

ANNUAL REPORT

ABOUT FACE

THEATRE

2020-2021





ABOUT FACE THEATRE

MISSION & VISION

About Face Theatre exists to create exceptional, innovative, and adventurous theatre and educational programming that advances the national dialogue on sexual and gender identity, and challenges and entertains audiences in Chicago and beyond.

We strive to be a nationally recognized, intergenerational, and community-focused LGBTQIA arts organization by creating theatre that fosters awareness, understanding, and celebration of all forms of sexual and gender expression.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff and board of About Face Theatre honor and uplift that Chicago is the homeland of the original stewards and guardians of Chicagoland: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Their alliance is known as The Council of Three Fires, first formed in the year 796 of the common era at Mishimikinaak, also known as Mackinac Island, in Michigan. These peoples did, and do still exist. Without their committed stewardship, we would not be enjoying this place today.

We also recognize and acknowledge the enslaved Africans who have lived, been subjugated to free labor, and toiled the grounds where many theatres have been built and resurrected. This organization, and the people behind it, believe that Black Lives Matter. We cannot serve our mission to advance dialogue on gender and sexuality without including the voices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) in everything we do and create.

About Face Theatre • 5252 N Broadway, 2nd Fl, Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 784-8565 • AboutFaceTheatre.com



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[/aboutfacetheatrechicago](https://www.youtube.com/aboutfacetheatrechicago)

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ABOUT FACE THEATRE

THE
PEOPLE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BOARD CHAIR

AT A
GLANCE

THE PEOPLE OF ABOUT FACE

STAFF

Megan Carney
Artistic Director

Mikael Burke
Associate Artistic Director

Logan Boyd Jones
Managing Director

Dave (Dylan) Toropov
Director of Individual & Major Giving and Special Events

Charles Riffenburg
Marketing Manager & Graphic Designer

Kirsten Baity
Sharon Pasia
Green Room Collective Participants

Ruby Muñoz
Bookkeeper

John Olson
Public Relations

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chair

Becky Huinker
Vice-Chair

Derek Blin
Treasurer/Finance Chair

Ed Talideh
Development Chair

Sheldon Brown
Artistic Assoc. Rep.

Sharon Pasia
Youth Representative

Kathe Elwell
Sean Gill
Daniela Hautzinger
Maxwell Koziol
Linsea Moon Waugh

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Pat Ewert
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William W. Greaves
Chris Landgraff

Michael Leppen
Dwight A. McBride
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Mary Morten
Mike Sullivan
Denis Weil

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES

Patrick Andrews
William Boles
Scott Bradley
Sheldon Brown
Mikael Burke
Philip Dawkins
Scott Duff
Scott Ferguson
Armand Fields
John Francisco

Keira Fromm
Delia Kropp
Bob Kuhn
Elizabeth Ledo
Lexi Saunders
Kelli Simpkins
Benjamin Sprunger
Paul Oakley Stovall
Mieka van der Ploeg
Alex Weisman

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES EMERITI

Amy Beck
Alexandra Billings
Precious Brady-Davis
Joel Butler
Megan Carney
Brad Cawley
Geoffrey M Curley
Jane C. Cho
Shelley Echerd
Mark Emerson
Mitchell Fain
Steve Futterman
Brian Goodman
Sarah Gubbins
David Hyman
Kyle Hall

Ted Hoerl
Eric Hoff
Jessica Hudson
Patricia Kane
SK Kerastas
Julia Fabris McBride
James McKay
Amy Matheny
Jacob Padron
Andre Pluess
Dida Ritz
Rebecca Rugg
Tanya Saracho
Arturo Soria
Daniel Stermer

Introduction

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MEGAN CARNEY (SHE/HER)



I often wish I had simple answers to things, but lately I'm finding more wisdom in the questions.

For example, About Face was invited to lead a workshop in June addressing how racism shows up in LGBTQIA+ communities. Sheldon Brown, Artistic Associate and board member, screened some material from *Power in Pride at Home* and viewers filled the chat with responses to the questions, "What do you imagine anti-racism to be? What examples do you see in our society? What is missing? What do you want to see?"

On one Saturday afternoon this past spring, the About Face Youth Theatre teaching artists Lisa Siciliano and Breon Arzell were guiding a group of 12 LGBTQ+ youth from around the country to create the original show *Whodunnit?* As part of laying the foundation for their collaborative process, they asked, "How will we make decisions together?"

And then there was this one evening when the full AFT staff and board gathered on Zoom for a workshop on building authentic relationships. Tania Richard, our dynamic facilitator, presented various direct communication strategies

and new ways of thinking about our work and she asked us, "What are you willing to lose?"

Taken together, these bold questions capture our work at About Face Theatre. What world do we want to see? How will we work together for that vision? What are we willing to lose?

We answer these questions everyday through the stories we tell and the care that we demonstrate in the process. Evolution is in the DNA of our mission to advance positive social change. Fueled by our core values of authenticity, collaboration, fun, and inclusion, we trust that the combination of strong community and powerful art will show us the way forward.

Thank you for your support and partnership. We're so proud to share the work from the year and build a better world with you.

Megan
Megan Carney
Artistic Director

A Message From
BOARD CHAIR
AARON KACEL (HE/HIM)



On behalf of the AFT Board of Directors, thanks for sticking with us for another year. As we find ourselves continuing to adapt to ever-changing circumstances in the world, we're grateful that your support has remained unwavering.

Despite ongoing challenges and unpredictability for the theatre sector, the AFT Board has a lot to celebrate this year. We made progress on a number of larger strategic goals, including increasingly forward-thinking financial planning, participation in anti-racism and equity training, deepened partnership between Board and Staff, and welcoming new members with diverse backgrounds and experiences. We exceeded fundraising goals, thanks in part to enhanced approaches and our base's receptiveness to them. We found new ways of virtually staying united when we couldn't physically gather together. We supported staff development,

