

Play Guide

Photo by Dylan Pojar-Weatherly.

Breaking the Box

UNMASKING THE “SYSTEM” OF AMERICA’S EDUCATION

A collaborative work consisting of verbatim interviews, live music, and video footage.

Collected and edited by
LaDarius Lamar Jamerson
Chad Bradford
Shaina Tippitt
Keith Harper
Miki Gaynor

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About the Show

Sparking Dialogue Through Drama presents socially themed theatre experiences for teen audiences. Through performing arts and dialogue, artists and audiences explore meaningful stories about history, identity, and culture within local, national, and international contexts.

In this edition of Sparking Dialogue, AMFA presents *Breaking the Box*, a live performance that combines documentary theatre with fiction, video footage, and music to examine race, education, and the “school-to-prison pipeline” in America. *Breaking the Box* dives into this complex topic, offering a unique forum to engage in topics through the lens of performing arts. The post-show discussion with the creators allows the audience to dialogue with the artists on the themes presented.

Due to adult subject matters, the recommended audience age is high school students to adults.

RUN TIME: 55 MINUTES

Special Thanks

Each performance will conclude with a brief talk-back moderated by Alexandria Brown in collaboration with Ozark Living Newspaper.

Wyatt Hamilton, North Little Rock High School, and Ruby Machelie Steward-Brown, Washington Elementary (retired)

UA Pulaski Tech Theatre Department and Arkansas Repertory Theatre

Note from the Director



“*Breaking the Box* opens our eyes to the world that we currently live in, and the world we are bound to become. The school-to-prison pipeline is a heavy topic in America, therefore my wonderful team and I wanted to add a little ... ‘Razzle Dazzle.’ Our show takes the audience on a ride through time, showing the injustices faced by students of color and the struggle to find justice in a tough situation. We aim to make this heavy subject lighter, with a little magic, a little music, and a little fun. We can always find joy in our pain. As Americans, we do that every day. Our script is brand new and original. We are still creating, editing, and revising. What you see today will most likely be a completely different show the next day. Well, maybe not the next day, but there is still room to grow with in this script and with this message. Thank you for joining the process. Let’s go on this adventure together.”

LADARIUS LAMAR JAMERSON is thrilled to make his directorial debut at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. LaDarius recently directed *The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall at Actors Theatre of Little Rock (ATLR), but you may have seen him in the Ensemble (*Sweeney Todd/Judge Turpin U/S*) during ATLR’s production of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. He was also seen as Tom Collins in *RENT* at the Argenta Contemporary Theatre, summer 2023. Other professional acting credits include leading roles at the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre and Shake on the Lake Theatre Company in western New York. “Shout out to my family, friends, and my partner Todd, who encourages me to keep pursuing my dreams. This one’s for you, Vincent.”

Meet the Makers

Creative Team

PRODUCER *Keith Harper*

DIRECTOR *LaDarius Lamar Jamerson*

SOUND DESIGN *Chad Bradford*

LIGHTING DESIGN *Andrew Shelton*

VIDEO AND PROJECTION DESIGN *Dylan Pojar-Weatherly and LaDarius Lamar Jamerson*

STAGE MANAGER *Shaina Tippitt*

Cast



KEITH HARPER is very excited to return to the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. He recently worked with AMFA on The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show and Dragon Love Tacos. He also produced the last Sparking Dialogue Series featuring Candrice Jones' play Cynthia's Place. His new film, The Company You Keep, is available on Tubi Tv and Amazon Prime. Keith studied performing arts at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he received a BA in Theatre. He serves as the Artistic Director of the Ozark Living Newspaper Theater Company and has worked as a professional actor at Shake on the Lake Theatre Company in western New York. He wants to thank his family and friends for always supporting his passions. "It's important to stop waiting for opportunities and CREATE THEM." For fun, Keith enjoys traveling and trying different foods.



