The Farm Arts Collective presents Clear Creek Creative's

EZELL
BALLAD OF A LAND MAN
A PARABLE OF DOMINATION + RESILIENCE FROM THE FOOTHILLS OF APPALACHIA

June 3-5, 2022
Outdoors at the Farm Arts Collective
Damascus, PA
We acknowledge the privilege and complexity of living, working and producing this experience on the lands of the Lenni Lenape as well as the Aniyunwiyi (Cherokee), Shawanwaki (Shawnee) and other peoples indigenous to the place from which Ezell arose. We strive to be good guests and stewards of the lands and to resolve the legacies of oppression and domination that have come before and persist today. We offer the experience of Ezell with a humble, healing spirit and in recognition of all those who have come before and are yet to come in this place and in all the places we visit.
INTENTION

The development and sharing of this eco-cultural experience is an attempt to make plain and disrupt domination: to reveal the patterns of domination behavior within this character Ezell, within his relationship to others and the land, within his livelihoods and his ways of being, within his ancestry and his belief system. It is meant for everyone who witnesses it as a motivation to continue — or an invitation to begin — the work of discovering and disrupting domination within and around themselves and to do so as an act of love and liberation.
Welcome to Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man presented by the Farm Arts Collective.

Act 1. Welcome
Connect with group & guide for an orientation to the journey and enjoy a treat and a drink if you’d like.

Act 2. Journey
Make a contemplative trek with guide to the performance site alongside the Delaware River amidst mountain music.

Act 3. Performance
Witness Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man set in the grassland beyond the farm.

Act 4. Reflection
Engage with Eliza, the musicians and the farm to embody Ezell’s themes along the return journey.

Act 5. Celebration
Enjoy conversation with your group and a delicious farm-fresh meal amidst more mountain music.
The Land

Originally occupied by the Lenni Lenape, the area that stretched from Callicoon to Minisink was known as Cushetunk. The specific location of Willow Wisp Organic Farm was a place the Lenape used for settlements, fishing, hunting, and growing crops of corn, beans and squash. This area was later named after the great Lenape chief Tamanend, or Tammany, and is today known as Tammany Flats.

In the 1750s a contingent of Connecticut farmers, finding the western part of that state too crowded, arrived at Cushetunk to establish agrarian lives. Joseph Skinner was the leader of this group – the Delaware Company. His son Daniel went on to start the first industry in the Upper Delaware Valley – lumbering -- by cutting the huge, straight pine trees, assembling them in long rafts, and piloting them down the Delaware to Trenton and Philadelphia to be used as masts for tall sailing ships.

Agricultural activities continued on this stretch of riverfront through the 19th Century, the river bottomland being enriched by the spring freshets and other floods. In the 1960s the property became known as Hickory Lane Farm due to the shagbark hickory trees that lined the driveway. A half-mile horse track was installed, to serve as an overflow practice track for the Monticello Raceway.

In 1968 the Freda family from Callicoon bought Hickory Lane Farm to serve as an adjunct to their Upper Delaware Campgrounds on the New York side of the river, and as a riding stable for visiting campers. Horseback trails ran throughout the property and up Conklin Hill. The Fredas also continued the agricultural efforts on the land by growing sweet corn and extensive gardens.

In the early 1980s, the Fredas sold Hickory Lane Farm to a long-term camping family, the Kaufmanns, who continued to operate the stables and the campgrounds. In 2015, Greg Swartz and Tannis Kowalchuk purchased the property and relocated their Willow Wisp Organic Farm there where they produce the finest organic vegetables in the region.

-- Excerpted from writing by Joe Freeda
Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man is an environmental, cultural and spiritual parable derived from living in the foothills of Appalachia, one man among many seeking to make sense of the time, place and condition in which we live. In the story, Ezell’s choices, traumas, ancestors and more intersect with themes of domination and resilience as he seeks to take advantage of an anticipated fracking boom and the opportunity to reconnect with the people and land of his raising.

