

# PLAYWRIGHTS



## Nathan James

**Nathan James** is a proud native of Pittsburgh, PA, where he began his career with Kuntu Repertory Theater. He has most recently appeared Off-off Broadway in a one-man show written and performed by Nathan, *Growing Pains*, at The Gene Frankel Theater. Prior to *Growing Pains*, he appeared as Ellis in August Strindberg's *Easter* (in which *The New York Times* considered him a "Standout actor") and in the Off-Broadway production *Playing with Fire* with The Negro Ensemble Company and The August Strindberg Repertory Theatre, for which he and his cast were nominated for an AUDELCO Award 2012 for "Best Performance by an Ensemble."

Nathan is a recent recipient of the August Wilson Playwriting fellowship from the August Wilson Cultural Center, and his play *Contrary to Popular Belief* was featured in the Reader's Theater at the National Black Theater Festival, The Blackboard Reading Series, The Standardized reading series at Center Stage NY, and in the Cultural Conversations Festival at Penn State University. He has been commissioned to write and perform poems for some of America's premiere black pioneers, most notably Mae Jemison, Roy Ayers and Angela Davis.

**THE NEW BLACK FEST'S**  
**HANDS UP:**  
**7 PLAYWRIGHTS, 7 TESTAMENTS**



## Nathan Yungerberg

Nathan Yungerberg is a Brooklyn-based playwright. His plays include *Esai's Table*, *The Son of Dawn*, *Pousada Azul*, *Evelyn Dreams of Horses*, *Orchids and Polka Dots* and *Brush Strokes*. Nathan's work has been developed or featured by The Playwrights' Center, Crowded Fire Theater, The Brooklyn Museum, The Lorraine Hansberry Theater, Brava Theater, The Lark, The Fire This Time

Festival, 48 Hours in Harlem, The National Black Theatre, The Hansberry Project, The National Black Theatre Festival, The Classical Theatre of Harlem, Blackboard Reading Series, The Dramatist Guild, Flashpoint Theater, The August Wilson Red Door Project, New Venture Theater, The Brooklyn Generator, Multistages theater and BBC Radio Afternoon Drama. Nathan is one of seven black playwrights commissioned by The New Black Fest for *HANDS UP: 7 Playwrights, 7 Testaments*.

Awards and honors: 2017 Cherry Lane's Mentor Project with Stephen Adly Guirgis (*Esai's Table*), The 2016 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference (Semifinalist), Ken Davenport 10-Minute Play Festival (Winner), 11th Annual InspiraTO Festival (Finalist), Blue Ink Playwriting Award (Semifinalist), and PICK OF THE VINE 2016 at Little Fish Theatre (Semifinalist).

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## Idris Goodwin

Idris Goodwin is a playwright, Hip Hop artist, spoken word performer and essayist. He is the author of the award winning and widely produced play *How We Got On* (Playscripts, 2013) and the pushcart nominated essay collection *These Are The Breaks* (Write Bloody, 2011). He's performed on HBO and Sesame Street. His two latest plays *And in this corner....Cassius Clay* (for StageOne Family Theater) and *This is Modern Art* (for Steppenwolf, co-written with poet Kevin Coval) will have world premiere productions in 2015. Idris teaches performance writing and Hip Hop aesthetics at Colorado College.

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## Nambi E. Kelley

**Nambi E. Kelley** has penned plays for Steppenwolf Theatre, Goodman Theatre and Court Theatre/American Blues Theater in Chicago, Lincoln Center in New York, and internationally with LATT Children's Theatre/Unibooks Publishing Company (South Korea), Teatri Sbagliati (Italy) and The Finger Players (Singapore), where she also performed in the co-adapted production in Singapore of *The Book of Living and Dying*. Most recently, Kelley was named playwright in residence at the National Black Theatre in New York, was a finalist for the Francesca Primus Award, The Kevin Spacey Foundation Award, and is working on an adaptation of

Toni Morrison's *Jazz* to be produced by Center Stage in their 2016-17 season. Her adaptation of *Native Son* will have several productions across the country next season. The world premiere of *Native Son* was presented to critical acclaim at Court Theatre with American Blues Theatre (co-production), was nominated for 5 Jeff Awards, including best adaptation and production of the year, and was the highest-grossing production in Court Theatre's 60-year history. *Native Son* is also on the Kilroy's List 2015, in the top 7% of new plays by female and trans\* authors nominated by literary managers, directors and other artists polled across the country. Kelley's *Xtigone* celebrated productions in Chicago (Chicago Danz Theatre Ensemble) and San Francisco (African American Shakespeare Company directed by Rhodessa Jones), with several high school and college productions across the country, and was just published by YouthPlays Publishing.