MIKI GAYNOR, native of North Little Rock, Arkansas, made her theatre debut at the Argenta Contemporary Theater in the 2018 production of To Kill a Mockingbird as Calpurnia where she found a love for acting and the theatre. A few of Miki's theatre credits include Ms. Walker in Goosebumps The Musical (The Local Artists Project, 2022); Celie in The Color Purple Musical (The Studio Theatre, 2023), Faye in Skeleton Crew (Actors Theatre of Little Rock, 2023), Mom in Corduroy (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, 2023); Yellowman (The Weekend Theatre, 2024); and as the Chorus in Romeo & Juliet (Actor's Theatre of Little Rock, 2024). Other acting credits include minor film work in student projects, movie background extra, and the Little Rock 48 Film Project (2020). Miki currently acts as a medical actor (UAMS) and as a puppeteer/puppeteer translator and storyteller for Flurffy & Friends (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts). When not acting Miki creates jewelry (Miki Magick Beads & Crystals) as well as providing a safe space for therapeutic cuddles, companionship, and emotional support (Cuddly LLC Professional Cuddler/Touch Therapy).

AMFA Staff

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS *Erin Larkin*

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS *Chad Bradford*

CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR *Andrew Shelton*

PERFORMING ARTS COORDINATOR *Rivka Kuperman*

YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS COORDINATOR *Liz McMath*

Theatre Etiquette



1. Arrive early.

Arriving 15-30 minutes early allows time to pick up your tickets, buy concessions, make a final trip to the restroom, and locate your seats.

2. Turn off all electronics.

Lights and sounds from phones and other electronic devices are distracting to other patrons as well as the performers. Photography is not allowed during the performance.

3. Be aisle kind.

Say “pardon me” and “thank you” as you move through the aisle; tuck your belongings under our seat to remove tripping hazards; stand up, when possible, to let others move past you when finding their seats. Be sure to take all your belongings with you when you leave and throw away any rubbish on your way out.

4. Play your part.

Watch and listen; laugh at funny bits; applaud at the spectacular. Be present and in the moment with the performers.

[CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO ON THEATRE ETIQUETTE](#)

Continue the Conversation

In order to Spark Dialogue in our rehearsal room, we started by asking ourselves important questions related to the theme of the show. Spark dialogue in your home or classroom through the following questions:

WHY DO PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES INCARCERATED?

WHEN YOU HEAR “SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE,” WHAT COMES TO MIND?

DOES THE JUSTICE SYSTEM NEED REFORM? IF SO, WHAT SOLUTIONS MIGHT YOU PROPOSE?

Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue

Meet on the grounds of common and mutual respect.

Speak one at a time and allow people to finish stating a thought without interruption.

Make sure any debate on differing opinions stays on topic and never veers into comments that could be received as personally offensive.

Some discussions may not be fully addressed during a brief conversation. Feel free to place some conversations in the “parking lot” and come back to them later when more time is available.

Remember, “sparking dialogue” is a process. Solutions to big issues not only require speaking our minds, but also listening with an open mind.

There may not be a resolution to a differing opinion in the room. That’s okay. Dialogue and discussion allow us to engage our hearts and minds and will hopefully lead to more collaboration in the future.

You may also create your own ground rules to honor the needs of your classroom or community.

Some of the guidelines above are adapted from the Harvard Business Review Guide to Dealing with Conflict, by Amy Gallo

Resources

[US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT: “STUDY CONFIRMS SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE”](#)

[SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS: “A MENTOR FOR LOVE: TEACHING SHAKESPEARE IN PRISON”](#)

[MCGRAW HILL EDUCATION: “HOW TO IDENTIFY AND HELP STRUGGLING STUDENT”](#)

[YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE: 988](#)

[CRISIS HOTLINES FOR YOUTH](#)

MEMBERS EXPERIENCE MORE

By joining the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, you help create an inclusive cultural space that inspires and builds community through the visual and performing arts. Members of AMFA enjoy many benefits throughout the year, including free or discounted admission to all AMFA programs.

SUPPORT THE MUSEUM

When you give to AMFA, you support the arts, the community, and our future. Visit our website, arkmfa.org, or contact us about becoming a member or donating today.

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The taking of photographs or the use of recording devices during the performance is strictly prohibited.

