesus. Happy Holidays everyone.

Lesely Crawford (Victoria) – Lesely Crawford is a native of Pittsburgh, has been married for 28 years, and a mother of three children and two grandchildren. She teaches for the Pittsburgh Public School District.

Ife Foy – (Reebie) Ife Foy is thrilled to be making her debut with Just Jesus with Pittsburgh Playwrights! Her credits include The Messenger/Musician in Hecuba and Vera in Seven Guitars with the Point Park Conservatory. She'd like to thank her wonderful support system.

Leo Beatty (Cassius) – Leo is a veteran stage actor who has acted for Kuntu, New Horizons and Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. He is honored to be on stage with such great company.

Amaru Williams (Simon) – A young aspiring actor, Amaru is proud to be part of this year's festival.

Eugene Banks (Obie) - Eugene is an actor from Buffalo New York. Recent work City Theater's Young Playwright Festival, and locally filmed web series The Weakness.

TRUE MEANING

A young woman in her mid-20s, whose life has already stalled, struggles to keep her temper and her dignity at a family Christmas gathering that includes her successful twin brother and his Born Again pregnant wife, each of whom has a very distinct idea of the true meaning of Christmas.

Andrew Ade (Playwright) - Andrew Ade's recent productions include *Reports of a Home Invasion* (Spotlight Award, 2013 New Voice Play Festival, Charles Town, WV), *Little Miss Understanding* (2013 8x10 TheatreFest, Akron, OH) and the New York premiere of *A Question of Taste* (2013 Midtown International Theatre Festival), which had won Best Play at the PPTC's 2007 Theater Festival in Black & White and received the 2009 *Arts & Letters* Prize in Drama. Other produced plays: *Language Barrier* (Best Play, 2010 Black & White) and *Off-Color Remarks* (2011 Pittsburgh New Works Festival). Ade is a Heinz Endowments Fellow, recipient of a Kennedy Center National Teaching Artist Grant, and has had residency fellowships at MacDowell Colony, Ragdale Foundation, and Hambidge Center. He is Associate Professor of English at Westminster College in nearby New Wilmington, PA.

Rita Gregory (Director) - Rita Gregory has been a member of the performing arts community for more than 30 years, having worked in film, television, print media and theater. She has won several awards for her work in the theater. Humbled to share the same space with some of the most talented artists in these United States, she thanks Mark Southers for the opportunity to be a part of this fantastic theatrical event!

Tonya Lynn (Erin) – Tonya's recent roles include Katherina (Taming of the Shrew) and Mistress Quickly (Henry V). She is also a fight choreographer, active in Pittsburgh since 2005.

Adam Rutledge (Evan) – Adam is a master Shakespearian and a fight choreographer. His talents have been used all over the city of Pittsburgh.

Tonia Marie (Karlie) - Tonia got her start in theatre by playing Francine in Mark Clayton Southers' play Ma Noah. She did a mini web series called Pale and continues to work with Benzidream FX. She recently landed a role in a feature film.

AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT

When Justin brings his girlfriend to dinner during the holidays to meet his family for the first time, her being white is not a problem. Her being an atheist is a different story.

Lissa Brennan (Playwright) - Lissa is an actor, educator, director and playwright who has shared her work all over the world, but likes to do so in Pittsburgh the most. She has previously appeared onstage and backstage in the Festival in Black and White as actor and director, and as a playwright is now making her Festival debut. She thanks her director, cast and crew for their willingness to go there, and the audience for their willingness to follow.

Cheryl El-Walker (Director) - Cheryl is award-winning Actress, Makeup Artist and Costume Designer for PPWTCO for the past 10 years, she has also worked and won awards for New Horizon Theatre, Kunte and Wilkinsburg Art Theatre. This Pittsburgh native attended Point Park University and is so proud of her cast for all their support through her directorial debut.

Jamilah Chanie (Grandma Elwood) - Jamilah is most known for her award-winning role as Clare in the play Redneck Revenge. Her most memorable role was Grandma in a color blind casting of the musical Bill Elliot in London, England. P.S. Thank you Mom!

William "Bill" Blair (James) - William has been doing stand up comedy for 10 years. He has performed shows in Pittsburgh, Ohio, West Virginia with two comedy troops. Bill's comedy is straight to the point. By being hilarious, funny, & raw, he holds back no punches with his stick to your mind comedy.

Sara Fisher (Kayleigh) - Sara is the Producing Artistic Director of 12 Peers Theater, where she was last seen as Tracey in Colorado.

