

JULY 25-29TH, 2019

WINSTON-SALEM



33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BLACK THEATRE:
UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK

#BTN33

BLACKTHEATRENETWORK.ORG

BLACK THEATRE: UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK

BLACK THEATRE NETWORK | 33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE | WINSTON-SALEM, NC

A QUICK GUIDE TO STUDENTQUEST(SQ) PROGRAMMING:

StudentQuest is a series of classes, activities, and career-building sessions particularly selected for the students attending BTN conferences. They provide the opportunity for BTN members to invest in the future of Black Theatre through discussions, sharings, and new skills. Student participants are encouraged to attend these sessions as well as to participate in any of the other sessions that interest or inspire them. Likewise, these sessions are open to all conference participants.

StudentQuest sessions are all indicated within the pages of this program with (SQ) next to the session's title.

BROOKSTOWN INN ADDRESS:

please use this address for all deliveries, ride services, etc.

200 Brookstown Ave
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Phone: (336) 725-1120

Welcome to #BTN33 at our bi-annual home at the Brookstown Inn in Winston-Salem, NC! We're thrilled to have you with us for an unapologetically inspirational, spirited, feisty, fun, and BLACK Theatre Network conference!



BTN Executive Board Members

BTN'S MEETING SPACES AT THE BROOKSTOWN:

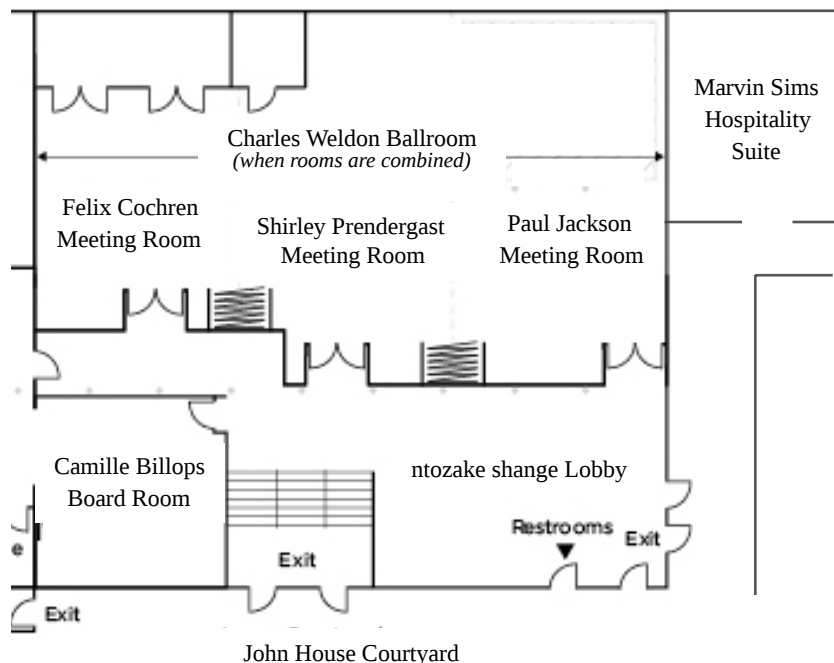


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From the President

Dear BTN Family,

It humbles me to address you. I joined BTN in 1995 as a graduate student from the University of Maryland. The next year, at the NYC conference, I was honored with the distinction of being the first Judy Dearing Design Award recipient. The honor and love I felt was unimaginable. I was in the fold and the elders accepted me-an honor not to be ignored. It becomes apparent as we reflect upon our existence on this land that we also celebrate the resilience, perseverance and integrity of our ancestors. Here we are, 20 something years later, dreadlocks free, and with an academic career in full force, I salute you as the 2018-2020 President of the Black Theatre Network. My heart is full as I write this address, for most of you know I struggle with this sort of thing. Suffice to say, I have been busy networking and facilitating initiatives with various networking service organizations of color. My recent attendance at the TCG conference revealed that our voice is still not heard as we perceive it to be. My attention to the ideals of what we do as practitioners and scholars has motivated me to further enhance our presence in the 'larger' arena without sacrificing our existence. It is very clear to me that we -the BTN family- are unique and hold a very special place in the hearts and minds of many. Help me celebrate our existence, love, and support of what we do as we convene in Winston-Salem NC for our 33-Annual Conference. Join me as we celebrate the work of the BTN Executive Board in all their efforts to make this conference a memorable event. I want to specially acknowledge our Vice President and Conference Planner Christopher Berry. His efforts and enduring work in planning this conference will ensure we are true to our values, mission and purpose.

Andre Harrington
BTN President, 2018-2020



From the Vice President & Conference Planner

While walking through the office area of North Carolina A&T, Greg Horton passed me and told me I should consider becoming the undergraduate liaison of the Black Theatre Network. I had no idea what this organization was, what it stood for, and with whom I would eventually form life changing bonds through our mutual reverence for Black Theatre.

To think about the inception of this organization over the famous piece of apple pie and the pioneers who have paved the way so the current crop of black theatre makers are fueled with the power of ancestral memory moves me daily. We all wake up understanding the gift, duty and responsibility we have to keep Black Theatre moving forward unapologetically.

