

THE PHOENIX SOCIETY

A new play by Peter Lawson Jones

Directed by Terrence Spivey



LIFE

EXCHANGE

CENTER

Playwrights Local &
Life Exchange Center (LEC) Present

THE PHOENIX SOCIETY

Written by Peter Lawson Jones

Directed by Terrence Spivey

May 20 — 29, 2022

CAST

Prophet Seay.....Will Coulter
Joyce Linzy.....Eliza Coulter
Logan Dior Williams.....Danielle Coulter
Luther Pete Robinson.....Hollywood
Kenny Charles.....Mack Hinson
Laprise Marie Johnson.....Vanity
Willie Walker Gibson.....Amir
Sandy Deida.....Angel
Darlene Darby Baldwin.....CiCi
With additional members of LEC:
Lynn Exsentico.....Aiesha
Clifford Hinton.....Blackjack
Rose Sams.....Jewell
Sherrel Jones.....CiCi (Understudy)

CREATIVE TEAM

Andre Brown.....Stage Manager
Laprise Marie Johnson.....Assistant Stage Manager
Marcus Dana.....Lighting Designer
Tom Hayes.....Technical Director
David Todd.....Production Manager
With additional members of LEC:
Johnnie M. Arnold-Menefee.....Production Assistant
Claude Gooden.....Production Assistant

RECORDED MUSIC

Provided courtesy of Elizabeth Huang, violin, and Nolan James, trumpet.

NOTES

- All proceeds from this performance benefit Life Exchange Center (LEC).
- This performance runs two hours including one 15-minute intermission.
- Video/audio recording of this performance by any means is prohibited.
- Special thanks to Rick Eble and Music Emporium for the generous loan.



www.lifeexchangecenter.org

www.facebook.com/LifeExchangeCenter

Life Exchange Center (LEC) is a local non-profit that provides services to adults in recovery of severe mental illness and/or chemical dependency. It is a certified peer support program, operating under the auspices of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) and Cuyahoga County ADMHS Board.

Life Exchange Center currently provides two peer support agencies – a drop-in center and a transitional youth housing program.

Life Exchange Center Drop-In Center
13407 Kinsman Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44120
(216) 752-1269

Transitional Youth Housing Program
18464 Lakeshore Drive
Cleveland, Ohio 44119
(216) 481-6458

The peer support, consumer-directed drop-in center assists members in their recovery process by providing social support, educational programs and life skills development. Classes include computer training, wellness, and art therapy. Physical fitness is also encouraged - activities include bowling, walking, and dancing. Field trips to local museums, the Zoo, sports venues and surrounding Metro parks are scheduled throughout the year to stimulate members' cultural and social engagement. Continental breakfast and lunch is served daily.

The Transitional Youth Housing Program provides independence living skills to young men and women between the ages of 18 – 25, who are transitioning out of foster care who are also in recovery of mental illness and/or chemical dependency. Each youth accepted into the program is provided a private, furnished apartment. They are assigned a certified peer support counselor who guides them to develop and maintain individual plans of achievement. These independence achievement plans may include educational enrollment, job training or employment, budget planning, engagement with social service support systems, and professional clinical treatments.

With generous funding from the St. Luke's Foundation, LEC board has commissioned this original play, *The Phoenix Society*, to inspire hope to its members, their loved ones and anyone who has begun rebirth in recovery.

PLAYWRIGHT



Peter Lawson Jones is a Cleveland-based playwright, actor, and politician. He is a member of both Actors' Equity and SAG-AFTRA, and has appeared in over twenty films (*White Boy Rick*, *Alex Cross*, *The Assassin's Code*, *Starve*), on network television (NBC's *Chicago Fire* and ABC's *Detroit 1-8-7*), and on stages throughout Northeast Ohio. Among his theatrical credits are *Picnic*, *Inherit the Wind*, *The Great White Hope*, *The Member of the Wedding*, *Ruined*, and *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*. Peter's drama *The*