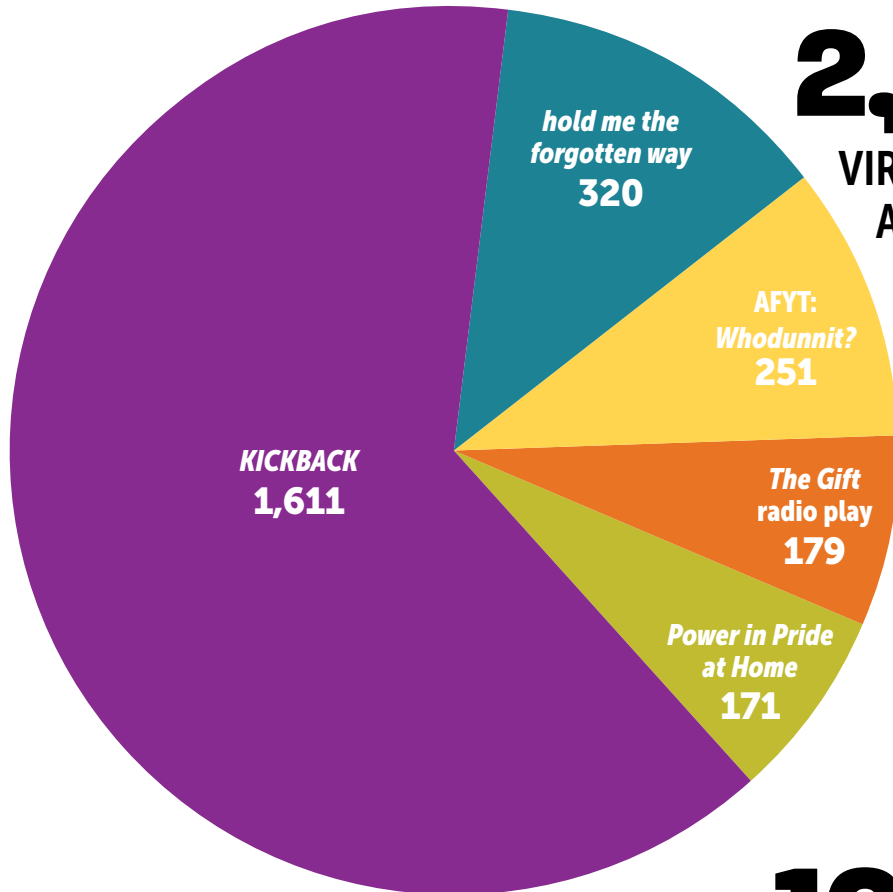
engaged in detailed self-reflection, and refined certain policies and procedures in line with current industry trends. With our mission top of mind, we will continue these efforts and explore new ones in collaboration with Staff.

The company has a lot to be excited about moving forward. Please enjoy this report as a sign of our work this past year and the foundation it provides for the future. Thanks for making it all possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Aaron Kacel
Board Chair

ABOUT FACE AT A GLANCE



2,532
VIRTUAL EVENT ATTENDANCE

97 ARTISTS & STAFF EMPLOYED



10 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY & SPECIAL EVENTS



PERFORMANCES

AFYT: WHODUNNIT?

THE GIFT: a radio play

KICKBACK

hold me the forgotten way

**POWER
IN
PRIDE
AT
HOME**

A WORLD PREMIERE VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

KICKBACK

A partnership with **REBUILD FOUNDATION** Conceived & Directed by **MIKAEL BURKE**

KICKBACK

A partnership with Rebuild Foundation

Directed by AFT Associate Artistic Director Mikael Burke

DEC 12 – JAN 12, 2021**Extended through AUG 31, 2021**

Streaming online (on YouTube & the AFT website)

Inspired by Rebuild Foundation's extensive collection of African-American art and cultural artifacts, *KICKBACK* is an unapologetic celebration of Black lives now and through the ages. This online festival of original plays and performances highlights the intersection of queerness and Blackness in all its beauty and glory. When just being alive and living your best life is an act of rebellion, it's time to turn up the music and make some noise!

Lead artists

Dionne Addai, Robert Cornelius, Kirsten Baity, Zahra Baker, Jenn Freeman, Ben F. Locke, Keyonna Jackson, Shanta Nurullah, Paul Oakley Stovall, Michael Turrentine, Cori Wash, Vic Wynter, and avery r. young

Attendance & Engagement

1,611 TOTAL VIEWS

14 VIDEOS
PERFORMANCES
& EVENTS

INTRODUCTION FROM DIRECTOR MIKAEL BURKE

**"History is not the past. It is the present.
We carry our history with us. We are our history."
-James Baldwin**

The seed of *KICKBACK* was simply a desire for joy, a yearning for Black stories above and beyond the trauma so regularly paraded across Chicago stages. But when the pandemic disrupted our lives, something shifted. That desire for joy did not go away, it only become more apparent.

With so much uncertainty in the world, I sought out joy wherever I could find it, and I realized I most often found it in the form of my past. I found comfort and safety in the things, places, and people I knew well, and there was something truly heartening about remembering that humanity is no stranger to times like these. So as 2020 continued to become the year none of us will ever forget, this need for past and history to give way to joy became the real heart of the *KICKBACK* process.

This project is all about looking backward to find new ways forward. We have a great opportunity to revisit our histories and learn from them. We look back and appreciate where we came from as we celebrate where we are now and grapple with how far we still have to go. Each of us carries a history and vision as unique as ourselves. This series celebrates that by inviting artists to develop new works for our present moment, inspired by our past and looking toward our future. A celebration. Joy as resistance. We are living through history right now. What will we make of it?



Mikael Burke
About Face Associate Artistic Director
KICKBACK Director



VIRTUAL SPECIAL EVENTS

KICKBACK Happy Hour (Fri, Dec 18, 2020)
with Mikael Burke, *Pride Action Tank (PAT)* Executive Director Kim Hunt, Shanta Nurullah, and Zahra Baker

How have Black Lesbians been made invisible, overlooked or omitted? How does supporting Black Lesbians create an environment that is safe and inclusive for all?

KICKBACK Happy Hour (Sat, Jan 9, 2021)
with AFT Artistic Associate Sheldon Brown, Mikael Burke, Robert Cornelius, and Paul Oakley Stovall

How have gay Black men been erased and diminished by other groups in the greater fight for rights and social acceptance? How has that affected our mental health? And have we participated in our own undoing?

KICKBACK Happy Hour (Sat, Feb 20, 2021)
with Mikael Burke, multi-disciplinary artist Sojourner Zenobia, and Vic Wynter

How can Black and LGBTQ artists embrace the power of our voices and take agency in telling our own stories to prevent being erased? And how can we find support, healing, and therapy through queer community-building and House music?

KICKBACK Happy Hour (Thurs, April 22, 2021)
with Mikael Burke and Dionne Addai

A conversation around the creation and themes of the *KICKBACK* performance "Pangea."

KICKBACK PERFORMANCES

“Pangea”

By Dionne Addai

Using poetry, music, and movement, this piece discusses the history and legacy of colonization, the ancient struggle for civil rights, and the conundrum of black kings and queens.

“OM Mission”

By ShaZah (Shanta Nurullah and Zahra Baker)

An exploration of Black lesbians from the Harlem Renaissance to present day Chicago, culminating in a vision for our future.

“Do Black Lives Matter?”

By Ben F. Locke

An introduction to an upcoming feature-length documentary that asks Black people from the often-ignored places of Chicago if they think Black Lives Matter.

“What We See”

By Kirsten Baity, Keyonna Jackson & Cori Wash

A series of short pieces exploring and exposing the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of growing up Black and queer in the USA.

“Frankie & Labi Saved Us”

By Robert Cornelius & Paul Oakley Stovall

An artist suffering PTSD due to the current pandemic finally seeks help to sort out the feelings that are resurfacing.

“LITANY | Pt. IV | EBONY”

by Jenn Freeman

A voyage onto the historical pages of *Ebony Magazine*. Set to a soundscape created by Chicago’s DJ Dapper, “EBONY” is a playful celebration of Black unity and power.

“Black Woman on Purpose”

By Michael Turrentine

What starts out as a normal weekly family zoom call between a Grandmother, a Mother, and Her Daughter morphs into a beautiful coming out moment and a spoken shared word that is outward to the audience/watchers.

