

KENNY LEON'S

**true colors**

THEATRE COMPANY

THE FIRST ANNUAL

**NEXT** MONOLOGUE  
COMPETITION  
**NARRATIVE**  
**NATIONAL**  
**FINALS**

MONDAY  
MAY 2ND 2022  
AT 7PM EST

AT THE HISTORIC  
APOLLO THEATER

NEW VOICES.  
NEW TRUTHS.  
NEW DISCOVERIES.





## Program Overview

True Colors' Next Narrative™ Monologue Competition features newly created works from fifty of America's leading contemporary Black playwrights that engage students in artful exploration of 21st century themes, while instilling confidence in all to find their voices.

True Colors' mission is to celebrate the rich tradition of Black storytelling while giving voice to bold artists of all cultures. This Black storytelling lens is not exclusionary, but provides an inclusive portal to new worlds and the truths therein.

This program serves high school students, grades 9-12. Regionally, students progress through three rounds: preliminaries, semi-finals, and a regional final. Then, the top two winners from each regional competition participate in the National Finals, receiving an all-expense paid trip to New York City that includes:

- Workshops with theatre professionals
- Performance at the Apollo Theater
- Ticket to a Broadway show
- Cash prizes for the top three winners

## Program Objectives

1. Introduce students to today's leading contemporary Black writers
2. Expose students to acting techniques that enhance their knowledge of the art and skill of performance
3. Utilize the arts to support students in making co-curricular connections
4. Investigate how history and culture influence personal perspective through artful exploration
5. Embolden students to use their voices to inspire social action

## About True Colors

Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company is a nonprofit regional theater company based in Atlanta, GA. True Colors Theatre Company's mission is to celebrate the rich tradition of Black storytelling while giving voice to bold artists from all cultures. We add dimension and relevance to our work on the stage through community events and education programming. The vision of Artistic Director Jamil Jude is for the company to thrive at the intersection of artistic excellence and civic engagement.

## True Colors Education

Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company's Education Department strives to be a premier organization that adds theatre into the daily educational lives of students; therefore, promoting respectful dialogue among cultures and fostering an appreciation for diverse viewpoints. We achieve this vision by educating students using a standards-based arts integrated curriculum that preserves both the rich canon of African American classics and world drama through our all-encompassing 3 Ps: pedagogy, partnerships, and performances. The department offers programs to students from elementary school through college and beyond.

## Monologue Themes

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Class                      | 6. Cultural celebration/competency         |
| 2. Gender                     | 7. Global warming/environmental            |
| 3. Ableism/Inclusivity        | 8. Immigration/international relationships |
| 4. Relationship to technology | 9. Social/emotional/physical health        |
| 5. Family/Community           | 10. Abstract/non-thematic                  |

**Diverse stories that reflect our diverse world**

# A letter from Jamil Jude

Welcome to the first annual National Next Narrative Monologue Competition! We are so excited to introduce you to the eighteen talented students who have landed here, at the Historic Apollo Theater, ready to surprise and delight you with their performance. For 15 years, True Colors has proudly hosted a high school monologue competition and we are so very thankful for everyone who has joined us as we shifted the program's focus to include a plethora of the diverse Black playwrights who are having a positive impact on the American Theatre.

What started out as an idea has been nurtured by so many loving artists and has blossomed into today's event. In the truest sense of Sankofa, we thank the visionaries who initially conceived of a way to invite more young artists to develop a relationship with Black writers. Their love of Black storytelling and their desire to see its preservation is the ground in which today's event stands on. We thank our regional partners who have recruited, trained, and fostered an environment that allowed our students to fully step into this work and see themselves transformed through it. It is in the growth of our students that this program truly reaches its highest heights.

This work would not have been possible without the buy-in from the 20 writers assembled for this first year. Thank you for giving of your time and talent to create, from scratch, 41 new monologues that will enrich the world. You all stepped into the gap- so many students have raised concerns that, prior to this competition, there were too few monologues for Black and Brown high school-aged actors. With the help of our collaborators at Theatrical Rights Worldwide, there now exist a fulfilling response to that need. Over the next few years, we will grow the number of participating playwrights until we reach 150 new monologues. We look forward to sharing this gift with the field shortly.