Welcome to the 2019 Black Theatre Network annual conference! We are gathering again in Winston-Salem North Carolina hosted by the lovely Historic Brookstown Inn. It is always a pleasure to return to Winston for what feels like Black Theatre's homecoming, a celebration of what makes Black Theatre a truly magical artform. This year's theme Black Theatre: Unapologetically Black, looks to celebrate theatre that addresses black joy, black empowerment and black perseverance without succumbing or yielding to oppression.

Please join me and the BTN Executive Board as we welcome you to enjoy the presentations, panels workshops and fellowship that will take place during this year's conference. I am sure you will find yourself inspired, empowered, and filled with knowledge that will help energize your year.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Berry'.

Chris Berry
BTN Vice President 2018-2020

Black Theatre Network (BTN) promotes and strengthens the national Black Theatre community by collecting, processing, and distributing information and resources for artists, academics and lovers of Black Theatre.

BTN's function is to expose the beauty and complexity of the inherited theatre work of our African American ancestors and to take this work to a higher level into the 21st century and beyond. We seek to unite those who share this rich inheritance to assure we all work TOGETHER in promoting quality artistic and aesthetic standards and historical scholarship.

Black Theatre Network Executive Board 2018-2020

President: Andre Harrington

Vice President: Chris Berry

Secretary: James Brown

Asst. Secretary: Billicia C. Hines

Treasurer: K. Zaheerah Sultan

Asst. Treasurer: Ekundayo Bandele

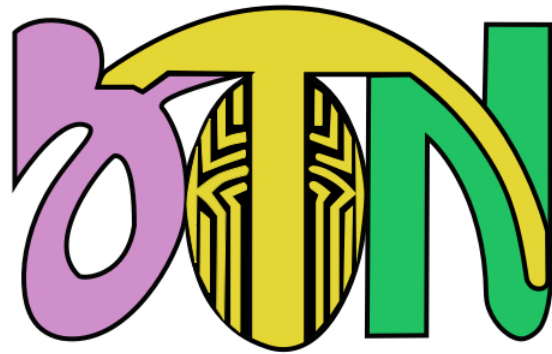
Parliamentarian: Rachel Dickson

Public Relations: Marcia Pendelton

Membership Chair: Greg Williams, Jr.

Immediate Past President: John Shévin Foster

Consultants: Michael Dinwiddie,
Kathryn Ervin, Gregory Horton



PAST BTN NATIONAL CONFERENCE SITES

2018: Memphis, TN
 2017: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #15)
 2016: Chicago, IL (w/ATHE)
 2015: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #14)
 2014: New York, NY (Gallatin School at NYU)
 2013: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #13)
 2012: Atlanta, GA
 2011: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #12)
 2010: Los Angeles, CA
 2009: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #11)
 2008: Lake Buena Vista, FL (Disney)
 2007: Greensboro, NC (NC A&T University)
 2006: Louisville, KY (University of Louisville African American Theatre Program)
 2005: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #9)
 2004: Kent, OH (Kent State University)
 2003: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #8)
 2002: San Francisco, CA
 2001: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #7)
 2000: St. Louis, MO (St. Louis University)
 1999: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #6)
 1998: Houston, TX (Ensemble Theatre Company)
 1997: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #5)
 1996: New York NY
 1995: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #4)
 1994: Chicago, IL
 1993: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #3)
 1992: Detroit, MI
 1991: Winston-Salem, NC (NBTF #2)
 1990: Atlanta, GA (NBAF)
 1989: New York City (ATHE) & Winston-Salem, NC (National Black Theatre Festival -NBTF #1)
 1988: Atlanta, GA (Clark-Atlanta University & National Black Arts Festival)

THE ORIGINS OF THE BLACK THEATRE NETWORK

The story of the creation and development of the Black Theatre Network (BTN) can hardly be told with full accuracy by any one individual. BTN is an organization where the labor of many has come together to form the whole, where individual contributions are too numerous to fully recount. We stand on the shoulders of the many selfless artists & academics who have made BTN what it is today.

The seeds of BTN were planted by the African American educators of the National Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts (NADSA). These educators joined the American Theatre Association (ATA) when it became more receptive to people of color. In 1965, the Afro-Asian Theatre Project was founded under the ATA. Subsequently, the group within the Project interested in Black Theatre formed the African Theatre Project, which ultimately became the Black Theatre Program (BTP). It was 1985, at the ATA meeting in Toronto, Canada, that talk of ATA's structural problems became a concern for members of the BTP.

In 1986, the inevitable happened: ATA folded. A group of Black Theatre devotees met in New York City at the National Education Theatre Conference (NETC), to bemoan ATA's demise and to excitedly debate the future of the defunct BTP. Against the backdrop of the lobby bar of the Milford Hotel, these pioneers pondered the feasibility of creating a new Black theatre organization. This new organization would rise like the Phoenix to provide a service to those facing displacement, while securing a haven for future artists and scholars.

As strategy sessions moved to New York University, the group faced its first major decision: to follow the safe path by joining forces with the newly created Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), or to tread on what was perceived as uncharted territory and build a separate nationalistic organization.

