MIDWEST PREMIERE

PARADISE BLUE

BY **DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU**

DIRECTED BY **RON OJ PARSON**

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY **ORBERT DAVIS**

TimeLine 20
Theatre Company
20 YEARS OF HISTORY

BACKSTORY YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

A MESSAGE

FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PJ POWERS

Dear Friends,

My parents were born and raised in Detroit. I went to school in the city and grew up in a suburb on its northern border. Though I've called Chicago home for the last 26 years, I will always be deeply influenced by my Detroit roots. But I'm less proud to admit that prior to reading *Paradise Blue*, I knew little about a historic part of Detroit's rich cultural history that had vanished before I was born.

From the 1920s through the '50s, the Black Bottom neighborhood was home to a growing population of African Americans—many of whom had migrated from the South to seek employment in the booming auto industry. The neighborhood's business and entertainment center—Paradise Valley—became an epicenter for music through the '40s and '50s, drawing famous blues, big band, and jazz artists to the numerous black-owned clubs, performing for enthusiastic, mixed-race crowds.

But by the 1960s, Paradise Valley and Black Bottom ceased to exist.

Mayor Albert Cobo and his mostly white city government hatched an urban renewal plan for the Motor City, including the buyout and elimination of Black Bottom to pave the way for their new vision. Gone were the the homes, businesses, music, and culture of Paradise Valley. New were the Chrysler Freeway and, ultimately, Ford Field—the stadium occupied by the NFL's Detroit Lions.

Thankfully, Dominique Morisseau is helping tell the tale. TimeLine produced her play *Sunset Baby* a year ago, and we're honored to present the second production of *Paradise Blue*, following its recent premiere at the Williamstown Theatre Festival and a year before its planned Off-Broadway debut in 2018.

A passionate native Detroiter, Dominique is crafting an ever-growing body of work that pays homage to her hometown's history, not unlike what August Wilson did for his beloved Pittsburgh. Her trilogy of *Detroit '67, Skeleton Crew*, and *Paradise Blue* puts the citizens of a great Midwestern city on stage with humanity, humor, poetry, and authenticity.

We couldn't be more excited to have her vital storytelling at TimeLine again, under the always inspired direction of Company Member Ron OJ Parson. He's joined by Chicago jazz legend Orbert Davis, lending his renowned artistry to the production by composing and recording original music for *Paradise Blue*.

These artists will take you back to Paradise Valley, circa 1949, for the beauty of the jazz, the soulfulness of the musicians, the struggles of a neighborhood in transition, and the haunting decisions that would change the landscape of a city.

Bringing this play to our stage now feels apropos, as Chicago continues to see gentrification changing neighborhoods, and economic development flourishing in some, but absent in many, parts of our city.

And a year ago—57 years after this play is set—plans were unveiled in Detroit for a multimillion-dollar development known as the Paradise Valley Cultural and Entertainment District, aiming to highlight African American arts and businesses. It calls for a jazz club, restaurants, boutique hotel and mixed-cost housing. Paradise Valley's urban renewal, version two. Time will tell if this new vision—and all its good intentions—will have the desired impact.

History can't be rewritten, but it can be told, with the hope that the future can be bettered. I look forward to the stories that Dominique has yet to write about our beloved hometown and its many tales not yet told.

Thank you for joining us,

THE PLAYWRIGHT

DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

"Detroiters know that people feel negatively about the city, so they're very particular about who's going to write us. When I tell people from Detroit that I'm writing about the city, the first thing they say is, 'Okay, make us look good now.' And I'm like, 'Why? That's not an interesting play!' I'm not going to do that. But what I promise is: I'm not going to make you look bad. I'm going to make you look human. Because that's what we are."

– Dominique Morisseau

Detroit native Dominique Morisseau has made a name for herself as one of the most exciting young playwrights and performers in theatre today, and she was one of the most produced playwrights in America during the 2015-16 season. TimeLine's production of *Paradise Blue* marks the company's second foray into the playwright's work in as many seasons, coming on the heels of last year's successful run of *Sunset Baby*.