Now, get ready to be wowed. These students are about to bring the house down!

Positive vibrations



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamil Jude'.

Jamil Jude  
Artistic Director, True Colors Theatre Company

# Regional Partners

**BILL NUNN**  
THEATRE  
OUTREACH  
PROJECT

**HUNTINGTON  
THEATRE  
COMPANY**  
AVENUE OF THE ARTS  
& SOUTH END

KENNY LEON'S

**true colors**

**THEATRE COMPANY**



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY

SEATTLE  
**REP**



SMU | MEADOWS  
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

# NEXT **MONOLOGUE COMPETITION**

# NARRATIVE

## **Welcoming Remarks**

Jamil Jude, Joaquina Kalukango

## **Introduction of Judges**

Chandra Stephens-Albright

## **Presentations by National Finalists**

**Courtney Anderson**- "Eat," Candrice Jones

**Arissa Collymore**- "What You Can't Have," Francisca Da Silveira

**Lala Cooks**- "Sparking Joy," Francisca Da Silveira

**Terynn Erby-Walker**- "Say No to the Dress," Stacey Rose

**Shakyna Golphin**- "Connie," Dominic Taylor

**Aija Hodges**- "One Second," Rachel Lynett

**Leila Hyder**- "Eat," Candrice Jones

**Karamoko Kaba**- "a note spit from a native son," Psalmayene 24

**LaNiyah Simone K. Grovell**- "Say No to the Dress," Stacey Rose

**Mikayla Keyes**- "The Blues," Star Finch

**Nick Marston**- "Upcharge," Inda Craig-Galvan

**Ife Martin**- "One Second," Rachel Lynett

**Jola Olojede**- "Chuck," Jonathan Norton

**Jordan Talley**- "It's Aaliyah for Me," Candrice Jones

**Julia Weston**- "The Recurring Dream, or Small Baby Hands," Psalmayene 24

**Zaria Williams**- "What You Can't Have," Francisca Da Silveira

**Alexandria Woods**- "One Second," Rachel Lynett

## **Musical Performance**

Sterling Strings

## **Presentation of Winners**

# Performer Bios

## Courtney Anderson



Courtney Anderson is a junior with a 3.3 GPA who has participated in theatre for four years. She enjoys being a part of choir, the Baton Rouge Youth Coalition (BRYC), and has been seen in shows such as "High School Musical," "50s Bandstand," "Beauty and the Beast," "Cinderella," and "Jerome," a play written by a teacher and students. She plans to attend college to major in the arts or Chemistry and would like to thank her family, friends and all four of her arts teachers.

## Arissa Collymore



I'm Arissa, a senior at Juan Morel Campos with a burning passion for theater. Helping people is my specialty. I'm a queer black hispanic student who tries my best to spread awareness throughout. In the future I would like to pursue acting as a career, and even if it doesn't happen, I still want acting in my life. I would love to thank my drama teacher, Ms. Brown, that has helped me on my acting journey ever since I stepped into high school. I also want to thank my family for supporting me and my shenanigans.

## Alana Cooks



Hi, I'm Lala and I'm sixteen old. I'm going to be a successful actor to have my dream life. I attend Boston Arts Academy in Boston, MA. I'd like to thank my Mom & the BAA theater staff for all their support so far.

## Terynn Erby-Walker



Talk about excited...Terynn Erby-Walker, a junior at Golda Meir High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in this year's Next Narrative Monologue Competition. She has performed in several plays in the Milwaukee area, but her absolute favorites include "The Wiz," with First Stage, "West Side Story," with the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, and "Hairspray," with Skylight Music Theatre. Terynn is beyond grateful for the Next Narrative Monologue Competition program organizers as well as The Milwaukee Rep for providing an avenue for her to feel seen. She thanks her PTI coaches, Jenny and Jeff, who have chaperoned her on this fabulous adventure, for their direction and expertise. Terynn's family is always supportive of her, and she appreciates them and her theater teacher, Tyne Turner, for always believing in her.