During the 1986 meeting, as the hours passed and the debate raged on, the revolutionaries were determined to strike out on their own, and after much fiery wrangling, the decision was made to form the "Black Theatre Network." Those who brought this vision to life were: Addell Austin-Anderson, George Bass, Buddy Butler, Don Evans, Kathryn Ervin, Winona Fletcher, Coleman Freeman, Floyd Gaffney, Errol Hill, Woodie King, Jr., Bill Lewis, J.W. Lewis, Vernell Lillie, Barbara Molette, Carlton Molette, Louis Rivers, Freda Scott-Giles, Archie Simpson, Marvin Sims, Lundean Thomas, Barbara Votja, Rhonnie Washington, Von Washington, Ethel Pitts-Walker, Phillip Walker, and Allen Williams.

A communal position paper was drafted and adopted, officers were elected, and the Black Theatre Network came to light. The first officers were Ethel Pitts-Walker (President), Rhonnie Washington (Vice President), Addell Austin-Anderson (Secretary), William Lewis (Treasurer), Von H. Washington (Newsletter Editor), Marvin Sims (Program Chair/ Conference Planner), and an Advisory Board was formed that included Winona Fletcher, Errol Hill, Vernell Lillie and Margaret Wilkerson.

BTN's Past Presidents:

Ethel Pitts-Walker	1986-1988
Rhonnie Washington	1988-1990
Addell Anderson	1990-1992
Kathryn Ervin	1992-1994
Lundean Thomas	1994-1996
Mikell Pinkney	1996-1998
Lorna Littleway	1998-1999
Eileen Morris	1999-2002
Marvin Sims	2002-2003
Gregory Horton	2003-2006
Sandra Shannon	2006-2008
Luther Wells	2008-2011
Artisia Green	2010-2012
Michael Dinwiddie	2012-2014
kb saine	2014-2016
John Shévin Foster	2016-2018
Andre Harrington	2018-2020

...WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND THAT APPLE PIE STORY?

Listen to BTN's First President, Dr. Ethel Pitts-Walker, tell the tale of the origins of the Black Theatre Network on the black theatre history podcast. The episode can be found on iTunes, Pandora, apple podcasts, and at www.blacktheatrehistory.com



Schedule of Events

THURSDAY, JULY 25

4:00 - 6:00 pm **Executive Board Meeting** - Camille Billops Boardroom

6:00 - 8:00 pm **Registration Open** - ntozake shange Lobby
Facilitated by Renee Charlow, Business Manager

Promotion Table/BTN Marketplace setup – ntozake shange Lobby
A space in our common lobby space will be reserved for member artists & companies to share their marketing & promotion materials with other BTN conference attendees. Bring yourself & your materials & meet & greet with other BTN members. Share your good work with your colleagues!

8:00 - 10:00 pm **BTN Opening Night Meet & Greet** - Marvin Sims Hospitality Suite
Gather with the BTN Executive Board Members and all BTN members who have already arrived for an initial meet & greet in an informal setting: enjoy a chance for social time, reconnections, & meeting new friends & colleagues!

**THE
NEW
GROUP**

one in two

BY
DONJA R. LOVE
(*Sugar in Our Wounds, Fireflies*)

DIRECTED BY
STEVIE WALKER-WEBB
(*Ain't No Mo'*)

**PERFORMANCES BEGIN
NOVEMBER 2019**

For more information visit TheNewGroup.org.

FRIDAY, JULY 26

8:00 am - 4:00 pm **Registration Open** - ntozake shange Lobby
Facilitated by Renee Charlow, Business Manager

8:30 - 9:30 am **Black Theatre History Podcast Live Recording** - Felix Cochran Room
Facilitated by kb saine, Associate Professor of Theatre, Shepherd University
In front of our live audience, black theatre history podcast host kb saine will interview Jackie Alexander, Artistic Director of North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre, producers of The National Black Theatre Festival, about his extraordinary career as an actor, author, playwright, filmmaker, and director, and the changes, trends, and opportunities he sees in Black Theatre.

9:45 - 11:00 am **Plenary Session 1** - Paul Jackson Room
“Unapologetically Afropolitan: Redefining Home in the Plays of Ngozi Anyanwu, Jocelyn Bioh, Dana Gurira, and Mfoniso Udofia”
Presented by Dr. Sandra Shannon, Professor Emerita, Howard University
A January 2018 article in the New York Times hailed a fresh wave of young, talented African women playwrights. In titling this piece, this Times feature writer defaulted to an overly exaggerated and outdated label: “daughters of Africa.” While playwrights Ngozi Anyanwu, Jocelyn Bioh, Danai Gurira, and Mfoniso Udofia can indeed trace their lineage to the African continent, each also has deep competing roots in American soil.

Aesthetics of Qya in reading and staging Lillian Hellman’s The Children’s Hour

Presented digitally by Omiyemi Artisia V. Green, Associate Professor of Theatre & Africana Studies; College of William & Mary
In the eighteen years between the play’s opening at the Maxine Elliot Theatre and 1952, Lillian Hellman’s 1934 version of The Children’s Hour undergoes a dramaturgical evolution. As Hellman evolved as a playwright and queer woman, she revisits the play several times, altering character attributes and modifying content. Hellman describes this process of revision as pentimento writing, “later choice[s], [are] a way of seeing and then seeing again”. Hellman’s amendments were the inspiration for the conceptual approach used in the 2018 William & Mary Theatre production of The Children’s Hour—a framework grounded in performative practices within black theatre.

