

Playwrights



ALICIA FOXWORTH, Writer/Producer/Actor

creates content that is culturally affirming to communities of color. In addition to self-producing her works, Alicia extends programs to fellow quillsters and creatives on stage in arts districts and local communities near you. The Garden Reading Series is now in its third year and began as a way to help heal neighborhoods hard hit by the recent pandemic. Other works include Ghost Writer, a semi-finalist to the 2019 Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference, The Last Rise of Ahkenaten and The King's Ally. In addition to performances on stage and screen, Alicia's written works have been accepted to the NY Winterfest, Garland Thompson Jr.'s Reader's Theater at National Black Theater Festival (NC), Theater for the New City's Lower East Side Festival of the Arts, Weeksville Houses & Historical Society (Brooklyn, NY) and Frank Silvera Writer's Workshop in residence at the Billie Holiday Theater.

Member, SAG-AFTRA, Dramatists Guild, League of Professional Theater Women. Winner of the NY League of Independent Theater-2023 Caffe Cino Award. **More at BrownstoneSteps.com.**



KAREN BROWN

has written and self-produced numerous plays, performed throughout the northeast US. Working with her sister as director and co-producer for Brown & Browns Productions, Her work has also graced the stages of Cooper Square Theatre, Henry Street Settlement, Riant Theatre Company, Paul Robeson Theatre and Riverside Church. Play Readings include The Grass Stopped Growing (Stroller's Players) and Love at the Diner which performed at Brownstone steps Play Festival and was later picked up for a full production by NIA Productions. Karen is currently a member of Uptown Playwrights Workshop.

CRIS ELI BLAK

is an emerging playwright whose work has been performed and produced Off-Broadway; regionally in the US and internationally. Cris is the winner of the 1st Black Broadway Men Playwriting Initiative and the 1st place winner of the Atlanta Shakespeare Company's inaugural Muse of Fire BIPOC Playwriting Festival. He has been a resident playwright with Paterson Performing Arts Development Council, Quick Silver Theatre Company, La Lengua Teatro en Espanol/Alter Theater Ensemble and was an inaugural-year fellow with the Black Theatre Coalition. Currently, he is developing work with The Negro Ensemble Company. His book YOUTHPlays is published by Applause Books.

Cris' work in today's Reading series is part of the inaugural Brownstone Steps New Play Development Program.

You can follow his work on Instagram [@criseliblak](https://www.instagram.com/criseliblak)



MICHAEL GREEN, Director

The plays in this year's series are directed and performed by Michael Green, whose work includes the ongoing portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Jeff Stetson's *The Meeting*. Some of his many credits include *The Blacks* (Classical Theatre of Harlem) and *Esther Armah's Savior* (Our Place Theatre). He has also written/co-produced *Whistle in Mississippi: The Lynching of Emmett Till* and *Barbara Jordan: I Dared to Be Me*, among others.

A teaching artist at Medgar Evers College Center for Black Literature, Michael has been the director of Shades of Truth Theatre in NYC for more than 16 years. An actor and a writer, Michael recently co-wrote and produced the Reading of *The Plan*, a Black Wall Street Saga.



Join us at the **GARDEN**

Presenting

The Brownstone Steps
Garden Reading Series

with works by local playwrights

The Garden Reading Series and
The New Play Development Program
are made possible in part with funding by

NEW YORK RESTORATION PROJECT and The Laundromat Project

Saturday, August 12, 2023 at 3:30 P.M.

PARADISE ON EARTH, FANNIE'S COMMUNITY GARDEN
1106 Fox Street at 167th Street
Morrisania section of the Bronx, New York 10459

Produced by
Brownstone Steps Entertainment
The Heart of the Story

Presenting

THE COME UP by Alicia Foxworth

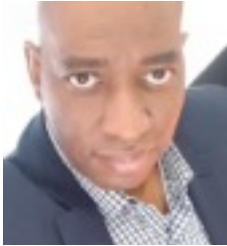
SOUP KITCHEN SAINTZ by Karen Brown

ESSENTIALLY YOURS by Cris Eli Blak

The Plays & Cast

THE COME-UP by Alicia Foxworth

What happens when the soon-to-be son-in-law gets cozy with the father of an heir apparent to the family business. Sparks will fly!