“See Us As We Are”

By Vic Wynter

Even in moments of our erasure we still find a way to show up and influence culture. What a better way to tell that story than through the conduit of queer house music icon Frankie Knuckles

“john 11:35 [fo(r) all de lazurus(is)]”

By avery r. young

A 3-part sermon of service addressing the erasure of varied blk bodies (specifically trans-bodies) in the age of #BLKLIVESMATTER.



LITANY | Pt. IV | EBONY

OM Mission

Frankie & Labi Saved Us

See Us As We Are

PRESS RESPONSES

“CAPTIVATING and NECESSARY...”

Comprehensively, these pieces introduce legend after legend who many may never have heard of, re-educating, inspiring and schooling viewers as it continues...

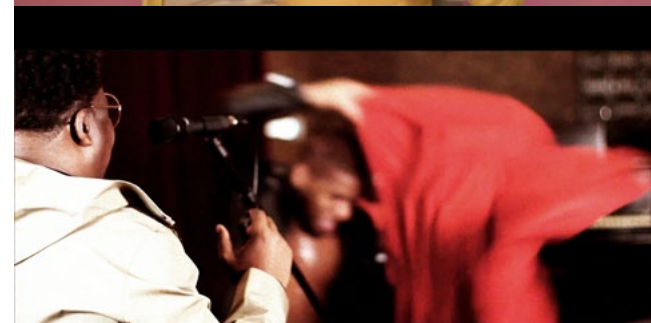
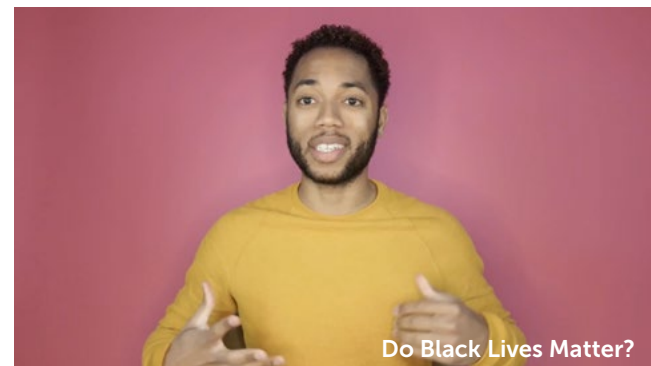
Each piece is thoughtful and specific, brimming with heart, truth and perspective.”

–New City

“I don’t think it particularly matters in which order you decide to watch the pieces that make up *KICKBACK*. But don’t skip any of them. **The history, hope, and deeply humane stories on display here deserve your full attention.**”

RECOMMENDED

–Chicago Reader



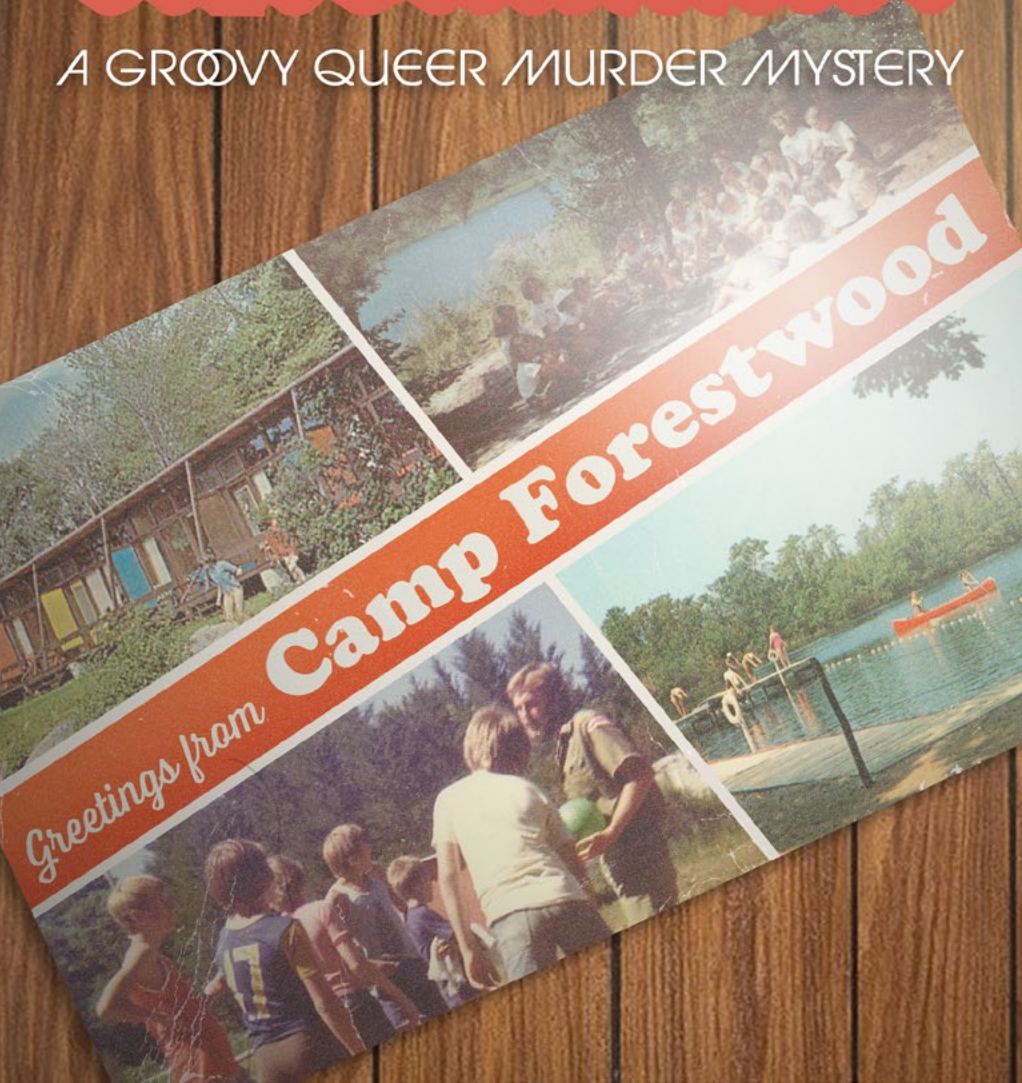
john 11:35 [fo(r) all de lazurus(is)]



About Face Youth Theatre
presents

Whodunnit?

A GROOVY QUEER MURDER MYSTERY



Whodunnit?

A Groovy Queer Murder Mystery

Created and performed by
the About Face Youth Theatre ensemble
Directed by Breon Arzell and Lisa Siciliano

June 7 – July 2, 2021

Streaming online (on YouTube and the AFT website)

The year is 1971. Ten people receive mysterious invitations to a summer camp reunion at a secluded mountain resort. Who has orchestrated this get together? Does it have anything to do with an “accidental” death from their time at camp? Old passions and rivalries reignite as the guests are forced to confront what happened at Camp Forest Woods years ago... before time runs out.

