



**DOWN
TOWN**

DIALOGUES

F L E X

BY CANDRICE JONES

DIRECTED BY TINASHE KAJESE-BOLDEN

OCTOBER 8, 2020

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING ONLINE
WITH THE HASHTAG *#toDowntownDialogues*

CAST

STARRA JONES Asha Basha Duniani*
SIDNEY BROWN Jazmine Stewart*
CHERISE HOWARD Therecia Lang
APRIL JENKINS Keara Jones*
DONNA CUNNINGHAM Kristin Jeter*
COACH FRANCINE PACE April Parker Jones*
STAGE DIRECTIONS India Tyree

* *Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Theatrical Outfit, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

CREATIVE TEAM

PLAYWRIGHT Candrice Jones
DIRECTOR Tinashe Kajese-Bolden
DOWNTOWN DIALOGUES HOST Gail O'Neill
SOUND DESIGNER Jeremiah Davison
SOUND PRODUCER Multiband Studios
STAGE MANAGER Courtney Greever-Fries*

STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Matt Torney

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Gretchen E Butler

GENERAL MANAGER
Rochelle Shinn

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Courtney Greever-Fries

APPRENTICE COMPANY

Caroline Cook

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Tess Malis Kincaid

BOX OFFICE ASSOCIATE
Abigail Dawkins

Therecia Lang

Jessica McKeown

Jules Tollett

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Ryan Oliveti

INTERN
Nicole Hart

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Welcome to the second ‘episode’ of Downtown Dialogues, Theatrical Outfit’s series of digital readings and conversations.

When developing ideas for digital programming, we asked ourselves a simple question: how do we honor our mission to “start the conversations that matter” in a time when we can’t gather together? The answer was to produce digital readings of four excellent plays that resonate deeply with the current moment, have fascinating stories and compelling characters, and are performed by some of Atlanta’s top theatre artists. To deepen the conversation around the plays, we are pairing each of the readings with a live video podcast hosted by Gail O’Neill in which expert guests will dig into the big questions behind the play and what they might mean for society, as well as addressing questions from you, the audience.

Tonight’s reading is the Atlanta premiere of *FLEX* by the immensely talented Candrice Jones. Set in Plainole Arkansas in the 90s, right after the launch of the WNBA, the play tells the story of a high school girls basketball team who struggle through adolescence as they dream of going pro. Candrice draws from her own experience, and explores what it means to be a young black woman in rural Arkansas and what it means to be part of a team.

Speaking of teams, we have assembled an incredibly exciting creative team for you. Director Tinashe Kajese-Bolden, the BOLD Artistic Director Fellow at the Alliance Theatre, is joined by an exceptional cast, full of Atlanta talent. And for the post show podcast, Gail has assembled an outstanding panel. She will be joined by Tinashe, alongside *FLEX* playwright Candrice Jones; Rose Scott, host of WABE’s Closer Look and former sports radio show host; and Kiesha Brown, WNBA veteran, and varsity basketball coach at The Galloway School.

We are thrilled to introduce Atlanta audiences to this phenomenal play!

Matt & Gretchen

SYNOPSIS

A powerful new play about swagger, determination and sticking together. It's 1997 and the WNBA is changing the game. Every player on Plainole's Lady Train basketball team now dreams of going pro — but first, they'll have to navigate the pressures of being young, black and female in rural Arkansas. Candrice Jones's adrenaline packed play about a high school basketball team explores the fierce strength of young black women in the South and what it means to be part of a team.

HISTORY OF FLEX

- Candrice Jones, from Dermott, Arkansas, is known for writing love letters for and to women of the American South.
- Candrice Jones is a 2019 MacDowell Colony Fellow and is a current Many Voices Fellow at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, MN.
- FLEX was developed at the 2020 Humana Festival of New American Plays.



ASHA BASHA DUNIANI * (*Starra Jones*) earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from North Carolina A&T State University with a focus in Professional Theater, after studying Theater at Tri-Cities Visual & Performing Arts magnet program. As a young actress, dancer and vocalist, she has been in and around the entertainment industry her entire life. As an Atlanta native, she's worked with well-known Artists, Directors and Performers in and around the Atlanta scene. Some Theatre credits include: *Eclipsed* (The Girl) at Synchronicity Theatre, *Mad At Miles* (Woman #2) NC Touring Theatre, *Jelly's Last Jam* (Ensemble) North Carolina Black Repertory Theatre, *Detroit 67* (Bunny), *Ruined* (Josephine), *Hurt Village* (Cookie), *For Colored Girls: Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Wasn't Enuf* (Lady in Yellow). Thank you to the cast and crew of *FLEX*.



