



**PODCAST**  
**PLAYS**

**LISTEN**  
**ENGAGE**  
**RESPOND**





## WITH LIVE TALK BACK

**The Covid Crisis has changed how we do theater.**

With our buildings shuttered, and our touring productions idle, we have put our heads together and put our artists back to work telling the stories that reflect the diverse and vibrant worlds of Black life.

Striving to be “nimble” in uncertain times, we have designed a program which will engage the listening community and allow for safe interaction, without sacrificing the quality arts experience.

In a *podcast* format MPAACT will stream the play of your choice for a *communal listening event*. Following the event, production members will “zoom” into a virtual venue for a lively “*talk back*” to assist in the exploration of the play and the issues therein. To encourage an inclusive community experience, each podcast is available for a duration that is tailored to your organizational needs. Ranging from days to months, podcast plays are a flexible format, ready to meet the new constraints of our modern reality.

# THEATER OF THE MIND



**MPAACT** IS...

**29** SEASONS OF EXCELLENCE  
**89** WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCTIONS  
**213** AWARD NOMINATIONS AND HONORS  
**45** AWARDS OF RECOGNITION  
**26** PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION ARTISTS  
**4** BOOKS ON AFRICAN CENTERED THEATER  
**2** BROADWAY PRODUCED PLAYWRIGHTS

**1** **AMAZING**  
**CULTURAL INSTITUTION**  
[WWW.MPAACT.ORG](http://WWW.MPAACT.ORG)



# Shepsu Aakhu's **BLACK AND BLUE**

**CHICAGO  
READER**

October 2018

In case you need a reminder of just how insightful and powerful a writer Chicago's Shepsu Aakhu is, consider MPAACT's staging of his new play about the multiply conflicted allegiances of two African-American Chicago police officers in the immediate aftermath of the Laquan McDonald video release ...the script's intellectual rigor and visceral impact are unmistakable.

Davoe Sexton and Jayson Rabedeau patrol the notorious neighborhood on Chicago's long-neglected south-east side. The area is known to locals as "Terror Town." As veteran cops who "happen to be Black," these men must navigate the streets, the policies of policing, and the deeply conflicted roles that they play in the lives of those that they are supposed to "serve and protect." Set in 2016, these officers find themselves at ground zero when long-suppressed evidence surfaces (via the media) illuminating an officer involved shooting on the very streets that they patrol. Over the course of a single day Sexton and Rabedeau must confront the most corrosive questions that face African American officers. Are they Black? Are they Blue? Or are they a volatile mix of *Black and Blue*?



RAGE  
REBELLION  
REDEMPTION

**Dueling Critics**  
**Kelly Kleiman**  
April 2016

A blistering 90 minutes.  
Feral is Shepsu Aakhu's  
finest play yet, focusing on  
police shootings of young  
black men without merely  
reiterating what we hear  
nearly every night  
on the news.



# Feral

A NEW PLAY BY SHEPSU AAKHU

The word *FERAL* has been tagged on buildings across the city. FX (Francis Xavier), is behind this politically motivated campaign. He is young Black and full to bursting with ideas about himself and the world around him. On a warm night in late July, FX and the local police share a moment of violence. The city and country respond... but what about FX, his family, friends, and the complex ideas that he hoped to communicate? In the national conversation "*Black Lives Matter*," *FERAL* looks at youth, idealism, and desperation. It all starts with a word spray painted on a wall.



# MOTHER OF THE Dark WATER

Devised by  
Lauren Wells-Mann

## NEWCITY

Gorgeous...

ninety minutes of pure,  
joyous black-girl worship.

### Picture this Post **Black Goddess Magic**

Mother of the Dark Water  
requires and commands your attention...  
Though it has many light and humorous  
moments, this is a serious look at what it  
means to be a black woman,  
not only in white America,  
but in Black America also.