ORIGIN
The threat of another century of fossil fuel extraction in Appalachia arrived directly on our doorstep when a company land man arrived at Clear Creek offering a lease for mineral rights to the place that we & many others call home. Land men—essentially hired speculators for the oil & gas industry—were making a hard push to get in early on the anticipated expansion of oil & gas fracking into the Rogersville Shale, a geologic formation that crosses from West Virginia into Kentucky through what has long been called “coal country.”

Several years later, that push came to shove in a region where many are desperate to rekindle coal or replace it with a kindred economic driver and power source. Upstream from Kentucky along the Ohio River between Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, an industrial mega-complex known as the Appalachian Storage Hub is being developed with the stated goal of matching the Gulf Coast’s capacity for processing, storing and delivering fossil fuels and making plastics from extraction waste generated from fracking throughout the mountains.

As fires burn, islands submerge, storms grow more forceful and substantially shifting seasonal patterns make the effects of climate change ever more real around the world, there are more & more of us who are manifesting another way forward, making another world possible. The character & story of Ezell was born within this global movement, one more localized element of resistance & resilience to inspire and activate the just transition away from fossil fuels, away from domination of all kinds and into a future powered by renewable energy and our evolving capacity to live in harmony with nature & with one another.
Ezell has many points of origin and inspiration, another of which is the cross-regional cultural exchange with artists based in New Orleans which began more than decade ago when Clear Creek Creative presented ArtSpot Productions & Mondo Bizarro’s Loup Garou (2010) and Cry You One (2014) in Kentucky. As artist-activists and cultural organizers, we have continued to work together each year since, training and skill-sharing and deepening our relationships within each others’ communities. As we engage in this work, we continue to learn from one another and be inspired by the resistance and liberation efforts in each of our communities.

Communities in Southeast Louisiana and in Appalachian Kentucky are both facing existential climate threats which—while they look very different on the surface—share something fundamental. The fossil fuel industries have deeply impacted both places for far too long, and while they have succeeded in providing upward mobility and economic stability for many families, they have profoundly influenced our current climate crisis and deeply impacted the health of our peoples and communities. Land where people have lived for countless generations is no longer the source of viable, thriving livelihoods.

Together we face the same complex questions as do so many across this continent and around the world. How will we transition from the extractive industries that are destroying our land and sickening our communities but have often been the only economic game in town? How will we manifest equitable economies, thriving communities and right relationship with the land? How will we heal and resolve the colonial and imperial legacies upon which our current relationships and systems are built in order to create a future in which we are all free and thriving?

We do not pretend to have answers to these and the many other questions we ask ourselves through this work. We collaborate artistically with the intent to envision and enact possibilities; to heal what needs healing within each of us and among all of us; to activate the many different types of contributions and efforts it will take for us to learn to live in greater harmony with nature and one another.
I met Carrie and Bobby of Clear Creek Creative a number of years ago through our mutual friend Nick Slie who is the director of this Ezell production.

Many people here may remember that NACL had presented Nick and his performance “Loup Garou” (another play about mineral extraction) to our community. This performance, presented at Apple Pond Farm, was deeply moving to many of us, and in some ways, inspired me to start making theatre on Willow Wisp Organic Farm.

When Carrie and Bobby from Clear Creek Collective visited many years ago, I invited them to the farm where we shared a long meal and deep connection and conversation about making theatre and art in rural America. We discussed how to live the dream in a sustainable manner, and how to manage expectations, obstacles, successes and disappointments.

I had been keeping abreast of Clear Creek’s work, and since their recent reunion visit with us, we have been planning this 2022 exchange. We are so happy to present and be a part of this wonderful performance and community engagement project. I hope you enjoy the experience as much as we are.

-- Tannis Kowalchuk, Farm Arts Collective Artistic Director
TO A WILD VISION

The great American and Appalachian playwright Jo Carson once said to me, “Watching theater can change the way people think. The act of making theater can change people’s lives.” I’ve danced with this bit of wisdom for years and it has never resounded more profoundly than during my time collaborating on Ezell.

My contribution to this theatrical study-story-ceremony actually began more than ten years ago, long before the character of Ezell was born. In 2009, Bob and Carrie invited me to experience the Clear Creek Festival on land they steward in Kentucky. It was then that I first witnessed the quiet, profound kindness of working in those mountains, allowing the balance of the land to meet all the callous edges within myself.