## Shakyna Golphin



My name is Shakyna Golphin I'm 18 years old and attend two high schools, Taylor Allderdice and Millions UPREP, under the CTE program in Pittsburgh PA. I have been performing for almost 5 years and writing is my favorite part.

## LaNiyah Simone K. Grovell



LaNiyah Simone K. Grovell is simply thrilled to be a part of the inaugural Next Narrative Monologue Competition!! She has always admired the spirit, intent and social consciousness of August Wilson's playwriting genius, and is humbled to honor his legacy in this manner. A senior at Dunwoody High School in Georgia, LaNiyah has been performing in musicals and plays at various venues around Atlanta, including the Tony Award Winning Alliance Theatre, for over 6 years. Some of her favorite roles include Matron Mamma Morton ("Chicago"), Motormouth Maybelle ("Hairspray") and being a part of the ensemble cast of The Palefsky Collision Project. Shauna C Grovell~LaNiyah's first coach & song mistress~introduced her to theatre and infused in her the love, appreciation, respect and dedication for/of this tremendous art form (thanks Mother!!). LaNiyah credits the expansion of her acting abilities to Samantha Provenzano, Chris Moses and her AT family.

## Aija Hodges



Aija is an 11th grade student at Kalamazoo Central in Kalamazoo, MI. Aija has plans to pursue an education in the Arts at an HBCU. Aija believes in the importance of uplifting the voices and sharing the authentic stories of BIPOC communities. Aija is grateful for this opportunity and looks forward to performing.

## Leila Hyder



Leila Hyder (she/her) is a sophomore at Hopkins School in New Haven, CT. She is extremely grateful for this opportunity, and thanks all her friends and teachers for supporting her throughout the competition process, as well as her acting and theater performances throughout the years. She would like to especially extend gratitude for the other talented participants at Long Wharf Theatre's regional competition, who made this experience so fulfilling. Most importantly, Leila thanks her parents and brother for being her number one supporters; and her mentors, Julius and Jacques, for guiding her through the competition to help her grow as an actress. Performing at such a legendary theater like the Apollo has been a dream of Leila's ever since she was little, and she hopes to be a part of more acting opportunities in the future!

## Karamoko Kaba



Hi, I'm Karamoko Kaba. I'm 14 in the 9th grade, attending Baruch College Campus High school. I was raised in West Africa for one-third of my life, so I'm bilingual and speak fluent French and English. I play soccer for a school outside my school team called Downtown United Soccer Club. In Elementary I participated in theatre and dance for end of the year performances so I grew up performing on stages. I would like to thank Ms. White who has been my coach throughout this whole journey, Without her time and honesty I wouldn't be where I am I'm happy I made it this far, so the goal now is to win.

## Mikayla Keyes



Mikayla Keyes is a Senior at Oakland Catholic in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who is extremely excited to be performing and learning this weekend. She first thanks her wonderful support system for continuously motivating her to take risks and step out of her comfort zone. Next, she thanks the Alumni Theater Company and The Bill Nunn Outreach Project for introducing this opportunity and coaching her through the process thus far. Lastly, she thanks Star Finch and the other skilled playwrights for sharing pieces of themselves and stretching even further to allow each young performer to breathe their own lives into these pieces.

## Nick Marston



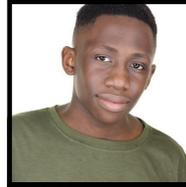
Nick Marston is a Junior at Silas High School, where he is currently cast as Sky in "Mamma Mia." Nick has also been seen at Tacoma Musical Playhouse on the Main Stage, in the 10-Minute Musical Festival, and in CampTMP shows. He is currently playing Sonny in "In The Heights" at TMP. Besides theatre, Nick swims and loves outdoor sports. He adores performing and making others laugh, and plans to continue acting throughout his life. He wants to thank his Mom, his Silas Cast Mates and all of TMP.