Featuring

Liv Haman, Keyonna Jackson, Liam Jones, Sophia Jones, Matt Keesecker, Ghost Simpson-Lacey, Lily Rubin, Jaydon Skinner, Ellie Van Houten, and Cori Wash, with music by Joshua Wentz and editing by Mikael Burke.

Attendance & Engagement

251

TOTAL VIEWS

5

TEACHING ARTISTS
& SPECIAL GUESTS

2

POSSIBLE
ENDINGS TO
CHOOSE FROM

[Learn more about AFYT ▶](#)

HOW ABOUT FACE YOUTH THEATRE CREATED *WHODUNNIT?*

Associate Artistic Director Mikael Burke

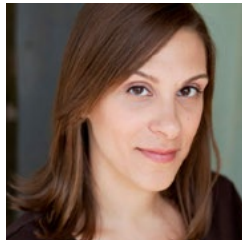
Heading into this Spring's session, we set out to create a space of fun and community, where play-making and ensemble-building could be an escape from the difficulties our young people faced elsewhere. And what's the most fun and engaging thing we could imagine? An original murder mystery, created and devised by the ensemble.



The pandemic changed a lot for us in AFYT, but it also provided some exciting opportunities. For the first time in our history, AFYT was able to host ensemble members from around the country in a single production. Members hailed from Chicago as well as Wisconsin, Oregon, and Washington. Additionally, the ensemble got to not only learn about acting and theatre, but also about filmmaking—framing, lighting, continuity—as the actors had to be their own designers and crew as well. And all this while still providing a safe space for our young artists to gather, spend time with one another, and find community with other queer youth in a time where real connection is in short supply.

Lead Teaching Artist Lisa Siciliano

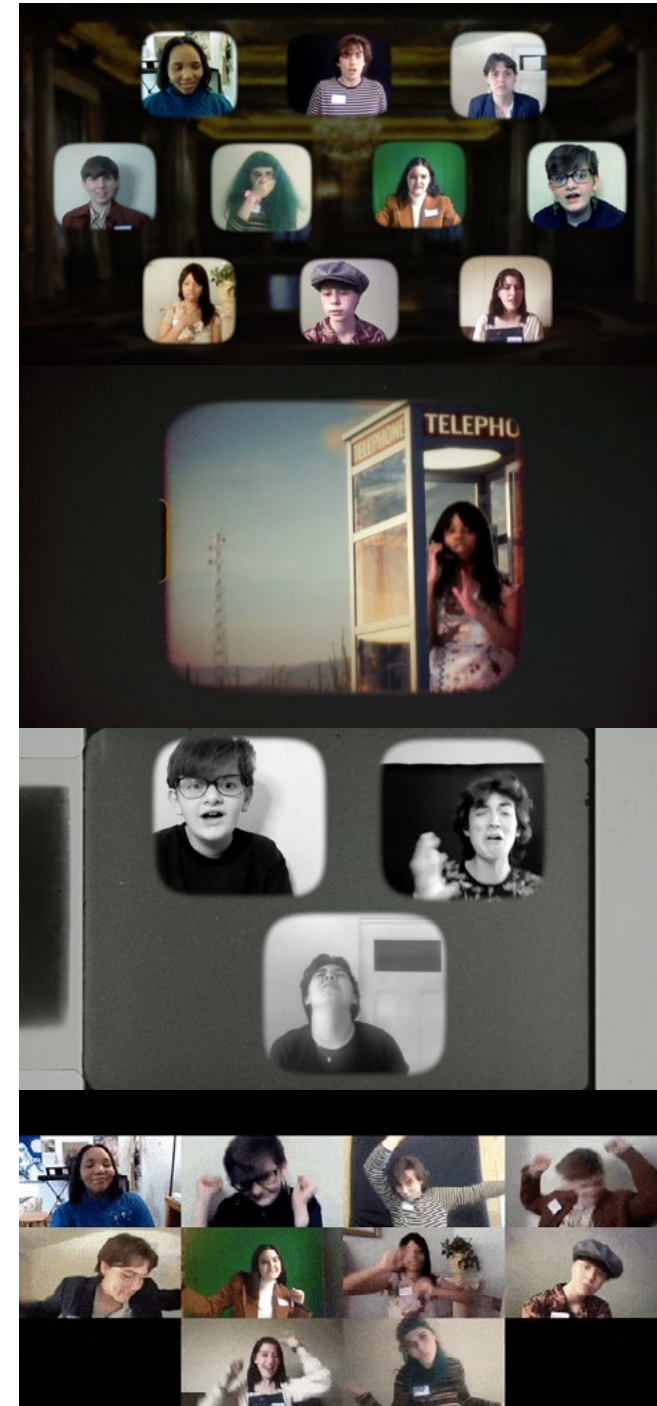
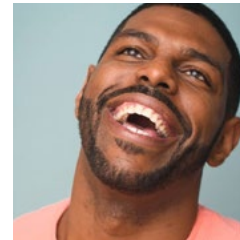
This session of About Face Youth Theatre was key for so many of us. It came at a moment when we weren't yet out of the pandemic, and we needed a place to be together



after a year of really challenging times. Our meetings served as both an anchor and as a bridge between our pandemic lives and a newly vaccinated and less restricted time. I am so proud of what we created together—the process, the product, and the friendships formed along the way.

Lead Teaching Artist Breon Arzell

The core of our work was not only devising a show, but creating an ensemble; a true challenge in a virtual world. But, despite not physically being in the same space, our young artists were able to create a space that was supportive, charged, and greatly collaborative. And for that, and the awesome show they created, I am immensely proud.



THE GIFT

A RADIO PLAY



Written & directed by AFT co-founder **ERIC ROSEN**
 Starring **CLAYBOURNE ELDER, FAWZIA MIRZA,
 JENN COLELLA & MAULIK PANCHOLY**
 Narrated by **ARI SHAPIRO**



The Gift

A Radio Play

Written and Directed by AFT Founder Eric Rosen

December 21-31, 2020

Streaming online (on YouTube, Instagram, and the AFT website)

In 1996, About Face Theatre debuted in Chicago with Eric Rosen's full-length play *The Gift*. Now, in celebration of the company's 25th anniversary season, Rosen has adapted his play into a delightful, bite-sized radio play performed by five amazing performers. The story focuses on the double date of a gay couple and a lesbian couple, and the unexpected secrets and stories that arise from their pasts. Inspired by O. Henry's classic short story "The Gift of the Magi," this tale of coincidence and the possibility of miracles is told with a subtle blend of humor and spiritual insight.

Featuring

Jenn Colella, Claybourne Elder, Fawzia Mirza, Maulik Pancholy, narrated by Ari Shapiro, with original music composed by Rodney Bush, and editing by Julie Tarrab. Produced by James McKay

Attendance & Engagement

179 TOTAL LISTENS



hold me the forgotten way

A national queer micromonologue collaboration

by Harrison David Rivers

Produced by TigerBear Productions

June 16 – December 31, 2021

Streaming online (on Spotify, iTunes, Google, and the [TigerBear Productions website](#))

Consisting of seven brief audio monologues, hold me the forgotten way explores intimate confessions made in public spaces about love and sex. TigerBear partnered with six remarkable queer theaters across the country, using this virtual moment to connect organizations through our shared mission to serve our queer communities and celebrate the talented artists across boundaries despite existing in separate geographies.

