

## **Deliverables for Austene Van New Dawn Theatre Company's *A Breath for George***

**Film Screening, Q&A, and Dialogue**

**Presented virtually by the Perpich Center for Arts Education and the 2020 CTAM Conference**

**September 19, 2020**

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### **About the piece: *A BREATH FOR GEORGE***

*A Breath for George* was created by New Dawn Theatre and Minnesota artists as a platform to: honor Mr. Floyd's life; speak to this moment and moments past openly and honestly; and to share avenues which promote hope and positive changes for the future. *A Breath for George* gives voices to the ways Black citizens & residents historically have been negatively affected emotionally, physically and financially by systemic racism and nationwide police violence.

The film is a collection of songs, interviews, and poems created to honor the life of George Floyd. Artists featured include: James T. Alfred, Aimee Bryant, Wanda Christine, Perri Gaffney, Peter Macon, Thomasina Petrus, T. Mychael Rambo, Frank Sentwali, Regina Marie Williams and Jevetta Steel. Interviews with Sarah Bellamy, Harvey Blanks, Melvin Carter Jr., James Craven, Talvin Wilks and Professor John Wright are also included in the collection.

"There is value in people knowing that they are not alone in the way that they are feeling right now. There is also value in speaking truth to people who have never heard our stories or ever been in position to hear our stories," says New Dawn Artistic Director Austene Van.

### **About New Dawn Theatre Company**

#### **THE MISSION (WHAT WE DO)...**

NEW DAWN Theatre draws brilliance out of shadows by illuminating & supporting cutting edge works of overlooked, under-represented communities of our theatrical landscape through innovative, exciting & excellent theater productions.

#### **THE VISION (HOW WE DO IT)...**

NEW DAWN Theatre Company is present in a time when there is need for more outlets that give a diverse body of artists the support and space to: create, be seen & heard, expand & transform in positive ways that radiate out into our communities at large. We are proud to be a vessel which amplifies a rising chorus of diverse, colorful & often muted communities of theater artists. Each season we breathe life into two established plays & one devised play.

Our established plays (one straight play, one musical) reflect the body of our company, staff, board and varied communities we serve in that they are by, for & feature women, minorities and members of the LGBT communities.

Our devised production is cultivated through empowering those communities that are physically, mentally or socially incarcerated to tell their stories through creative writing workshops. Our goal is to amplify vital yet muted voices, arm those who feel powerless with tools that affect change from within and outward.

## About the Artistic Director and Founder, Austene Van



2013-2014 McKnight Fellowship Award winner, IVEY Award recipient for GUTHRIE THEATER's *Trouble in Mind* and Woodie Award nominee for Best Actor and Best Supporting actor for her multiple roles in both *Spunk* and *Colored Museum* at the ST. LOUIS BLACK REP. **Austene Van** has been a local and national theater professional for 30 years; acclaimed as a gifted, "quietly powerful" and "innovative" actor, director and choreographer. Inextricably woven into her artistic aesthetic is her deep passion to advocate for social justice, equity and equality, which is why Austene also enjoys her roles as an educator, administrator and community builder through varied disciplines of theater. Austene's stage credits include *Familiar*, *Disgraced*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Amen Corner*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Crowns* and *A Christmas Carol* at the GUTHRIE THEATRE; *Disgraced* at MCCARTER/MILWAUKEE REPETORY THEATER; *Wedding Band*, *The Owl Answers*, *Detroit '67*, *Spunk*, *Amen Corner*, *Blue*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Dinah Was*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Zooman and the Sign*, *Seven Guitars* and *Lost in The Stars* at PENUMBRA THEATRE; the title role of Aida in *Aida* at THEATER LATTE DA at the PANTAGES; *Radio Golf* at IRT/CLEVELAND PLAYHOUSE; Blanche Dubois in *A Street Car Named Desire*; *Henry IV* and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* at TEN THOUSAND THINGS THEATER; *In The Next Room* at the JUNGLE THEATRE; *Might As Well Be Dead* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* at PARK SQUARE THEATRE; *Shrek the Musical*, *Once on this Island*, *Two African Tales*, *A Very Old Man* and *Not Without Laughter* at CHILDREN'S THEATER COMPANY; *A Christmas Story*, *Singing in the Rain* and *Dinah Was* at THE ORDWAY MUSIC THEATER; *Hair* at CHANHASSEN DINNER THEATRE; *Vices*, *Two Queens One Castle*, *Dance On Widows Row* and *Point of Review* at MIXED BLOOD THEATER. Austene's directing credits include *The Royale* at YELLOW TREE THEATRE; *Annie* ( AWARDED BEST PLAY, City Pages Best of 2018) at ORDWAY MUSIC THEATER; *Hot Mikado* at SKYLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE; *Intimate Apparel* at TEN THOUSAND THINGS THEATER; *Blues in the Night* at MCKNIGHT THEATRE, THE ORDWAY; *Gee's Bend*, *Hot Chocolate* and *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* at PARK SQUARE THEATRE; *Black Nativity*, 2006-2008, at PENUMBRA THEATRE; *Lonely Soldier Monologues* and *A Civil War Christmas* at HISTORY THEATRE; *Ain't Misbehavin'* at the CAPRI THEATRE; *Six Degrees of Separation* at THEATRE IN THE ROUND; *Joan*; *Voices in the Fire* for the GUTHRIE THEATER EXPERIENCE at RARIG.

**Link to the recording of the virtual workshop – Introductory remarks and follow up Q&A and dialogue:**

<https://sites.google.com/view/ctam/ctampanelrecordings>

### **Creating Racial Justice Performance in a Time of Pandemic: New Dawn Theatre Company's film *A Breath for George***

Stephanie Walseth, Perpich Center for Arts Education

Austene Van, New Dawn Theatre Company

[Link to Video](#) | [Link to Chat](#) | Email questions to Stephanie Walseth

([stephanie.walseth@pcae.k12.mn.us](mailto:stephanie.walseth@pcae.k12.mn.us))

\*Note: The posted video only includes the introduction and the Q and A sessions, not the actual film for intellectual property reasons. Those interested in organizing a free screening of the film in their community should contact New Dawn Theatre directly at <http://newdawntheatre.org/>).



We know the transformative power of theater when it comes to addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time. This summer, the fight for racial justice was re-ignited worldwide after the murder of George Floyd, amidst the context of a global pandemic that is disproportionately affecting BIPOC communities, and radically shifting both education and performance into new, distanced forms. In this context, New Dawn Theatre Company created *A Breath for George*. The film was crafted from individually recorded performances of monologues, songs, poems, movement, and interviews by local black and POC artists and scholars, and then woven together and projected onto the exterior of theater buildings across the Twin Cities. In this session, join NDT's Artistic Director Austene Van and Perpich's Stephanie Lein Walseth for an online screening of *A Breath for George*, followed by a virtual Q&A and dialogue session.