



June 4-20, 2021

A Love Offering is a co-production of





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Directors Notes



In the summer of 2019, I co-hosted the Cloris Awards with Tiffany Johnson. This was the first time we had worked together on a project though her reputation as a talented director and performer certainly preceded her. I remember

thinking we were a good pair from the start and immediately hoped that I would get to work with her again in the future. Aside from being one of the most inspiring speakers I've ever known, she is also willing to do anything that contributes to good art including dressing up like Little Orphan Annie or performing a song and dance with me for the Cloris Awards opening number (I said "good art" not "high art").

When I became artistic director of The Playhouse the following year, one of the first new projects I suggested was working with Tiffany and Pyramid Theatre Company on a co-production. We have been able to bring the best of both theatres together for *A Love Offering* despite this being one of the strangest, most difficult years to work in theatre, and I am so proud to present this show to our community. This production has been a true blending of artistic resources with Tiffany and me co-directing, industry professionals from Pyramid joining Playhouse members on the production team, and shared resources of each theatre.

A Love Offering is a play about how we show up for the people we love. In a time when we are often reminded of the divisions that exist between us, a story about how we care for our friends, family, acquaintances, even strangers is relevant to any audience. I hope anyone who sees the show will find themselves in one or more of these characters and be reminded of what makes us human and connects us to each other.

> Katy Merriman, Des Moines Playhouse Artistic Director/*A Love Offering* Director



What a year this has been. With the pandemic and theatres trying to find normal in the most uncommon of times, this play has meant more to me than others in so many ways.

It has been such a pleasure to work with Katy Merriman and The Plavhouse on this production as it has taught us so many valuable things. We have learned not only how we show up for each other as Katy stated, but we have learned that communicating cross-culturally takes real work and commitment. It's vulnerable, and at times feels like we know less than we ever thought we knew. It has allowed us to discover these things in a way that provides clarity surrounding how we see and view things as individuals from our different cultural perspectives. It is more evident for me now that these collaborations in theatre are so beneficial to the communities we live in because they invite us to enable conversations, activate awareness, and encourage better communication for each person that will be affected once we go our separate ways.

I would not have been able to experience this process with anyone other than Katy; she and I have already solidified our friendship. We understand that in the challenging parts of this, we can discover and find answers to together. We are committed to finding ways we can continue to hold the door of understanding, awareness, and humanity open as we ourselves learn how to define and refine these values within ourselves.

The cast here is tremendous, and I want to honor their willingness to jump into new territory with us. I have learned so much from everyone, and value so much that we have created together. We are the first cast emerging from the pandemic in real space that Pyramid has been involved with since we were shut down. It feels good, you guys, and every time I see your faces it brings me back a little bit more. We needed this "Love Offering" for the audience and for each other. I hope you all can take a little bit of this show home with you.

Tiffany Johnson, Pyramid Theatre Company Producing Artistic Director/*A Love Offering* Director COMING SOON

Permission

Surviving White American Theatre

and

Last Supper

Please go to our website for further information on these short films.

www.pyramidtheatre.org



Cast List

Opening June 4, 2021 Closing June 20, 2021

Pyramid Theatre Company and Des Moines Community Playhouse Present in the John Viars Theatre

A LOVE OFFERING

By Jonathan Norton

Presented by ITAGroup Sponsored by DSM Mercantile

Directors: Tiffany Johnson, Katy Merriman Scenic Designer: Erin I. Wegleitner Costume Designer: Angela Lampe Lighting Designer: John G. Pomeroy Sound Designer: G. Thomas Furgerson Properties Designer: Hannah Cummins Stage Manager: Paige Beck Assistant Stage Manager: Kiera McGregor

Cast

In Order of Appearance

T'Wana	Heaven Booker
Stewart	Sean Kanuso
Josie	Jackie Schmillen
Miss Georgia	Courageous Fire
Mr. Turner	
Mrs. Cohen	

Time: The present Place: An assisted living center in Dallas, TX

A Love Offering is presented without an intermission.

A Love Offering is presented through special arrangement with Broadway Play Publishing Inc, NYC, www.broadwayplaypub.com.