We have continued to work together each year since, creating, training and deepening our relationships within each others’ communities. In this way, across seemingly distant but complementary landscapes, we have mapped a rich territory of experience between ourselves and our homes.

The act of being part of a team that guides another person through the process of making a performance is a mysterious territory riddled with self-doubt, questions, inspiration and joy. I have often questioned what it means to direct a show that is so intimately woven from a landscape that is not my home. When in doubt, I have always taken Bob’s lead, trusting the affection and curiosity I meet getting lost in the territory of experience our friendship has enlivened across the years.

Throughout, I have tried to serve the wild vision that he, Carrie, Cory, Nicole, Jeff and this team has surfaced. Calmly, like creek over stone, this wildness has changed me.

-- In gratitude, Nick Slie
### EZELL’S EVOLUTION

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<th>2014</th>
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<td><strong>The character of Ezell emerges &amp; is informed by our direct interactions with the Land Man as we prepare for a 2nd iteration of Land, Water, Food Story supported by a Partners in Action grant from Alternate ROOTS.</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Clear Creek community ensemble develops &amp; tours Where’s That Power Gonna Come From? across KY to support community organizing in relation to the fracking threat and the vision for renewable energy alternatives.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grassroots activism in key central KY counties stops the Bluegrass Pipeline project intended to transport natural gas liquids from fracking in PA &amp; OH across KY for processing further south.</strong></td>
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**Artistic Response**
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- A Clear Creek community ensemble develops & tours Where’s That Power Gonna Come From? across KY to support community organizing in relation to the fracking threat and the vision for renewable energy alternatives.
- Grassroots activism in key central KY counties stops the Bluegrass Pipeline project intended to transport natural gas liquids from fracking in PA & OH across KY for processing further south.
- Shortly after taking office, President Trump signs memoranda to revive both KXL & DAPL.

**Local Organizing Response**
- A “land man” arrives on Clear Creek & in nearby areas to offer a contract for mineral rights, speculating on future fracking expansion into eastern KY along the Rogersville Shale. Neighbors & activists gather to educate & organize people to refuse the contracts.

**Key National Events**
- After years of activism throughout affected communities & nationally, President Obama rejects the Keystone XL pipeline noting that its approval would undercut U.S. global leadership on climate change.
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**TIMELINES**
- Artistic Response
- Local Organizing Response
- Key National Events
**Ezell** is a long-term durational project that evolves in response to the land, people and context from which it arose and in which it is shared.

Bob is honored by the Kentucky Arts Council and we invest the award in developing and sharing **Ezell** as a work-in-progress during the Clear Creek Solstice Spectacle, ROOTS Week and Hurricane Gap Community Performance Institute.

**Kentucky & New Orleans artists collaborate in a series of residencies to bring **Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man** to full production at Clear Creek with support from NEFA, NET & NPN.**

**Grassroots advocacy & organizing stops the proposed re-purposing of a pipeline that crosses 18 counties in KY to transport fracking wastes for processing on the Gulf Coast.**

**Indigenous youth & leaders stand for their sovereignty at Standing Rock as water protectors of their homelands in opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline. Their actions inspire energy & climate activism throughout the U.S. and internationally.**

**The Appalachian Storage Hub / Petrochemical Complex on the Ohio River is under construction to serve as a processing & distribution center for fracking products, by-products & plastics intended to replace the need for transport from Appalachia to the Gulf Coast. Upon taking office, President Biden signs an executive order to cancel the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline and takes temporary action to pause fracking on public lands though does not commit to a ban.**

**2019-20**

Activists educate & coordinate efforts statewide through the Pipelines, Fracking & KY's Future Beyond Fossil Fuels summits. KFTC develops a statewide Clean Power Plan through the Empower KY campaign.

2019-20

Grassroots advocacy & organizing stops the proposed re-purposing of a pipeline that crosses 18 counties in KY to transport fracking wastes for processing on the Gulf Coast.