An alumna of The Public Theater Emerging Writers Group, the Women's Project Playwrights Lab, and the Lark Playwright's Workshop, Morisseau was the 2015 recipient of the Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama, and the winner of the 2015 Steinberg Playwright Award. Morisseau is also a two-time NAACP Image Award recipient, a Jane Chambers Playwriting Award honoree, and the winner of the Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwriting Award.

Paradise Blue (the 2012 L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award Winner) received its world premiere at Williamstown Theatre Festival in 2015. TimeLine's production marks its Midwest premiere. It is the second entry in The Detroit Projects, a three-play cycle about Morisseau's hometown, inspired by

Playwright Dominique Morisseau.

August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle. The first show of the trilogy, *Detroit '67*, premiered at The Public Theater in 2013, while the final play, *Skeleton Crew*, received its premiere at Atlantic Theater Company last summer.

Morisseau is also the author of *Pipeline* (a finalist for the 2017 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and premiering at Lincoln Center Theater this summer), *Blood at the Root* and *Follow Me to Nellie's*, as well as a series of published one-act plays including *Third Grade, Black at Michigan, love. lies.liberation, Socks, Roses Are Played Out,* and *Love and Nappiness*. Her work also has been published in *The New York Times* bestseller *Chicken Soup for the African American Soul* as well as "Signifyin' Harlem," a Harlem-based literary journal.

As a performer, Dominique originated the role of Camae in Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* in New York City and has appeared at the McCarter Theatre, New York Stage and Film, and Yale Repertory. She currently works as a writer for *Shameless* on Showtime.

A graduate of University of Michigan, Morisseau started her career as a performance poet. To this day, her work revolves around shining a light on communities that are underrepresented and pushed to the fringes of society. For more information, visit *dominiquemorisseau.com*.

THE MUSIC

JAZZ AND THE GREAT MIGRATION

The history of jazz is a history of time and of place, one that cannot be separated from the history of African Americans in this country. As is true with many aspects of culture, music is inherently linked to the geography of human migration; as people and communities move, musical traditions and genres move with them, evolving and developing to reflect the environment accordingly.

The origins of jazz can be traced back to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Slaves maintained strong connections to the musical traditions of their homes in Sub-Saharan and West Africa, continuing to practice these traditions despite their enslavement. After the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, these traditional African elements continued to mix with Latin and Caribbean musical influences, as well as more traditional folk music of the American South. In the Mississippi Delta, this gave rise to a form of local folk music that would become known as the Blues, recognizable by its distinctive rhyme scheme and its characteristic call and response structure.

In New Orleans, during the last years of the 19th century, Blues was adopted by musicians who experimented with the form to create a new improvised form of music that would come to be known as Jazz. Jazz music borrowed from Blues but sped up the tempo and infused elements of brass marching bands (popular in New Orleans at the time).

Buddy Bolden and his band, one of the earliest jazz bands in New Orleans.

Jazz came to reflect the Creole melting-pot culture of the port city as it continued to develop and grow throughout the black community. It began spreading to other cities as the pioneering musicians found work as part of riverboat bands and as part of vaudeville acts that would tour the South.

At the turn of the century, nearly 90 percent of all African Americans lived in former slave states in the South, and more than 75 percent of that population lived in rural areas far removed from major city centers. Jazz had begun to permeate these communities, but had yet to break through to enjoy mainstream success. However, with the onset of World War I, the demand for workers to aid in the war effort in northern cities began to increase. Spurred in part by this new sense of economic opportunity, and by black newspapers such as *The Chicago Defender* and *The Detroit Free Press* calling for a "Great Northern Drive," African Americans began to migrate out of the South, en masse, in three great waves between 1910 and 1940.

An African American family leaves their home in the South during the Great Migration. (MPI/Getty Images)

This exodus, which would come to be known as The Great Migration, saw major population shifts as African Americans began to form distinctive black communities throughout the North. Black-owned businesses, social clubs, and churches were organized in order to cater to these new communities' needs. In Detroit alone, between the years 1910 and 1929, the African American population increased from 6,000 to 120,000, and all-black neighborhoods such as Paradise Valley / Black Bottom were formed and began to thrive.

