

NEW PROFESSIONAL THEATRE COMPANY OPENING IN SEPTEMBER

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About the Fonseca Theatre Company

The Fonseca Theatre Company, founded by Bryan Fonseca, is a company of people of color producing works by and/or about our minority communities based on the Near West Side of Indianapolis. Our first production and youth drama classes will launch this September at Indy Convergence with a second production to follow in November. Meanwhile, we will be hard at work renovating our new building across the way at 2508 West Michigan Street, which is set to open in January 2019.

Neighborhood History

Since 2015, Fonseca has been working in the Near West Neighborhoods of We Care, Stringtown, Hawthorne and Haughville through a Transformational Impact Fellowship from the Lilly Endowment and the Arts Council of Indianapolis. Over the course of the fellowship, Fonseca was able to produce three full plays (including a tour), a range of youth arts classes, two community festivals, and support artistic growth in the area in partnership with individual artists and other organizations. With these years of work as a solid foundation, the Fonseca Theatre Company looks to continue this commitment to the Near West and add to the community's cultural and economic landscape.

Our Vision and Mission

The Fonseca Theatre Company exists to give voice to and celebrate the minority communities of Indianapolis through the prism of purposeful theater and civic engagement. The goal is to bring about social justice through programs which educate, illuminate, and ignite conversations on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Fonseca Theatre Company is a company of artists (80% People of Color) who will give voice to the disenfranchised in our community. The sharing of culture is essential to our nation's health, and we will focus on work by and/or about minority artists to bring together the city's growing minority communities. The Fonseca Theatre Company thinks globally but focuses locally.

Our mission aligns with the city of Indianapolis' initiative to support new work, new forms of entertainment, artists, and community building.

Frank Basile

The Fonseca Theatre is thrilled to announce that we have purchased our building thanks to an initial gift from Frank Basile! Mr. Basile is recognized as a leading supporter of the arts in Indianapolis and we are very grateful for his contribution and his confidence in our vision. His initial gift allows us to move forward on the project and his planned gift ensures our sustainability for years to come. In

recognition of his gift we have named the building housing the theater after him. The Fonseca Theatre is located in the Basile Building at River West.

[How to Engage](#)

Our new home needs renovations before it can be operational. We have completed the initial silent phase of our Capital Campaign, successfully raising \$208,000. The Fonseca Theatre Company is now making a public ask for contributions. We will need an additional \$292,000 to reach our goal of \$500,000 to complete work on our building. Contributions can be made by visiting the website. To make an online donation and to learn more about our company, our upcoming shows, as well as ticketing and Flex Pass subscriptions visit FonsecaTheatre.org. Any checks should be made payable to the Fonseca Theatre Company and can be mailed to our PO Box:

Fonseca Theatre Company
P.O. Box 22298
Indianapolis, IN 46222

[Meet the Team](#)

Bryan Fonseca (Producing Director) *"It takes heart to create a vision. It takes courage to create art. And it takes passion to achieve both. Thirty-Five years of hard work led me here - to River West and to lead an extraordinary community of artists of color, gender non-conforming artists, and physically challenged artists yearning for expression. We have much to say and finally have the platform to express ourselves. Most importantly, I serve those who are in most need of our work—you—the community in the near west side as well as the city of Indianapolis."*

For thirty-five years, Bryan served as the Producing Director of the Phoenix Theatre. Prior to that, he started a storefront theater in his hometown, Gary, Indiana, and at the Civic Theatre of Indianapolis (Studio C); he was the Producing Directing of the Broad Ripple Playhouse. Overall, his work was instrumental in transforming neighborhoods in both cities. Bryan has received an Achievement and Service award from the Indiana Theatre Association, two Artist Fellowship awards from the Indiana State Arts Commission and two Creative Renewal Fellowships from the Arts Council of Indianapolis/Lilly Endowment. He taught at IUPUI and was invited to lecture on *Contemporary Theater in America* and spent a month touring Germany.

New model – four Artistic Directors:

LaKesha Lorene (Artistic Director) *"I am driven by art that touches the mind and speaks to the soul. As an artist, advocate, entrepreneur and supporter of the arts on stage and screen, I am honored to be a part of the Fonseca Theatre Company's mission of providing more opportunities in professional theatre for artists of color."*

LaKesha's career began at age eight when she performed off-broadway in the musical ***Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat***,. The actress, singer, film producer and director works locally and regionally on stage and screen. Some of her past credits include, The Kennedy Honors (ensemble), Ain't Misbehavin' (actress), The Color Purple Musical *regional tour* (actress), Barbecue (actress), The Fourth Degree (actress), Earth Cry (director/producer), Lost (producer/director),

Fairfield (actress). LaKesha is also the proud president/CEO of entertainment production company *Loving Life Productions LLC*.