2021-22

Coalitions of activists and organizations in KY, OH, PA & WV turn attention to the Appalachian Storage Hub. Efforts continue to extend renewable energy alternatives in the region amidst ongoing work to resist fracking & pipeline expansion.

**Ezell** tours in Appalachia and across the U.S. to raise awareness & support organizing that ends fossil fuel extraction, dismantles domination and supports all of us in building the resilience to live in harmony with nature and one another.

**Kentucky & New Orleans artists collaborate in a series of residencies to bring **Ezell: Ballad of a Land Man** to full production at Clear Creek with support from NEFA, NET & NPN.**
Within days of the land man’s arrival on Clear Creek, many people in our small rural community gathered together to educate and organize. We shared the leases we had been offered with one another and we contacted others in neighboring places to alert them. We called on the expertise of key organizations who have done great work over many years: Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Kentucky Conservation Committee, Kentucky Environmental Foundation, Kentucky Resources Council, Kentucky Heartwood and more.

Together with several of those groups, we organized a town hall meeting in nearby Berea attended by 400 people. We learned from leaders in West Virginia and other communities about their experience of fracking and joined efforts with other communities in Kentucky and afar who had worked to resist the expansion of pipelines and other oil and gas infrastructure throughout the U.S.

As we contributed to these early organizing efforts that were (and continue to be) carried out by many people and organizations in our communities, we ultimately turned to our art as a means to access our collective resilience in the face of the fracking threat and to inspire action toward the vision of a future in which we all live in greater harmony with nature and one another. The character and story of Ezell has been devised in response and dialogue with many local and global efforts toward a renewable energy future. The spirit of this work is enlivened by that collective action.

Ezell has also been inspired by Bob Martin's work with hundreds of students and community members throughout East Kentucky as a teaching artist and director of community story projects. Special thanks to the communities and people whose drive to tell their own stories in their own voices has also contributed to bringing Ezell’s story and voice forward:

Cowan Creek Community of Letcher County, KY
Higher Ground of Harlan County, KY
Homesong & The Shiners Projects & students of Owsley County, KY
Monkey Dumplins of Clay County, KY
SEEDS OF RESISTANCE + RESILIENCE

While facilitating a strategy retreat of West Virginia organizers and activists working to oppose fracking & petrochemical infrastructure in Appalachia, Clear Creek Creative artist & producer Carrie Brunk was gifted seeds of sacred Ponca corn by Tom Genung, an activist from Bold Nebraska who was present to share their strategies for resisting the Keystone XL pipeline. He shared that one of their most meaningful actions each year is a ritual planting of the sacred Ponca corn in the proposed pipeline path by coalitions of indigenous and settler peoples working together to resist the KXL.

We have planted the seeds on Clear Creek each year since they were gifted to us and have been given permission to pass them along to inspire & activate others’ resistance & resilience. We invite you to honor the seeds as you choose to. May we each take our turn.
Our People

Ezell is a collaborative ensemble project born of its place and people with the support of many collaborators from near and far. We’re grateful to work with so many incredible people in making this shared work together.

**Ensemble**

Written and Performed by Bob Martin
Produced + Eliza by Carrie Brunk
Directed by Nick Slie
Production Design & Technical Direction by Jeff Becker
Music Direction & Sound Design by Cory Shenk
Production Coordination & Guide Performance by Hannah Burt
Guide Performance & Music Accompaniment by Nicole Garneau & Lisa Moraschi Shattuck
Additional Music & Production Support by Rachel Meirs

**Home Team**

In addition to the touring team above, our premier and ongoing development of Ezell at Clear Creek has been supported by a great crew of artists, builders, farmers, foragers, neighbors and all sorts of other fine folks. We acknowledge them here knowing their contributions are carried with us as the work tours: Joana Amorim, Xyara Asplen, Michael Beck, Bugz, Adam Burke, Phil Feger, Erica Chambers, Erica Fladeland, Clarity Hagan, Jamie Hart, Loren Heacock, Bob Henshaw, Tim Hensley, Debra Hille, Peter Hille, Ben Johansen, Nick Kondziolka, Finn Mahoney, Inan McFarland, Cheyenne Mize, Steve (Snoop) Moberly, Jo Nazro, Ron Owens, Kayla Preston, Timi Reedy, Yamil Rodriguez, Robert Rorrer, Sacha Runa, Terra Luna, Laney West, Laurie White, Connor Zaft and Tommy Johns & Will Hartsock of Neon Bites.
LOCAL TEAM