11:15 - 12:45 pm **BTN Business Meeting** - Shirley Prendergast Room
All members are strongly encouraged to attend. Agenda items will include moments of facilitation about the conference, and nominations for 2020-2022 Executive Board Members, upcoming & potential black theatre initiatives, among other topics.

12:45 - 2:30 pm **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN**

StudentQuest Orientation (SQ) - Felix Cochren Room

Facilitated by Chris Berry, Assistant Professor of Theatre, Laguardia Community College

Student attendees will gather together to enjoy pizza and a discussion about the role of StudentQuest within the Black Theatre Network, and how BTN is here to serve them. All students in attendance (undergraduate and graduate) are encouraged to attend this session.

2:30 - 3:45 **Decolonizing Pedagogy** - Paul Jackson Room

Presented by Kaja Dunn, Assistant Professor of Acting and Beth Murray, Associate Professor of Theatre Education, University of North Carolina: Charlotte

Students of color in traditional training programs often have limited access to performing culturally-specific roles. This is damaging when the actors body and representation are utilized for employment after training. Students of color often must learn the dialects, types and even tropes of their particular ethnicity. An overwhelming proportion of acting instructors are Caucasian and many were trained in the era of “colorblind casting” and have a limited cannon for students of color. Even Black professors must wrestle with the colonization of their acting training and where their values are placed.

Student Quest Discussion With Tiffany Nichole Greene, Resident Director, Hamilton Philip Tour (SQ) - Felix Cochren Meeting Room

Facilitated by Chris Berry, Assistant Professor of Theatre, Laguardia College

Students will engage in a digital conversation with Tiffany Nichole Greene, the Resident Director for the Hamilton Philip Tour, for a discussion and question & answer session about the experiences she had along her path to success, and about developing a career as a professional director.

#BTN33 UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK

- 4:00 - 5:15 pm Plenary Session 2 - Paul Jackson Room
BREATHING LIFE INTO THE BLACK AND WHITE: PERFORMING SANDRA BLAND
 Presented by Brittney S. Harris, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre, Old Dominion University
 Drawing from a variety of techniques and methodologies—notably Augusto Boal’s Theatre for the Oppressed and The Rainbow of Desire, this session is an immersive presentation sharing the artist’s process in conceiving the work and performing brief selections from the one-woman show *The Intersection (The Sandra Bland Project)*. Much like Augusto Boal’s socio-political background, the one-woman show acts as a conversational piece about the ‘unbreakable black woman’: an oppressed and often misunderstood entity in American society.
- The Journey of Liberation: From Development to Performance**
 Presented by Billicia Charnelle Hines, Assistant Professor, Theatre and Dance Program, Wayne State University
 The Freedom Players devised a play based on the social justice theme Liberation. The developed play, *I AM : A Journey Towards Liberation* is about the continual challenge of seeking liberation. As a group of young Detroit based artists meet and interact, challenges arise as they realize their birth was political. These artists explore how they can survive and thrive in a place where everything seems to be set up against them? Their journey leads them on a path of discovery and renewal. Through the performances, the students have been able to move towards healing, empowerment, and discovery for themselves and the audience.
- 5:30 - 7:00 pm **Welcome Reception** - John House Courtyard (*weather permitting*)
 Enjoy music by the John Henry Ensemble, food, and fulfilling networking conversations as the executive board formally welcomes you to this years 33rd annual conference.
- 7:30 - 9:00 pm ***Mad at Miles: A Black Woman's Guide to Truth*** - Charles Weldon Ballroom
 Performed by Touring Theatre Ensemble
 Drawing not only from her own personal experiences with abuse but from the harrowing stories of countless women around her, writer Pearl Cleage was driven to write what a workbook for black women struggling to survive in a society that is both racist and sexist, resulting in a collection of essays and performance pieces called *Mad at Miles: A Black Woman's Guide to Truth*. Music can be expressive and powerful, beautiful and fierce. So can a woman. *Mad at Miles* is an emotional journey through the anger of abuse to the clarity of self-discovery. (*continued*)

(Mad at Miles continued:)

Set against the backdrop of Miles Davis and Cicely Tyson's abusive marriage, these alternately passionate and poetic stories explore love, pain, and where to draw the line between a man and his music. [It's not man bashing; it's love.]

10:30- 12:00 am

Hospitality Suite Networking - Marvin Sims Hospitality Suite

Hosted by Andre Harrington, BTN President, and Kathryn Ervin and Eileen Morris, Executive Board Consultants

Join us for a night of card games, an interactive online internet BTN trivia game, and various board games amongst the backdrop of libations, light snacks and cool music. Enjoy our first official night to gather together and share the family love.

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Special Thanks
to
BTN's partner
magazine



all BTN members receive
a subscription to
Black Masks Magazine as
a benefit of membership!

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DIRECTED BY LEAH C. GARDINER
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SATURDAY, JULY 27

8:30 am - 4:00 pm **Registration Open** - nt ozake shange Lobby
Facilitated by Renee Charlow, Business Manager

9:30 - 10:45 am **Embodying Redemption Through Theatre: Performing *BEING B.A.D.***
Paul Jackson Room
Presented by Brittney S. Harris, Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre, Old Dominion University
In this performance/presentation, Brittany S. Harris will share her process in conceiving her original one- woman show, *Being B.A.D.* A theatrical production that embodies creative resistance against oppressive gender stereotypes and domestic violence, *Being B.A.D.* is a piece about personal acceptance and redemption from the cycle of abuse. This show explores the lengths to which one will go to take that power back after years of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her family and romantic partner.

