

Objectively/ Reasonable

A Community Response to
the Shooting of Tamir Rice, 11/22/14

Photo by Curtis Locke

Playwrights Local Presents

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Written by Playwrights Local:
Mike Geither, Tom Hayes, Lisa Langford,
Michael Oatman, and David Todd

Directed by Terrence Spivey
Conceived and edited by David Todd

February 17 - March 11, 2017

CAST

Samone Cummings
Kali Hatten
Christina Johnson
LaShawn Little
Joshua McElroy
Mary-Francis Renee Miller
Phillia
Corin B. Self
Nathan Tolliver

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager: Geraldine Harris
Assistant Director: Nathan Tolliver
Lighting Designer: Margaret Peebles
Set Designer: Terrence Spivey
Sound Designer: David Todd
Board Operator: Ludie Cummings
Electrician: Cory Molner
Carpenter: Tom Hayes
Group Sales: Cosandra Wheeler

NOTES

The run time is ~90 minutes with no intermission.
Please be advised: strobe lighting effects are used during this performance.
Photography and video/audio recording are strictly prohibited.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS

Mike Geither is a playwright and solo performer whose works have been staged in San Francisco, Chicago, Toronto, New York, and London. He is a four-time Ohio Arts Council fellow and has served as a resident artist at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito. Recent works include *Creation Myth* (convergence-continuum), *how small, how far away* (Zuppa Theatre, Halifax), *Flame Puppy* (Playwrights Local), *Tear It Off* (convergence-continuum), and *Loki and Lucy* (Talespinner). He is currently an Associate Professor of English at Cleveland State University where he teaches in the Northeast Ohio MFA in creative writing.

Tom Hayes is an award-winning playwright who received his MFA from Cleveland State University and the Northeast Ohio Masters of Fine Arts (NEOMFA) program. His play *Lord of the Burgeoning Lumber* was staged at convergence-continuum and was awarded Best Original Script by a Local Playwright — 2008 by Rave and Pan. Tom's play *Patterns* was staged at Cleveland Public Theatre in 2011. Other plays have appeared at the Manhattan Project and Playwrights Local.

Lisa Langford recently received her MFA in creative writing. Several of her plays have been seen locally, including *InCogNegro*, *The Bomb*, and *The Split Show*.

Michael Oatman is the Playwright-in-Residence at Karamu Theater, the oldest African American theater in the country. He is only the second person to hold this honor; the first being Langston Hughes. He won the 2011 CPAC Workforce Fellowship, the 2010 Cleveland Arts Prize for Best Emerging Artist, and the 2010 Lantern Award for Best Play. In 2011, three of his full-length plays were produced: *Breaking the Chains*, *You Got Nerve*, and *Sometime Hope Is Enough*. In 2010, seven of his plays were produced in various venues: *Black Nativity* (Adaption), *War paint*, *Eclipse: The War Between Pac and B.I.G.*, *Course of Action*, *My Africa*, *A Solitary Voice*, *Not a Uterus in Sight*, and *Hitler and Gandhi*. He earned an English Degree from Cleveland State University in 2004 and completed his MFA in theater from the Northeastern Ohio Master of Fine Arts Consortium in 2008.

David Todd's plays have been presented or developed in NYC at theaters including 59E59, Dixon Place, the Little Theater, HERE, and NY Theatre Workshop, regionally in DC, Portland, and Chicago, and internationally at the LaMaMa Spoleto Open in Italy. His playwriting residencies include Hangar Theater (Ithaca, NY), Classic Studio (NYC), and Chicago Dramatists. He earned his MFA in Dramatic Writing at NYU (Goldberg Award; Harry Kondoleon Award) and his PhD at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has taught at NYU, SUNY Stony Brook, and Cleveland State University. His nonfiction book *Feeding Back* was published in 2012 by Chicago Review Press, and his play *Joy in Repetition* was published in January 2014 by Connotation Press. Currently, he is the regional representative for the Dramatists Guild. He was awarded an Individual Excellence Award by the Ohio Arts Council for 2016.

SPECIAL THANKS

Playwrights Local offers its deepest thanks to Samaria Rice and the Rice family for their consideration and support. We also thank all of this play's other interviewees—who shall remain anonymous, according to our agreement—for their time and thoughts. For advice and support, we thank Subodh Chandra and the Chandra Law Firm, LLC. Others we couldn't have done this play without include: the amazing original cast; Amy Callahan and Waterloo Arts; and Ludie Cummings and Kwanza Brewer.