TONY MITCHELL is Jay Crosland (J.C.) Brooklyn born and acting on stage and screen, in musical theater and musical tours. You can hear his deep baritone-bass voice in voice-over/announcer jobs and commercials on ESPN, Netflix, HBO media, and others. Other work includes a Bob Hope tribute show for the Veterans and as soloist for St. Marks Church.



MALAIKA TINASHE is Deirdre

Malaika is actor, playwright, poet, director, model and recent graduate from Pace University's BFA Acting program. She has written plays that tackle racial dynamics, homophobia, misogyny, sexual harassment, and more and advocates for marginalized groups, especially Queer Black Women/Femmes. She is the author of a poetry book entitled "My Words, My Rules" that includes topics related to Black girls in America.



AKALYN WHITELEY is Michael

A Brooklyn native, Akalyn graduated from college in 2021 as a biochemist but decided to pursue a creative career as model and actor. From his youth, he performed in skits, danced, and recited monologues. Afterward, he started stepping in high school, continuing for 7 years as coach, producer and competitor on National stages. He loves the Arts, but most important of all is family.

SOUP KITCHEN SAINTZ by Cris Eli Blak

Two men of color meet after work for drinks. Still carrying the scars of incarceration, the conversation turns to dreams, regret and what it means to live in a society where you are not seen as a person.

Directed/Performed by MICHAEL GREEN as Clive. Bio on back of program.



JUNIE B. HART is Latrell

Junie began acting in 2021. Stage credits include The Sunset Limited, True West and Sketch of NY. His on-screen debut was in the film, I Got Now. Film Credits include I Got Now Forever and Jab. Awards: Best Debut Acting, Oniros Film Festival (I Got Now).

ESSENTIALLY YOURS by Karen Brown

The Jenkins family navigates the pandemic through job loss and at-home instruction but, on a gig-economy income delivering meals.

JOVANNY JACOBO is Al Jenkins



Stage: Eugene, *Crossroads*; Darius, *A Christmas Without Him/The Jennings Family Reunion*; Joshua, *The Last Hour* (J. Marshall Evans); Virtual: *12 Incompetent Jurors*; *10 Ways to Survive Life in Quarantine* (AlphaNYC Theater); Ebenezer Scrooge, Dickens by *Candelight: A Christmas Carol*. Jovanny dedicates his work to his wife Shirley and sons,

KHALFANI A. LOUIS is Todd Jenkins



NYC Credits: Martin/Mr. Adams, *Martin's Truth* (Theater for the New City); Regional: Cory, *Fences* (Playhouse on Park & Redhouse Arts Center); Valentine, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Hedgerow Theatre Co.); Count Paris, *Romeo and Juliet* (Ithaca Shakespeare Co.); Cinesias, *Lysistrata* (Evergreen Theatre Collective); Film: Turn Me On (IFC Films); Ruri (Stop and Watch Films, Inc.); TV: Imposters (pilot); fluent in Haitian Creole and French.

SOYINI CRENSHAW is Rowena Jenkins



Originally from Brooklyn, NY, Soyini received her MFA and training at Pace University's Actors Studio Drama School in 2009. Recent theater credits include Miz Anderson in The Dream Chest (Negro Ensemble), Biddy Mason (Michele Jones), Leaves (Victor Vauban, Jr./Theater for the New City), and Terminal 9 (Alicia Foxworth). Soyini also worked as Stage Manager for Brownstone Steps Play Festival and Chillerfest.

SOUP KITCHEN, CONT'D.

CHEYENNE SPRINGETTE is Stella



Cheyenne is an actor and recent graduate from Carnegie Mellon University. A Pittsburgh native, she has always had an eye for arts, culture and activism. She currently works in early childhood program in the New York/New Jersey area. Cheyenne hopes to continue work on forward thinking material on and off screen and thanks her family and Mr. Hawkins for always believing in her.

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