Step Into the Light: From the Classroom to the Career (SQ) - Shirley Prendergast Room
Presented by Eric Little, Theatre Arts Coordinator, Clark Atlanta University
Have you just finished college and ready to start your career? Or maybe you've begun the journey through your career but you're looking for new ideas? STEP INTO YOUR LIGHT will present you with tips, lessons, testimonies and encouragement as you navigate through the artistic world.

11:00 am - 12:30 pm **CONTINUUM Editor's Meeting** - Paul Jackson Room
Facilitated by Dr. Sandra Adell, Executive Editor *Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama, Theatre and Performance*
Join us for updates and information for our juried journal Continuum. We will share information about publishing, initiatives and strategic planning for preserving our work. New ideas and strategies are welcomed.

It's not all about you! It's all about the work! - Shirley Prendergast Room
Facilitated by Patrese D. McClain, Director of Education, The Court Theatre; Valeka Holt, Assistant Professor of Acting/Directing, Georgia College; Chris Berry, Assistant Professor of Theatre at Laguardia Community College
(continued)

(Not all about you! *continued*)

Students will get this time to workshop monologues and audition pieces to aid in their next steps as they move forward in their acting careers.

1:00- 2:00 pm

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

Executive Board Meeting - Camille Billops Board Room

2:00 - 3:15 pm

Student Quest Digital conversation with Stanley Ralph: Stage Management and Touring Fundamentals - Felix Cochren Room

Facilitated by kb saine, Associate Professor of Theatre, Shepherd University
Stanley Ralph, stage manager for *Chicago the Musical*, *The Bodyguard*, and *Motown the Musical* national tours will engage students in a discussion about the fundamentals of touring for young stage managers.

Whats On the Menu? - Paul Jackson Room

Led by Kathy Ervin, Professor of Directing, California State University, San Bernardino; Buddy Butler, Professor at San Jose State University; Daniel Banks, Co-director, DNAWORKS

A conversation about who and what is being “served” as production processes become ‘inclusive’, and how these choices impact artists, audiences, and institutions as we investigate the joys and complications in play selection, casting, and audience engagement.

3:30 - 4:45 pm

‘Nigger!’ : an examination of otherness - Paul Jackson Room

Presented by Korinn Annette Jefferies, playwright

‘Nigger!’ : an examination of otherness through a presentation of selected scenes and field research from ‘Nigger!’, a play by Korinn Annette Jefferies. The performance/presentation will be followed by a panel discussion regarding the use of the ‘n- word’ in theatre and the impact of ‘color-blind’ casting on the authenticity of Black theatre.

Black Theatre Survey - Felix Cochren Room

Shared by Gary Anderson, Artistic Director Plowshares Theatre Company
Two years ago, Plowshares Theatre Company concluded a research project designed to examine the current state of sustainability in Black Theatre in the U.S. to identify the shared challenges these theaters face regardless of pedagogy, geographical location or budget size. The final outcome will be a national action plan for Black Theatre that will bring greater stability, creativity, public awareness and support for their work and the well-being of their institutions, artists, audience and other stakeholders for the foreseeable future. This is the presentation of that report.

5:00 - 6:15

Keeping the Craft: A Roundtable - Paul Jackson Room

Facilitated by Patrese D. McClain, Director of Education, Court Theatre

From the pulpits of southern churches to the streets of the Bronx, African Diasporic art has historically been passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions. Though black art has thrived in grassroots spaces, it has often been underfunded and denied the same resources as its white counterparts. Even worse, it has been susceptible to poaching and gentrification by the white gaze through which we traditionally analyze theater. These prompts will provoke a lively discussion that will provide strategies to address the aforementioned issues.

On Camera 101 - The fundamentals of the self-tape audition for film -

Felix Cochren Room

Presented by Keith Arthur Bolden, Associate Professor of Theatre, Spelman

In this session, stage and screen actor Keith Arthur Bolden will guide students through the process and requirements for submitting high-quality self-taped auditions. Students will gain quality tools to help nail their next self-recorded video audition.

6:30 - 7:30

DINNER ON YOUR OWN

7:45 - 10 pm

SIGHTED EYES | FEELING HEART: The first feature documentary about Lorraine Hansberry - Paul Jackson Room

ARTIST. ACTIVIST. REBEL. VISIONARY. If You Only Know "A Raisin In The Sun," Then You Don't Know Lorraine Hansberry.

Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart is the first-ever feature documentary about Lorraine Hansberry, the visionary playwright who authored the groundbreaking *A Raisin in the Sun*. The play transformed the American theater and has long been considered a classic, yet the remarkable story of the playwright faded from view. Filmmaker Tracy Heather Strain resurrects the Lorraine Hansberry we have forgotten—a passionate artist, committed activist and sought-after public intellectual who waged a defiant battle against injustice in 20th-century America. The film reveals how Hansberry's works tackle race, human rights, women's equality and sexuality -anticipating social and political movements on the horizon.

This screening will be followed by a digital discussion with the author.