Cast & Production Headshots



Heaven Booker T'Wana



Courageous Fire Miss Georgia



Sean Kanuso Stewart



Mark Pullen Mr. Turner



Jackie Schmillen Josie



Tiffany Johnson Director/Pyramid Theatre Company Producing Artistic Director



John Pomeroy Lighting Designer



Kiera McGregor Assistant Stage Manager



Katy Merriman Director/Des Moines Playhouse Artistic Director



G. Thomas Furgerson Sound Designer



Alexis J. Davis Pyramid Theatre Company Managing Director



Erin I. Wegleitner Scenic Designer



Hannah Cummins Properties Designer



David R. Kilpatrick Des Moines Playhouse Executive Director



Angela Lampe Costume Designer



Paige Beck Stage Manager



Jonathan Norton Playwright

Heaven Booker (T'Wana) attends Iowa State University where she is studying performing arts with emphases in acting, directing, and musical theatre. Her theatre résumé includes Mary Magdalene in Jesus Christ Superstar, Maggie Jones in 42nd Street, Humpty Dumpty in Shrek The Musical, Madame Arcati in Blithe Spirit, and Tilly in It's a Wonderful Life at Des Moines Roosevelt High School: Liz Rico in *King* Liz and Ruth Younger in A Raisin in the Sun at Baylor Theatre in Waco. TX: and Soloist in Songs for a New World. Mom in Facing Our Truth, and Bessie in Sometimes the Rain. Sometimes the Sea at ISU. This is her Pyramid Theatre Company and Des Moines Playhouse debuts. Heaven's hobbies include painting, cooking/baking, exercising, and listening to podcasts.

Courageous Fire (Miss Georgia) is owner and operator of Courageous Fire, LLC, Courageous delivers representation through providing the only culturally specific programming in the state of lowa specifically designed to end cycles of domestic violence among Black female survivors. As a two-time award-winning actor. Courageous' willingness to be obedient to the call in her spirit to take to the stage has earned her a Cloris Award and a Studio Series Favorite Award for her performances as Sister Moore in The Amen Corner in 2017 and as Mrs. Muller in Doubt, A Parable in 2018. Courageous says the theatre gave her new life because it gave her permission to fully listen to herself and share what she discovered. She is looking forward to sharing that permission for discovery with you.

Sean Kanuso (*Stewart*) studied at the William Esper Acting Studio in New York City. His extensive credits include Repertory Theater of America's national tours of *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Drunkard, Wait Until Dark* and *Spoon* *River Anthology* at Barter Theatre (Abingdon, VA), *Barefoot in the Park* at Repertory Theater of America (Rockport, TX), and *Last Thursday* at Madison Avenue Theater (New York City). This past fall, he made his Des Moines Playhouse debut as Frank in *Weekend Comedy*. Sean and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Caeden and Logan. A stay-at-home dad, Sean enjoys golfing, scuba diving, and traveling.

Mark Pullen (Mr. Turner) is a favorite with Des Moines area audiences where his shows have included *Ragtime* (Grandfather), *Tony N'* Tina's Wedding (Uncle Louie), Anne of Green Gables (Matthew). Junie B. Jones & a Little Monkey Business (Grandpa), Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka (Grandpa Joe). Into the Woods (Cinderella's Father), and others at The Des Moines Playhouse; as well as Fiddler on the *Roof, Oliver*, and *Hello, Dolly!* at Urbandale Community Theatre. A favorite show was Annie at Cherokee (IA) Community Theatre where he played Daddy Warbucks. He also performs with The Playhouse's Final Act Ensemble. Mark has volunteered on various backstage crews and set building crews for more than 20 years at The Playhouse, receiving the Dick Brown Superior Volunteer Award in 2014. He retired as chief pilot for Hy-Vee, Inc. and in his retirement enjoys golfing, woodworking, and model railroads. Mark and his wife, Darlene, have 18 grandchildren and a great-grandchild with another on the way.

Jackie Schmillen (Josie) is a morning news anchor on *Good Morning Iowa*, Local 5 News – We Are Iowa. With a B.F.A. in musical theatre from the University of Miami, her many area roles include Debra in *Hooded, Or Being Black for Dummies* at Pyramid Theatre Company; April in *Company* at Iowa Stage Theatre Company; and at The Playhouse, Mrs. Banks in *Mary Poppins*, The Lady of the Lake in *Monty*

Python's Spamalot, Elizabeth in *The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein*, Mom in *A Christmas Story The Musical*, and Ursula in *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, for which she won a Cloris Award. Jackie is passionate about Des Moines and enjoys volunteering and promoting great things happening in the community.