THE DIRECTOR



Terrence Spivey is a native Texan with a B.A. in Theatre from Prairie View A&M University. His was Artistic Director of Karamu House for over twelve years. During his artistic administration, Spivey programmed over seventy productions and directed over twenty five, winning numerous awards. During his stay, Karamu collaborated with numerous theaters and festivals throughout Northeast Ohio. He served as Director in Residence for Kent State Pan African Studies during the 2013-2014 season. Spivey has appeared in *Black Mask*, *Back Stage*, *Ebony*, *Artist and Influences*, and *American Theatre*. He served as board member for Community Partnership for Arts and Culture and the Cleveland Arts Prize, and currently serves on the national AUDELCO. He is a member of Black Theatre Network and an elected member of National Theatre Conference. In 2011, he was given a proclamation by the Mayor and the City of Cleveland for his artistic contributions and, under his leadership, Karamu was honored with the 2013 AUDELCO Award for Repertory Company of the Year. As freelance director, he directed one of *The Plain Dealer's* Top 10 plays of 2016, *Bootycandy*, at convergence-continuum, Peter Lawson Jones' *The Bloodless Jungle* at Ensemble Theatre, and Kia Corthron's *Breathe, Boom* at John Carroll University. His most recent production is August Wilson's *Radio Golf* at Ensemble Theatre. His next project is *Neighbors* by Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins at convergence-continuum.

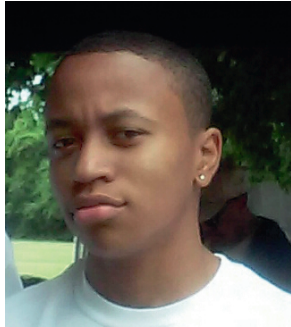
DIRECTOR'S NOTES

It has been a great honor to bring back Playwrights Local's critically acclaimed production that was selected as one of the "outstanding plays" of 2016. When David Todd and Tom Hayes approached me to be part of an important work about a young man who has become, as his very gracious mother would say, "a figure now," I was hooked. I would like to thank the original cast and the new cast for this revival, my assistant director Nathan Tolliver, stage manager Geri Harris, and the five major playwrights who dared themselves to go there, utilizing the arts: you all are soldiers-warriors. I would also like to thank Andrea Simakis once again for her tireless coverage during the summer of 2016, shining light on such an important social issue beyond the arts. And, to Samaria Rice for giving her blessing to this very important work.

THE CAST



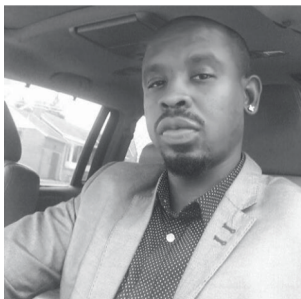
Samone Cummings: Let me introduce myself. My name is Samone Leslie Cummings. I'm 10 years old. I'm in the sixth grade at Dike School of the Arts. I believe we all have a purpose and no one's purpose is greater than another. I feel I was brought here to make a positive impact on the world, through the arts. A scripture I always tell myself: "God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind."



Kali Hatten is a ninth grade theatre major at the Cleveland School of the Arts. He is very excited to participate in *Objectively/Reasonable*. Kali recently performed in the Madame C.J. Walker Extravaganza, the Kuumba Arts Festival, and *God's Trombones*. Kali's other performances at Karamu House include *Leap of Faith*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and *Xanadu*. He also performed in productions at the Cleveland School of the Arts including *Home on the Morning Train* and *Crying Out for You*. Kali dedicates this performance to his loving family and his church family of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church.



Christina Johnson is a Cleveland-born singer, songwriter, and poet. As a performer for many years, the arts have become more than just performance for her, but a catalyst for learning, peace, and balance. The love of arts keep her connected on the stage, as well as working behind the scenes of productions. Recently performances include *Black Nativity*, *What If*, *Crystal Clear*, *The Wiz*, *The Color Purple*, *Crowns*, and *Sister Act*, to name a few. She is so excited to be a part of this cast and movement to cause awareness for the urgency for much-needed change.



LaShawn Little has had the passion and gift to act since the age of twelve. He is a graduate of the Cleveland School of Performing Arts where he studied theater and creative writing. He was the second recipient of the Alex Haley/Florence Kelley Scholarship at the Cleveland Playhouse. LaShawn continued his education at Wilberforce University where he studied theater and mass media communications. LaShawn appeared in Karamu Theater's *Ceremonies of Dark Men* and *The Return of Superman* and Dobama Theatre's *Civil War Christmas*

and *Superior Doughnuts*. LaShawn has been a featured extra with the Lilian Pyle casting company for the John Travolta film *Criminal Activity* and the Lifetime movie *With This Ring*. LaShawn is also writer and co-producer/owner of I Was Rollin Productions LLC.



Joshua McElroy is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art. He aspires to be an actor, entertainer and a comedian. He has multiple talents other than being an artist: he's a musician, and for several years he was the leader of the Shaker Heights Improv Team, as well as a member of the Case Western Reserve University's IMPROVment. Josh appeared in Karamu House's *The Color Purple*, *The Wiz*, *God's Trombones*, and recently *Sister Act*. Joshua is currently performing at the

Hilarities 4th Street Theater. Josh is also currently in the plays *Harriet*, *As Long As We Both Shall Live*, and *Tell Hell I Ain't Coming*.



