



ANNUAL REPORT

2018
2019





Cover: Ensemble member Dara Cameron and Jacquelyne Jones in *The Spitfire Grill*.
Above: Tiffany Oglesby, Tiffany Renee Johnson, Sydney Charles in *Flyin' West*.
Photos by Michael Brosilow.



AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary Season Since Our Rebirth

We give heartfelt thanks to the many artists, donors, patrons, employees, and volunteers who enabled American Blues Theater to transform and thrive! This fiscal year, we celebrated our 10th anniversary season since our 2009 rebirth.

During this decade, we've produced 36 mainstage productions—including 10 iterations of *It's a Wonderful Life*. Of those 26 non-holiday plays, 16 were Chicago or World premieres.

In 10 years, we've received 14 Joseph Jefferson Awards or nominations for outstanding play, musical, and solo performance: *Tobacco Road*, *Collected Stories*, *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, *Grounded*, *The Rainmaker*, *Native Son* (co-production with Court Theatre), *Looking Over the President's Shoulder*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Columnist*, *This Wonderful Life*, *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!*, *Buddy—The Buddy Holly Story*, *On Clover Road*, and *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey*. In addition, *Six Corners* received a Joseph Jefferson nomination for New Work, *Native Son* received a Joseph Jefferson nomination for Adaptation, and *Beauty's Daughter* received the Black Theatre Alliance Award for Leading Actress and the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago nomination for Solo Performer. All 5 out of 5 solo performances received awards or nominations from the Joseph Jefferson Award committee and/or Black Theatre Alliance Awards.

In addition to our commitment to artistic excellence, we strive for economic sustainability. Working from a bedroom office, American Blues began 2009 with zero dollars in our bank account. During this decade, our finances have been carefully managed with no deficit nor liabilities. We were given incredible support for our mission, art, and community service, including two transformational gifts—a \$2.5 million endowment from the Ruth D. and Ken M. Davee General Operation Support Fund and a \$1 million grant, payable over 3-years to grow infrastructure and programming. We grew staffing from 1 to 6 office employees.

This past year, we produced 6 mainstage plays, increased our arts education in the community and Chicago Public Schools, and continued our commitment to new work with commissions, workshops, and playwriting festivals. During 2018-2019, we produced 43 weeks of theater! Nearly 20,000 patrons saw 208 performances. This was a 39% increase from the prior year due to all our *buddies*.

Our gratitude for your support is boundless. We could not achieve these milestones without your investment in American Blues Theater and our artists.

GWENDOLYN (WENDY) WHITESIDE

Artistic Director



Ensemble members Ed Kross and Joe Foust
at the 2019 Blue Bash. Photo by Maia Rosenfeld.

35

ENSEMBLE MEMBERS

(as of June 30, 2019)



12

MEMBERS RESIDE
OUTSIDE CHICAGO



7+

TYPES OF
ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES
REPRESENTED AT BLUES

(acting, directing, writing,
designing, stage & production
management, composing, & more)

ABOUT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Winner of American Theatre Wing's prestigious National Theatre Company Award, AMERICAN BLUES THEATER is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. **American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.** American Blues Theater follows three guiding values both on and off its stages—to be **accessible, responsible, and true.**

Our diverse and multi-generational artists have established the **second oldest professional Equity Ensemble theater in Chicago.** Our 35-member Ensemble has nearly 600 combined years of collaboration on stage. As of today, our theater and artists received 213 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 38 Black Theatre Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades. Our artists work throughout the nation - including Broadway and regional theaters - and loyally return to our stage.

For over thirty years, American Blues has created essential productions for Chicago. Our performances of *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!* have entertained nearly 60,000 patrons since 2002! We produce 4-5 mainstage productions annually. **We choose classic American plays and musicals, as well as world and Chicago premieres** from internationally-renowned writers that explore the American identity. We provide a free, integrated arts education program, *The Lincoln Project*, to Chicago Public Schools and the surrounding communities. **We serve 3,000 students annually.** Our teaching artists provide mentorship throughout the students' academic careers.

We are committed to developing new work for the American canon. Our **Blueprint Development** program includes commissions, workshops, and staged-readings. Our world premieres receive multiple productions across the nation. We present the nationally-recognized **Blue Ink Playwriting Award** and produce the annual **Ripped: The Living Newspaper Festival** of 10-minute plays.