We have the honor to be hosted by the Farm Arts Collective at Willow Wisp Organic Farm by an incredible team. Heartfelt love and appreciation to all of these amazing people and so many others by extension who have made Ezell possible here:

Produced by Tannis Kowalchuk & Jess Beveridge for the Farm Arts Collective

Indigenous Culture Bearer Chief Gentlemoon, Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania

Guide Performance by Jess Beveridge, Colette Ballew, John Roth

Music Support led by Doug Rogers with Roger Brinkerhoff & Elizabeth Rose

Culinary Artistry & Foraging led by Tannis Kowalchuk for Willow Wisp Organic Farm with Jess Beveridge & Vickie Diescher

Photography by Kent Fairfield

Videography & Production Support by Connor Zaft

Housing Donated by Pat Ashley & Chuck Stroble, Tracy Broyles, Melissa Bell & Leo Schmidt, Tannis Kowalchuk & Greg Swartz, Sally Ann Parsons

Big Thanks to the entire Farm Arts Collective ensemble, volunteers and season sponsors as well as Greg Swartz & Willow Wisp Organic Farm for their additional support of this production.

MORE LOVE

Program & Visual Installation Design by Ennis Carter, Social Impact Studios + Carrie Brunk

Cover Art by Robert Gipe
BİTS ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

JEFF BECKER
is a designer, director and sculptor who specializes in audience interactive performances and outdoor spectacles. His work focuses on issues surrounding racism, abuse of power and environmental justice. He has toured extensively nationally and abroad and is the recipient of numerous awards and grants. Jeff is the co-founder of Catapult, a performance laboratory in New Orleans dedicated to the development of original theater and innovative design. Setsalive.com

CARRIE BRUNK
lives and loves in the foothills of Appalachian Kentucky where she co-stewards a solar-powered off-grid farm, artistic venue & eco-cultural retreat through Clear Creek Creative. She finds joy and curiosity in the garden and in a wide range of creative endeavors…writing, ritual, pottery, costuming, spatial design, culinary & healing arts. In her spare time, she works as a facilitator, educator, producer and somatic coach for transformative personal and systems change. clearcreekcreative.net

HANNAH BURT
vibes: ✨ ✨ ✨ more: @hannahburt /// www.hannah-burt.com

NICOLE GARNEAU
is an interdisciplinary performing artist. Her book Performing Revolutionary: Art, Action, Activism was published in print in 2018 and audio in 2022. Originally from Chicago, she now lives in Rockcastle County, Kentucky where she is a teaching artist and a member of Alternate ROOTS. She has presented her work in Russia, Denmark, and the UK. She has taught at several universities and been a visiting artist in classrooms around the world. Nicolegarneau.com

BOB MARTIN
Robert BobbyB Martin lives and works in the foothills of Appalachia on Clear Creek in Disputanta, Kentucky. He is creatively engaged with the ancestors, the natural world, youth and those in service of stories that witness and transform the world around them. Hey internet! How do you make a living being a rural community theater artist / cultural organizer / producer / educator / land steward / rogue forest ranger? Best you can. Give thanks. clearcreekcreative.net

RACHEL MEIRS
is an artist/musician/oral historian based in the Hudson Valley (who isn’t saying that to avoid admitting she’s from Long Island). Her work is centered around labor, food, and encouraging people to really listen to one another, while she pays her rent as a sound-person, wood-person, and goat chauffeur. You can follow her work, very good dog, and ongoing identity crisis on instagram @rachel.meirs
**CHEYENNE MIZE**
is a multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and music therapist born and raised in Kentucky. Although seen on the stage occasionally, her passion lies with using music as a point of connection and transformation within and between individuals, and for a community as a whole. You can listen to her singalong podcast highlighting the voices and music of elders here: canyouhearmelouisville.org