10:00 - 12:00

Networking, Hospitality Suite

Hosted By Rachel Dickson, BTN Board Parliamentarian and Dr. John Foster, BTN Immediate Past President

SUNDAY, JULY 28

- 9:30 - 10:00 am **Salute to Ascendants** - John House Courtyard
- Please join us as we pay homage to the legacy of the artists who've paved the way and created the foundation for the theatre which we have the privilege to create. Be inspired and filled by the reverence of their essence as we speak their names and breathe their presence into this year's conference.
- 10:30 am **Awards Brunch** - Charles Weldon Ballroom
- Our annual celebration of BTN excellence will celebrate the unapologetic successes of our Black Theatre stars. We will bestow **the Larry Leon Hamlin Legacy Award** during our annual brunch celebration. Come mingle, laugh and share in joyous fellowship while honoring a few of BTN's greats including previous Hamlin recipients, past executive board members, and local representatives from the art community.
- 12:30 - 1:45 pm **S. Randolph Edmonds Young Scholars Awards & Presentation**
- Judy Dearing Design Awards & Presentation** - Paul Jackson Room
- Join us as we celebrate our young scholars and designers. The Edmonds Scholar will present their award-winning paper and the Dearing Designers will present their award-winning design portfolios in costume, lighting and scenic design. This will be an exceptionally exciting session bridging design and scholarship as we support our next generation of theatre practitioners. Beth Turner will respond to the Young Scholars paper, and Kathy Perkins will respond to the design. (See page 19 for students' information.)
- 2:00 - 4:00 pm **What is the Black Vitality Commission?** - Shirley Prendergast Room
- Monica White Ndounou, Black Vitality Commission; Andre Harrington, Black Theatre Network; David Mitchell and Meredith Suttles, Black Theatre Commons; Nicole Presley Hodge, Black Theatre Association
- Please join us for this working session to address some of the important issues affecting the success, sustainability and longevity of Black Theatre service organizations. The Black Theatre Network, The Black Theatre Association, The National Black Theatre Festival and The Black Theatre Commons will share information, strategies and ideas that will foster cross collaborations and efforts to strengthen our individual and collective objectives.

4:00-5:00 **Digital Conversation with Jason Michael Webb** - Paul Jackson Room
Facilitated by Chris Berry, Assistant Professor of Theatre at Laguardia
Community College

Join Jason Michael Webb for a digital conversation about his work as a musical director, composer, and writer. Webb was recognized with a special Tony Award this year for his arrangements for the Broadway play with music *Choir Boy* at Manhattan Theatre Club's Samuel J. Friedman Theatre. He previously served as Music Director on the 2016 Tony-winning revival of *The Color Purple*, and worked on President Barack Obama's 2013 inauguration celebration, Disney's *Frozen: Live at the Hyperion*, the popular film *The Greatest Showman*, TV's *Empire* and as associate musical director on Broadway shows including *Motown: The Musical*, *Leap of Faith* and *Violet*. He is currently writing the new South African musical *WILDFLOWER*, which was recently seen at the Apollo Theatre.

5:00 - 7:00 **DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

7:15- 9:00 **Reading: *Citrus* by Celeste Jennings** - Charles Weldon Ballroom
Performed by the Black Ops Theatre Company

Citrus is a captivating choreopoem, written by last year's Judy Dearing Award Winner, Celeste Jennings, and directed by Jameeka Halloway, which chronicles the struggle and resilience of Black women in America from 1840 through the present day. With music, dance, and spoken word, *Citrus* pays homage to Black women in this evocative and uplifting performance piece.

9:00- 12:00 Hospitality Suite Networking
Hosted by Michael Dinwiddie, Marcia Pendleton and K.Zaheerah Sultan
(*Zaheerah will be serving in honor of John House.*)



CONTINUUM The Journal of African Diaspora
Drama, Theatre and Performance

CONTINUUM is an academic service of the Black Theatre Network, dedicated to fostering scholarship on the past, present and future of African Diaspora performing arts.

**Learn more at continuumjournal.org
or at www.blacktheatrenetwork.org under “publications”.**

MONDAY, JULY 29

- 9:30-- 11:00 **I found god in myself, too: my tribute to ntozake shange** - Paul Jackson Room
Led by Renee Charlow, Adjunct Professor of Literature, Southern New Hampshire University; Adjunct Professor of Theatre, Shepherd University
This “Art Infused Theatre” interactive workshop will celebrate the life of the legendary ntozake shange with personal reflections, musical performances and choreopoems. Afterward we will make art and share our masterpieces!! Art materials will be provided.
- 11:15 am - 1:00 pm **Student Quest Wrap-Up** - Felix Cochren Room
Facilitated by Chris Berry, BTN Vice President; Assistant Professor of Theatre LaGuardia Community College
Students will gather and discuss how they can move forward using the tools and connections that they have acquired over the conference, and how they can maintain their student network after returning to their independent institutions.
- 11:00 - 1:00 pm **Staying Current with Theatre Technology** - Felix Cochren Room
Presented by Kathy A. Perkins, Professor Emerita, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Timothy Jones
In keeping with the suggested BTN 2019 themes, which includes “new practices in design and staging and technical applications,” this panel explores trends in current technology in the areas of scenery, lighting and costume design. Timothy Jones, Patrice Davidson, Myrna Colley-Lee, Xavier Pierce, Thelma Pollard, and BTN’s Judy Dearing Awardees will participate in this discussion.
- 1:00 - 2:30 pm **Business Meeting, Next Steps** - Paul Jackson Room
All members are strongly encouraged to attend. Agenda items will include the first call from the floor for nominations for the 2020-2022 Executive board, follow up on the previous meetings agenda items, motions and debates. We will plan out the next 10 years for conference sites and further follow up on initiatives and strategic goals presented in the first meeting.
- 2:30 - 3:00 **Adjournment**