Tiffany Johnson (Director/Pyramid Theatre Company Artistic Director) was born in St. Louis. MO. but raised in Iowa and considers herself an Iowa native. Acting has always been a passion of hers as she feels it gives her a unique opportunity to ask tough questions. raise awareness on issues, and many times walk right up and touch the elephant in the room. Her stage credits include *Good People* and *Clybourne Park* with StageWest; *The Jack* Trice Story for Juneteenth: The Mountaintop for Westminster Presbyterian Integral Arts: and Silent Victory and Amen Corner for Pyramid Theatre Company, In 2014, under the direction of Ken-Matt Martin, she played Rose in Fences at Des Moines Social Club, receiving an acting award from Broadway World. She moved to the production side of theatre with A Soldier's Story at Des Moines Social Club, serving as the show's associate director. In August 2015, Tiffany became one of the founding members of Pyramid Theatre Company which was established to serve as a gateway to the arts and to enhance the experience by illuminating the presence of Black artists and providing opportunity for more diverse artistic expression. Tiffany made her directorial debut in 2016 with Pyramid's first production, A Raisin in the Sun. She has since directed Akeelah and the Bee for Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. Dead Dog Park for Open Door Rep. Intimate Apparel for Pyramid, and How I Learned What I Learned, a co-production of Pyramid and Iowa City's Riverside Theater. Tiffany was featured by the Des Moines Register as one of the people to

watch in 2019, and by the end of the year the State of Iowa awarded her the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award for her contributions to art and her commitment to the community utilizing art to educate and enhance the Black experience in Iowa. More than anything, Tiffany Ioves to give of herself to her community as she firmly believes "as you empty your vessel, your vessel is filled." She also believes it takes a village to raise our children, to support our communities, and to nurture our tomorrows, and intends to use her gifts to make room for others to utilize theirs.

Katy Merriman (Director/Des Moines Playhouse Artistic Director) has been an active member of the local theatre community since moving to Des Moines in 2013. Her Playhouse directing credits include Some Enchanted Evening. Stuart Little, I and You, The Roommate, Love Letters, and Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!" Katy also has appeared on The Playhouse stage in shows including *Into the* Woods (Cinderella), Les Misérables (Cosette), Completeness (Molly), and Legally Blonde the *Musical* (Elle Woods) and was the musical director for The Playhouse Performance Academy from 2016 to 2018. Katy worked with Iowa Stage Theatre Company as a resident artist where her performance credits include The Glass Menagerie (Laura) and Our Town (Emily). She also directed their 2018 production of *Fun Home*. Prior to her time in Des Moines. Katy worked with numerous theatres as a performer, director, and administrator. She has a Bachelor of Music from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN. Katy and her husband, Max, have a son, Jack.

Erin I. Wegleitner (*Scenic Designer*) is new to Des Moines theatre. This is her first production with both Pyramid Theatre Company and The Des Moines Playhouse. Erin has worked all over

the country with theatres such as Geva Theatre Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, and Chautauqua Theatre Company. Currently, she is an assistant professor of theatre design/ technology at Drake University. She is looking forward to immersing herself in the arts in Des Moines post pandemic.

Angela Lampe (Associate Artistic Director) began her tenure with The Des Moines Playhouse in 1993 and has designed costumes, sets, and props for nearly 300 productions including Guys and Dolls, Meredith Willson's The Music Man, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder, Ella Enchanted, The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, Ragtime, Les Misérables, Disney's The Little Mermaid, West Side Story, Into the Woods, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sunset Boulevard, and Hairspray. She has a B.A. from Central College in Pella and a M.F.A. in theatre from the University of Nebraska. She is the recipient of four Cloris Awards for excellence in costuming and puppetry.

John G. Pomeroy (Lighting Designer) has been a professor of theatre, technical director, and designer at Drake University since 1993. For Pyramid Theatre Company, he has designed lights and served as technical director for many productions including A Soldier's Play, Too Heavy for Your Pocket, and Prowess. When not at the theatre, John enjoys gardening, woodworking, hiking, watching hockey, and keeping up with his son's career.