Bloodless Jungle, which is slated to be staged this year at The King Arts Complex in Columbus, Ohio, has enjoyed two full productions at Ensemble Theatre in Cleveland Heights and has had staged readings at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Black Theatre Festival. Peter's play *The Family Line* has been produced at Karamu, Ohio University, and Harvard University, where he received his bachelor's (magna cum laude) and law degrees. Peter is also an attorney and business consultant. He formerly served as a councilman and vice mayor in Shaker Heights, a member of the Ohio General Assembly and as a Cuyahoga County commissioner. As an actor, Peter can next be seen on Christmas Day in *A Man Called Otto*, starring Tom Hanks. Find additional information on Peter at www.peterlawsonjones.com. Peter is grateful to the Life Exchange Center for commissioning him to write *The Phoenix Society* and is excited to be collaborating with Playwrights Local on its premiere.

DIRECTOR



Former artistic director at Karamu House, **Terrence Spivey** is a member of The HistoryMakers and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a 2018 Alan Schneider Directors Award nominee, and the 2017 Best Director and 2005 Best Theatre Honcho by *Cleveland Scene*. He was given a proclamation in 2010 by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson for his artistic contributions.

He garnered multiple awards at Karamu and the institution was given Repertory Company of the Year in 2013 by AUDELCO in NYC. He directed plays such as *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (2006 Best Production), *The Blacks: A Clown Show* (2008 Best Drama) and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Since leaving Karamu: *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* (2018 Chandelier Best Drama Akron), *Boodycandy* (2016 Top 10 Plain Dealer), and the nationally acclaimed *Objectively/Reasonable: A Community Response to the Shooting of Tamir Rice, 11/22/14* at Playwrights Local. Spivey recently wrote and directed *An Ocean in my Bones* at the 4th Annual Spirit of Our Ancestors Festival for the Clotilda Descendants Association in Mobile, Alabama. The play was highlighted on PBS NewsHour. He is the founding director for Powerful Long Ladder.



The Cleveland Treatment Center

Mission Statement

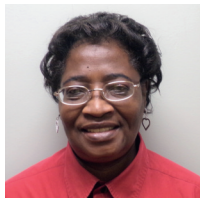
The Cleveland Treatment Center is a comprehensive, community-based not-for-profit drug and alcohol treatment agency committed to providing services which are supporting, preventing, and advocating a nature for both people and agencies in the community needing services. It is our goal to facilitate and foster the emotional and physical health, growth, and development of those through projects and services which are both restorative and remedial in nature.

Cleveland Treatment Center has been accredited by CARF for the following programs: Opioid Treatment, Prevention/Diversion Alcohol, and other Drugs/Addictions (Adults). An agency funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Addictions Services, and the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services of Cuyahoga County.

Len L.C. Collins, Executive Director

CREATIVE TEAM

Andre Brown (Stage Manager) has over 30 years of theater experience. Andre is well-rounded in all aspects of theater, having been an actor, director, lighting designer, and sound tech, and wearing the hat of stage manager in this particular production. Andre is looking forward to another amazing journey with director Terrence Spivey on this awesome piece of work by Peter Lawson Jones.



Johnnie M. Arnold-Menefee (Production Assistant, LEC):

Education: John Adams Class of 1977.

Member of Life Exchange center since 2015.

Sober since 1992 (25 years).

Mother of two.

Bobbie Hurley

Program Manager

bhurley@lifeexchangecenter.org

Transitional Youth Housing Program

Direct: 216-481-6458

www.lifeexchangecenter.org

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Cleveland, OH 44120



Murtis Ta Human Services



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ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL

Every day that we remain sober is a victory in a battle that never ends. --Peter Lawson Jones

As former board chair of Life Exchange Center (LEC), I am proud to be part of this noble literary work, *The Phoenix Society*, written by playwright Peter Lawson Jones. This work invites community collaboration and continues to consciously raise our awareness and concerns surrounding addiction, mental illness, and recovery. Indeed, the playwright captures "WHAT IS" in a day and life of those who live with addiction and mental illness.

To all LEC members who had a role in this production... You all are incredible! Thank you for bringing an authentic beauty to the stage!