We believe it is an honor and duty to serve our community. We raise awareness of other non-profit organizations' commendable causes through creative collaborations. We hold food drives, distribute promotional materials, offer free post-show discussions, provide complimentary tickets, honor military personnel, hold exclusive performances for underserved communities, and raise awareness for children's surgeries. We donate proceeds from "Pediatric Previews" to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

American Blues Theater is your Chicago home for bold, exceptional, and relevant performances. **Your ticket purchases and donations help us make Chicago the first city in all our hearts.**

"Feels like home." – *The Wall Street Journal*

"One of our favorites in Chicago!" – Dean Richards, *WGN*

"Ensemble founded one of Chicago's most venerable off-loop theaters." – Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune*



Ensemble member Michael Mahler and Artistic Affiliate Zachary Stevenson in *Buddy—The Buddy Holly Story*. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

11

WEEKS



53

PERFORMANCES



7,123

PATRONS

CHICAGO'S SMASH HIT—ENCORE RUN

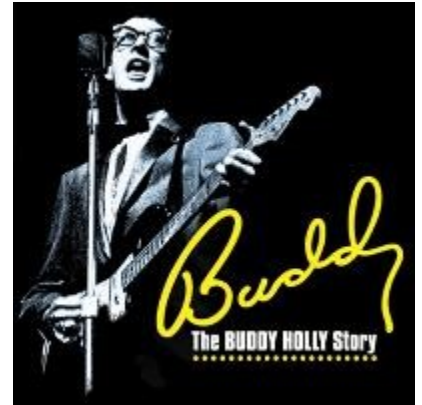
JUNE 29 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2018

Book by Alan Janes

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

Music Directed by Ensemble member Michael Mahler

Before the Beatles or the Rolling Stones ever played a note, rock & roll was forever changed by the bespectacled kid from Texas. *Buddy* tells the true story of Buddy Holly through his short—yet spectacular—career and features classic songs “That’ll Be the Day”, “Peggy Sue”, and many more.



AWARDS & REVIEWS

Joseph Jefferson Award for Midsize Production—Musical

Joseph Jefferson Award for Ensemble—Musical or Revue

Joseph Jefferson Award for Director—Midsize Musical (Lili-Anne Brown)

Joseph Jefferson Award for Music Director (Michael Mahler)

Joseph Jefferson Award for Performer in Principal Role in a Musical (Zachary Stevenson)

Alta Award nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical (Cisco Lopez)

Alta Award for Outstanding Choreography (Jon Martinez)

“You’ll have a blast!”—*Chicago Tribune*

“Buddy Holly can easily compete with any musical on or off Broadway!”—*WTTW*

“The one musical you must see! High octane, infectious, and electrifying energy.”—*Let’s Play*

“Highly recommended. Prepare for one fabulous night of theater!”—*Chicago Theater & Arts*

“Music direction is sheer perfection.”—*Around the Town Chicago*

“Superb revival.”—*Third Coast Review*

“Performed to perfection.”—*Windy City Times*

Top Rated Shows in Chicago—*Theatre in Chicago*

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We offered complimentary tickets to Chicago Public Schools and Guitars Over Guns. We partnered with The Family Institute at Northwestern University. In addition, artists performed at Rush University Children’s Hospital, University of Chicago Comer Children’s Hospital, Friedman Place, CJE SeniorLife, and The Chicago Lighthouse/VisionQuest. We also continued “Pink Previews” which donates proceeds to The Lynn Sage Foundation for cancer research.



MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS - "HOME SWEET HOME"



Joslyn Jones and Tiffany Renee Johnson in *Flyin' West*.
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

5
WEEKS



CHICAGO REVIVAL

OCTOBER 5 - NOVEMBER 3, 2018

Written by Pearl Cleage

Directed by Ensemble member Chuck Smith

Following the end of the Civil War, many former slaves took advantage of The Homestead Act and went West to build new lives for themselves and their families. Many of these homesteaders were black women who overcame tremendous odds to work their own land and make a place for themselves in an often harsh and forbidding environment. Set in 1898, this is the story of some of these African-American female pioneers who settled, together, in the all-black town of Nicodemus, Kansas.



24
PERFORMANCES



AWARDS & REVIEWS

Black Theater Alliance Award nomination for Best Featured Actress in a Play (Joslyn Jones)

Black Theater Alliance Award nomination for Best Featured Actress in a Play (Tiffany Renee Johnson)

The African American Arts Alliance of Chicago—Black Excellence Award (Tiffany Oglesby)

Joseph Jefferson Award recommended

"Four out of four stars! Triumph of spirit and determination. Enthralling!" – *Chicago Sun-Times*

"Juicy melodrama...entertaining direction of Chuck Smith" – *Chicago Tribune*

"Winningly-realized revival" – *WTTW*

"Theatrical masterpiece! Highly recommended" – *Let's Play*

"Golden theater" – *Stage & Cinema*

"Earnest, talented cast!" – *Chicago Theatre Review*

"Riveting emotional drama!" – *PicksInSix*

Top-rated shows in Chicago – *Theatre in Chicago*

1,803
PATRONS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We offered complimentary tickets to Chicago Public Schools, Connections for Abused Women and Their Children, and League of Black Women. We partnered with The Family Institute of Northwestern University. We raised funds for Season of Concern and donated proceeds of "Pediatric Previews" to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.