## Ife Martin



Ife Martin is a young artist, focusing on acting and spoken word as her main disciplines. She is a member of the internationally acclaimed Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. Ife also serves on the Inside Out Literary Arts Youth Advisory Board. She is a senior attending Howard University in the fall. She wants to thank her mother and father for always encouraging her to continue to grow. When she is not performing, Ife enjoys traveling and immersing herself in new stories and experiences

## Jola Olojede



Jola Olojede is a graduating senior who is striving to pursue film and acting. He would like to thank his family, his friends, Mr. Benard and Ms. Sasha, and Angi Burns for helping him throughout the way.

## Jordan Talley



Jordan is a sophomore at Fife High School in Washington State. Jordan comes from a background of musical theater and dance, she has played Babette in "Beauty and The Beast," Lucy in "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," ensemble in "In the Heights" and "All Shook Up" as well as Dance Captain in "Frozen Jr." Jordan has also found a love for technical theater in running sound and lights as well as directing. Jordan would like to thank her mom for being her #1 fan and biggest support and her coach Deanna Martinez for everything she has done for her.

## Julia Weston



Julia Weston is a sophomore from Hartford, Connecticut, currently attending Watkinson school. She is thrilled to be participating in finals for the Next Narrative Monologue Competition, as she passionately supports the uplifting of Black voices in any and all art forms. She thanks her family and friends for all the support!

## Zaria Williams



My name is Zaria Williams. I have been acting since I was 3, it has always been my passion. I hope to attend Howard University for their Theater Arts program. I want to sincerely thank my teachers, family, and closest friends for always supporting, loving, and teaching me along my journey.

## Alexandria Woods



Alexandria Woods is a junior at Rufus King IB High School in Milwaukee, WI and is ecstatic about this wonderful opportunity. She has had a deep passion for the performing arts from a young age. Starting with dance classes at the age of three and then participating in many theater classes and performances over the years. Her desire to be on the stage has continued to grow. Alexandria was most recently seen in Rufus King's fall play "Until the Flood" as Louisa Hemphill. She is extremely appreciative for all the support she has received from her family, friends, and mentors along the way as well as her faith being her foundation. Each experience has shaped her into the performer she is today. After high school graduation in 2023, Alexandria plans to attend an HBCU and major in either Theatre Arts or Psychology.

# Playwright Bios

## Inda Craig-Galván



Inda Craig-Galván is a playwright and screenwriter. Inda's currently developing new works of theatre on commission with Primary Stages, Company One, and The Old Globe. Produced plays include "Black Super Hero Magic Mama" and "I Go Somewhere Else." Awards: Kesselring Prize, Jeffry Melnick New Playwright Award, Blue Ink Playwriting Prize, Jane Chambers Student Award for Feminist Playwriting, and Stage Raw Best Playwright Award. Her work has been seen at the Ojai Playwrights Conference, Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Black Swan Lab, The Old Globe Powers New Voices Festival, Black & Latino Playwrights Conference, WomenWorks, Humanitas, Skylight Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, Trustus Theatre Playwrights Festival, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Intiman, and others.

## Francisca Da Silveira



Francisca is a Cape Verdean-American playwright. Her plays have been developed with Theatre503 (London), The Traverse Theatre (Edinburgh), TC Squared Theatre Company (Boston), Company One Theatre (Boston), Flat Earth Theatre (Boston), Fresh Ink Theatre Company (Boston), The Fire This Time Festival (New York), and Horse Trade Theater Group (New York). She has been a finalist for SpeakEasy Stage's 2018 and 2019 Boston Project Residency, Space of Ryder Farm's 2020 Creative Residency and has been a semi-finalist for the Dennis & Victoria Ross Playwrights Program, the 2019 Papatango New Play Prize and the 2019 Theatre503 International Playwriting Award. Fran's play "Can I Touch It?" was featured NNPN's 2020 National Showcase of New Plays in November 2020.

