

Monday, August 10, 2020: Online!

STORYTELLING'S BACK!



(Top L to R: Sherz Aletaha, Jamen Nanthakumar, Jonathan Raviv, and Angel Desai).

Monthly Storytelling Series





ABOUT THE STORYTELLING SERIES

Our monthly storytelling series is all about community engagement. We believe that stories impact change, that we better our world by coming together to learn about our shared and unique experiences. While we may be forced physically apart for some time to come, we are very much together in spirit.

As you can imagine, many of our artists and theatres are struggling right now. If you are in a position to help, please consider “tipping” our presenting artists and others you may know through their **Venmo** and **PayPal** accounts, along with donating to your favorite local theatres and arts organizations. So many of our colleagues are creating virtual programming, maintaining salaries and benefits with no earned revenue feasible for months. Please, help us help them open the doors on the other side of this!

TONIGHT'S WORKS

(in order of presentation)

ORDER #2377

Sometimes, we need a bit more than groceries delivered. Finding the connection and moments of kindness, even when times are hard.

A short play by Katherine McDowell.

Read by Sienna Aczon and Patricia Black.

Excerpts from

SALAAM MEDINA: TALES OF A HALFGHAN

An original musical by Rona Siddiqui.

*Two songs pre-recorded with Sherz Aletaha, Angel Desai,
Jamen Nanthakumar, and Jonathan Raviv.*

LINDA LBEIJA

Urgency by Linda La, produced by BYRELL THE GREAT.

Prerecorded performance. With dancer Kya Azeen.

*

****Q&A with available artists follows our presentation.***

TONIGHT'S STORYTELLERS

Linda LaBeija is a multidisciplinary artist, teacher and curator from the Boogie Down Bronx of New York. Through workshop facilitation and communal performances, her work explores the complexities of living as a transgender woman of color in today's America. Born out of the Iconic House of LaBeija in the underground New York City Vogue Ballroom scene, Linda's work has been articulated in both *AFROPUNK* and *The Fader*. She has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Timeout New York* and *W Magazine*. She has curated performances through The Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, La Mama Experimental Theater, New York Live Arts and VICE. She can also be seen in the feature film *Pariah* directed by Dee Rees and in the FX series *Pose* produced by Ryan Murphy. Currently, her work can be found archived at the Brooklyn Museum in the "Nobody Promised You Tomorrow: Art 50 Years After Stonewall" Exhibit.

Katherine McDowell is an actress, writer, and educator. She holds a BFA from Tisch School of the Arts NYU and an MA from King's College London in conjunction with RADA. For over 10 years she has been using her theater expertise to teach communication and presentation skills to businesses and individuals. She leads the corporate role-play and interactive training company Critical Act (www.criticalact.com) and has co-founded Virtual Coach Working (www.virtualcoachworking.com) to promote productivity when working from home. With half a dozen plays, all in various stages of completion, it is great to have an outlet to share her brilliant dialogue. A proud member of Undiscovered Works, she is grateful to have such a joyful creative home.

Rona Siddiqui is a composer/lyricist based in NYC. She is a 2020 recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and the 2019 recipient of the Billie Burke Ziegfeld award. She was named one of Broadway Women's Fund's Women to Watch. Her show *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*, an autobiographical comedy about growing up bi-ethnic in America, had a reading at Playwrights Horizons Nov 2019 (dir. by Raja Feather Kelly). Other musicals include *One Good Day*, *The Tin*, and *Treasure in NYC*. She is the recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award, and the ASCAP Foundation/Max Dreyfus Scholarship. She has written pieces for *Wicked's* 16th anniversary commemoration *Flying Free*, 24 Hour Musicals, Prospect Theater Company, The Civilians, the NYC Gay Men's Chorus, and 52nd St Project, and has performed concerts of her work at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and 54 Below. Original scores she has written include *The Vagina Monologues*, *Middletown* and *The Good Person of Szechuan*. She also received an Obie Award for her work on the Pulitzer Prize-winning show *A Strange Loop* along with the cast and creative team. www.ronasiddiqui.com

More About *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*

Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan is a zany, vaudevillian fantasia of bi-ethnic identity exploration. “Halfghan” Medina Eskandani is whisked down a rabbit hole of memories dealing with with body hair, racist cousins, airport security, and pesky head scarves as she confronts what it means to identify as a person of color (her Middle Eastern side) when she has spent her whole life trying to be white (her Italian side).

Presented in a fast-paced sketch style a la *The Muppet Show*, scenes range from vaudeville, to family sit-com, to game show, and beyond. Musical styles explore vaudeville, folk, rap, pop, country, and middle eastern groove.

Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan was conceived in 2017 and developed at the Catwalk Art Residency in July 2018. Marshall Paillet directed a 29 hour reading in November 2018 produced by THML Theatre Company. It had a second reading at Playwrights Horizons with director Raja Feather Kelly November 2019. Songs from the show have been performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Feinstein’s/54 Below.

HELP SUPPORT OUR ARTISTS

If you’re able, please consider tipping our participating artists via their **Venmo/PayPal** accounts:

- Sienna Aczon: **Venmo @sienna-aczon**
- Linda LaBeija: **Paypal.me/LINDALABEIJJA**
- Rona Siddiqui: **Venmo @Rona-Siddiqui**

If, like us and our artists, you’re passionate about the issues impacting our communities of color, please consider supporting:

Undiscovered Works’ 2021 Off-Broadway premiere production of Tearrance Arvelle Chisholm’s *Hooded; Or Being Black For Dummies*, directed by the playwright: the play employs satire, hip-hop inspired rhythms, stereotypes and a traditional heroic journey motif to open the door for honest reflection about how we are coping with the racial divide in America.

Visit <http://undiscoveredworks.org/donors/>.

SOME WAYS TO IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY

Register to Vote:

<https://vote.gov/>

Fill Out Your Census:

<https://2020census.gov/>

Learn About the Breathe Act:

<https://breatheact.org/>

Help Feed Families (in Washington Heights):

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/company-dinners/thomas-loughlin>

WE'RE LOOKING FOR STORYTELLERS LIKE YOU!

We are actively seeking new storytellers to feature in our monthly community gathering. Please email us at info@undiscoveredworks.org if you'd like to share your music, poetry/spoken word, play, essay, monologue – we welcome work in every stage of development and will provide actors/directors as needed!

Undiscovered Works is dedicated to supporting artists as they develop plays, music, monologues, comedy, and film. Our monthly storytelling series presents work in all stages of development, bringing together voices from across our community. Our ensemble-based Off and Off-Off Broadway productions bring to light the social issues of our times, all the while entertaining and inspiring dialogue.

THIS SUMMER'S NON-PROFIT PARTNER

THE JEAN MOYE DARK FUND FOR BLACK WOMEN/FEMMES + TGNC ARTISTS

Our talented, inspiring colleague Nia Witherspoon is a source of light in darkness for our artistic community. She has created, with the support of BAX, The Jean Moyer Dark Fund for Black Women/Femmes, +TGNC Artists, envisioning a different, better future that supports and celebrates us all!

The Jean Moyer Dark Fund will primarily support the creation of a collectively-imagined residency space that centers Black Women (Cis and Trans), Non-Binary Folks, and other Transfolks to be artists, world-makers, healers, and visionaries. The ultimate goal is to purchase land and be self-sustainable by offering our beloved community time and space to vision, recover, and rest from the ongoing trauma of white supremacy, heteronormativity, and transphobia as they rob us of our ability to be fully well. It is only through offering this kind of restorative space that we will be able to fully support the revolutionary bodies and creative visions of our communities.

A portion of the The Jean Moyer Dark Fund will also directly support our community of Black women, femmes, and TGNC artists + organizations who have made incredible sacrifices to help reimagine a world in which we are sacred.

You can learn more and donate at:

<http://artistservices.bax.org/jean-moye-dark-fund-black-women-femmes-tgnc-artists/>

Our Next
MONTHLY STORYTELLING EVENT

SPECIAL EVENT & TIME!

**Monday, September 14, 2020
@ 6:00 PM EDT**

September is back-to-school month and we're celebrating whatever that will come to look like in these strange days by featuring the work of 7th-9th graders from 826NYC's summer workshop on monologue writing!

Be sure to sign our mailing list and visit us at www.undiscoveredworks.org for all the 411 on our monthly storytelling series and upcoming productions.



Our Next
MIXOLOGY
**Sunday, September 13, 2020
@ 3:00 PM EDT**

ENJOYING THE WORK? FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



undiscoveredworks.org



facebook.com/undiscoveredworks



[@undiscoveredworksny](https://www.instagram.com/undiscoveredworksny)



While we are not able to gather together in person tonight, New York's arts community remains committed to being a source of support for all of us as we navigate a new reality we'd hoped we'd only ever know through novels and history books. We normally gather at Dixon Place's lounge, a staple of the downtown theatre scene for over three decades, where we remind you to stay hydrated and know that every dollar you spend at the lounge goes directly back into supporting the thousands of artists Dixon Place hosts every year. Well, it's more important than ever to stay hydrated and Dixon Place needs our support more than ever to open its doors to all of us as soon as it becomes safe to gather again.

Please, if you're able, consider making a donation - perhaps the cost of that drink:

<https://shop.vendini.com/dixonplace/product-details/donation/054d-4ca95ace388c1932e38137522652>