"Jazz musicians came north for the same reasons that other people did: failing crops and discrimination in the South."

As these communities moved, jazz musicians moved with them. Jazz musicians "came north for the same reasons that other people did: failing crops and discrimination in the South," wrote Isabel Wilkerson in her award-winning book *The Warmth of Other Suns.* Jazz found its way to clubs in cities like Detroit, Chicago, and New York, and began to steadily increase in popularity as musicians from across the country were introduced to one another's musical stylings and influences. These cities became a hub for cultural activity and the breeding ground for musical collaboration and experimentation as jazz continued to evolve.

Record labels soon took note of the financial opportunity that jazz presented and capitalized on the moment, signing a slew of musicians and ushering in a new era for jazz music. Musicians such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis continued to push and grow the genre to new places and new levels of popularity, both in the United States and abroad.

The appeal of jazz extended past national borders or cultural identities, and became a universally understood language. And yet, through it all, it remains uniquely a snapshot of the African American experience at the turn of the century.

"Jazz is restless. It won't stay put and it never will."

– J. J. Johnson, jazz trombonist

THE TIMELINE:
BLACK BOTTOM, DETROIT

1917 The Detroit Urban League estimates that 1,000 Black Americans are moving to Detroit each month, most to the Black Bottom neighborhood.

1920 Detroit's population is roughly one million; its black population is 40,000. There are more than 350 black-owned businesses in Black Bottom. The city is at its social, cultural, and political peak.

1925 The promise of economic opportunity continues to draw more people to Black Bottom. Overcrowding becomes prevalent in housing units, with predatory landlords charging high prices for squalid conditions.

1929 The stock market crash tanks the U.S. economy, exacerbating the poor quality of life of Black Bottom's working-class. Employment in the black community drops by 30 percent.

1930 Detroit's population has increased to 1.5 million; only New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia are larger. The black population is now 149,000.

Charles Roxborough becomes the first black Michigan State Senator; he represents a portion of Black Bottom as well as North End and Hamtramck.

1935 During President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR)'s administration, the first black public housing projects are constructed in downtown Detroit as part of New Deal initiatives.

1937 FDR's Housing Act of 1937 creates the U.S. Housing Authority and provides subsidies to improve living conditions for low-income families.

1940 Detroit's population is 1.7 million with 224,000 black residents. With the U.S. involvement in World War II, employment rates rise, attracting another wave of black migration to Black Bottom.

1941 The Sojourner Truth Housing (STH) project, public housing intended for black tenants, is constructed in a previously all-white Polish community.

THE ENVIRONMENT

BLACK BOTTOM AND THE RIOTS OF 1943

Police use tear gas to disperse a crowd on the main street of Detroit in an effort to halt race rioting on June 21, 1943. (AP)

In June 1943, Detroit was home to one of the worst race riots in the history of the United States. While these riots are often overshadowed by the more talked-about riots of 1967, the '43 riots served to illuminate the issues that would continue to plague the city during the tumultuous decades that followed.

Much like the riots that would break out two decades later, the conditions leading up to the Detroit Race Riot of 1943 were deeply rooted in the inaccessibility of employment opportunities, population density, poor living conditions, and racism.

Starting in 1940, drawn to the promise of the booming auto industry, workers began to migrate to Detroit in vast numbers. However, the city's infrastructure was ill-equipped to accommodate such quick population growth, and while employment opportunities in the city were plentiful, the physical space to house all of these new workers did not exist.

Many of these workers who migrated north were African Americans searching not only for economic opportunity, but also for a respite from the concentrated racism of the American South. However, when they arrived, they found they still were treated as second-class citizens, and struggled to find housing among the violently defended borders of white segregated neighborhoods.