## Star Finch



Star Finch is a 2nd generation San Franciscan trying her best to hold ground for her children amidst the Black-erasure of gentrification. She is currently the Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Campo Santo and Crowded Fire Theater. She's also a resident playwright in the RPI program at Playwrights Foundation. Finch's plays include "H.O.M.E. [Hookers on Mars Eventually]" and "BONDAGE" (Relentless Award honorable mention). Find out more about her work at [starfinchplays.com](http://starfinchplays.com).

## Candrice Jones



Playwright, poet, and educator Candrice Jones is from Dermott, Arkansas. Candrice has been honored to have been a fellow at Callaloo for poetry at Brown University and in London. She has also been a VONA Playwriting Fellow and a CalArts MFA Critical Studies recipient. She is the author of the full-length plays "Crackbaby" (2010 Wasserstein Prize Nomination) and "FLEX." She has been a resident fellow at Ground Floor housed by the Berkeley Rep, the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival, and MacDowell's Colony of the Arts. Candrice, who was a 2019-20 Many Voices Fellows, is amazed and grateful to have been chosen for a 2nd year fellow at the Playwrights' Center, this time as a Jerome Fellow. She believes that in these times of peril "story and art matter more than ever."

## Rachel Lynett



Rachel Lynett (she/they) is a queer Afro-Latine playwright, producer, and teaching artist. Their plays have been featured at San Diego Rep, Magic Theatre, Mirrorbox Theatre, Laboratory Theatre of Florida, Barrington Stage Company, Theatre Lab, Theatre Prometheus, Florida Studio Theatre, Laughing Pig Theatre Company, Capital Repertory Theatre, Teatro Espejo, the Kennedy Center Page to Stage festival, Theatresquared, Equity Library Theatre, Chicago, Talk Back Theatre, American Stage Theatre Company, Indiana University at Bloomington, Edgewood College, and Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. Their plays "Last Night" and "HE DID IT" made the 2020 Kilroy's List. Rachel Lynett is also the 2021 recipient of the Yale Drama Prize for their play, "Apologies to Lorraine Hansberry (You Too August Wilson)," and the 2021 recipient of the National Latinx Playwriting award for their play, "Black Mexican."

## Jonathan Norton



Jonathan's work has been produced or developed by Actors Theatre of Louisville/Humana Festival, Dallas Theater Center, PlayPenn, InterAct Theatre Company, Pyramid Theatre Company, Black and Latino Playwrights Conference Playwrights Conference, Bishop Arts Theatre Center, African American Repertory Theatre, Soul Rep Theatre, the National Performance Network, and NNPN, among others. His play Mississippi G\*\*d\*\*\* was a Finalist for the Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and won the 2016 M. Elizabeth Osborn Award given by the American Theatre Critics Association. Other awards include Artistic Innovations Grant from the Mid-America Arts Alliance, SDCC Diaspora Performing Arts Commission, the TACA Family New Works Fund, the TACA Bowdon Family Fdn. Artist Residency Fund, and Jubilee Theatre's 2019 Eastman Visionary Award.

## Psalmayene 24



Psalmayene 24 (a.k.a. Gregory Morrison) is an award-winning playwright, director, and actor. He is currently The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Mosaic Theater and The Doris Duke Artist-in-Residence at Studio Theatre. His plays include "Les Deux Noirs" (2020 Charles MacArthur Award Nomination for Outstanding Original New Play or Musical and Venturous Capital Grant recipient), and "The Frederick Douglass Project" (six 2019 Helen Hayes Award nominations). He has received commissions from the African Continuum Theater Company, Arena Stage, Imagination Stage, The Kennedy Center, Solas Nua, Mosaic Theater Company, and Theatrical Outfit. Among other awards, the plays of his "Hip-Hop Children's trilogy" have earned two development grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Walt Disney Corporation grant, and two Helen Hayes Award nominations for Outstanding Production, Theatre for Young Audiences.