Featuring

"we met on Grindr"

performed Donovan Session, directed by Sheldon Brown presented in association with About Face Theatre

Attendance & Engagement

320

TOTAL PROGRAM LISTENS*

*as of September 1, 2021

41

LISTENS FOR ONLY "we met on Grindr"*



Power in Pride at Home

A webseries

Created by the *Power in Pride* ensemble
Directed by Lexi Saunders

September 1, 2020 – Aug 31, 2021

Streaming online (on YouTube, Facebook, and the AFT website)

Developed at the end of the 2019-2020 Season, *Power in Pride at Home* adapted AFT's touring production of *Power in Pride* to video to engage our community during the early months of the pandemic. A mix of performance and conversations, the series was written and performed by artists of color about their true life experiences and explores their dreams for the future and how understanding the role of LGBTQ+ people in history can change your life. AFT extended access to this website for a second season to pair with interactive online programs.

Featuring

Dionne Addai, Angelica Grace, Nico Quinn, Aimy Tien, and Vic Wynter, produced by Amy Sheahan, with editing by Charles Riffenburg.

Attendance & Engagement

171

ONLINE VIEWS
THIS SEASON

1,778

TOTAL VIEWS
LAST SEASON

9

VIDEO
EPISODES

[Learn more about engagement events ▶](#)

EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

ABOUT FACE

YOUTH THEATRE

GREEN ROOM
COLLECTIVE

ARTIST GRANTS

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS

ABOUT FACE YOUTH THEATRE

Established over 20 years ago, **About Face Youth Theatre (AFYT)** is a brave and creative space for queer youth to find and empower their artistic voice in the performing arts. Our award-winning, nationally-recognized program provides rigorous training in devised theatre, lessons about social justice through history, and opportunities for leadership development and activism. Through original ensemble plays, created in dynamic collaboration with accomplished adult artists, we encourage and support LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies to become powerful agents for change.

As a result of this program, AFYT has developed and performed **17 original mainstage productions**, including this season’s digital streaming show, *Whodunnit? A Groovy Queer Murder Mystery*.

AFYT Program Highlights and Benefits

- Connections with a diverse network of peers
- Rigorous artistic training with professional artists
- Access to professional mentorship from local leaders and activists
- Connections to resources for support in different areas of life
- Lessons about social justice and LGBTQIA+ history
- Leadership training and opportunities
- CTA cards and snacks at weekly workshops