A man is dragged from a street car on June 21, 1943, during fighting near Detroit's downtown section. (AP)

Detroit's black residents were mostly concentrated in the 60 square blocks of the Paradise Valley / Black Bottom neighborhood, which was one of the epicenters of African American community and culture during the first half of the 20th century. They were forced to live in tight, cramped tenements, often housing more than one family. These less-than-ideal living conditions were a stark contrast to the city's more spread out white neighborhoods.

In 1942, a federally mandated attempt to create more housing opportunities by constructing a black housing project (the Sojourner Truth Housing project) in an all-white neighborhood brought tensions to a head. More than 1,000 white residents, angry about the desegregation of the neighborhood, responded by lighting a cross on fire and taking to the streets. State troopers were required to protect incoming black families.

In June 1943, white factory workers began protesting against having to work alongside their African American co-workers. On June 21, a public fight broke out between more than 200 residents, divided along racial lines, that police had to break up.

That night, two rumors began to spread: one that a black woman and her baby were thrown off the Belle Isle Bridge, another that a white woman had been raped near the same bridge. A second wave of violence started the next morning. White mobs rioted, beating black professionals on their way home from work. These mobs then traveled into Paradise Valley, attacking black moviegoers and home owners. For the most part, black-directed violence was aimed toward white-owned businesses within Paradise Valley. The violence spread and grew more indiscriminate. These riots lasted until Mayor Jeffries asked President Roosevelt to intervene with federal troops.

Over the three days the riots lasted, 34 people were killed (25 of them African Americans) and more than 1,800 people were arrested (85 percent of whom were black).

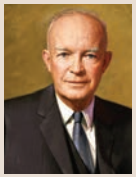
THE POLITICS

THE HOUSING ACTS OF 1949 AND 1954

Truman

In 1949, the first major comprehensive housing act was adopted under President Harry S. Truman. Its ambition was to provide a home to every American within a generation and in the process, serve to contribute to "the development and redevelopment of communities and to the advancement of the growth, wealth, and security of the Nation."

Part of Truman's domestic legislations program known as The Fair Deal, The Housing Act of 1949 stimulated the private sector economy and created jobs while boldly carrying out a Franklin D. Roosevelt New Deal legacy of public housing. Envisioned as a way to assist the millions of suffering families identified by Truman and his administration, the bill allocated federal financing toward slum clearance programs and toward constructing more than 800,000 new public hosing units across the country.



Eisenhower

Over the next 15 years, however, this intent to offer "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family" would be transformed into a policy of urban renewal. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower introduced a housing bill that whittled Truman's goal of 135,000 public housing units annually over six years down to just 35,000 units in one year. The Republican-controlled Congress was able to circumvent the 1949 Act—which they'd been trying to defeat during Truman's administration—by restricting funding for public housing.

Though urban renewal was present in a minor way in Truman's 1949 act, Eisenhower's 1954 Housing Act focused heavily on urban renewal, masked in terms like "removing urban blight." This policy focused primarily on low-income black and minority communities. Instead of replacing slums, it cleared these communities in order to build luxury housing and commercial projects to drive up property value for white communities.

Under the backdrop of these federal administrations, Paradise Valley / Black Bottom flourished and fell, as legislation at the federal level mirrored discriminatory local politics and played a huge role in the neighborhood's destruction and erasure.

1942 Federal officials, fearing backlash from the white community, re-designate the STH project to be white-only. But the following month, the unit is designated for black tenants again.

Despite black tenants having paid a full month's rent without being able to move in, white tenants riot in protest in April, disbanding only after the Michigan National Guard is called in.

1943 Growing unrest caused by scarce housing and workplace competition escalates into the Detroit Race Riots; three days of riots end up destroying property and lives in Black Bottom.

1944 New York developer Eugene Greenhut proposes to the Detroit Housing Commission a $50 million slum-clearance plan aimed at two communities, including Black Bottom.

1946 Mayor Jeffries revamps the Greenhut "Detroit Plan," focusing on Black Bottom. The City Council approves the plan.

1949 Condemnation begins in Black Bottom. Property owners, some of whom resist, are offered money. The neighborhood's residents, most of whom are renters, begin to move.