G. Thomas Furgerson (gthomas) *(Sound Designer)* returned to his hometown of Des Moines in 2006 after working around the world as a director/editor/cinematographer on artistic and commercial projects. More than 35 years communicating though various mediums provides gthomas with unique and creative multimedia solutions for a variety of productions.

Hannah Cummins (Properties Designer) is earning a dual degree – B.F.A. in musical theatre and B.A.J.M.C. in public relations – from Drake University. At Drake, she has served as props master for *Time Stands Still, Life is Short, Hand to God*, and *SPUNK*; as stage manager for *Electra* and *The Rocky Horror Show*; and as assistant sound designer for *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and *Pippin*. Her onstage roles include Janet Weiss in *The Rocky Horror Show* at Drake. When not at the theatre, Hannah enjoys hiking and graphic design.

Paige Beck (Stage Manager) always dreamed of being involved with a great theatre company that encourages and nurtures change, and, thanks to Pyramid Theatre Company, she is fulfilling that dream. Through the years she has performed many jobs in theatre including designing, acting, directing, dramaturgy, and stage managing. Her past shows as production stage manager include Shakuntala and Shakuntala: On the Move for Gateway Dance, three years of the Cloris Awards, and How I Learned What I Learned, Too Heavy for Your Pocket, Intimate Apparel, Prowess, The Amen Corner, and Mississippi Goddamn with Pyramid. She was stage manager for the most recent production of *Triple Espresso* at the Temple Theatre, In 2016, she won the Region V Dramaturgy Award during the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and hopes to pursue a future in both stage management and dramaturgy. A Renaissance woman, her hobbies include photography, singing, dancing, crocheting, embroidery, sewing, JASNA (Jane Austen Society of North America) and traveling. Paige thanks her Pyramid family; her mentor, Janet Albanese; her college professor, Kristin Larson; her family – mom, dad, and sister Jordyn – for their babysitting and flexibility; and her children, Jeice and Dominic, for supporting her and giving her the

love, strength, support, courage, and tools to become the stage manager and artist she is today.

Kiera McGregor (Mrs. Cohen/Assistant Stage Manager) recently graduated from Drake University with a degree in theatre: performing arts. She is pumped that she's able to fully merge into the local theatre scene, most recently performing in the Two Steps to the Left filmed original production, nature of the dream. In 2019, Kiera began her association with Pyramid Theatre Company. She served as associate director on Too Heavy for Your Pocket and was honored to be mentored by Tiffany Johnson. She is excited to continue to work with Pyramid and is grateful to have been welcomed with such open arms. Outside of acting and the arts, her many interests include writing, DIY projects, organizing, and thrifting. Kiera thanks her family and friends for always believing in her.

Alexis J. Davis (Pvramid Theatre Company *Managing Director*) is a founding member and managing director of Pyramid Theatre Company, A native of Country Club Hills. IL, she came to Des Moines to attend Drake University, where she received her bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications in 2013 and a master's in communications leadership in 2017. Alexis is very passionate about community engagement and diversity and bringing arts back into education. She serves on several boards including Drake University's Black Alumni Association, James B. Morris Scholarship Fund, and African American Leadership Academy's Advisory Board. She is a member of the Des Moines Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Incorporated, and serves on several committees including chairing the internal audit committee. She works as a strategic

communications project manager at United Way of Central Iowa. Alexis thanks her parents for loving her, supporting all her endeavors, and reminding her that there are no limits.

David R. Kilpatrick (*Des Moines Playhouse Executive Director*) has been part of The Playhouse since May 2017. His career has included producing artistic director of a small professional theatre, owner of a dinner theatre, production manager, director, lighting designer, and professional stage manager. His education includes degrees from George Mason University, Missouri State, and University of Missouri, where his dissertation was the exploration of the audience as it prepares for the show.

