

WAYWARD SISTERS THEATRE

PRESENTS



Thirty

By Melda Beaty

**WAYWARD SISTERS
THEATRE ENSEMBLE**

PRESENTS

THIRTY

WRITTEN BY MELDA BEATY

DIRECTED BY VICTORIA KING

CAST & CREW

SISTER MARDRA THOMAS
JOJO TANIKIA CARPENTER
SANDRA CANDICE CLARKE
THE BABY (MAE) HARMONY HARRIS
ASSITANT DIRECTOR GARDY GILBERT

*ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS FUTURE PRODUCTIONS IN
2021 AND TO OUR ENSEMBLE CAST MEMBERS*

MEET THE TEAM



Meldy Beaty (Playwright) (she/her/hers) is the "one to watch." Born in Jackson, Mississippi, Melda resides in Chicago, Illinois with her three gifted and beautiful daughters. Melda is a passionate playwright. Her first play, *Front Porch Society*, delves into the complex and connected lives of four elderly Black women in the Mississippi Delta on the eve of the 2008 presidential election as they relive the struggles of Jim Crow, the fight for civil rights, and the trauma of the senseless killings of Black boys. The play enjoyed a world premiere at The Ensemble Theatre in Houston, TX (2017), and most recently, a mainstage production at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, NC (2019). Her second play, *Coconut Cake*, was accepted into the New Works Reader's Series at the National Black Theatre Festival (2017) and had virtual readings at St. Louis Black Rep (2020), Ensemble Theatre (2020) and a staged reading at ReadFest in Houston, TX (2017). Her most recent stage play, *Thirty*, was a finalist in the Blackboard Play Festival (2021) and the WayWard Sisters Third Annual Workshopping Women's Voices (2021).

Melda was commissioned by The Ensemble Theatre for their 2021-2022 season. She is also a 2021 fellow with the St. Louis Shakespeare Festival. Her upcoming short film, *Cupcake*, chronicles the divide mental illness creates between a mother and her daughter. In addition, she is an author of two books and freelance contributor to *Black Masks* magazine. Her first book, *My Soul to His Spirit: Soulful Expressions from Black Daughters to Their Fathers* won the 2006 National Fresh Voices Award, and her debut novel, *Lime*, is hailed as "America's Next Top Model" meets "Burning Bed." Melda earned a B.A. in Broadcast Communications from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a M.A. in English at Illinois State University. In her spare time, she enjoys cardio and strength training, live theater, concerts, Food Network, traveling, and hanging with her three Z's/daughters.



Viktoria I.V. King (Director) (she/her/hers) is an acclaimed and award-winning, British- American Director, Writer and Producer. She was a finalist for the 2019 ABC Discovers Showcase. As a film director, her films have been selected in over 50 international film festivals with over 20 awards being singled out as Best Director. Her work as a filmmaker has also gotten her into Academy Award-qualifying film festivals like Cinequest Film Festival and the LA Shorts International Film Festival which is also BAFTA Qualifying. As an award-winning theatre director, she's directed theatre & opera internationally, she's developed original plays, regional premieres and re-imagined classics; most notably Shakespearean plays set in modern times. Most recently, she's tapped to direct the play "Q is for Queen" for an Equity Showcase and is so honoured to direct this virtual production of "Thirty" for Wayward Sisters Theatre's Women's Voices Festival. Featured Director in Film Fatales, Alliance of Women Directors, Brown Girls Doc Mafia, Latinx Directors, Chicana Director's Initiative and many others. Viktoria's bold cinematic eye and pulse on emotional authenticity is greatly influenced by her international background. As a largely visual director, she focuses on narratives about connection and identity with social & political undertones.



Gardy Gilbert (Assistant Director) (he/him/his) is excited to return to Wayward Sisters Theatre Ensemble once again to be a part of the creative team for "Thirty" by Melda Beaty in their Third Annual Workshopping Women's Voices New Play Festival! Gardy is a Chicago-based theatre artist and graduate from the BFA Acting program at Ball State University. Some of his favorite recent credits include "Try to Be" with La Vuelta Ensemble (Ensemble Member), "Scary Stories: Are You Afraid" with Random Acts Chicago (Quinn, Various Roles), and behind the scenes as the Assistant Director of "1 2 3" with Wayward Sisters. Outside of theatre, you can find him working on a dish with a really nice kick in the kitchen or tending to his ever-growing plant collection. It has been an absolute pleasure to assist in making this story come to life and he can't wait for you to go on that journey.