The Housing Act of 1949 is passed. President Harry S. Truman and Congress make millions of dollars in federal public housing money available to cities like Detroit. City officials propose 12 sites for public housing development.

1950 Detroit's new mayor Albert E. Cobo nixes nine of 12 public housing plans—the ones he approves will be in white neighborhoods. He does allow continuation of the "Detroit Plan" and orders that 423 residences, 109 businesses, 22 factories, and 93 vacant lots within the three miles from Jefferson Avenue to Pallister Street in Black Bottom be condemned.

1950 Mayor Cobo attends a meeting of black businessmen at Paradise Valley's El Sino Club on January 13; he warns them to "improve slum areas."

THE INTERVIEW

ORBERT DAVIS

Orbert Davis

During rehearsals, dramaturg Jared Bellot (JB) caught up with renowned jazz musician Orbert Davis (OD), who composed and recorded the original music for *Paradise Blue*, to ask about his 30-year career, his approach to working on the play, and the power of jazz.

JB: What inspired you to pursue this career in music?

OD: When I was 11 years old, a local Veterans of Foreign Wars organization contacted me very early on Veterans Day to play "Taps" at a few local cemeteries. I was honored, though a bit shaken up with the 7-gun salutes! But an amazing thing happened when we were finished ... they reached into their wallets and handed me 25 dollars! The concept of being able to "play and get paid" never ceases to amaze me.

JB: And now your career has spanned more than three decades, and you've enjoyed great critical and commercial success. How has your connection to the music and your conversation with the world around you evolved?

OD: I don't think that my connection to music has changed much. I'm still a "music addict." But it has intensified through the years. I guess that age, knowledge, and experience are the best teachers.

I remain in conversation with the world simply by living life to the fullest. My work keeps me busy and highly motivated, but I get to turn the volume down occasionally. Life with my family keeps me balanced. And talk about "conversation"—I love traveling to other countries, meeting and sharing music with other musicians. Though we may speak different languages, we understand each other perfectly through the language of music.

JB: When you sit down to write a piece of music, how would you describe your process?

OD: My process is all about making connections, whether historical, visual, or aesthetic. I want my music to serve as "soundtracks" for whatever assignment I'm given.

JB: Much of Dominique Morisseau's writing is about inheritance—what is passed down to us (for better or worse) from the generations that have come before. Does this sense of legacy and ancestry also live in your music?

OD: There is no way my music cannot contain a sense of legacy and ancestry, whether from my own experiences or inspired by external factors. As I said earlier, my process is all about making connections. The connection I know best lies within my own DNA: my heritage, faith, beliefs, struggles, and successes that live within my bloodline. And for me, that's a fascinating place of reference. When I experience the legacy of others through direct contact or intensive study, music begins to elevate to an even higher level. That's what I believe happens through collaboration, or even within jazz performance.

JB: Just last year you received a commission from the Chicago Jazz Festival to write a piece that would be part of the city's ongoing centennial celebration of The Great Migration. You created "Soul Migration"—what is its significance?

OD: The significance behind "Soul Migration" was personal. It celebrates the 100th anniversary of the migration of African Americans from the South to the North, specifically to Chicago. My parents came to Chicago from northern Louisiana during the early 1950s, toward the end of The Great Migration. I remember their stories about Chicago being the "land of opportunity." Specific inspiration came from Natalie Moore's book *The South Side*, and Timuel Black's epic two-volume *Bridges of Memory.* I was motivated to write a seven-movement work that would depict more than the geographical movement of a people. I wanted it to be a celebration of the consciousness of the people ... the collection of "souls" that built strong communities. The stories of "Soul Migration" reflect the Chicago African American experience, but are universally humanistic sagas of survival, strength, and heritage.

JB: After a project like that, what was your response when Ron OJ Parson approached you about working on this production?

OD: When Ron called me to compose for *Paradise Blue*, I immediately responded with excitement that this would be another experience in the chapter of our friendship. We've known each other for a while and have both appreciated and admired each other's work. As he described *Paradise Blue*, I started brainstorming on different processes that we could use to collectively transcend our individual art.