THE FAMILY
INSTITUTE
at Northwestern University

CHICAGO
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

CPS



MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS - "HOME SWEET HOME"



Artistic Affiliate Camille Robinson and Brandon Dahlquist
in *It's a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!*
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

8

WEEKS



17th ANNIVERSARY

NOVEMBER 15, 2018 - JANUARY 5, 2019

From Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life"

Directed by Artistic Director Gwendolyn Whiteside

Music Directed by Ensemble member Michael Mahler

Original composition by Ensemble member Austin Cook

Chicago's original! The incredible cast takes the audience back to a 1940s radio broadcast of the holiday classic with live Foley sound effects, an original score, and holiday carols. After the show, the entire audience is served milk and cookies by the cast.



REVIEWS

Seen & heard on ABC, CBS, NBC, WGN, FOX, WXRT, WBEZ, WBBM, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Magazine, Newcity, Chicago Reader, Time Out Chicago, Windy City Times, and many more!

Dean Richards recommended

"This show nourished me in a way no other play has. American Blues Theater gave me a profound lesson in generosity." – *PerformInk*

"More than a play, it's an incredible experience! Don't leave this off your must see list!" – *Newcity*

"Holiday favorite – makes the bell ring every time." – *Chicago Tribune*

"Blues brings the holiday magic we've all been missing." – *Chicagoland Musical Theatre*

"American Blues Theater's production would've made Mr. Capra proud." – *Chicago Theatre Review*

"Undeniable charm!" – *Times Square Chronicles*

"Life-changing experience" – *Chicago Now*

45

PERFORMANCES



COMMUNITY SERVICE

We honored one military personnel per performance with a "Soldier Spotlight". We partnered with the USO, U.S. Dept. of Veteran Affairs, and Blue Star Theatres to offer complimentary and deeply-discounted tickets to military families. We also gave complimentary tickets to Misericordia residents, family, and staff to a dedicated performance. We donated proceeds of "Pediatric Previews" to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

5,530

PATRONS



MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS - "HOME SWEET HOME"



Ensemble member Philip Earl Johnson and Grace Smith
in *On Clover Road*. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

7
WEEKS



CHICAGO PREMIERE

FEBRUARY 1 - MARCH 16, 2019

Written by Steven Dietz

Directed by Halena Kays

At an abandoned motel on a desolate American road, a mother meets a cult deprogrammer, believing she will be reunited with her runaway daughter.



30
PERFORMANCES



AWARDS & REVIEWS

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Midsize Production—Play

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Director—Midsize Play (Halena Kays)

"Smart and fast paced—delivers chills at nearly every turn. Cast is thrilling." – *Chicago Sun-Times*

"Recommended—taut & tense." – *Chicago Tribune*

"Each performance is riveting." – *Chicago Reader*

"Intensely emotional thriller—unpredictable and dangerous ride." – *Chicago Theatre Review*

"Heart-stopping production." – *Chicago on the Aisle*

"Keeps you on the edge of your seat." – *Chicago Theater and Arts*

"5 out of 5 stars. Must see. Perfection." – *Around the Town Chicago*

"Exciting evening of theatre" - *Broadway World Chicago*

"Irresistibly suspenseful." – *PicksInSix*

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We partnered with The Family Institute at Northwestern University and National Runaway Safeline.

We continued our "Pediatric Previews" which donates proceeds to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

1,845
PATRONS



THE FAMILY
INSTITUTE
at Northwestern University



MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS - "HOME SWEET HOME"



Ensemble member Joe Foust in *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey*.
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

5
WEEKS



CHICAGO PREMIERE

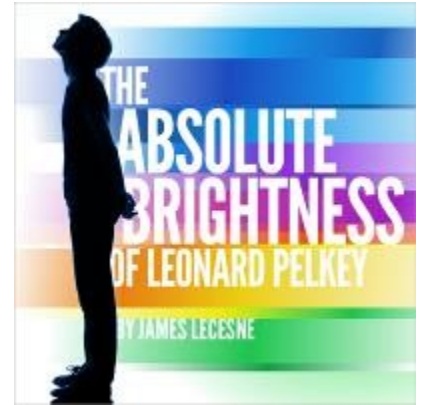
MARCH 29 - APRIL 27, 2019

Written by James Lecesne

Directed by Kurt Johns

Starring Ensemble member Joe Foust

Ensemble member Joe Foust portrays a tough New Jersey detective, a withdrawn teenage girl, a brusque yet gentle hairdresser, and many more intriguing characters as they join forces to solve a mystery about the disappearance of Leonard Pelkey. The answer will forever change their lives.