Willa Cotton (Vanessa) - In 2006 Willa was nominated by the AACTA for an Onyx Awards as best supporting actress in a musical or revue. She has played the roles of Sarah Vaughn in Clean Drums, the wife of Satchel Paige in Among the Best, an understudy for Beneatha, Althea the bar proprietor, & several dance numbers in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" and as an ex-wife in I Gotcha, The Story of Joe Tex & the Soul Clan. This is also her first Black & White Festival performance.

LaMar Darnell Fields (Justin) - LaMar is a native of Pittsburgh PA and is an actor of stage, film & television. LaMar has made his presence known by being in several Plays, Movies, & Commercials. This is LaMar's second year performing in The Theater Festival in Black & White. He one best actor in his debut in the 2012 Festival, for his role of Kendall, in the play, "The Vows."

ST CLAIR XMAS

As the housing project St Clair Village is torn down, one man launches a "Bring back St Clair" campaign. Big laughs, big drama and remembrances of a neighborhood that is gone with no traces left of it. Will he succeed? Will anyone listen?

Wali Jamal (Playwright) – Wali Jamal’s festival writing credits include, Tigger's Tat (2004), Detention (2005), The Holding Cell (2006), and Doo Rag (2010). Wali would like to thank Marcus and the cast for keeping me afloat during this wondrous voyage into the mind of a sentimental psycho.

Marcus Muzopappa (Director) - Actor, director, graphics/set and/or sound designer in over 80 productions in the Greater Pittsburgh area since 1994.

Wali Jamal (Ernie) – Wali Jamal has been involved with this theater festival since its inception in 2003. Since then he has written, directed, and acted in a myriad of works by some of Pittsburgh's most talented playwrights.

Paul Guggenheimer (Bruce Piso) - Paul is a Pittsburgh based actor and journalist who is host of "Essential Pittsburgh" on 90.5 WESA, Pittsburgh's NPR member station. Paul is coming off of a successful run as Orson Welles/Professor Pierson in "The War of the Worlds" at Bricolage Theatre. He can be seen in the newly released sci-fi feature film "Dust of War" starring Tony Todd and Doug Jones.

Judy Kaplan (Gracie) – Judy previously appeared in Tammy Ryan's "The Music Lesson" and "Dorothy 6" at PPTCO. She looks forward to her Black & White Fest debut with this terrific cast and show!

Deborah Starling (Barnetta) - Debbie is a playwright, published author and lead vocalist with the premier reggae/calypso band in the city, The Flow band.

Charles E Timbers Jr. (Plookum) - Charles E Timbers Jr. started out over 25 years ago in Theater. Has played multiple roles. Best remembered for his role as "Cutler" in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom", "Billy Eckstine" in "The Crawford Grill Presents Billi Holliday" and "Dr. Hayes" in the ABC TV Mini series "The Jacksons an American Dream"

Art Terry (Detective David Gerald) – A veteran actor on stage, film and television. He was most recently seen in Pittsburgh Playwrights historical production of August Wilson's Radio Golf.

Mont Jones (Tootay) – Mont has been a hidden talent behind the scenes in theater, he now brings his talents to stage for this year's festival.

CORNUCOPIA

It's closing time on Christmas Eve at the Family Dollar store. Three employees, the cashier, the manager and the security guard, all struggling to keep body and soul together, are ready to go home after a long night. But a chance encounter with a cold and hungry runaway tests both their capacity for compassion as well as their Christmas spirit.

Tammy Ryan (Playwright) - Tammy Ryan's plays award winning plays have been produced around the country and in Pittsburgh. She thanks Mark and PPTCO for including her in this year's Festival.

Ashley Southers (Director) – Ashley is making her directorial debut with Tammy Ryan's Cornucopia. She is excited and grateful for the outpour of support she has received during this process. She thanks her cast for being there with her every step of the way and Mark Southers "Daddy" for giving her this chance.

Andy Kirkland (Dave) – Andy showed his true love for acting as he portrayed three different characters in three different play in last years Festival. He returns this year to bring a certain fire back to PPTCO's stage.

Laura Hoffman (Helen) – Is excited to return to the Theatre Festival in Black & White.

Aliya Sims (Lacy) – Aliya was most recently seen in PPTCO's production of Sold: Renn Woods in Concert.

Candace Walker (Jacki) - Candace Walker aka Hotep the Artist is an actor, mime, spoken word poet and mother. She is appearing both programs this year in a total of 3 plays. View more info about her work at www.hoteptheartist.com.

