Illusion Theater’s 2023 Fresh Ink Series

New works by
Bob Beverage, Michael Robins & Roberta Carlson,
and Carlyle Brown & Victor Zupanc

Plus, some special events

Illusion Theater’s Fresh Ink Series allows writers to explore new areas by giving them a platform and the resources they need to develop new work in a workshop setting and then share that with an audience. The Fresh Ink Series began in 1987 and has continued each year since.

Illusion Theater, known for creating new works, has been producing socially impactful plays for nearly 50 years. Producing Directors Michael Robins and Bonnie Morris have led Illusion Theater since 1974 and have guided nearly 500 plays to production.

The 2023 Fresh Ink Series

- **The Long Fall Down** written and directed by Bob Beverage. Featuring Pierce Bunting as Sinclair Lewis with Carlyle Brown serving as Dramaturge. Thursday June 8, through Sunday June 11, 2023.


Special Event

- **The Free Black Table** presented by Black Table Arts on Friday, June 23 7:30-9:30pm. Information about the event will be available at [https://www.facebook.com/BlackTableArts/](https://www.facebook.com/BlackTableArts/). Black Table Arts is a community driven arts cooperative located in Minneapolis Minnesota gathering black communities through the arts towards better black futures. Illusion is pleased to host Black Table Arts in our Center for Performing Arts space having hosted several the Open Mic Series in downtown Minneapolis for several years.
The Plays and Playwrights

The Long Fall Down written and directed by Bob Beverage. Starring Pierce Bunting as Sinclair Lewis.

We meet American novelist, Sinclair “Red” Lewis at the pinnacle of his literary achievements, having just won the Nobel Prize. From there, it’s 21 long years of highs and lows. Over the course of the play, we see Sinclair Lewis’ struggle to regain the success he had early in his literary career, even as he strives to find a fulfilling personal life. Exploring some of the issues and demons that haunted Sinclair Lewis in the first half of the 20th century reflects on the issues and demons that haunt many of us today.

BOB BEVERAGE (Playwright) has written or co-written numerous scripts for the stage and television. His plays have received professional productions around the country – many of which have featured historical subjects. His work has been produced at many theaters including Florida Stage, History Theatre, Capital Repertory Theatre, Riverside Stage, and Meadowbrook Theatre. Sisters of Swing (co-written with Beth Gilleland), has been translated into Dutch and German, and has received multiple productions in Germany, Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands. His screenplay, One Who Stole at Christmas produced by WCCO-TV, won an IRIS Award for “Best Entertainment in a Medium Market.” He has also written and/or produced segments for Volcanos: Ring of Fire for The Discovery Channel, Carpe Diem in Paris for Knowledge TV, segments of the Children’s Miracle Network Telethon (Minneapolis production) and award-winning segments for Newton’s Apple produced by Twin Cities Public Television. Bob is a member of Actors’ Equity and has performed at The Guthrie Theatre, The Ordway, History Theatre, Children’s Theatre Company, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, and many more.

PEARCE BUNTING (Sinclair Lewis) has appeared in the Twin Cities at Park Square Theatre (Holmes and Watson), History Theatre (Parks, All The Way, Great Society, Dance Till You Drop, The Things They Carried, Radio Man), Ten Thousand Things (Pericles, As You Like It), Theatre Latte Da (Peter and the Starcatcher), Open Eye (The Holiday Pageant, Cabinet of Wonders), Points of View (The Life and Loves of Sinclair Lewis), Theatre Novi Most (Master Builder, The Seagull). Other credits: Theatre Exile (Killer Joe, Lieutenant of Inishmore, Blackbird, A Behanding in Spokane, Annapurna, Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf), The Wilma Theatre (Road, Under the Whaleback), Big House (The Wild Duck, Endgame). Broadway (Mamma Mia), HBO (Boardwalk Empire). Pearce also cohosts a podcast with his 18-year-old kid, Milo, called Growing Up Naked.


We all have soundtracks for moments in our lives and we all have artists whose songs were part of those moments. The music of Judy Collins, Joan Baez, and Joni Mitchell provided those
moments for many of us. If you remember songs like, *My Father, I Think It’s Going to Rain*, *Chelsea Morning, Diamond and Dust, River, With God on Our Side*, and *Big Yellow Taxi* you’ll love this evening.

Roberta Carlson is familiar to local audiences for her work with Illusion in *For Our Daughters, Bill W and Dr. Bob, Love and Marriage*, and *Only One Sophie*. She composed music at Children’s Theatre Company and the Jungle Theater. She has also composed for the Guthrie Theater, Arizona Theater Company, and many other theaters across the country. Her score for Steven Dietz’s *Dracula* has been used in more than 150 productions nationally, as well as Canada, Europe, and Japan. She has twice been the recipient of the Arizona State Arts Council "Zuni" Award as well as various other critics’ awards.

Michael Robins founded Illusion Theater in 1974. Over the past 40+ years, he has guided nearly 500 plays to production. Most recently Michael directed T. Mychael Rambo’s *PRESENT*, the premiere of Michael Egan’s stage adaptation *Five Minutes of Heaven*, and *In This Moment...Now*. Favorite projects he has directed include Allison Moore’s Ivey award winning *My Antonia, Bill W. & Dr. Bob* by Samuel Shem and Janet Surrey, James Still’s *Miranda*, Kate Guentzel in *The Pink Unicorn*, and Jeffrey Hatcher and Chan Poling’s *A Night in Olympus*. With Roberta Carlson, Michael created the musical *Only One Sophie*. Michael is part of the team that created Illusion’s Education/Prevention program in 1977 starting with the award-winning play *Touch*. Michael received the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Ivey Award with Illusion Theater co-founder Bonnie Morris.