23
PERFORMANCES



AWARDS & REVIEWS

Joseph Jefferson Award for Solo Performance (Joe Foust)

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Projections Design (G. "Max" Maxin IV)

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Sound Design—Midsize (Eric Backus)

"Sensational!" – *WTTW*

"Foust is a dynamo!...perfectly suited for a character actor extraordinaire!" – *Newcity*

"Astute direction...imaginative contributions of designers." – *Chicago Reader*

"Masterclass in acting...riveting to watch!" – *PerformInk*

"[Foust] effortlessly, almost magically, morphs into the entire cast." – *Chicago Theatre Review*

"[Designers] create an absorbing atmosphere for the gifted Foust." – *PicksInSix*

"Comedic richness of Foust's characterizations." – *Chicago Tribune*

"a HIT—an important piece of work." – *Chicago Stage Standard*

"[Foust] has a naturally inviting and playful energy." – *Chicago Sun-Times*

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We offered complimentary tickets to Chicago Public Schools, The Trevor Project, and Center on Halsted. We partnered with the Family Institute at Northwestern University. We also continued our "Pediatric Previews" which donates proceeds to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

926
PATRONS



THE FAMILY
INSTITUTE
at Northwestern University



MAINSTAGE PRODUCTIONS - "HOME SWEET HOME"



Jacquelyne Jones and Ensemble member Ian Paul Custer in *The Spitfire Grill*.
Photo by Michael Brosilow.

6
WEEKS



28
PERFORMANCES



1,844
PATRONS

CHICAGO REVIVAL

JULY 12 - AUGUST 17, 2019

Based on the film by Lee David Zlotoff

Book and music by James Valcq

Book and lyrics by Fred Alley

Directed by Tammy Mader

Music Directed by Malcolm Ruhl

A feisty parolee follows her dreams, based on a page from an old travel book, to a small town in Wisconsin and finds a place for herself working at Hannah's Spitfire Grill.



AWARDS & REVIEWS

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Music Director (Malcolm Ruhl)

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Performer in Principal Role—Musical (Jacquelyne Jones)

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Performer in Supporting Role—Musical (Dara Cameron)

Joseph Jefferson Award nomination for Performer in Supporting Role—Musical (Catherine Smitko)

"Luminous production...a musical revelation!" – WTTW

"Must-see [show] that absolutely shines! Pitch perfect in every way." – Chicago Theatre Review

"Satisfaction guaranteed with this unpretentious two-hour labor of love." – Stage and Cinema

"The cast is a knockout." – Chicagoland Musical Theater Review

"Stellar performances." – PicksInSix

"Superb revival." – Third Coast Review

"Highly recommended" – Let's Play

"Necessary today...reignites that spark of hope in our hearts." – Chicago on Stage

"Jones & Cameron are immensely talented singers and sophisticated actresses." – Chicago Tribune

"Best plays in Chicago" – Picture this Post

"Beautiful...joyous!" – Around the Town Chicago

"Heartfelt" – Northwest Herald

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We offered complimentary tickets to Alternatives Girl World and Connections for Abused Women and Their Children. We partnered with the Family Institute at Northwestern University. In addition, we ran a clothing drive for Suits for Success—a nonprofit organization that donates clothing to parolees for job interviews. We also continued our "Pediatric Previews" which donates proceeds to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.



THE FAMILY
INSTITUTE
at Northwestern University



RIPPED: THE LIVING NEWSPAPER FESTIVAL



Top to bottom: De'Jah Jervai, Ada Cheng, Ensemble member John Mohrlein, Artistic Affiliate Richard Shavzin, Linda Kimbrough, Dianne Baskin, Kathy Smith, Ensemble members James Leaming & Suzanne Petri at 2019 Ripped Festival. Photos by Maia Rosenfeld.



10
PLAYS

18th Edition
JUNE 17, 2019

Based on the 1930s WPA era program that brought Orson Welles, Arthur Miller, and Clifford Odets into public attention, *Ripped* presents short plays inspired and ripped from today's headlines. Since 2009, we've produced 18 events and utilized over 550 artists.



65
ARTISTS

2019 PLAYS

Linda's Choice by Michelle Aguirre, Elizabeth de la Torre, Xavier Reyes, Miranda Sustaita*

I'm Not Misty by Ensemble member Darren Canady

Final Exam by Rachel Bykowski

Amber Alert by Ensemble member Manny Buckley

Buy One Get One Free by Artistic Affiliate Christina Telesca Gorman

Assumptions & Forgiveness by Ethan Correa, Willow Ortiz, Naomi Reyes, Channie-Brianna Thornton, Glenn Visita*

Where Does it All Start by Ada Cheng

The Baby Boomers Pledge by Ensemble member Wandachristine

Seek Immediate Shelter by Bret Angelos

Future of Helium Uncertain by Shannon Pritchard

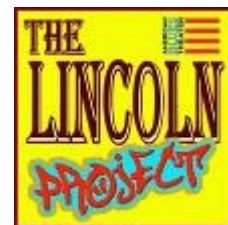
*CPS students



166
PATRONS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All proceeds of the event benefited our free arts education *The Lincoln Project* in Chicago Public Schools. The winning CPS students in our *The Lincoln Project* Playwriting Award contest were given a professional workshop and production at this event.



BLUE INK PLAYWRITING AWARD & FESTIVAL



Winner of the 2019 Blue Ink Playwriting Award—Benjamin Benne.

752
SUBMISSIONS



2019 BLUE INK PLAYWRITING AWARD

Alma

by Benjamin Benne

Alma was selected from a pool of 752 submissions across the world. Playwright Benjamin Benne (New Haven, CT) received a \$1,250 cash prize and staged-reading in Chicago.