Mardra Thomas (Sister) (she/her/hers) for years has painted a musical and historical picture of the legendary singer Billie Holiday, and was nominated for Chicago's 2018 Best Leading Actress Lena Horne Award, for her portrayal of Billie Holiday in the Fleetwood Jourdain production of "LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL". Her most recent performances are as Mildred in Sandra Seaton's "THE LOOKOUT" for Chicago's Literary Hall of Fame, as Miss Martha in Melda Beaty's "THE FRONT PORCH SOCIETY" for the Beverly Center and Alice in Barry Moton's "DAYDREAM-THE LIFE OF BILLY STRAYHORN" at the Kennedy Center Washington, D.C. Mardra studied under the direction of artistic director Ralph Greene at the Katherine Dunham Center For The Arts at Southern Illinois University in East St. Louis. Curtains opened previously for her as Mother Shaw in " CROWNS", portrayals of both Bessie and Sadie Delaney-"HAVING OUR SAY", Lady in Green- "FOR COLORED GIRLS...", Power Woman-"MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL", Billie Holiday- "LADY DAY AT THE BOSTON BISTRO", Mama/Mildred-Terry McMillan's "MAMA" at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston/Salem NC, ensemble player in " POCKETBOOK" & "CANCER MONOLOGUES", "COTTON CLUB REVUE"; and has produced, directed and portrayed leads in Sandra Seaton's "THE CHICAGO TRILOGY" at Atlanta's Black Theatre Festival. Mardra's jazz roots are planted in the St. Louis area where early in her career she performed for the opening of Dizzy Gillespie's 70th Birthday Concert. Shortly thereafter she found herself trading scat solos with world-class trumpeter Clark Terry. You'll see her in concert halls, jazz festivals, and premier clubs around the country. You will hear her with small ensembles and jazz orchestras, on various recordings including her latest Matters Of The Heart with husband, pianist Reggie Thomas. Stay in touch at www.mrtjazz.com



Tanikia Carpenter (JoJo) (she/her/hers) was born on the South side of Chicago, and is a writer and actress. She is the founder of Good Content Productions which tells stories of Black culture that have been overlooked and forgotten. She is also the creator of Black Owned Chicago which is a resource for the city to support Black businesses. Tanikia received her B.F.A. in Media Studies from North Park University with a minor in Africana Studies. Immediately after graduating she interned in Jackson, Mississippi under Dr. John Perkins and transcribed his memoir "Love is the Final Fight". She also curated events featuring Civil Rights Activists such as Charles Evers, brother of Medgar Evers, and more. When she isn't writing or on stage, she's raising her brilliant daughter India and loving on her amazing husband, Stephen.



Candice Clark (Sandra) (she/her/hers) is an actor, singer, and writer from Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Hunter College with a BA in Sociology and Creative Writing, and studied musical theater at Stella Adler Studio of Acting. She became a member of The New Circle Theater Company in Manhattan, NY in 2019, appeared in a few short films, and off-off Broadway productions. Candice is also a member of Scriptwriters & Co, located in Bath, London. Every script is an opportunity to grow and discover new things about herself as an actor. There is no role too big or too small in her eyes as long as she can bring an authentic performance to her audience.



Harmony Harris (The Baby/Mae) (she/her/hers) is a singer and actor from Tallahassee, Florida. Harmony is in her final year of earning her BFA Musical Theatre degree from Howard University's Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts. She was last seen in "Pippin" on the Ira Alridge stage at Howard University. She was an artistic intern at Theater Alliance of DC. She co-wrote and performed in a devised theatre piece called "Breaking News" at Arena Stage. She was also seen in "Top 5" a web series which has been nominated for numerous film festival awards. Combined with her passion for performing and mental health she hopes to create more spaces for the black community to heal through art.

SPECIAL THANKS

THE PRODUCERS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ACTORS, CREW AND THE AUDIENCE FOR TAKING THE TIME TO MAKE THIS MOMENT GREAT!

SPOTLIGHT: WOMEN IN BUSINESS



&Rise is a nonprofit organization that empowers women to be the ultimate versions of themselves no matter what adversities they have faced. We offer personal and professional development workshops, weekly support groups for female trauma survivors via zoom, and free counseling for women who reside in Illinois. Our vision is to put millions of single moms through college and put millions of trauma survivors through free counseling so they can be that ultimate version of themselves.