#BTN33 UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK

S. Randolph Edmonds Young Scholars Award

Ms. Angela Fraser, CUNY Brooklyn College(senior)
Topic: *Intersectionality and Theatre's Role in Oppression*

Judy Dearing Design Award

Costume Design: Yvonne Johnson; Southern Methodist University

Lighting Design: Erica Lauren Maholmes; Illinois State University

Scenic Design: Reiko Huffman; San Diego State University

THE YOUNG SCHOLARS COMPETITION



In honor of a pioneering black theater scholar and in the interest of encouraging research and scholarship in Black Theatre, BTN has sponsored The S. Randolph Edmonds Young Scholars Competition since 1988.

S. Randolph Edmonds was a playwright and educator, considered the dean of black educational theater in America. Among many others, his plays include *The Land of Cotton and Other Plays*, *Shades and Shadows*, *Everyman's Land*, *Gangsters Over Harlem*, *Yellow Death*, *Old Man Pete*, *Earth and Stars*, and *Nat Turner*. In 1930, he formed the Intercollegiate Drama Association, and in 1936 he organized black colleges throughout the south and southwest into the Southern Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts.

THE JUDY DEARING DESIGN COMPETITION



The Black Theatre Network established this award in 1996 in honor of pioneering costume designer Judy Dearing to encourage African American students focused on elements of theatrical design.

Judy Dearing served as resident designer for the Crossroads Theatre, the New Federal Theatre, and the Negro Ensemble Company, as well as for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Dearing designed costumes for a number of regional theaters: Goodman Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, the Hartford Stage, the Guthrie Theatre, the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, GeVa Theatre, Asolo Theatre, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, the Egg, and the Goodspeed Opera House. She designed the costumes for the Broadway productions of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, *The Mighty Gents*, *Trick*, *Once On this Island* (1990), *Having Our Say*, *Where the Wine Sellers Buy*, *The Black Picture Show*, *The Poison Tree*, and *The Lamppost Reunion*, among others. Dearing was a recipient of nine AUDELCO Awards, a 1985 Obie Award and a 1988 Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP Image Award.

The Larry Leon Hamlin Legacy Award

In 2013, the Black Theatre Network (BTN) was honored to inaugurate The Larry Leon Hamlin Legacy Award. Named in honor of the founder of the National Black Theatre Festival® (NBTF), the award will be presented biennially to an individual who “accepts the challenge to sustain and enrich the vision of the founder of an established institution devoted to the development of black culture.” Larry Leon Hamlin (1948-2007) founded the National Black Theatre Festival® in 1989 to unite black theatre companies in America and to ensure the survival of the genre.

In 2013, the first Larry Leon Hamlin Legacy Award was presented to Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, CEO and President of the National Black Theatre Festival® (NBTF). In 2015, the second Larry Leon Hamlin Legacy Award was presented to Sade Lythcott, CEO and president of Dr. Barbara Ann Teer’s National Black Theatre. In 2017, the third Larry Leon Hamlin Award was presented to Eileen J. Morris, Artistic Director of The Ensemble Theatre of Houston, Texas.



BTN’s 2019 Awardee: *Indira Etwaroo* Billie Holiday Theatre

Dr. Indira Etwaroo (producer, director, educator, scholar and non-profit arts leader) has worked with institutions across the country and the world. Indira’s passion is to explore the complex intersections between community, performing arts, and the topics-of-our-time, leading towards models of institutional thrivability in the 21st century.

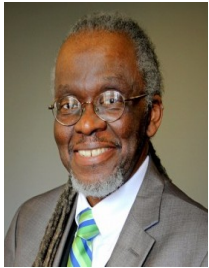
Dr. Etwaroo joined Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in 2015 to provide the artistic and curatorial vision, strategic direction, fundraising leadership, management and partnership expertise for one of Brooklyn’s cultural anchors: RestorationART. With her team of dynamic arts leaders committed to revolutionary art making, Dr. Etwaroo has reimagined a dynamic 21st century creative complex with the AUDELCO and Obie Award-winning Billie Holiday Theatre as the artistic centerpiece. With a deepened commitment to folding community into world-class artistic discovery and storytelling, this creative complex houses multiple performance spaces, including outdoor performance plazas; a Youth Arts Academy; the historic Skylight Gallery; and Institutions-in-Residence, including the Frank Silvera Writers’ Workshop, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence Dance Theater, Cumbe Center for African and Diaspora Dance, and The Noel Pointer School of Music. During her four-year tenure, Indira has completed a multi-million-dollar renovation of the theater and converted over 6,000 sq ft of ground floor space into essential rehearsal space where hundreds of artists of African descent can build new works and millions of Brooklyn community members can now witness “art in motion.” She has led RestorationART through audience expansion (40,000 to 81,000 annually), revenue growth and diversification (a 112% increase), and a pivot from community arts to world-class arts for the community. The Billie’s past two seasons have been nominated for a total of 18 AUDELCO Awards and taken top honors three times - twice for Best Play in 2017 and 2018 and once for Best Revival in 2018.