"It is deeply meaningful that American Blues Theater has elected to recognize this play about the United States as a place of opportunity/oppression that also explores current U.S. immigration laws," said Benjamin Benne.



2019 BLUE INK PLAYWRITING AWARD FINALISTS & SEMI FINALISTS

Featured Finalists

Hilary Bettis (*72 miles to go...*), Margo Buchanan (*Invisible Ink*), & Nathan Yunkerberg (*Mother of Pearl*).

Finalists

Ali Skye Bennet (*Rafetus*), Stephen Brown (*The Motel Play*), Kristiana Colón (*suspension*), Steph Del Rosso (*53% of*), Nate Eppler (*This Red Planet*), Douglas Gearhart (*Just Like Stealing*), Justine Gelfman (*The Technicians*), Kristin Idaszak (*The Surest Poison*), Tira Palmquist (*The Way North*), Eliana Pipes (*Stand and Wait*), & Andrew Rosendorf (*Refuge*).

Semi-finalists

Ed Bourgeois (*River of Blood*), Darcy Bruce (*All We Know is Enough*), Rodney Clark (*Telling Our Stories [Based on Events from 1921 Tulsa Race Riot—Story one—The Griffins]*), Gina Femia (*This Happened Once at the Romance Depot Off the 1-87 in Westchester*), Michael Gotch (*Starter Pistol*), A. Emmanuel Leadon (*Cave Canem*), Cristina Luzárraga (*La Mujer Barbuda*), Rich Rubin (*Descent from the Andes*), Jasmine Sharma (*Leaving Wonderland*), Scott Sickles (*Mariana's Trench*), Deanne Stillman (*Reflections in a D'Back's Eye*), Caridad Svich (*Holler River*), J.D. Volk (*Chrysalis*), Charles White (*The DePriest Incident*), & Victor Wishna (*DNR*).

29
FINALISTS
& SEMI-FINALISTS



2019 BLUE INK PLAYWRITING FESTIVAL

JUNE 1 - 3, 2019

4 staged-readings of featured finalists & the award-winning script

June 1

Invisible Ink by Margo Buchanan

directed by Ensemble member Heather Meyers

72 miles to go by Hilary Bettis

directed by Ensemble member Wandachristine

June 2

Alma by Benjamin Benne

directed by Ana Velazquez

June 3

Mother of Pearl by Nathan Yunkerberg

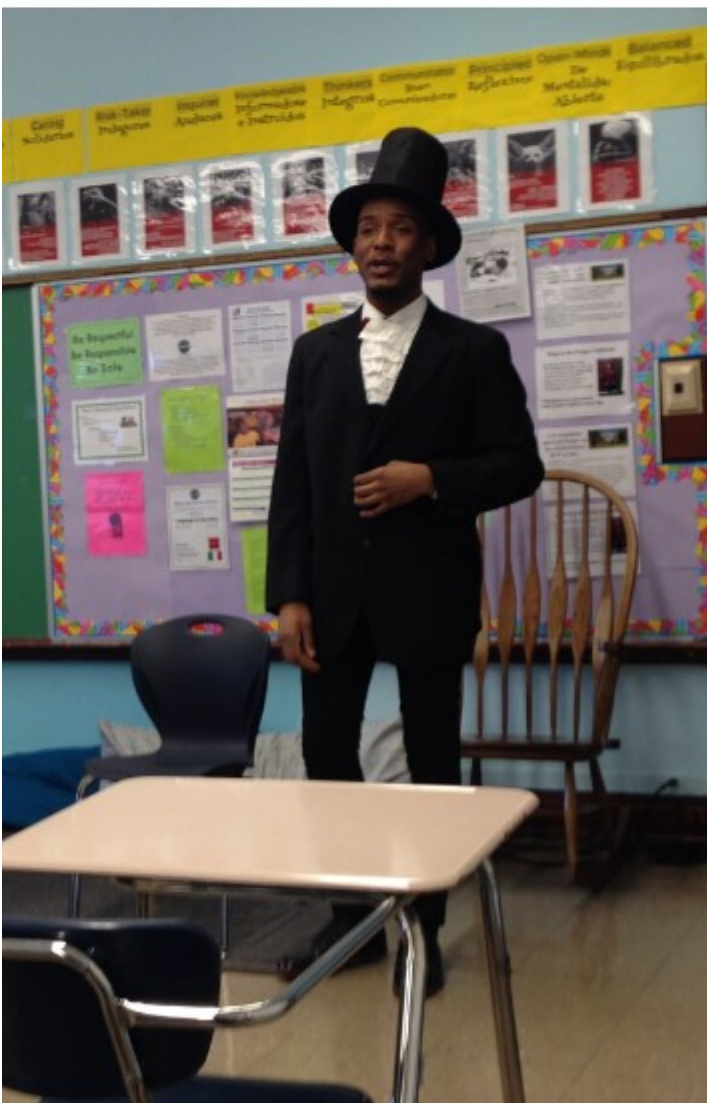
directed by Ensemble member Manny Buckley

29
ARTISTS

THE LINCOLN PROJECT



Clockwise: CPS 2019 winning play at *Ripped Festival*;
The Lincoln Project Award winners; Teaching artist
Donterrio Johnson during in-classroom visit.
Photos by Maia Rosenfeld.