Ian Cruz (Artistic Director) *“I believe that excellent theater is good for the soul! It doesn’t come easy and requires a lot of hard work, collaboration, purpose, and magical story-telling mixed with all the colors and textures the world has to offer. But once we get it... oh boy... it’s truly a transcendental experience that makes us feel, opens our hearts and minds, and changes the way we think about ourselves, our community, and the world.”*

Cruz was seen earlier this year in the Pulitzer Prize winning play “Sweat” by Lynn Nottage at the Phoenix Theatre. Other stage credits include: Peter and the Starcatcher, Pulp, Stuff Happens (@Phoenix Theatre), The Duchess of Stringtown (@Indy Convergence), Anything Goes (@ISO), The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (@Wisdom Tooth), Drowsy Chaperone, West Side Story, Aida (@Booth Tarkington Civic), The Underpants (@AUP), Victor Victoria (@ACT), La Cage Aux Folles, Miss Saigon, Man of La Mancha (@Footlite). By profession, he is a Salesforce Marketing Cloud Architect. He is also a crossword enthusiast and a Sudoku lover.

Jordan Flores Schwartz (Artistic Director) *“I believe that theatre is first and foremost a tool – a tool for communication, exchange, and connection. Live performance humanizes stories and experiences in a uniquely powerful way that builds bridges across communities and creates a new understanding, both individually and interpersonally.”*

Schwartz received her M.A. in Performing Arts Management from the University of Oregon ‘17 and holds a B.A. in History with a minor in Mathematics from Bryn Mawr College ‘15. Most recently, she has been recognized by Theatre Communications Group as a Rising Leader of Color. She joined the Indianapolis theatre community Summer 2016 as an intern at the Phoenix Theatre. After completing her Master’s, Schwartz returned to Indianapolis as the Director of Literary Programs and Outreach at the Phoenix. In this role, she had the opportunity to work closely with the Near West neighborhoods through Bryan Fonseca’s Transformational Impact Fellowship. The launch of the Fonseca Theatre Company represents an exciting new chapter in this work and Schwartz is honored and thrilled to be part of the journey with this incredible artistic team!

Dena Toler (Artistic Director) *“Storytelling is in the DNA of Humanity. The hopes, dreams, fears, nightmares, lessons, loss, love and so much more of our individual and collective culture flow through our bloodlines. When shared with others in a common space and time, the telling of these stories connect, educate and heal us”*

As a board member and a part of our phenomenal Artistic Director team I would like to invite you all to explore, embrace and support The Fonseca Theatre Company at River West. Indy's newest professional performance space will celebrate diversity, cultivate inclusion, and provide opportunities for artists and the surrounding community to flourish; while providing a safe space for healing dialogue through education, workshops and programming. It is my lifelong dream and personal commitment to facilitate, fertilize and foster the healing power of the arts in the individual and community. Please join me at The Fonseca Theatre Company @ River West!

The Inaugural Season

Performances will be held Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays at 5pm and 8pm, and Sundays at 2pm. Regular ticket prices are \$25 with \$20 tickets available for students and \$15 tickets available for Near West residents. Flex Passes are \$100 and offer admission to 5 performances of the passholder's choosing. **Please note: The first two productions (*Building the Wall* and *Hooded, or Being Black for Dummies*) will be produced at Indy Convergence.**

Building the Wall by Robert Schenkkan (September 14 – October 7, 2018)

Written on the eve of the 2016 election, the stunning play by Pulitzer Prize– and Tony Award–winning dramatist Robert Schenkkan has created a nationwide sensation. *Building the Wall* lays out the potential repercussions of Donald Trump's anti-immigration campaign rhetoric. After that policy resulted in the mass round-up of millions of undocumented individuals, the former warden for one facility is now behind bars awaiting sentencing for the horrific injustices that happened under his watch. In a riveting interview with a historian who has come seeking the truth, he reveals how the unthinkable became the inevitable.

Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies by Terrance Arvelle Chisholm
(November 9 – December 2, 2018)

A timely examination of growing up black in America by rising-star playwright Terrance Arvelle Chisholm. Marquis, a book smart prep-schooler from the suburbs, meets Tru, a street savvy Baltimorean, in a holding cell. Tru thinks Marquis has lost his “blackness” and decides to write a manual: *Being Black for Dummies*.

The Ballad of Klook and Vinette by Ché Walker, Music & Lyrics by Anoushka Lucas & Omar Lyefook (January 11 – February 3, 2019)

Klook is a drifter who's tired of drifting. Vinette is on the run but she doesn't know what's chasing her. Meeting over carrot juice, they take a chance on love and hope until the past catches up to the future. Soulful music combined with witty and poetic storytelling makes this a mesmerizing theater experience.

Miss You Like Hell by Quiara Alegría Hudes (March 8 – 31, 2019)

Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Quiara Alegría Hudes (*Water by the Spoonful*, *In the Heights*) and acclaimed, genre-breaking singer/songwriter Erin McKeown combine talents in this powerful new musical. *Miss You Like Hell* tells the story of Beatriz and her estranged 16-year-old daughter, Olivia. On the road trip of a lifetime these incredible women make new friends, reconnect with each other, and explore the meanings of family and redemption.

Salt Pepper Ketchup by Joshua Wilder (May 3 – 26, 2019)

A layer of bulletproof glass won't protect Superstar Chinese Take-Out owners from the gentrification consuming the Point Breeze neighborhood in South Philly. When a trendy food co-op

opens nearby, the Wu's and their customers initially see it as a hipster annoyance, but as tensions mount they begin to recognize the intrusion as an act of war. Tinged with genuine humor and pathos, *Salt Pepper Ketchup* examines the very human consequences of neighborhood redevelopment.

TBA (July 12 – August 4, 2019)

The Brothers Paranormal by Prince Gomolvilas (September 6 – 20, 2019)

The Brothers Paranormal tells the story of two Thai-American brothers who launch a ghost-hunting business in order to capitalize on the nationwide increase in sightings of Asian-looking ghosts. When the siblings end up investigating the home of an African American couple who claim to be haunted by one very terrifying spirit, everyone's notions of reality, fantasy, and sanity clash against the shocking truth. At times haunting, at times hilarious, *The Brothers Paranormal* serves as a powerful metaphor for grief, loss, and healing among communities of color.

[Community and Education Programs](#)

The Fonseca Theatre Company is more than just a theatre. In addition to our professional season, we will offer a range of civic and educational opportunities. We recognize that, in addition to being part of the larger Indianapolis arts community, we are part of a specific neighborhood with a unique history and culture. It is integral to our mission and our values that we become part of the Near West community and participate through neighborhood meetings, clean-ups, sporting events, community festivals, and more.

We will also continue our **youth classes** that have been developing over the past two years through the Transformational Impact Fellowship. Our fall class series, *Marvel & Mayhem*, will run from September 1st through November 3rd at Indy Convergence. The class is designed for kids ages 6-13. Students will spend the ten weeks devising a short play based on their favorite Superhero and then stage a performance for family, friends, and community members. Registration information will be found on our website, as well as two additional ten-week classes in the 18-19 season. We plan to launch an additional teen class in our second year in response to the growth of our youth ensemble and a significant gap in teen programming on the Near Westside.

In addition, the Fonseca Theatre company will be developing a **Community Ensemble**. Lead by a member of our artistic team, the ensemble will be comprised of community members who will go into the neighborhoods and offer a variety of theatre-based workshops and performances to generate dialogue around local issues and give our neighbors the opportunity to tell their stories.

There has also been substantial interest in organizing an **International Music Series**. Like our programming, this series will reflect our company's diversity and draw artists from all over the globe. We will work with local musicians and producers to bring the best in live music to the Near Westside and further our commitment to the neighborhood's growing artistic scene. Guiding this initiative are company members Tim Brickley and Eduardo Luna.

Of course, with each production we will also organize **post-show discussions** and open up the conversation to our audience. The conversations will be lead by the most relevant community leaders and company members. For the Fonseca Theatre Company, it is essential that our work does

not exist in a vacuum and we want to hear what our audiences think. Our goal is to provide an open forum to discuss the issues presented in our play and ideally offer our audiences practical next steps on what they can do to build towards equity and inclusion in their own lives and in their community.