Dr. Etwaroo is profoundly grateful to the late Larry Leon Hamlin for his unparalleled ability to see far into the future. She also wants to thank the late American and Black Theater pioneer Ernie McClintock who introduced her to the power, complexity, and majesty of the Black Theater.

A Salute to our Ascendants



We honor those who have come and gone before us, for the paths they have created and the successes they have garnered that enable us to continue our work. By naming our conference rooms and gathering spaces in honor of our ascendants, we invoke their presence and ask them to guide us as we claim and inhabit our meeting spaces, our sharing spaces, and our ritual spaces.



FELIX COCHREN

A scenic and costume designer, Cochren attended Carnegie Mellon University and was an associate member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829, New York. His New York credits included Broadway productions of “Home,” “Inacent Black” and “Amen Corner” and off-Broadway productions of “A Soldiers Play,” “A Brief History of White Music” and “Lotto.” His other New York credits included designs for the New Federal Theatre, Billie Holiday Theatre, Opera Ebony, Boys Choir of Harlem, New York Theatre Workshop, the Negro Ensemble Company, Soho Rep and the Joseph Papp Public Theater.



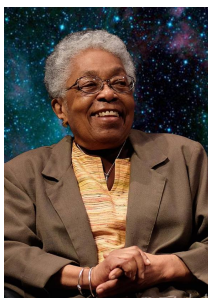
JOHN HOUSE

Assistant Professor of Speech & Drama at Rust College, Holly Springs, MS, John was also a longtime BTN member and previous Executive Board member (2004-2006) John consistently exhibited the true meaning of mentorship and love for all BTN members. He was honored at the 32nd BTN Annual Conference with a Lifetime Membership Award. BTN members travelled to see him, and we were able to present his award to him before he transitioned; we heard that he was very pleased and honored to be in the hearts of all BTN members.



DR. PAUL JACKSON

Paul Keith Jackson, Ph.D., served as a professor at Spelman College and helped to design the College's signature African Diaspora and the World Program. In 1998, he began a position at Miami University of Ohio and remained there until his retirement in January 2017. During his long career, he received awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Ford Foundation, and The Coca Cola Foundation among others. He also participated frequently in Black Theatre Network conferences and programs, and served as a reviewer for the National Association of Schools of Theatre.



SHIRLEY PRENDERGAST

A recipient of the 2014 USITT Distinguished Achievement Award in Lighting Design, Prendergast made history as the first African-American woman to be admitted to the United Scenic Artists' (USA) lighting division in 1969, and the first African-American female lighting designer on Broadway in 1973, with Joseph Walker's *The River Niger*. She was BTN's 1996 Winona Lee Fletcher Awardee.

A Salute to our *Ascendants*, continued



NTOZAKE SHANGE

shange was best known for her Obie-winning choreopoem “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf,” which was first produced Off Broadway in 1975 and then transferred to Broadway. She continued to write prolifically in the following four decades, penning another 13 plays, half-dozen novels, and nearly 20 poetry books. her most recent book was Wild Beauty in 2017, and Dance we Do is scheduled for 2020 publication. She was an active member in BTN, where she shared her time, knowledge, and later performances.



CHARLES WELDON

Charles Weldon was an actor, director, educator, singer, playwright and song writer. He was the artistic director of the Negro Ensemble Company, which was created in 1967 to promote works by black theater artists. After a brief career as a singer, Mr. Weldon turned to acting in the late 1960s, landing on Broadway in the 1969 “Buck White”. His last stage role was in 2016, in a 50th-anniversary production of “Day of Absence,” a play by Douglas Turner Ward, a founder of the Negro Ensemble Company.



The BTN Hospitality Suite is consistently named for the great **Marvin L. Sims** (1948 – 2003), who was a director, actor, educator & a founding Member of BTN. Sims taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign and at Eastern Michigan University. He served many theatre organizations, including the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and was simultaneously serving as BTN’s and ATHE’s president at the time of his transition.

Love & laughter are part of his legacy; please enjoy your time in his space.

“The road to a vibrant Black American Theatre lies in our radical acceptance of one another as artists, despite aesthetic differences and a relinquishing of dependence on “Industry” qualifiers. We know we create within an industry that never fully understands us, thus we shouldn’t look it as the measure of “greatness” within our work.
Our Greatness is inherent.”

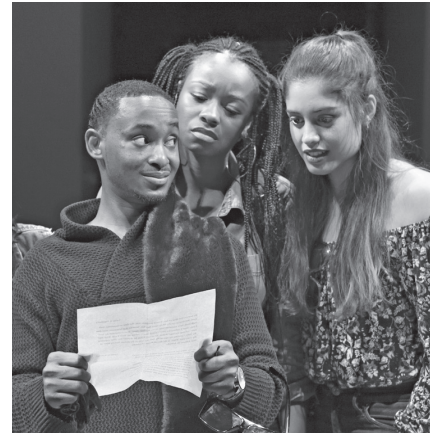
Stacey Rose - Playwright

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