**LISA MORASCHI SHATTUCK**
is a New Orleans-born theater artist, educator and parent. She is Co-founder of Catapult, a theater laboratory where she develops, performs and writes theater produced locally and abroad. She is on the Media Arts faculty at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. Check out her Wonder Wander, an immersive walk and talk at https://npnweb.org/contact/lisa-shattuck-and-jeff-becker/

**CORY SHENK**
often finds bios disappointing because they only tell him a few things that a person has done and not who they are, what their character is, or if and how they are elated or confused by existence. In spite of that, here is a tiny window into who he is: he enjoys being in the woods & liminal spaces, potlucks & Dairy Bar cuisine, dancing & porch sitting, and pondering & wondering at our strange existence. You can find his music on Spotify and also at https://coryshenk.bandcamp.com/releases.

**NICK SLIE**
is a New Orleans-born performer, producer and cultural organizer. He is the Co-Artistic Director of Mondo Bizarro and Professor of Theater at Nunez Community College. Since 2002, Nick has toured a wide array of imaginative projects to art centers, universities and outdoor locations in 38 states across the country and abroad. However, he is most proud of the work he does at home, where the land kisses the water.
All of the work we do through Clear Creek Creative is made possible by the generosity and collaborative spirit of our communities near and far. We give thanks for living and working in such an abundant place and having countless opportunities to do meaningful & magical work with incredible people.

We are humbled & thrilled by the support we’ve received to bring Ezell to full fruition. Deep appreciation to our funding partners for recognizing the value of this work and investing in it.

**EZELL: BALLAD OF A LAND MAN**

- is made possible with funding by the New England Foundation for the Arts’ National Theater Project, with lead funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and additional funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

- is made possible, in part, through a grant awarded to the Farm Arts Collective and Clear Creek Creative from the Network of Ensemble Theaters’ Travel & Exchange Network (NET/TEN), supported by lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Ezell was also developed with the support of a Continuation Grant from the Network of Ensemble Theaters’ Travel & Exchange Network (NET/TEN) awarded to Mondo Bizarro and Clear Creek Creative.

- is a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation & Development Fund Project co-commissioned by Carpetbag Theater in partnership with Mondo Bizarro and NPN. The Creation & Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency). NPN has also provided support through its Storytelling & Documentation Fund made possible by generous support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

- is touring to communities on the frontlines of the fossil fuel economy with support from the Chorus Foundation in alignment with their commitment to work together with frontline communities for a just transition to a fair and sustainable economy.

- has also been supported through an Al Smith Fellowship Award granted to Bob Martin for artistic excellence as well as Kentucky Artist Rescue grant funds from the Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, which is supported by state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.
ADDITIONAL THANKS

Deep Appreciation for Interviews and Coaching that supported the development of this work: Josh Barrett, Jeremy Eaton, Matthew Glassman, Mike Holt, Marin Ireland, Greg Manley, Rebecca Mwase, Carol O’Brien, Randy Wilson interviewing Ivan Gibson.

Thank you to many people for their Artistic & Dramaturgical Support, Feedback & Inspiration over the years including Hannah Pepper Cunningham, Kathie DeNobriga, Robert Gipe, Peter Hille, Sean LaRocca, Will MacAdams, Beth Martin Henshaw, Cheyenne Mize, Ron Owens, Kathy Randels, Timi Reedy, Joanna Russo, Walken Schweigert, Alternate ROOTS (Critical Response) family, Clear Creek Telepathic Spiders/Jubilee Crew, Double Edge Immersion Lab & the Hurricane Gap Community Performance Institute community.

And a big shout out to the many, many people and organizations working throughout Appalachia, Kentucky and worldwide in so many different ways to disrupt, heal, activate and inspire. YES!

• was seeded and evolved over many years with the support of Alternate ROOTS through the Partners in Action program, an Artistic Assistance grant, fiscal sponsorship and the ongoing learning & support of an amazing network of artists.

• has been supported by ticket sales and generous donations of all sizes and types at home in Kentucky and on the road throughout our touring productions. You can support Clear Creek Creative in taking Ezell on the road in the future at the QR code.

SUPPORT EZELL!