JB: So what was that process like, writing the music for this production?

OD: Preparing for *Paradise Blue* was quite a treat. When Ron told me that the setting was 1949, I immediately knew what I had to do. I studied the music from 1946 to '48 to discover what the character Blue would've listened to and who would've been his inspiration. Since Bebop was in its infancy, Dizzy Gillespie would have been the obvious choice. However, given Blue's character and personality, I gravitated toward Fats Navarro. So the music of *Paradise Blue* was

Orbert Davis records portions of his original composition for Paradise Blue *at Chicago's Tone Zone Studio in March, with director Ron OJ Parson listening in.*

1951 Detroit's population is 1.8 million, the black population is 300,000, about half of whom live in Black Bottom.

1954 Eisenhower's Housing Act of 1954 is passed, deemphasizing public housing and emphasizing slum clearance. Black Bottom is completely razed and renamed "Ragweed Acres." It will remain empty for more than a decade.

1956 Lafayette Park construction begins.

1957 Mayor Cobo suffers a fatal heart attack on September 12; City Council President Louis Miriani becomes mayor.

1959 Mayor Miriani is on hand for the January 30 ground breaking for the I-357 portion of the Chrysler Freeway.

1960 Detroit's population has fallen to 1.6 million, but the black population has increased to 482,000. The Cobo Center, a convention center along Jefferson and Washington avenues, is built.

1961 Lafayette Park towers and shopping center construction begins. Chrysler School opens.

1964 On June 26, the I-375 portion of the Chrysler Freeway opens. It wipes out Hastings Street from East Jefferson to Milwaukee Street.

1965 The 1954 Housing Act comes under the purview of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

1967 Construction begins on a second major urban renewal project: Elmwood Park I. It too is designed with middle-class residents in mind.

1974 In its July 29 edition, *The Detroit Free Press* calls Lafayette Park Detroit's urban renewal "fiasco."

2002 606 Horseshoe Lounge, the last structure of the Paradise Valley era, is demolished; Ford Field is poised to open.

2016 Plans are revealed for Detroit's Paradise Valley Cultural and Entertainment District development; most of the developers making up the private investment of $52.4 million are African American.

"I could tell that the creative process of jazz inspiration inspired Dominique. Her lines flow with emotion as finely crafted improvised solos."

inspired by the creative improvisation of Fats and the compositional style of Tadd Dameron. My goal was to compose music as if I were writing for "Blue's new album." I want the audience to leave the theater thinking, "I've heard that tune before." If they do that, I will have done my job.

JB: One of the things I've come to love about Dominique's writing is the musicality of her prose—her words ebb and flow so fluidly, and I think you can see her origins as a poet. How did Dominique's language influence your own writing process?

OD: I could tell that the creative process of jazz inspiration inspired Dominique. Her lines flow with emotion as finely crafted improvised solos. The musicians' interaction is spot on ... except the Orbert Davis Quintet would never fight like Blue's group does!

JB: In an interview you did with *Jazz Inside New York*, I read your comment that "Improvisation is life. In it we find many skills found in life itself." Certainly the spirit of improvisation has been incredibly important in this rehearsal process and is a vital part of the story. How did that spirit translate to the music?

OD: When I teach improvisation, I often ask students, "how many of you use a map every time you drive?" Or, "who uses a manual to ensure that your morning routine is exactly the same every day?" Or, "... do you use a script for casual conversations?" Answers are usually "no." Such can be the same for music. *Paradise Blue* is set in jazz. The music must reflect the time period and the musical process. However, once the music is documented, it becomes scripted, unless the actors are improvising musicians.

JB: So when you refer to "improvisation as composition," what does that mean?

OD: Improvisation is spontaneous composition. It is a process based on the theory and aesthetics of written composition, but occurs in the moment.