We at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company would love to give special thanks to the following for their continued support:



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To stay up on the latest from Pittsburgh Playwrights

PROGRAM B

WE NEED A RAMADAN

Pittsburgh, Hill District Bedford Avenue 2002: The 23rd day of Ramadan (the Islamic holy month) has fallen on Thanksgiving Day. G.G. (Grandma Good Lord) is filled with unwanted anxiety. Overwhelmed with financial distress from their youngest daughter Felicia's court trials and expenses, G.G., a boogie Pentecostal Black Diva Christian, has now requested all family members, including her non-Christian (Muslim) family members, to come to her & Gramps's (Grandpa Have Mercy) home to strive to have one last dinner together as a complete family. The grandparents both secretly fear losing their only home of 43 years... until the Spirit of Ramadan fills the air...

Aasiyah El-Rice (Playwright) – This is Aasiyah's second year writing for the Theatre Festival. She wrote 'The Best Play' In My Sistah's Closet for the 8th annual festival.

Vince Ventura (Director) – Vince is the artistic director for 12 Peers Theatre Company www.12peerstheater.org. This is his second time directing for the Theatre Festival in Black & White and teaming up with Aasiyah El-Rice.

Candace Walker (Layla) - Candace Walker aka Hotep the Artist is an actor, mime, spoken word poet and mother. She is appearing both programs this year in a total of 3 plays. View more info about her work at www.hoteptheartist.com.

Mayme Williams (G.G.) – Has been in many Festivals in the past. She is happy to be back on stage again amongst family and friends.

Sam Lothard (Gramps) – Has acted on many stages and now brings his talents to Pittsburgh Playwrights.

Camille Washington (Shahada) – Camille makes her return to the Theatre Festival in Black & White after teaming with Vince Ventura and Aasiyah El-Rice for In My Sistah's Closet back in 2008.

Vince Ventura (Dwight) – Vince is the artistic director for 12 Peers Theatre Company www.12peerstheater.org. This is his second time directing for the Theatre Festival in Black & White and teaming up with Aasiyah El-Rice.

HANUKKAH IN THE BACK COUNTRY

Julie is a Jewish lesbian. When her girlfriend of six years walks out on their relationship right before Hanukkah, Julie's big sister takes her for a hike in the backcountry. They search for peace of mind, but face new obstacles.

Judy Meiksin (Playwright) - Judy Meiksin is a playwright and poet. This is her third play in TFIBW. PPTCO also produced her play *Jonathan*. Other productions include Queer Theater and WOMENSCENES. Many heartfelt thanks to the wonderful creativity of Mark, Eric, Kim, Christine, Tonya, Shenita, Imaani, and Cheryl.

Kim El (Director) - Kim El is an award winning Pittsburgh artist with extensive history and skills in theatre and education.

Tonya Lynn (Cammie) – Tonya's recent roles include Katherina (Taming of the Shrew) and Mistress Quickly (Henry V). She is also a fight choreographer, active in Pittsburgh since 2005.

Christine Marie (Julie) Stage: Teri-The Session; Miss Casewell-The Mousetrap; Holly-Bored of Education, Margot-Helping Out; Herself-Spooky Musings; Persephone-Ella Noir; Lady Macbeth- Macbeth; Brimstone & Grind Series.

Shenita Williams (Pearl) is a recent graduate of Point Park University, receiving a BA in Acting and is excited to make her first appearance in the Theatre Festival in Black and White.

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WHERE I FIRST SAW THE LIGHT

Christmas Eve and two young men, one White, one Black, are in a cemetery visiting the graves of their fathers. Though they were raised together as brothers, time and differences have driven a wedge in their once close-knit bond. Painful family secrets are revealed, and threaten to unravel even the tiniest bit of affection that lingers between them. Only a supernatural intervention can show the two the thickness of love, family, and friendship that lives beyond the grave.

Dr. Tameka Cage-Conley (Playwrights) – Tameka is an

T.C. Brown (Director) - T.C. earned an M.F.A in acting from WVU. He has worked in a variety of capacities at a number of theatres in the Pittsburgh area. This is T.C.'s 2nd year working with the Black and White Festival. Special Thank You: Victor Capone.

Dionysus Westbrooks (Samuel Jr.) - Dionysus is currently a theatre major at CCAC South campus and is thrilled to be a part of the B&W festival this year.

Ben Blazer (Adam) – Ben is very happy to be a part of this festival and to work with Pittsburgh Playwright's Theatre. He is a local actor and director, who teaches movement and acting for Point Park University. Ben is a proud member of AEA and the P3 Studio Collective.