# Dandelions



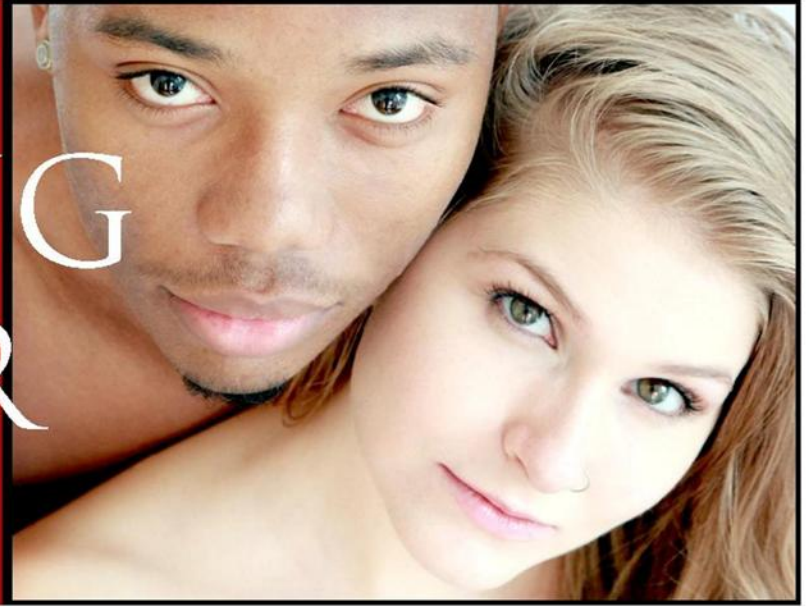
BY TINA FAKHRID-DEEN

## A NEW PLAY

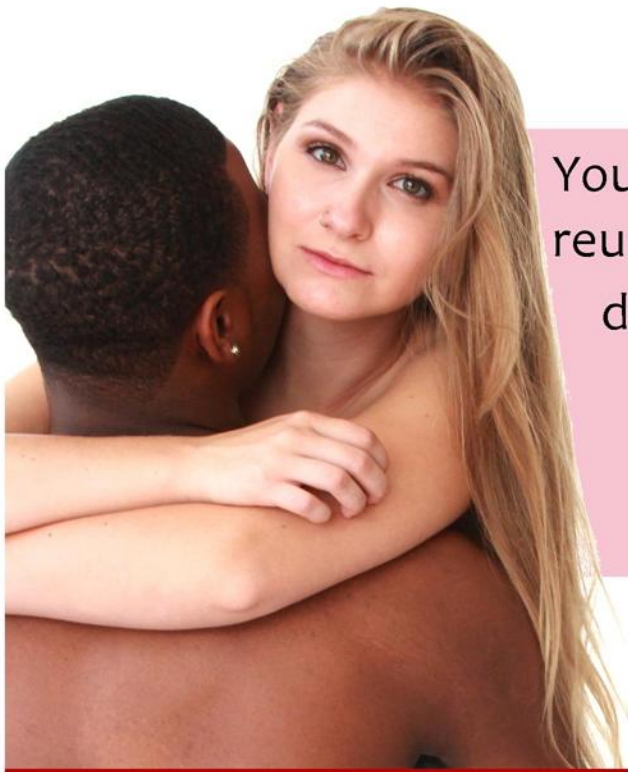
King Davis is a recovering addict whose only legacy is the six-flat building in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Bronzeville (Chicago). Back taxes threaten to take the building, but King lost the respect of his mother years ago.

Wrestling with questions of rehabilitation and redemption, King struggles with his past, his present, and the man he wishes to someday become. This searing drama is about survival, loss, and redemption. *Dandelions* is about who gets to stay and who's weeded out.

# STARTING OVER



**spectacular storyline**  
**riveting yet complicated love story**  
**wonderful cast of actors!**



Young lovers from an intolerant small town reunite years later in a major city. Their difficult past must be reconciled with an even more challenging present. One of them is transgender. Can love roll with the changes?



# NEVER THE & MILK HONEY

The world was supposed to come to an end. For Alger, a man of deep faith (and his family), it did not. ...perhaps for them- that actually *IS* the apocalypse. There are covenants that bind people together - man and woman, pastor and flock, humanity and divinity. *Never the Milk & Honey* explores the fall-out when those covenants are broken. Can faith ever be rebuilt?



**CHICAGO  
READER**

Shepsu Aakhu casts a sympathetic, compassionate gaze on one of society's biggest collective punch lines: doomsday preachers. When the sun rises on the day after what was supposed to be the end of the world and the eye-rolling public moves on, it's easy to forget that fellow human beings, however misguided, have just had their understanding of the universe obliterated. Carla Stillwell's MPAACT production makes the gravity of that situation feel true in an isolated, claustrophobic Mississippi home. Unable to face his congregation or provide comfort to an ailing parishioner, a deeply shamed pastor (Darren Jones) cedes responsibilities to his wife (Renee Lockett). Lockett's performance resonates with pain and pity, then explodes with the sort of grief known only to those hurt by the ones they love the most. ... **HIGHLY Recommended**



PODCAST  
PLAYS



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