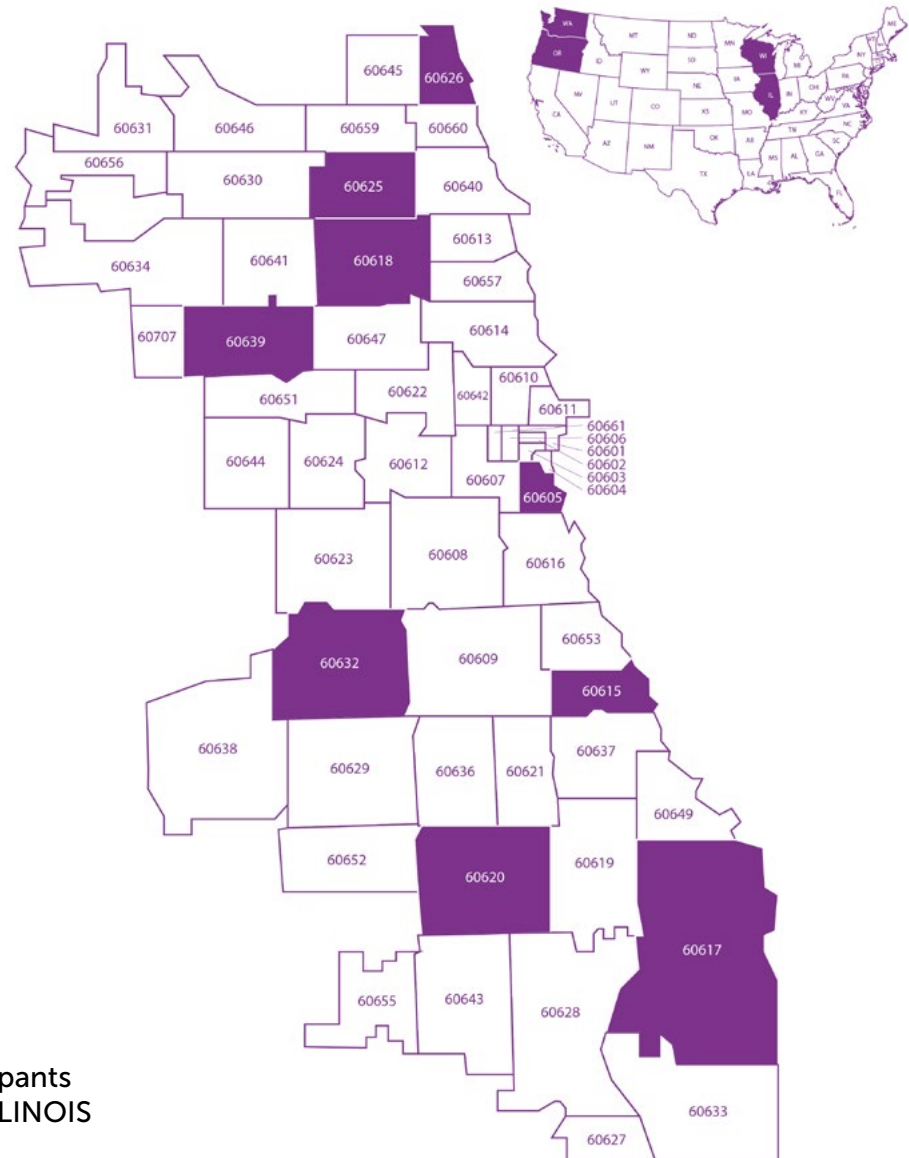
10

2020-2021 participants
FROM CHICAGO AREA

4

2020-2021 participants
FROM BEYOND ILLINOIS

AFYT ENSEMBLE MEMBERS 2020-2021 REPRESENTATION BY ZIP CODE



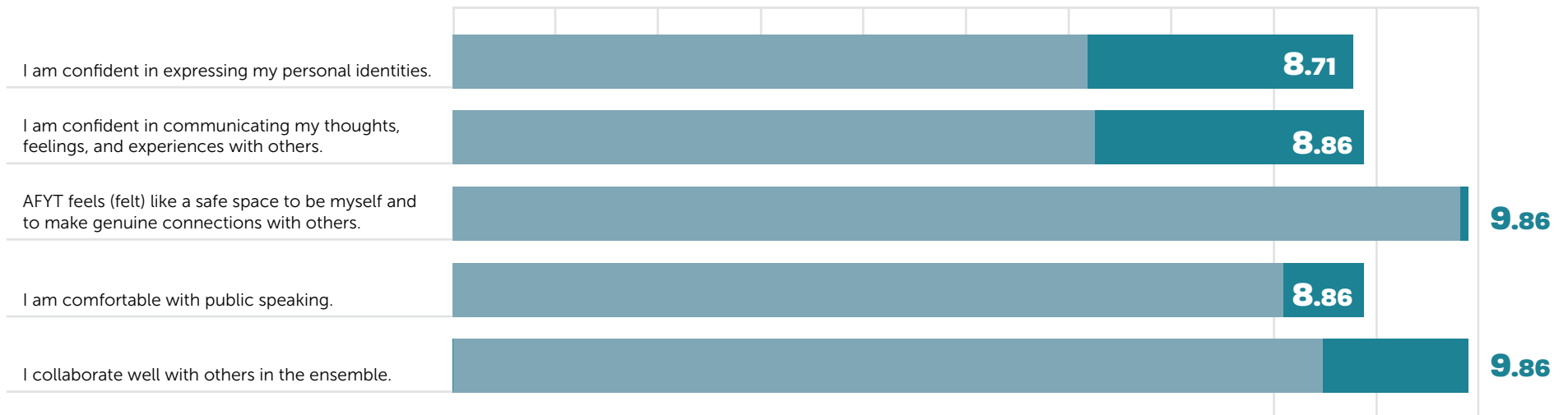
AFYT 2020-2021 ENSEMBLE SURVEY RESULTS

The following survey responses were all individually self-reported by AFYT participants.

9 FALL SESSION PARTICIPANTS

10 SPRING SESSION PARTICIPANTS

Pre-season Survey Average Post-season Survey Average



“I get so many different perspectives from the other ensemble members and guest artists. It really makes my day a whole lot better.”

“I loved the community [AFYT] provided. It meant so much to me and it was amazing to experience how close we got even online.”

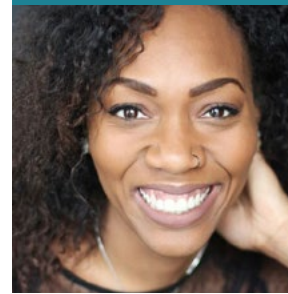
“I enjoyed being able to just be myself and not have to apologize for that.”

AFYT 2020-2021 SEASON TEACHING & GUEST ARTISTS



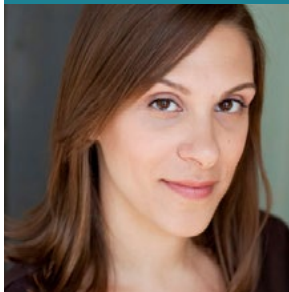
BREON ARZELL (he/him)
lead teaching artist

Breon is an actor, choreographer, director, writer, and educator with a career spanning 22 years (and counting). He has performed all across the world, developing his own style of movement and storytelling.



Brianna Buckley (she/her)
guest artist

Brianna serves as a teaching artist for Lifeline Theatre working with elementary students, as well as an actor, singer and voice over artist. She grew up in Pontiac, Michigan before heading to Michigan State University.



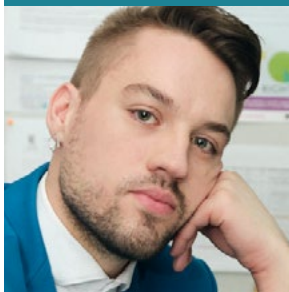
Lisa Siciliano (she/her)
lead teaching artist

Lisa is a doctoral student at the Learning Sciences Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago. A life-long theatre maker and teaching artist, she proudly served as a Chicago Public Schools teacher prior to pursuing her PhD.



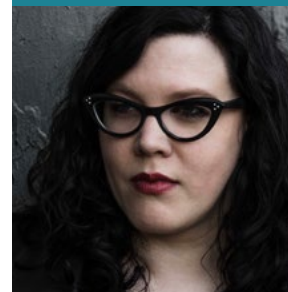
McKenzie Chinn (she/her)
guest artist

McKenzie is a writer, poet, producer, and stage and film actor. She was recently named the inaugural recipient of the NCBUniversal Grant from the Bentonville Film Foundation.



Spencer T. Olson (he/him)
youth mental health counselor

Spencer is a drama therapist based in New York, where he is a case manager & clinician for Hetrick-Martin Institute working with LGBTQ+ youth. He is passionate about using therapeutic theatre as a tool for community healing and identity reclamation.



Layne Fargo (she/her)
guest artist

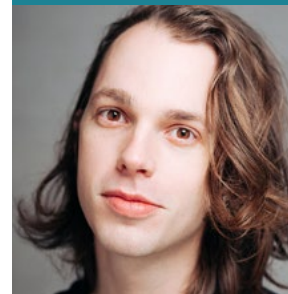
Layne is a novelist, screenwriter, and the co-creator of the *Unlikeable Female Characters* podcast on Lit Hub Radio. Her works include the novels *Temper* and *They Never Learn*.

AFYT 2020-2021 SEASON TEACHING & GUEST ARTISTS (con't)



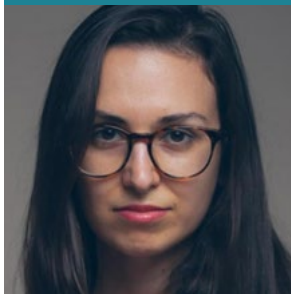
Jerrell L. Henderson (he/him)
guest artist

Jerrell is a theatre director, puppeteer, and professor of Performance Studies at Chicago State University. His Juneteenth Puppet Protest: The Welcome Table was featured in the *New York Times*.



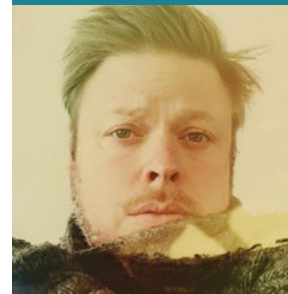
Paul Michael Thomson (he/him)
guest artist

Paul Michael Thomson is a Chicago-based, Amherst-educated artist and interdisciplinary scholar. He is co-founder of The Story Theatre



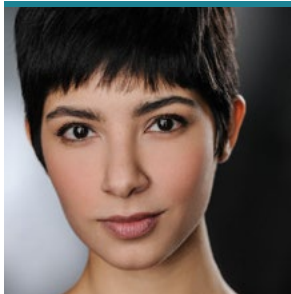
Olivia Lilley (she/her)
guest artist

Olivia is a screenwriter, director, playwright, and producer who came up in Chicago's DIY scene. She is the Artistic Director of Prop Thtr and is currently working on her MFA in Screenwriting.



Joshua Wentz (he/him)
guest artist

Josh is Chicago-based musician, recording artist, and composer for theater and film. He enjoys collaboration and working in different genres and styles whenever possible. Current band projects include Silvergirl, Brash Flair, and Jessica Risker.



Vero Maynez (she/they)
guest artist

Vero is a queer, Mexican-American, EMC actor, director, and teaching artist, and an MFA Acting Graduate of DePaul University. She's worked with companies across the country.