Other writing credits include: Shortlisted professional writing affiliations include: National Black Theatre Playwright in Residence, Goodman Theatre Playwrights Unit, Steppenwolf Theatre Company New Plays Lab Playwright-In-Residence, Goodman Theatre/Ellen Stone Belic Institute/ Fellowship Recipient, Goodman Theatre Lila Wallace Fellowship, La MaMa Playwrights Symposium Playwright-In-Residence, Spoleto, Italy, under the tutelage of Pulitzer prize winner Lynn Nottage, Ragdale Foundation Artist in Residence, HealthWorks Theatre Colonel Stanley McNeil Playwright-In-Residence, Chicago Dramatists Playwright Emeritus, Danny Glover's Robey Theatre Co. Playwriting Lab (Formerly The Blacksmys At The Mark Taper Forum) and MPAACT Playwright Emeritus, Chicago. An accomplished actress, Kelley has performed on regional stages across the country, internationally, and has been seen on several television shows, including *Search Party* (TBS), *Person of Interest* (CBS), *Madam Secretary* (CBS), *Elementary* (CBS) and *Chicago PD* (NBC). Nambi has a B.F.A. from The Theatre School at DePaul University, and an M.F.A. in interdisciplinary arts from Goddard College. [www.nambikelley.com](http://www.nambikelley.com)

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## Nsangou Njikam

NSangou Njikam is an actor and playwright originally from Baltimore, MD. He is the author of Syncing Ink, Re:Definition, I.D., When We Left, Search For The Crystal Stairs, and one of the authors of “Hands Up: 6 Plays, 6 Testimonials.” His work has been developed by The Public Theater, Penn State University, The Flea Theater, Hip Hop Theatre Festival, UNIVERSES theatre company, The New Black Fest, and the Alley Theater. Mr. Njikam’s play I.D. recently made its world premiere at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, South Africa before coming to the U.S. at Penn State Centre Stage.

His playwriting residencies and fellowships include 2015 Emerging Writers Group at the Public Theater, 2013 New Black Fest fellow, and Penn State University commissioned playwright. Currently, Mr. Njikam’s play, Syncing Ink, will go to the Alley Theater’s All New Festival, directed by Niegel Smith. As an arts educator, Mr. Njikam has worked for Brooklyn Academy of Music, CUNY Creative Arts Team, Harlem School of the Arts, and is co-founder of The Continuum Project, Inc., an organization using African Ancestry DNA testing and the Arts to promote healing and empowerment for communities. Mr. Njikam’s work focuses mainly on identity stories and the empowerment of the human spirit by recognizing and embracing one’s personal gifts, utilizing Hip Hop theater, poetry, and West African performance aesthetics. He also aims to develop new, diverse and younger audiences by creating “theater of the now and for tomorrow.” He received his BFA in acting from Howard University. After tracing his roots to the Tikar people in Cameroon, West Africa, he was named NSangou by Sultan Ibrahim MBombo Njoya, 19th king of the Bamoun kingdom in Cameroon. He currently resides in New York.

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## Eric Micha Holmes

Eric Micha Holmes is a playwright based out of Brooklyn, NY whose work has been seen and developed at MCC Theater (“Pornplay, Or Blessèd Are The Meek,”) Rattlestick Playwrights Theater (“World Without Names,”) New York Theatre Workshop (“Nimpsey Pink,”) The Lark Play Development Center (“Wolf/Paper/Sky,”) SPACE at Ryder Farm (“The Stick Up,”) and

The Actors Studio Playwright/Director Unit (“Jackets In May.”) His mono-play, “Walking Next To Michael Brown: Confessions Of A Light-Skinned Half-Breed,” was commissioned by The New Black Fest and has toured with Barrymore Independence Foundation Award Nominee “Hands Up: 7 Playwrights / 7 Testaments.” Productions include Flashpoint Theatre, The National Black Theatre, The Brooklyn Museum Of Art, The Hansberry Project, and The New Venture Theatre in Baton Rouge. A radio adaptation of 'Walking Next to Michael Brown' was presented on Afternoon Drama on BBC Radio 4. Holmes holds an MFA in playwriting from The Iowa Playwrights Workshop.

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## Dennis A. Allen II

Dennis A. Allen II is an actor, playwright, and New York native, who takes his mantra from Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*: "To realize one's destiny is a person's only real obligation." After receiving his BA in Communications, Dennis tried his hand at acting, thinking it would be a hobby, and auditioned for a local repertory company.

He landed the role of Moon in a production of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* and since that first taste of the stage has played key roles in many plays after, including the lead role in *Beast: A Parable*, a one act play by J. Julian Christopher.

His own short play, his play *The Mud Is Thicker In Mississippi* directed by Christopher Burris, won the 2010 Samuel French Off-Off Broadway Short Play Festival. His plays have been produced and/or developed by, Sanctuary NYC, Variations Theatre Group, The Bowery Poetry Club (*Sticky*), JACK, and ActNow Foundation. Recipient of the 2012 and 2013 Himan Brown Creative Writing Award. Collaborative Writer for The American Slavery Project's 2012 'Unheard Voices'. Member of Liberation Theatre Company's 2011 and 2012 Black Playwright's Group. Featured playwright for 2013 The Fire This Time Festival and Harlem9's 2013 48 hours in Harlem. 2013 *Bring a Weasel and a Pint of Your Own Blood* featured playwright. 2013 commissioned writer for The Schomburg Junior Scholars, 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' theatrical reading. Dennis is helping to develop and acting in *Tyson vs. Ali* under the direction of Reid Farrington. In 2013 he recieved his MFA from Mac Wellman's Brooklyn College Playwriting program. It would be safe to say that he has realized and is fulfilling his obligation.

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