Terence Spivey, you are an amazing talent. I watched you overcome unimagined obstacles and challenges. Your tenacious spirit and thrive to succeed layered with your "Patience of Job," we came through.

Darlene Darby Baldwin, MSODBA
Community Transitions Consultant & Residential Care Compliance Trainer

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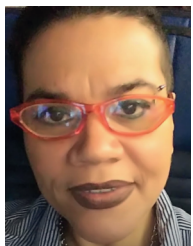
CAST



Darlene Darby Baldwin (CiCi) is a former board president of the Life Exchange Center and has served the mental health community for more than thirty-three years. She's appeared on stage, television, and film, working with notables to include the late Ron O'Neal (*Super Fly*), Jim Pickens, and Vanessa Bell Calloway. She's appeared in *For Colored Girls Who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Isn't Enuf*, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery*, *Tambourines to Glory*, and more. Filmed appearances include *Traditions and Beliefs' The Praying Grounds* and *Black Women in History*. As an invited guest of comedian Leslie Jones, Darby has appeared at the Laugh Factory Comedy Club in Hollywood, California.



Kenny Charles (Mack Hinson) is a native Clevelander last seen in the movie *Rent Due*. He has appeared in several productions including *Maafa*, *God's Trombones*, *Ruined*, and *From Breast Cancer To Broadway*, including a performance at Cleveland Play House where he had the honor of performing with the late great Ruby Dee. Kenny gives special thanks to Terrence Spivey with whom he has worked with in the past and has hopes of continuing to work with in the future.



Sandy Deida (Angel) has worked tirelessly to educate and empower those impacted by sexual assault and intimate partner violence. Sandra began her journey of victim advocacy in 1999 when she joined Templum House. She worked in the women's shelter providing support and encouragement and empowering victims to survive through their stories. In 2003, Sandra became a registered advocate for the state of Ohio and an advocate for the Cuyahoga County Witness/Victim Services Center. Working in conjunction with Cleveland Division of Police Domestic Violence Unit detectives, her contributions enable the unit to serve as a one-stop shop, as detective's partner with victim advocates when making the initial contact and while engaging the victim during the interview process as well as the judicial walk.



Willie Walker Gibson (Amir) is a seasoned actor whose career spans over four decades, with works in New York City at Lincoln Center as well as plays in Cleveland and Los Angeles. He has performed in seven plays directed by Terrence Spivey and is happy to be a part of Peter Lawson Jones' new play *The Phoenix Society*.



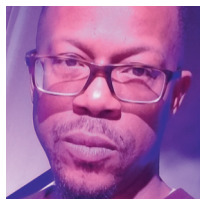
Laprise Marie Johnson (Vanity, also Assistant Stage Manager) started out as a theater major at the Cleveland School of the Arts and from there partnered with Cleveland Playhouse, Kaiser Permanente, & Karamu House youth theater programs. Recently, she performed *Out of Time* at Front Stage Theater by Mel Yarbrough. She is excited to be blessed with the opportunity to work with Playwrights Local as well as the Life Exchange Center. She would like to thank God, her family and friends for their support.



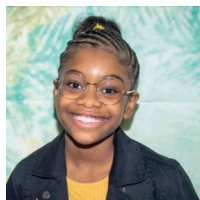
Joyce Linzy (Eliza Coulter) is a veteran community theater performer in Greater Cleveland and its surrounding areas. "I'm excited to help shine a little light on this important issue."



Luther Pete Robinson (Hollywood) is a Cleveland-born professional actor/director. A longtime member of SAG-AFTRA, he appeared in several motion pictures in the '70s and '80s and hundreds of stage productions across the country. His film credits include: *Up Your Ally*, *Down on Us*, *Our Winning Season*, *G.O.R.P.*, and *The Return*. His recent stage productions include *As You Like It*, *Winter's Tail*, *Two Trains Running*, and *The Bloodless Jungle*. Luther made his directorial debut in 1989 with *Mahalia* at L.A. Playhouse. His director credits include *Day of Absence*, *Old Love*, and *Men Don't Cry*.