**Nobody No Time** written by Carlyle Brown with music by Victor Zupanc. Directed by Keith Glover and featuring Peter Jay Fernandez as Bert and James Williams as Chappy.

It’s February 25, 1922 - the last night in the life of celebrated Negro entertainer Bert Williams. In a break between performances of a matinee and the evening show, Bert regales his longtime assistant with songs and stories of a career built on the exploitation of Negro stereotypes. **Nobody, No Time** is a play with music that looks inside one of the most complex and conflicted figures of the Vaudeville era.

CARLYLE BROWN (Playwright) is the Andrew W. Mellon Playwright in Residence at Illusion. His shows produced at Illusion include *Finding Fish, Acting Black, A Play by Barb and Carl*, and *History of Religion*. Other Twin Cities productions include *Little Tommy Parker’s Celebrated Colored Minstrel Show* and *The African Company Presents Richard III* at Penumbra Theater, Beggars’ Strike at the Children’s Theater Company, the Mixed Blood production of *Pure Confidence* that moved to off-Broadway in New York, and *American Family* at Park Square Theater. Other plays that have been produced across the country include *The Negro of Peter the Great, A Big Blue Nail, Dartmoor Prison, The Pool Room, Yellow Moon Rising, Down in Mississippi, Are You Now or Have You Ever Been*... He has received commissions from Arena Stage, Houston Grand Opera, The Children’s Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Goodman Theater, Miami University of Ohio, and the University of Louisville. He was honored for Distinguished Achievement in American Theater by the William Inge Theater Festival. In 2022 he received the Legacy Award from the Legacy Playwrights Initiative of the Dramatist’s Guild. The award recognizes established American
playwrights for their sustained influence on the American theatre. Carlyle Brown began the Cultural Diaspora Project held at the Camargo Foundation in France in 2018 and 2022. That Project led to Carlyle with the Playwrights Center to hold the 2019 Afro-Atlantic Playwright Festival here in Minneapolis. Carlyle is a Core Writer at the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis and an alumnus of New Dramatists. As part of Carlyle’s Mellon Residency, Illusion, Playwrights’ Center, and the Camargo Foundation will hold a second Afro-Atlantic Playwright Festival October 13-15, 2023, in Minneapolis.

VICTOR ZUPANC (Composer) began his musical career studying violin and piano at the age of six at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Victoria, British Columbia. After receiving his Bachelor of Music Degree at the University of Victoria he went on to earn his master’s degree in music composition at the University of California at San Diego in 1983. Since 1989 he has held the position of Resident Music Director/Composer at the Tony Award winning Children’s Theater Company of Minneapolis (CTC). At CTC, Mr. Zupanc composes scores and conducts orchestras comprised of the finest professional musicians in the country. From members of the Minnesota Orchestra and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra to members of Prince’s New Power Generation, Victor has the trust of the best musicians in the business. Not to mention the finest playwrights, directors, theater artists and actors in the country.

About the Illusion Theater

Illusion Theater was founded in 1974 and presents its season in its new home in the Center for Performing Arts in South Minneapolis. Since the beginning, Producing Directors Michael Robins and Bonnie Morris have led Illusion Theater in illuminating the illusions, myths, and realities of our times and in using theater to catalyze personal and social change. In 2021 Tree O’Halloran joined Illusion as Associate Producer. Illusion has generated over 500 plays, developed thousands of artists, and created groundbreaking educational work. Plays developed at Illusion have been produced in theaters throughout the world. Illusion’s works have catalyzed conversations in living rooms, kitchens, coffee houses boardrooms, and has led to transformations in policy, in organizations, in students and in individuals.

INFORMATION

FRESH INK – Illusion Theater’s Annual Series of New Works
June 8 through June 30, 2023

Location:
Center for Performing Arts
3754 Pleasant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409
Box Office: 612-339-4944

www.illusiontheater.org

Tickets: Name Your Price
Illusion is pleased to announce Name Your Price as the norm. Name Your Price offers a sliding scale to our community starting at $10. We encourage those who can afford $25 tickets
to pay full price. Your generosity will help support Illusion in providing our community with Name Your Price tickets. All tickets will be e-tickets.

**Seating**: General Admission.

**COVID Precautions**: Masks will be optional for all performances. Prior to the performance if you are experiencing COVID symptoms or been exposed, please contact the box office at 612-339-4944. Illusion Theater reserves the right to modify the COVID policy based on local, state, and federal public health guidelines and virus conditions.

**The Long Fall Down** Written and Directed by Bob Beverage  
Thursday June 8 at 7:30pm  
Friday June 9 at 7:30pm  
Saturday June 10 at 7:30 pm  
Sunday June 11 at 2:00pm

**Judy, Joan & Joni** Created by Roberta Carlson and Michael Robins  
Thursday June 15 at 7:30pm  
Friday June 16 at 7:30pm  
Saturday June 17 at 2:00pm  
Sunday June 18 2:00pm

**The Free Black Table** presented by Black Table Arts  
Friday June 23 at 7:30pm

**Nobody No Time** Written by Carlyle Brown. Music By Victor Zupanc. Directed by Keith Glover  
Friday June 30 at 7:30pm

**Schedule and performers subject to change.**