JB: In a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune*, you quoted jazz clarinetist Pete Fountain, commenting that art can lead to healing and "that music forces us to listen and to feel, before we turn our minds away from what's going on, before we ignore what's right in front of us. The music holds us long enough to think and to feel." What is it about jazz specifically that allows for this cathartic experience?

OD: Wow, I didn't know that I was quoting Pete! But the ideal is universal, and boy does our nation need jazz right now! The very fact that jazz is spontaneous means that the listener participates in a process that has unexpected consequences. When I attend a classical music performance, I know what's going to happen, based on experience and knowledge of the music. Jazz offers the listener a ride with the musician on a "risky" journey!

JB: How do we pass on that same experience to the next generation?

OD: The power of jazz never dies, as long as the performers have a high level of integrity and honesty. The improvised jazz performance is the perfect model for democracy and communication. These are qualities that must be presented to young people, as well as the rich history of jazz, which presents itself as the soundtrack for American and world history.

JB: What projects are coming up next for you?

OD: I'm actually working on multiple projects at the present time: a score for a fascinating movie called *Animator*; new compositions and arrangements for upcoming Chicago Jazz Philharmonic performances; producing two new CD projects and a documentary that will tell the story of our ongoing relationship with Cuba. Of course, I must mention the daily projects of being husband and dad!

BACKSTAGE

STEP INTO TIME: BIG BAND 1946

Pictured, clockwise from top left: Associate Artist Tyla Abercrumbie, Company Member Ron OJ Parson, and Amina Dickerson; Associate Artist Wardell Julius Clark and Company Member Janet Ulrich Brooks on the dance floor; Michael Otte, Janice Feinberg, Nia Tavoularis, and Maxine Brown; Kristina Bailey, Amy Wilbourne, Board Member Brian Douce, John Wilbourne, and Kim Vander Griend; Susan Stein and Board Member Susan Payne; Lorenzo Rush Jr. and the Step Into Time Big Band; Sandra Guthman, Gillian Darlow, and Mary Kay Sullivan; guests enjoying dinner in the historic Drake Hotel; and founding Company Members PJ Powers, Juliet Hart and Nick Bowling. (Photos: Ingrid Bonne Photography)

On Friday, March 10, more than 300 guests shook off the blues and lit up the dance floor at The Drake Hotel for our most successful event to date—Step Into Time: Big Band 1946. Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate our 20th Anniversary and raise a record amount of nearly $300,000 in net proceeds to directly support TimeLine's mission and programming!

We thank everyone who made this historic celebration possible!

BACKSTORY:
THE CREDITS

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Backstory is published four times each season.

Our Mission:
TimeLine Theatre presents stories inspired by history that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

THE FLEXPASS

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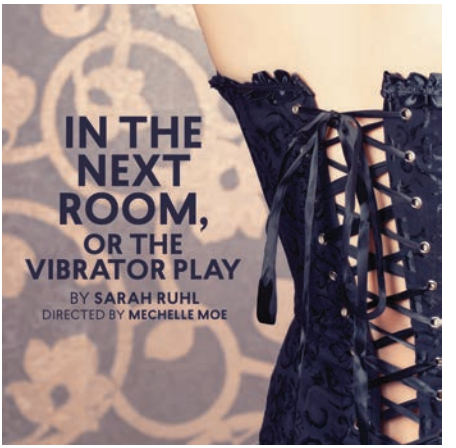
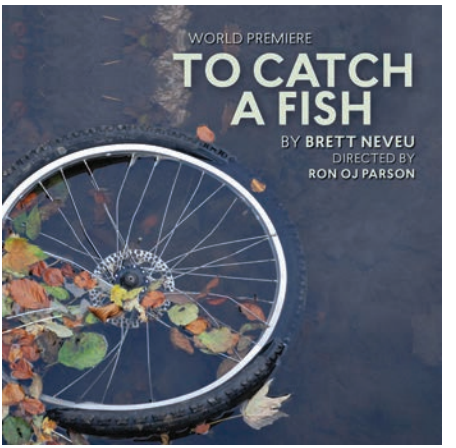
2017-18 OUR 21ST SEASON





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