Anneliese's Cookies, is a small up-and-coming cookie business. They make gourmet butter-based cookies, dipped in chocolate and then nuts, coconut, or sprinkles. Their artisan cookies also come in gluten-free, sugar-free, and vegan varieties, and make excellent gifts, party favors and beautiful dessert displays. For more information check out: anneliesecookies.com



Once upon a time, comedian Jen Chan was drafted into a beauty pageant, and in the midst of preparing for this absurdly random competition, Banato was created - A banana-sorbet treat with no dairy or added sugars. Since founding Banato in 2019, Jen's mission has been to challenge popular perceptions of dessert and increase the accessibility of healthy food in Chicago. Check Banato out on Instagram @go.banato



A bottle shop + experience. We drink well, have fun, and love everyone. Also ask about their BU club. It's pretty rad! You can follow us on social media: @bottles_up_chicago (Instagram) and @BottlesUpChicago (Facebook)



Handmade, 100% nickel-free earrings to brighten every day.
Shop CleverGirlClay on Etsy!



**DYKES
WITH
DRILLS**

Dykes With Drills is a nonprofit that empowers people with the tools to build. By hosting skill-building workshops, retreats, volunteer events and meet-ups, we cultivate opportunities for individuals to connect with each other and to use power tools. In everything we do, we foster safe, inclusive, non-judgmental spaces for learning and teaching. If you've ever thought you couldn't make something because of what you've been told, we are here to help you.



Hip Circle Empowerment Center's Mission is to empower women through dance, fitness, and community. ALL women need to believe they are strong, beautiful, and worthy of attention.



Too many believe waxing is everything but an enjoyable experience. Monica began thinking of her services as a waxing therapy, contrary to the popular belief. She has been in this field for over eight years and realized very quickly that her clients aren't just that, they are also friends. It's human nature to build bonds with those that you see on a regular basis. This world is a crazy place and it's nice to take the time to be pampered by someone you can trust. She began working as a licensed Esthetician after graduating in 2011 from University of Aesthetics located in Wicker Park. Her expertise includes Women Brazilian & Expectant Mother Brazilian Wax. She is passionate about building a relationship with each individual to establish trust and personal attention to their needs.



Growing up in Southeast Asia created our deep love of delicious food. Both our mother and grandmother were entrepreneurs, with successful ventures in food distribution for specialty markets and embassies in Laos. These gifts surrounded our family with unique influences of Southeast Asian and French cuisines, paving the way for our love story with Vietnamese food. Inspired by our history and excitement for the present, Saigon Sisters emerged in 2009, sharing our culinary delights and phenomenal flavors with the world. We have 3 locations: 2 in the West Loop/Fulton market areas and 1 in Northwestern Memorial Hospital). You can book online for dine-in, carry-out, delivery and catering at www.saigonsisters.com

In late August, we will collaborate with Chef Kathy Hardy from The Taste of the Philippines located at the Chicago French Market on a Southeast Asian Kamayan Feast where the delicious flavors of Vietnam, Thailand and Philippines come together in one package.

More details can be found about the event at www.saigonsisters.com



Sleeping Willow Decor is a small business that sells handcrafted macramé pieces that give your space that creative boost you've been craving! I believe that the space where you live, what you fill in that space is directly related to how you live. If I want to live a peaceful and creative life I am going to fill my house with items that bring me peace and spark creativity. Boost your space and tell a new story with fun and personal pieces of art individually handcrafted with tranquility and love!



The Colette Collection is a locally owned women's clothing boutique, owned by Lauren Colette Rubbelke. They cater to all ages and focus on trendy & affordable items! Check them out on Instagram @the_colette_collection



Tubby's Taste is an online vegan cookie company. Each Tubby's Taste cookie boasts bold flavors and stories inspired by our Jamaican-American roots! Gift a cookie subscription or a single box of cookies. Check us out at www.tubbystaste.com

Our Mission

The mission of Wayward Sisters Theatre Ensemble is to authentically represent the lives of the underrepresented, while striving to make theatre more accessible to our community.



@WAYWARDSISTERSTHEATRE



@WAYWARDSISTERS4



@WAYWARDSISTERSTHEATREENSEMBLE