GREEN ROOM COLLECTIVE

In May 2021, About Face Theatre announced the launch of the Green Room Collective, a new program for early career LGBTQ+ arts leaders. This program builds on over two decades of leadership development work at AFT and will help advance the next generation of LGBTQ+ leaders in their theatre-related career and educational goals. The Green Room Collective represents a bold investment in the future of the LGBTQ+ community and the arts. This program has been made possible in part thanks to a grant from the Arts Work Fund.

In a theatre, the “green room” is a location backstage where the artists prepare for performance. The green room is a space for camaraderie and community, vulnerability and questioning. The green room is often the last stop before you take the stage. The Green Room Collective program embraces these aspects to create a supportive platform to springboard young leaders in the LGBTQ+ community toward the advancement of their goals.

To ensure that this opportunity is equitable, all participants are paid a sustainable wage to collaborate on artistic and administrative projects that are at the heart of AFT’s work. They receive dedicated and individualized support from AFT staff and artists to cultivate skills in areas of their choosing, including devising new works, producing, development, and marketing.

GREEN ROOM COLLECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

SHARON PASIA (they/she) is a Chicago-based Filipinx actor, performer, and producer. They served as part of About Face Theatre’s Youth Ensemble for four years and its Youth Task Force for two. Some AFT productions include *Checking Boxes*, *Brave Like Them*, *20/20*, and *A Glow Up*. They were also one of the co-hosts for *KINSHIP: An All-Ages Queer Variety Show*. In their free time, you can catch them at home, eating veggies and chillin’ with their bunny, Sprout, whilst attempting to play the ukulele.



KIRSTEN BAITY (they/them) is a playwright, lyricist, performer, director, and teaching artist who recently graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a BA in Theatre. Their work has been produced at theatres around Chicago, and they have devised plays with Goodman Theatre’s Playbuild Ensemble, About Face Youth Theatre, For Youth Inquiry, and Free Street. In addition to their work directly related to theatre, Kirsten has consulted on two curriculums to help uplift queer and trans young people of color in the education system and is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Intimacy Coordinators of Color.



ARTIST GRANTS

In June 2021, About Face Theatre announced that it was awarding \$2,000 grants to two local LGBTQ+ playwrights to support their creative work. The grants were not tied to the creation of any specific work. The funding for this grant program was provided by an anonymous donor.

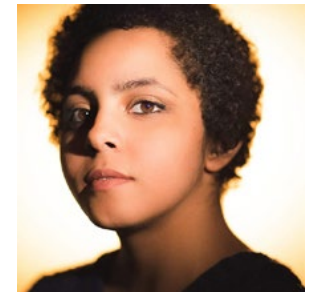
“These two artists have already been writing bold visions into the world and challenging the status quo,” said About Face Theatre Artistic Director Megan Carney. “We recognize that the creative process takes many forms and needs to be supported at different stages along the way. Grants like this are vital for supporting important LGBTQ+ voices in the arts community.” In addition to the grant money, AFT is making its office and rehearsal spaces available to the recipients for workshops, presentations, and/or writing spaces.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HANNAH II-EPSTEIN (she/her/hers), born and raised on the North Shore of Oahu, received her MFA in Writing for the Screen + Stage at Northwestern University in 2018. She is a creative writer, dramatist, and Co-Artistic Director of Nothing Without a Company. Hannah is a founding member of BearCat Productions, a resident playwright at Chicago Dramatists, a 50th season writer at Kumu Kahua Theatre, a board member at Aloha Center Chicago, and a member of the Ke Ali`i Victoria Ka`iulani Hawaiian Civic Club and Ke Kula Kupaa O Ka Pakipika hālau.



BEEBEE COOPER BROWNE (they/them) is a producer and artistic creator in Chicago whose work explores multimedia protest extravaganzas. They have survived six years in the Chicago non-profit theatre arts community as an administrator, playwright, and producer. BeeBee currently advocates for mental health wellness through a co-created platform of comedy and community, Dee N' Bee, with Dionne Addai. They are also an organizer for Creators Thrift, an emerging artistic community created by and for people who have been intentionally disinvested and ignored by systemic oppression and discrimination.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For over two decades, About Face Theatre's Community Engagement Ensemble has toured productions and workshops to schools, organizations, campuses, churches, and conferences around Chicago to deliver LGBTQIA+ stories and advocate for safe and equitable environments. Our performances and discussions provide opportunities for people of all ages to have important conversations about gender, sexuality, and intersecting identities while exploring ways to be a better ally and support healthy relationships. Offering a touring show, customizable interactive workshops, and guest speakers, our Community Engagement program is a flexible means by which to build community, allyship, and foster understanding of LGBTQIA+ expressions and experiences.

About Face Theatre understands that exposure to the arts and opportunities to engage with professional artists supports well-rounded education and provides students with opportunities for emotional growth and community involvement. We are committed to creating performance and dialogue programs that provide safe and brave spaces to talk about LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion.

With most schools and community centers closed down for safety during the pandemic, About Face once again engaged its ensemble to make our website ***Power in Pride at Home*** available to stream for free throughout the season. The performances and recorded discussions were also used as part of community events, such as Chicago's annual Night of Noise event.



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Watch the *Power in Pride at Home* trailer

328

TOTAL EVENT
ATTENDANCE*

*includes *KICKBACK*
Happy Hour events

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago's Night of Noise (April 25, 2021)

Night of Noise marks the end of a Day of Silence, wherein students in over 10,000 middle schools, high schools, and universities worldwide take a day-long vow of silence to honor those in the LGBTQ+ community whose voices often go unheard. This year featured performances from *Power in Pride at Home* with ensemble member Amy Tien in attendance. Total virtual attendance: 35

Federal Reserve Board event: "Anti-Racism in the LGBTQ+ Community" (June 15, 2021)

Artistic Director Megan Carney and Artistic Associate Sheldon Brown facilitated a watch party of *Power in Pride at Home* and discussion. Total virtual attendance: 97

Hollins University Annual New Play Festival (July 23-25, 2021)

Artistic Director Megan Carney represented AFT as a guest panelist for this weekend of new play readings. Total virtual attendance: 95

Chicago Commission on Human Relations: "Care and Respect: Supporting and Affirming Chicago's Trans and Nonbinary Communities" (June 30, 2021)

Panel facilitated by Artistic Director Megan Carney. Total virtual attendance: 45

Association of Theatre in Higher Education national conference (August 7, 2021)

Artistic Director Megan Carney presented on the methods and ethics of About Face Youth Theatre. Total virtual attendance: 36