3k
CPS STUDENTS
SERVED

INNOVATIVE, INTEGRATED, FREE ARTS PROGRAM
2018-2019 CPS SCHOOL YEAR

Our free program aligns with Illinois Learning Standards to engage 5th through 10th graders of the circumstances leading to the Emancipation Proclamation. Students watch scenes performed by professional actors, participate in discussions, and most importantly discover their voice by writing their own short plays.



STUDENT & TEACHER FEEDBACK

"I learned teamwork."

- Roberto, 7th grade student

"I learned you can change someone's opinion!"

- Fabiola, 5th grade student

"The Civil War es complicado."

- Alba, 5th grade student

"Students were able to write about events that matter to them, and that is powerful!"

- Anna Erickson, CPS teacher

"My students were enabled to have more authority over their learning experience by having conversations important to them, connecting the topics of the curriculum to their lives."

- Aaron Wilcox, CPS teacher

"This program is nearly perfect, maybe the teaching artist could come back for 1 or 2 more visits!"

- Cheryl Strus, CPS teacher

295

HOURS IN CLASSROOMS



NEIGHBORHOODS SERVED BY ZIPCODES (# of schools)

Albany Park, Ashburn (3), Archer Heights (2), Armour Square, Auburn Gresham, Austin (2), Avalon Park (3), Avondale, Belmont Cragin, Beverly, Bridgeport (2), Brighton Park (3), Burnside, Calumet Heights (3), Chatham (2), Chicago Lawn (3), Clearing (2), Douglas (2), East Side (2), Edgewater, Englewood, Fuller Park, Gage Park (6), Garfield Ridge (4), Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing (3), Hegewisch (2), Hermosa (2), Humboldt Park (2), Hyde Park, Irving Park, Lincoln Park, Lincoln Square, (2), Logan Square (3), Loop, Lower West Side, McKinley Park (4), Near North Side, Near West Side (2), New City, North Center, North Lawndale, North Park, Norwood Park, O'Hare, Pullman, Riverdale, Rogers Park, Roseland (3), South Chicago (2), South Deering (2), South Lawndale (2), South Shore (2), Uptown, Washington Heights (3), Washington Park (2), West Elsdon (3), West Englewood (2), West Lawn (3), West Pullman, West Ridge, West Town (2), & Woodlawn.

90%

UNDERSERVED
COMMUNITIES

Approximately **90%** of performances and writing workshops reached underserved students and community members. Approximately **46%** of performances and writing workshops were in classrooms where English is a second language for the majority of students.

46%

ENGLISH IS
2nd LANGUAGE

We served **7** Communities in Schools of Chicago Schools

(About CISC: More than 85% of Chicago Public Schools students come from low income homes. Many students lack access to the resources and support that help them succeed academically. CISC offers a solution by connecting students and their families with free programs and services that address students' unmet needs.)

2018 - 2019 REVENUE

\$468,419

TICKET SALES



\$625,411

CONTRIBUTIONS



\$81,959

SPECIAL EVENTS

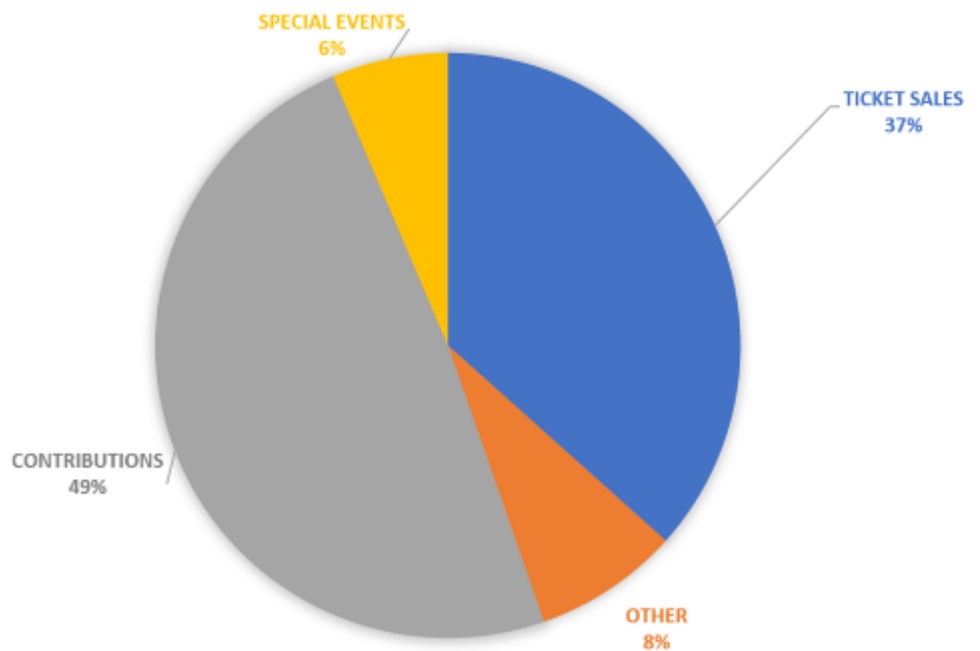


\$102,878

OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME



\$1,278,667



From the most recent audit conducted by IL NFP Audit & Tax (Sept 2019).