## Deneen Reynolds-Knott



Deneen Reynolds-Knott's outdoor play, "Shoebox Picnic Road Side: Route One," had its World Premiere at Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Fall 2021. Her play, "Babes In Ho-lland," was featured at Playwrights Foundation's 2020 Bay Area Playwrights Festival and will have a workshop production at Shotgun Players in Winter 2022. Other plays include "Flashes & Floaters" (2020 Playfest at Orlando Shakespeare Theater), "Baton" (2018 Premiere Play Festival and workshop reading at Premiere Stages, San Diego Rep's 2021 Black Voices Reading Series, Orlando Shakes' 2017 Playfest, finalist for the 2017 PlayPenn and Bay Area Playwrights conferences) and "Antepartum" (2020 Fire This Time Festival 's signature ten-minute play program). Deneen was a member of Clubbed Thumb's 2019-2020 Early-Career Writers' Group and received the 2021 Clubbed Thumb Constitution Commission. She also received a finalist grant from Clubbed Thumb's 2018 Open-Application Commission. She received her MFA in film from Columbia University.

## Stacey Rose



Stacey's work celebrates and explores Blackness, Black identity, Black history, body politics, and the dilemma of life as the "other." She is a 2019-20 McKnight Fellow, 20-22 Playwrights' Center Core Writer, 18-19 Goodman Theatre's Playwrights Unit writer, and member of The Civilians R&D Group. Her play *America v. 2.1* won the inaugural Burman New Play Prize and premiered in 2019. *America v 2.1* and *As Is* were featured on the 2019 Kilroys list (Legacy Land, Honorable Mention). She received a 2019 Virginia B. Toulmin Fdn. Womens Commissioning Grant with Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. Her work has been presented at UNC Charlotte, On Q Productions, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, The Fire This Time Festival, The Brooklyn Generator, The Bushwick Starr Reading Series, Mosaic Theatre, The Amoralists Theatre Company, National Black Theatre, and Pillsbury House Theater.

## Dominic Taylor



Dominic Taylor is a Los Angeles based writer and director whose work has been seen all over the country. The Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theatre and New York Theatre Workshop have all commissioned Taylor as a writer. His play, "I Wish You Love," premiered at Penumbra Theatre, and was produced at both The Kennedy Center and at Hartford Stage in 2012. "Hype Hero" was developed at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center in Waterford, Conn., and was produced at Brown University in Fall 2014. His written work includes "Wedding Dance" and "Personal History," both produced at the Kennedy Center by the African Continuum Theatre and published by Playscripts.com. His play "Upcity Service(s)" is included in the anthology "Seven More Different Plays." His next project will be a commercial musical, "Selassie," which he will also direct.

For the biographies of all other commissioned playwrights as well as other competition information, please visit: <https://truecolorstheatre.org/next-narrative-monologue-competition/>

# Special Thanks

Demeatria Boccella, Thembisile Gxuluwe, Meg O'Brien, Regine Vital, Naheem Garcia, Clarissa Crawford, Candi Dugas, Brad Raymond, Taylor Valentine, Kathy D. Harrison, Kenneth Ray, Cheyenne Barboza, Joey Reyes, Betzabeth Castro, Kate Moore Heaney, Julius L. Stone Jr, Jenny Toutant, Jeffrey Mosser, Liz Gray, Deric McNish, Rob Roznowski, Phillip Uko Effiong, Bert Goldstein, Nabra Nelson, Alex Lee Reed, Deanna Martinez, Benard Cummings, Sasha Maya Ada Davis, Trajan Clayton

Stori L. Ayers, Jordan Barrow, Clint Ramos, Bejunior Fallon

Kenny Leon, Joaquina Kalukango, Jason Michael Webb, lark hackshaw, the cast of "for colored girls...", Theatre Communications Group, Isisara Bey

Theatrical Rights Worldwide (Lysna Marzani, Steve Spiegel, Dylan MarcAurele)

The Apollo Theater

Sterling Strings

City Headshots

Nick Bedo, Tracey Bonner, Jim Dudukovich, Susan Gurman, Tyrrell Harrell, Alden Kennedy, Elizabeth Kennedy, Adrienne Leon, Nikki Toombs, Lisa Watson, Damon Whitaker, Austin Weatherspoon, Rebekah Wortman