FUNDRAISING & FINANCIALS

CAMPAIGNS

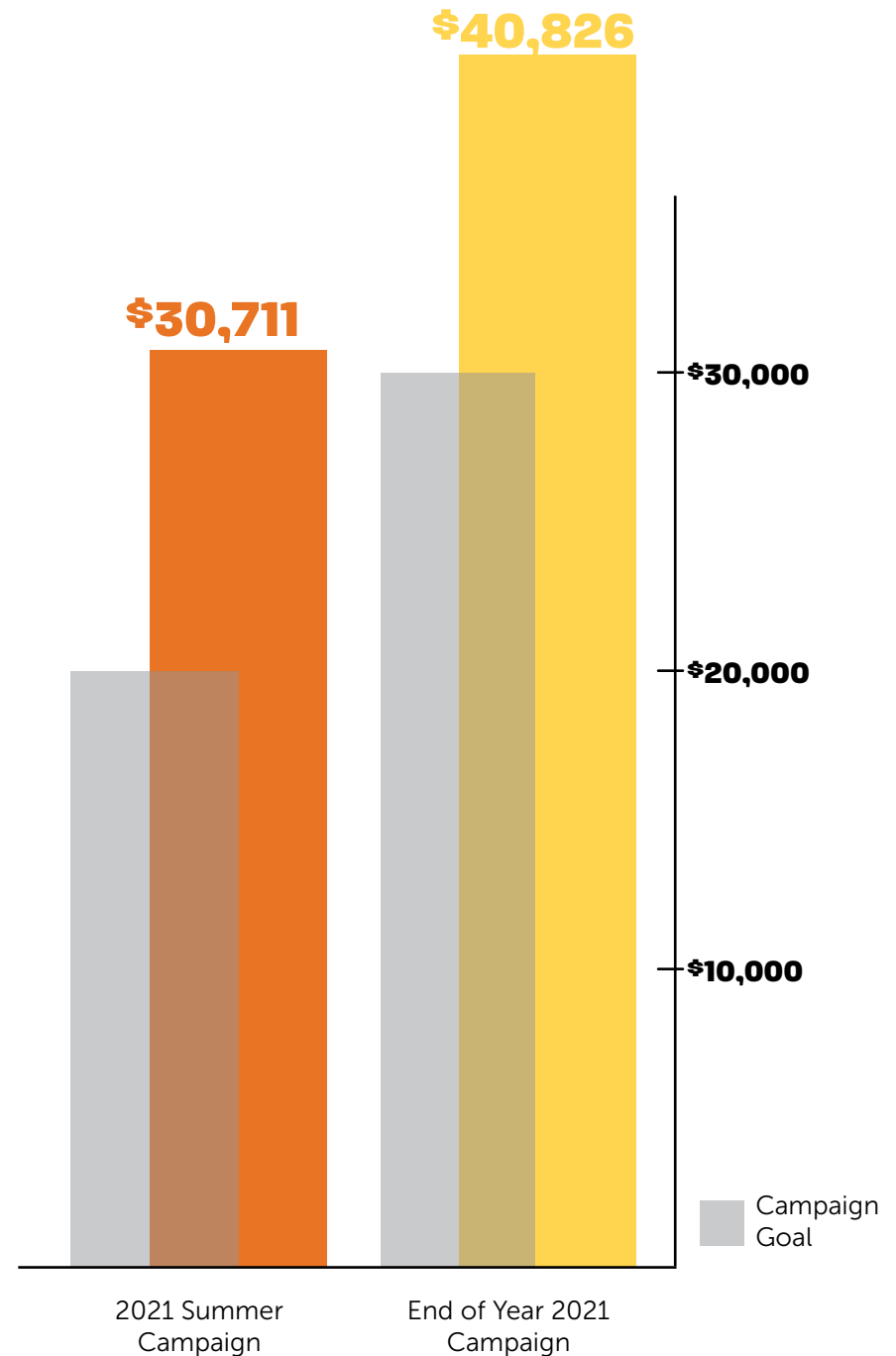
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DONORS & SUPPORTERS

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

About Face Theatre runs two major individual giving donation campaigns during the average season: the End of Year campaign mid-way through the season coinciding with the end of the calendar year, and an End of Season campaign to mark the end of the current production season and prepare for the next. This season, AFT changed our End of Season campaign into a Summer Campaign to more evenly space out our fundraising campaigns.

Each campaign is generally a combination of mailed solicitation letters, email and social media communications, and a brief phone banking period to reach out to donors one-on-one. We were pleased to see both campaigns this season exceed their goals by over \$10,000 each.



2020-2021 FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

*Pre-audit financials for Fiscal Year ending
August 31, 2021

	FY20	FY21*
ASSETS		
Cash	\$89,460	\$217,618
Accounts Receivable	\$2,500	\$80,065
Prepaid Expenses	\$1,075	\$1,075
Security Deposits	\$8,420	\$11,974
Fixed Assets	\$3,222	\$1,665
Total Assets	\$104,677	\$312,396
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	\$2,085	\$8,285
Deferred Income	\$0	\$0
Loans Payable	\$59,400	\$0
Security Deposits Payable	\$1,220	\$1,220
Accrued Expenses	\$0	\$15
Total Liabilities	\$62,705	\$9,520
EQUITY		
Opening Balance	\$30	\$30
Retained Earnings	\$60,368	\$41,943
Net Revenue	-\$18,425	\$261,153
Total Equity	\$41,973	\$303,126
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$104,678	\$312,646

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

*Pre-audit financials for Fiscal Year ending August 31, 2021

	FY20	FY21*
EARNED REVENUE		
Production Income	\$24,355	\$10,000
Education Income	\$6,415	\$1,800
Rentals & Other Income	\$25,598	\$17,263
Total Earned Revenue	\$56,368	\$29,063
CONTRIBUTED REVENUE		
Individuals (Board)	\$61,151	\$40,714
Individuals (Non-Board)	\$105,380	\$109,534
Special Events	\$258	\$0
Foundation	\$267,351	\$280,070
Government	\$22,300	\$230,371
Corporate	\$7,478	\$66,036
Total Contributed Revenue	\$463,918	\$726,726
In-kind Revenue	\$4,375	TBD
Total Revenue	\$524,661	\$755,788
EXPENSES		
Staff Personnel	\$285,944	\$310,881
Production Personnel	\$73,684	\$69,374
Production Venue	\$35,065	\$5,000
Production Materials	\$11,560	\$2,896
Marketing	\$28,571	\$10,157
Fundraising		\$7,612
Business & Operations	\$43,672	\$32,560
Facilities	\$56,481	\$54,597
Depreciation	\$8,108	\$1,557
Total Expenses	\$543,085	\$494,635
Net Operating Revenue	-\$18,424	\$261,153
Assets Released from Restrictions	\$71,637	TBD
Total Net Revenue	\$53,213	\$261,153

DONORS

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Reflects donations made between September 1, 2020 and August 31, 2021.

SUSTAINERS CIRCLE

About Face Theatre would like to thank the Sustainers Circle, a community of donors who pledge a recurring monthly or quarterly donation in support of the Theatre and its mission to advance the national dialogue on sexual and gender identity.

Rob Abernathy and Peter Vamvakas	Daniel & Anita Mauro
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August Garritano	Steven Trubac
Bill Chamberlain & Howard Heyman	Joshua Turnbull
Amy Hutchison	Moises Villada

FOUNDERS SOCIETY

With a generous annual contribution or monthly gift totaling \$1,000 or more in a year, Founders Society members support today's LGBTQ+ artists creating About Face Theatre's performances and touring shows, as well as our youth ensemble and education initiatives.

\$5,000-\$9,999

Geoffrey Anderson
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THANK YOU!

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our critical work possible.



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