Prophet Seay (Will Coulter): a Cleveland native, Prophet attended the Cleveland School of the Arts, where he studied fine arts and theater. Has has worked at the historical Karamu House since 2003 and is currently Karamu's Technical Director. Prophet never misses an opportunity to bring characters to life on stage and is honored to be in *The Phoenix Society*.



Logan Dior Williams (Danielle Coulter) is an honor roll student at Wade Park Elementary School, and a notable young philanthropist and change maker in the city of Cleveland. Her previous shows include *Fences*, *Sugar Belle*, *What if?*, *We Call Him George*, *What We Could Have Been*, *Tomorrow's Dance*, and *Juba (Song of Negroes)*. Theaters include Karamu House, Dobama Theater, Great Lakes Theater, Cleveland Music Settlement, and Cleveland Public Theater.



CAST (LEC)

Lynn Exsentic (Aiesha)

Born: February 9, 1982.

Education: Class of 2000, Maple Heights High School.

Actively recovering from mental health disorder since 2015



Clifford Hinton (Blackjack)

Retired Welder, 66 years old.

Goal: "To live my life in peace and do what I have to do to keep myself well and maintain my recovery. Just doing what is right, keeping my faith in God to keep me and take me through whatever it is I'm facing."

Biggest Achievement: March 6, 2006, when my life changed, and I gave my life to Christ.



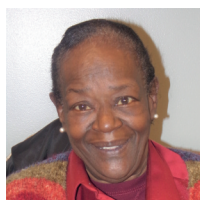
Sherrel Jones (CiCi) [Understudy]

Ultimate Goal: Being the best mom.

Education: Graduate of John Adams High School.

Tri-C Women's Transitional Program.

Recovery from active addiction and member of Life Exchange Center since 2016. Mother of a miracle daughter.



Rose Sams (Jewell)

Eldest character and member at Life Exchange Center.

Ultimate Goal: To live in recovery, free from active addiction.

Education: Nursing/ Clerical.

Born in raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Mother of two lovely children.

Kareema Darby Memorial Home
13136 Euclid Avenue
East Cleveland, Ohio 44112

Winds of Change and Hope
14932 Euclid Avenue
East Cleveland, Ohio 44112

KDMH is a 16-bed facility licensed by the state of Ohio as a class 2 facility providing housing meals medication monitoring and involvement in extracurricular activities: to adults living with severe mental illness, and this all done in a supportive nurturing environment.

Winds of Change and Hope is state licensed Class 2 - 16 bed facility also located in East Cleveland that provides similar services to adults living with severe mental illness.

Owners:

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216-856-4777

Jardene Shell
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PLAYWRIGHT---Richard S. Asbury



- Richard's plays focus on Black life.
- They address family settings and issues that are peculiar to the African American Experience.
- Richard is a Playwright sans MFE degree.
- He has written 6 full-length plays and many short plays.
- His full-length play, "Black and Blue Rhapsody", was performed, as a full production, at Rainey Institute in June 2019 as a two-day run. It received rave reviews.
- Three of his full-length plays have been performed, as dramatic readings, at Cleveland State University, Ensemble Theater, and Olivet Institutional Baptist Church.
- He can be contacted at a.z.writer2015@gmail.com or 216.225.3429



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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.

- www.playwrightslocal.org
- facebook.com/playwrightslocal
- www.playwrightslocal.org/plradio
- twitter.com/PlaywrightsLcl

Support for Playwrights Local

\$5000 +: The AHS Foundation • The Cleveland Foundation • The City of Cleveland Cable Television Minority Arts & Education Fund of the Cleveland Foundation • Cuyahoga Arts & Culture • Dramatists Guild Foundation • The George Gund Foundation • The Ohio Arts Council • The Paul M. Angell Family Foundation • Stephen and Rita Todd

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Directed by Rachel Zake

A Radio Play

Written by Gail Nyoka

Directed by Terrence Spivey

LOVE AND ECSTASY