American Blues Theater has total net assets of \$3,612,703

of which \$2,417,597 is a restricted endowment

from the Ruth D. & Ken M. Davee General Operation Support Fund.

2018 - 2019 EXPENSES

\$1,256,792

\$990,060

ARTISTIC PROGRAMS



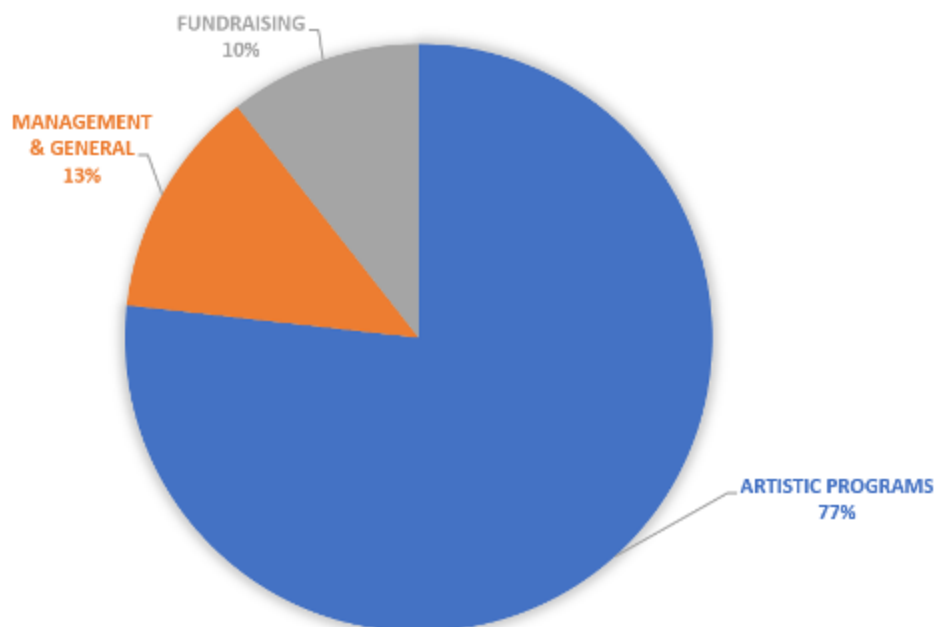
\$163,001

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL



\$103,731

FUNDRAISING



**American Blues Theater is carefully managed
and has never run a deficit nor has any liabilities.**



L to R: Joe Pocztowski, Board member Kimberlee Herold,
& Shaun Phillips at 2019 Blue Bash.
Photo by Maia Rosenfeld.

We are honored to recognize the following contributors who enable American Blues Theater's artistic programming, arts education, and community service. This list includes donations from our True Blue Annual Fund, GutterBall, Blue Bash, production sponsors, and other contributions given from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

[\\$25,000 and above](#)

Anonymous
The Chicago Community Trust
Kimberlee Herold
The Illinois Arts Council Agency
The MacArthur Foundation for Arts & Culture
at Prince Charitable Trusts
Burton X. and Sheli Rosenberg

[\\$15,000 - \\$24,999](#)

ComEd
The Davee Foundation
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
The Shubert Foundation

[\\$7,500 - \\$14,999](#)

Clary Butler
Phil and Jill Calian
David and Sissy Coffin
Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Brenda and James Grusecki
Montgomery Ward Foundation
Gwendolyn Whiteside and Ian Van Handel

[\\$5,000 - \\$7,499](#)

Lee Ayers
Heather Barnfield
Chris and Ingrid Burrichter
Gitta K. Jacobs
The Northern Trust Company

[\\$2,500 - \\$4,999](#)

Anixter Foundation
Marcy and Greg Carlin
Brian Carothers
City of Chicago DCASE
Eileen and William Conaghan
Gina Foley
Ray Garza
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Matthew and Sharon Tassone
Barbara and Randy Thomas

[\\$1,000 - \\$2,499](#)

Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Ben Rosenthal Foundation
Lane Brady
Tyson Carter and Sarah Nowak
Hillary and Matt Ebach
Eurex
Michael and Mary Goodkind
Craig and Linda Grannon
Matt and Beth Hafter
Jim and Lori Hock

[\\$1,000 - \\$2,499 cont'd](#)