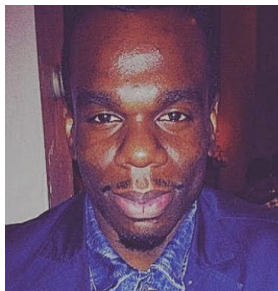
Mary-Francis Renee Miller is an actor, singer, and musician from South Euclid, Ohio. She attended Cleveland State University and received her training in the Department of Theatre and Dance. She was also a member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and Chamber Chorus from 2013-2016. Mary-Francis' theatre credits include the regional premiere of *Margin of Error*, the Ohio premiere of *In Red and Brown Water*, *The Crucible* opera, and *The Tempest*. She has received two Irene Ryan nominations during her undergrad at

Cleveland State. Mary-Francis' future obligations include singing on tour in France and Switzerland with the Wright Family Singers and singing backup for Sergio Mendes Brasil 66 in Brazil.



Phillia: I enjoy all aspects of art. Art has a way of expressing oneself authentically which inspires knee-jerk reaction. That's why I have participated in all aspects of the artistic scene in Cleveland since the age of three. By the grace of God, I have been blessed to perform at Karamu House, the Cleveland Playhouse, Tri-C, Dobama Theatre, East Cleveland Theater, and many more. I have also starred in films including *Swing Lowe Sweet Chariote*, *Used to BE*, *The Crimson House*, and *Seven Minutes*. When I am not performing, I am

teaching and learning all I can about the arts. During the summer of 2015, I had the pleasure of teaching theater for Karamu's cultural arts camp and assisting Richard Morris in directing their production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Follow me on Facebook @Cleveland urban actor Phillia. Godbless.



Corin B. Self, a native of Cleveland, has been a lover of the performing arts from a very young age. After studying Theater Arts at Morgan State University, he has been in many performances, ranging from musicals *Ragtime*, *Dreamgirls*, and *The Fantasticks*, to straight plays such as *Miss Evers' Boys* and *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act*. He has also has starred in a short film project for American University's School of Film & Media, *2nd Shift*, by Mikal K. Odom. He has also done voiceover work for Morgan State's Fine Arts Center as well as Radio One Baltimore and Clear Channel. He is very happy to

be a part of this wonderful piece. "It would be remiss of me to not leave it all on the stage after EVERY performance!!! Thank you Mr. Spivey for affording me that opportunity."



Nathan Tolliver is an actor/singer from Cleveland, Ohio. This is his first production with Playwrights Local. His past credits include *The Wild Party*, *Slow Dance on the Killing Ground*, *Dreamgirls*, *Aida*, *The Wiz*, and *Black Nativity*. Nathan is honored to be working with such talent on this protest piece, continuing this important conversation about injustice and police brutality.

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Ludie Cummings (Board Operator) is a Wife, Mother, and Educator for 15 years. Words I live by: "When much is given, much is required.... Also when something is done in love, it will be received in love....so spread LOVE!"

Geraldine S. Harris (Stage Manager) is honored to serve as Stage Manager for the 2017 production of *Objectively/Reasonable*. She is equally honored to reunite with Terrence Spivey, former Artistic Director of Karamu, where she served as a resident Stage Manager for 10-1/2 seasons under his direction. With a career that spans over 30 years, she has had the opportunity to work with many talented individuals. This production has only served to enhance her experience. To the Playwrights... Bravo! To a stellar cast, thank you for making the magic happen. Ludie, your input and assistance has been worth its weight in gold. Most of all, she sends her love to the Rice family. "My prayer is that humanity will learn from your heartbreaking tragedy, and that the loss of your beloved Tamir will not have been in vain."

Cory Molner (Electrician) is a local director, designer and collaborator in theatre. He has worked locally with many other theatres: ACT, convergence-continuum, NWT, HYT, Ensemble, Blank Canvas, and Cleveland Shakespeare Festival. By day, he works for Tri-C. Thank you for supporting live theatre.

Margaret Peebles (Lighting Designer) is an MFA Candidate of Lighting Design at the University of Connecticut and received her BFA in Theater Design and Technology from Kent State University. Her credits include Connecticut Repertory Theatre's *Sense and Sensibility* and *The Laramie Project*, the Trinity College Dance Festival, and *Lamia* with Suzanne Karpinski. She has also assisted on Hartford Stage's *Anastasia* and Porthouse Theatre's *Ring of Fire*. Margaret recently completed the Lighting Design Internship at Williamstown Theatre Festival. She has also worked for several companies including Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation, Porthouse Theatre, and Seagle Music Colony.

SUPPORT FOR THIS PRODUCTION

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PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL

Playwrights Local is dedicated to supporting the dramatists of Northeast Ohio. As a playwrights' development and production center, we foster diverse talents and present locally written works.

We strive to increase the impact of original theater on the community and to raise the profile of area playwrights both within Greater Cleveland and beyond.

Artistic Director.....David Todd
Managing Director.....Thomas W. Hayes
Director in Residence.....Dale Heinen
Teaching Artist.....Arwen Mitchell
Engagement Coordinator.....Mike Geither
Artistic Associate.....Jaelyn C. Cifranic