KRISTIN JETER* (*Donna Cunningham*) is happy to be returning back to a stage, even if it is a digital one! Kristen got bit by the bug when her Griffin Middle School theatre troupe got to perform an excerpt from *Guys and Dolls Jr.* at the Fox Theatre. She went on to study Musical Theatre at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. Professionally, Jeter has been fortunate enough to begin leaving her mark all around the country, by working hard and staying humble. Since returning to Atlanta, Kristen has performed as Patina in *Ghost* at the Alliance Theatre and as *Mercy* in *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* at True Colors Theatre. Favorite credits include *Hair* (Dionne), *All Shook Up* (Lorraine), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Crystal), *Nun-crackers* (Sister Robert Ann), and the show that led her back to the Fox Theatre stage, the Broadway national tour of *The Book of Mormon*. Because of the pandemic, Jeter can now be found on the internet like everybody else. For more info, visit www.kristinjeter.com and follow @kristen_jeter.



KEARA JONES* (*April Jenkins*) is an actor from the Mississippi Delta. A recent graduate of Clark Atlanta University, Keara attained her B.A. in theatre arts. During her matriculation, Keara performed in multiple productions - including *For Colored Girls ...*, *The Shape of Things*, *Macbeth*, and many more. Keara is an alumna of prestigious programs SpringboardNYC hosted by the American Theatre Wing and Shakespeare & Co. Summer Training Institute. Keara plans to continue her training and progression in theatre - she was recently accepted into the British American Theatre Company's Midsummer in Oxford Program which is now scheduled for the summer of 2021. Keara is super excited to make her Theatrical Outfit debut and be a part of the Downtown Dialogues.

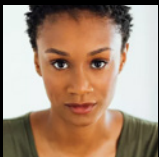


THERECIA LANG (*Cherise Howard*) is grateful to be a part of Theatrical Outfit's Downtown Dialogues reading of *FLEX*. Her recent professional and collegiate credits include (reading of) *Branches Etched Across the Sky* (Theatrical Outfit's Unexpected Play Festival) and *Hands of Color* (Synchronicity Theatre); *4.48 Psychosis*, *Macbeth*, and *Milk Like Sugar*. She recently graduated from Clark Atlanta

University with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts, and currently serves as the acting apprentice for Theatrical Outfit's Apprentice Company 20-21. Therecia would love to thank her mother, family, and friends for their abundant love and support, Theatrical Outfit for pushing her to dream bigger, and give Glory and Thanks to God for placing gifts within her so she can give them back to others.



APRIL PARKER JONES* (*Coach Francine Pace*), a native of Durham, North Carolina, first came to prominence through the role of Darcy on the cult sci-fi series "Jericho" (CBS 2006-2008). April began her acting career on the stage while studying at Hillside Highschool and North Carolina Central University. After moving to New York, she received two Audelco Award nominations for her original portrayal in the role of Christina in the off-Broadway premiere of *Plenty of Time*, in which she costarred with her now husband, Joseph Jay Jones. In 2005, April and her family packed their bags and moved to Hollywood in pursuit of a television and film career. Initially billed as April D. Parker, she landed her first major TV appearance in 2006 on "CSI: Miami," followed by the role of Darcy Hawkins on the CBS cult favorite "Jericho," where she held the role through 26 episodes until the shows controversial cancellation. April's theatre training has paved the way to numerous and exciting recurring roles on CBS's "S.W.A.T.," TNT's "The Last Ship," Fox's "The Resident," ABC's "How To Get Away With Murder," Lifetime's "Devious Maids," Freeform's "The Foster's," and the CW's rebooted teen soap "90210." Other television credits include guest star roles on "ER," "Lost," "NCIS," "Lie To Me," "NCIS: Los Angeles," "Prime Suspect," "The Chicago Code," "Scandal," and several others. Film credits include *Spider-Man 3*, *Have A Little Faith*, *Return to Zero*, and the shorth film *Heaven* (directed by Chadwick Boseman). In 2016 April returned to her roots to originate the role of Genie Ann Parker in the stage production of *Love Soul Deep* written and directed by Patricia Cuffie-Jones, in which she was nominated for a NAACP Theatre Award. April has most notable held the role of Natalie on Tyler Perry's television drama "If Loving You Is Wrong" on the OWN Network which made its series finale in 2020 after five seasons and the rols of Colonel Lauren Haley on the CW series "Supergirl." April currently resides in Atlanta, GA with her husband Jay of 13 years and her daughters, Miana and Justice. Instagram/Twitter: @a_parkerjones. Facebook: April Parker Jones.