Sarajane Johnson
Keith and Erica Karlson
Mike and Trudy Kelly
Michael and Cara Levinson
Anne and Keith Moffat
Patrick and Cynthia Murray
Ben and Nancy Randall
Tana and Kevin Reich
Megan Robertson and Tanner McCleerey
Suzy and Tim Robertson
Leonard X. and Arlene Rosenberg
Libby and David Savner
Carol and David Stone
Kerry Straub and Neil O'Callaghan
Darrel and Shirley Whiteside

[\\$500 - \\$999](#)

Actors' Equity Foundation
Peter and Bari Amadio
Dawn Bach and Rawl Thurman
Michelle Blanck
Larry Brandenburg
Steven Dietz
J.A. Friedman
Chris Johnson Gordon and Scott Gordon
James Joseph
Jim Moles
Rama Ranganathan
RMB Capital
Editha Rosario and Alexis Moore
Heather and Randy Steinmeyer
LaBonney Taylor
Thompson Coburn LLP
Patricia Walsh

[\\$250 - \\$499](#)

Christine Anderson
Ed and Laura Blatchford
Dennis Carlin
Keith Carlson
Craig and Karen Carothers
Deanna Dunagan
Exelon
Forefront
Adrienne Gomez
Carole Griggs
Heather Meyers and Roger Grum
James and Lois Hobart
Jean Klingenstein
Jim Leaming and Carmen Roman
Michael Mahler and Dara Cameron
Andrea McNaughton
Christopher and Ann Motogawa

[\\$250 - \\$499 cont'd](#)

David and Agnes Murdoch
Nancy and Gary Prior
Jazmine Reynolds
Sarah E. Ross
The Saints
Ann Whitney
Sue Wilde
Steven P. Wroten and Manny Buckley
Amy and Benjamin Yingling

[\\$100 - \\$249](#)

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Anonymous
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Thomas and Deborah Barnes
Richard Blass
Barbara Bobbitt
Matthew Brumlow
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Michael Cainkar
David Camic
Cynthia Chase
Thomas and Meg Claggett
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Sue and Clark Davoust
Leonara Dickson
Elyse Dolan
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Greg Matke
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American Blues Theater is grateful for every contribution. We regret that due to space limitations we are unable to list donations under \$99. Please accept our deepest appreciation as your donation makes a difference!

[\\$100-\\$249 cont'd](#)

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 Marriott Theatre
 Heather Meyers
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 Tom Morello
 Beth Murphy
 Murphy's Rooftop Company
 Music of the Baroque
 Christopher J. Neville
 New 400 Theater
 Northlight Theatre

2018-2019 Snapshot

 **3,000**
CPS students served

44 
"Soldier Spotlights"

 **194**
Community events


 **19,337**
Patrons attended


2
Pets in office

 **752**
"Blue Ink" scripts

 "Blues News"
Subscribers
10,419

 **208**
Performances

261
Artists in 2018-19 season 

 **4**
"Buddy Holly" shows attended by 4 yr-old superfan

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In-Kind Contributions cont'd

Northwestern Athletics
NPR
Old Town School of Folk Music
Palette & Chisel Academy of Fine Arts
Paramount Theatre
Peninsula Players
Porchlight Music Theatre
Raven Theatre
Redtwist Theatre
Remy Bumpo Theatre Company
Revolution Brewing
Rivers Casino
Suzy Robertson
Rock2Gems Jewelry
Burt and Sheli Rosenberg
Leonard X. and Arlene Rosenberg
Maia Rosenfeld
Larry Schulman
Seyfarth Shaw LLP
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Sideshow Theatre
Silver Poplar Studios LLC
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Kerry Straub
Studio Debonair
StudioUs
Summer House Santa Monica
Matt Tassone
Ben Thompson
TimeLine Theatre
Untitled Supper Club
Urban Oasis
Ian Van Handel
Victory Gardens Theater
VikArt Beauty
"Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me"
WBEZ
Gwendolyn Whiteside
Willamette Valley Vineyards
Writers Theatre



Board member Kimberlee Herold & friends.
Below: Artistic Director Gwendolyn Whiteside.
Photos by Maia Rosenfeld.





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In Memoriam

Chip Pringle

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Ed Blatchford

Matthew Brumlow

Manny Buckley

Dara Cameron

Casey Campbell

Darren Canady

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Ian Paul Custer

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Carmen Roman

Editha Rosario

Sarah E. Ross

Chuck Smith

Wandachristine

Gwendolyn Whiteside

Emeritus

Dennis Cockrum

William Payne

Artistic Affiliates

Eric Backus

Dana Black

Joe Dempsey

Paul Deziel

Olympia Dukakis

Tom Geraty

Christina Telesca Gorman

Shawn Goudie

James Joseph

Zach Kenney

Mary O'Dowd

Cara Parrish

Alexander Ridgers

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Director of Patron Services

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Shandee Vaughan

Production Manager

Dan Thomas

Finance Manager

Bruiser Johnson

Chief Motivational Officer

Piper Vaughan

Reception Services



Ensemble members James Leaming & Wandachristine.
Photo by Maia Rosenfeld.



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CHICAGO, IL 60640

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