Jonas Chaney's (Samuel Sr.) – Jonas' theatrical tenure includes memberships with SAG, AFTRA and Actor's Equity. Jonas won the AACTA Onyx Award for Best Leading Actor in a Play for his role as Troy Maxon in Pittsburgh Playwrights production of "Fences". Film credits: *Silence of the Lambs, Iron Maze, Dark Wake, End Game, River of Darkness, What She Doesn't Know (NBC), Stuck With Each Other (CBS), Blind Spot, Alone in the Neon Jungle, For I have Sinned, (ABC) Bride in Black, (HBO) Criminal Justice.*

Barney McKeena (Ronnie) - Barney is a willing conscript for this year's festival. Recent credits: *B.U.S. 8* and *Dutchman*, *Bricolage; The Gammage Project*, Pitt and AWC. It's alive! STRATA LIVES...

CHRISTMAS STAR

It's Christmas Eve, and Kenny comes home from Iraq with a wounded foot and PTSD, to a family that is divided over that war. Kenny is a true patriot. His father is a Vietnam veteran, also with PTSD, and anti-war. The clash is explosive, but not as powerful as the love of a wife and mother. It's the agony of war, and the victory of Christmas.

Ray Werner (Playwright) - Ray's trilogy "Elder Hostages" was the first production in this gem of a theater. "Christmas Star" is his third play in the Black and White. Last year's "Redneck Revenge" was voted the audience favorite. This year, he hopes you think about the ravages of PTSD on the way home. Oh, and Merry Christmas.

Monteze Freeland (Director) - Monteze Freeland is thrilled to make his Black and White festival debut! He has directed for Pittsburgh Playwrights, Kuntu Rep, Pittsburgh New Works Festival and the Pride Festival One Acts. Many thanks to Eric, Mark, Ray, Greg and the cast and crew who continuously promote diversity in the arts within the city of Pittsburgh. This is for Walter "Bennie" Freeland.

Trevor Butler (Kenny) - Trevor Butler is thrilled to participate in Pittsburgh Playwright's Black & White Theatre Festival. He attends Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts as a Theater Arts major. He is ever grateful for his role and hopes to make Pittsburgh Playwrights and COPA proud.

Les Howard (Bernie) - Les Howard A veteran of the music and entertainment world is proud to be making his debut in the Black & White festival. Les looks forward to participating in this extremely relevant and cultural event.

Marcia L. Jones (Gertie) - Marcia L. Jones is a Pittsburgh native who has previously acted with Pittsburgh Playwrights, New Horizon, and Kuntu Repertory Theatre. Marcia is excited to perform in the Black and White Festival and embrace the time of exchange and sharing this event encourages. Marcia wishes that each of you would be graced with peace and hopes the Black and White Festival will enhance your living.

Look for the August Wilson Theatre Festival produced by the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company coming in the spring of 2015.

AN UBUNTU HOLIDAY

An Ubuntu Holiday is a play about an African-American family, Sharifa, Amiri and Shani, as they prepare to celebrate Kwanzaa on December 26th. Shani, their teenage daughter, invites her African-African classmate/neighbor over for the festivities, but her classmate's Christian mother, Jeanne, does not want her daughter involved because she thinks Kwanzaa is anti-Christmas, so she wants to "check things out" before she allows her daughter to participate. Ubuntu is an ancient African word that means "I am what I am because of who we all are." The play unfolds as the women share holiday memories that help each other understand the reasons for their seasons.

Kim El (Playwright) - Kim El is an award winning Pittsburgh artist with extensive history and skills in theatre and education.

Stephen Santa (Director) - Stephen is thrilled to be directing for this wonderful festival! For info on Stephen's directing work please go to www.stephensanta.com. I give many thanks to Mark, Eric, Kim, and Caitlin. Happy Holidays!

Crystal Beatty (Geanne) - Crystal first gives all honor and glory to God. This is her first appearance in the Black and White festival and she is pleased to be here. She looks forward to what God has in store for her future!

Larry Scott (Amiri) – Larry is a graduate of Clarion University of Pa with a degree in Broadcasting, and Communication Studies. He really enjoys the performing arts.

Candace Walker (Sharifa) - Candace Walker aka Hotep the Artist is an actor, mime, spoken word poet and mother. She is appearing both programs this year in a total of 3 plays. View more info about her work at www.hoteptheartist.com.

Nia Washington (Shani) – Acting is in Nia's family and she brings her family tradition to Pittsburgh Playwrights stage at this year's Theatre Festival in Black & White.

Happy Holidays from

Founder and Artistic Director Mark Clayton Southers

Managing Director Eric A. Smith

and the entire

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company Family

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