JAZMINE STEWART* (*Sidney Brown*) is an artist of Jamaican descent, born and raised in NYC and currently based in ATL. She has worked in Off- Broadway and Regional productions: Kenny Leon's *Much Ado About Nothing* for The Public Theater's Free Shakespeare in the Park (Ensemble), *Henry IV Part One* at The Folger Theater (Poins/ Dir: Rosa Joshi) and *Citrus* by Celeste Jennings at Northern Stage (One

More Lady/ Dir: Jameeka Holloway-Burrell). Jazmine is excited to be doing *FLEX* and to be working with Theatrical Outfit!

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CANDRICE JONES (*Playwright*) is a playwright, poet, and educator from Dermott, Arkansas. Candrice has been honored to have been a fellow at Callaloo for poetry at Brown University and in London. She has also been a VONA Playwriting Fellow and a CalArts MFA Critical Studies recipient. Candrice's primary goal as a writer is to write love letters for and to women of the American South. She is the author of the full-length plays *Crackbaby* (2010 Wasserstein Prize Nomination) and *FLEX* (developed at the 2020 Humana Festival of New American Plays). She has been a resident fellow at Ground Floor housed by the Berkeley Rep, the Bay Area Playwrights' Festival, and MacDowell's Colony of the Arts. She is scheduled to be a resident playwright at Djerassi's Colony of the Arts in the fall of 2020. Candrice, who was a 2019-20 Many Voices Fellows, is amazed and grateful to have been chosen for a 2nd year fellow at the Playwrights' Center, this time as a Jerome Fellow. She believes that in these times of peril "story and art matter more than ever."

TINASHE KAJESE-BOLDEN (*Director*) is an Actor, Director and Educator. She is the BOLD Artistic Director Fellow at the Alliance Theater and recent recipient of The Princess Grace Award. As a Director, recent productions include *School Girls(Or the African Mean Girls Play)* at Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre, *Ghost* at The Alliance Theater, *Native Gardens* (Virginia Stage Company), *Pipeline* (Horizon Theater), *Nick's Flamingo Grill* (World Premiere at The Alliance Theatre, Hertz Stage), *Eclipsed* (Synchronicity Theatre, Best Director Suzi Bass Award). *She will next be directing the Pulitzer Prize winning play *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage on the new Coca-Cola Stage at the Alliance Theater, is developing a new play for Theater for the Very Young specifically for children on the Autism Spectrum, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison at Synchronicity Theater

followed by a co-production of *Toni Stone* at Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and The Alliance Theatre. As an actor, she has worked on and off Broadway, at numerous regional theaters, as well as TV and Film, most recently filming *Suicide Squad 2* that opens Summer 2021. *Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, several productions have been postponed. Like many artists, Tinashe has been creatively generating virtual content that builds community and sustains connectivity during these difficult times.

GAIL O'NEILL (*Downtown Dialogues Host*) is a writer for ArtsATL.org, where she covers arts and culture in Atlanta. She is the host and co-producer of Collective Knowledge— a weekly series of conversations with artists, entrepreneurs and thought-leaders— which can be viewed on YouTube, Facebook and The A Network. Most recognizable for her work in fashion, Gail spent 10 years circling the globe as a model before joining CBS News in New York City as a features reporter. After relocating to Atlanta in 2000, she hosted a travel show for CNN, and subsequently hosted several series and specials for HGTV— including *Mission: Organization*, *Christmas at the White House* and *Behind the Design of HGTV's Dream Home*.

COURTNEY GREEVER-FRIES * (*Production Manager & Stage Manager*) has spent the last decade working in various production roles in and around Atlanta. A proud graduate of Emory University, she came to Atlanta for school and fell in love with this city. Her work as a stage manager, sound designer, and props master has been seen at Dad's Garage, Actor's Express, Georgia Aquarium, Georgia Ensemble, Theater Emory, and Synchronicity to name a few, but she is happy to have found a home at Theatrical Outfit. A homebody at heart, when not working, she prefers being on her couch with a glass of wine, her husband Jonathan, and her dogs.

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