Jonathan Norton (*Playwright*) has had his work produced or developed at Dallas Theater Center, PlayPenn, Black and Latino Playwrights Conference, TeCo Theatrical Productions. Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture. Castillo Theatre, Soul Rep Theater Company, Nouveau 47. CrossOver Arts Theater. African American Repertory Theater, and the South Dallas Cultural Center. His play *Mississippi* Goddamn was a finalist for the Harold and Mimi Steinberg ATCA New Play Award and was the winner of the 2016 M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award. He was also a recipient of an Artistic Innovations Grant from the Mid-America Arts Alliance. He is a proud two-time recipient of the Diaspora Performing Arts Commission given by the South Dallas Cultural Center, an inaugural recipient of the TACA Donna Wilhelm Family New Works Fund, and was a finalist for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. He is an inaugural member of Dallas Theater Center's Dallas Playwrights Workshop led by Will Power.

Production Crews

Technical Director: **Tim Harris** Fight Coordinator: **Jackie Schmillen** Costume Crew: **Jessica Van Essen** Paint Charge Artist: **Erin I. Wegleitner** Paint Crew: **Harold Hinkhouse, Anne Jung, Darlene Pullen** Sound Board Operator: **Tim Harris** Light Crew: **Elizabeth Blackwell, Isabelle Valet** Videographer: **Mark Smith**

A LOVE OFFERING SPECIAL THANKS June McGhghy, home health aide; Nu Cara; Cooper Smith & Company; Fareway Stores; Steve Gibbons Photography; Heuss Printing, Inc.; Isenberger Photography



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To donate to The Des Moines Playhouse, contact: Ryan Crane, Director of Philanthropy, 515.974.5370, rcrane@dmplayhouse.com

COVID-19 UNIQUE POLICIES

General Practices

 Guests are required to wear face coverings, such as masks or face shields, and physically distance between groups and parties as much as possible while on the premises.

• Hand sanitizing stations are located throughout the lobbies for public use and should be used regularly.

• Guests with COVID-19 symptoms such as a temperature of 100.4°F or higher or other symptoms, either before or during a performance, are asked to leave and exchange their tickets for a later performance.

• All guests who attend productions at The Playhouse will have reservations with contact information retained in the ticket office to facilitate contact tracing if necessary.

· Programs are accessed digitally.

Exchanges & Refunds

The Playhouse ticket exchange policy allows guests to exchange tickets for a different performance if experiencing any symptoms of illness or if they learn they have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Seating

• Seats are assigned the day of the performance by staff based on reservation counts and group size. Seats are assigned to ensure physical distancing within the theatre space. Seat requests will be reviewed but not guaranteed. Requests for wheelchair seating will be honored.

• Seating will begin 1 hour prior to curtain to reduce congregating in the theatre.

Concessions

Concessions are prepackaged, individual servings, bottles, or cans.

Restrooms

• Flushing handles, water, soap dispensers, and towel dispensers are touchless to reduce unnecessary contact.

• Identifiers on the floor will guide appropriate distancing for line management.

Stairs & Elevators

• The use of stairwells and elevators will be managed to maintain appropriate physical distancing. Stairwells will be designated one direction only at a time.

• The elevator will be for one person/family/seating group at a time.

Lobbies

• Lobbies will be managed to ensure appropriate distancing between guests.

• Seating and tables in the lobbies will be reduced to maintain safe distance between groups.

Talkbacks

There will be conversations with audience, directors and community leaders following some of the performances, inside the theatre. Please contact the ticket office for a specific schedule. There will be no preshow talks for this production.

OTHER GENERAL PRACTICES

Accessibility

The Playhouse strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all guests. Our theatres are wheelchair accessible. Service animals are welcome. Assisted listening devices are available in the John Viars Theatre. If your hearing aid has a T-coil, toggle to that setting to receive the audio signal directly without any headset or other equipment needed. ASL interpreted performances and audio description are regularly scheduled for most productions. For these and other needs, please call the ticket office with specific service requests.

Cameras

The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed during a performance and are a violation of state and federal copyright laws.

Cancellations

If a show is cancelled due to bad weather, an email will be sent to ticket holders. Cancellations will be noted on the phone system, website, and social media sites. Tickets for a cancelled performance may be exchanged for another performance. Please be sure the ticket office has your email information and current phone in the event a performance is cancelled. The Playhouse does not sell its contacts and does not sell or trade its email addresses.

Concessions

A variety of beverages and candy may be available for purchase. No outside drink or food are allowed in the theatre. Beverages and candy are allowed in the auditoriums. Staff reserve the right to deny alcoholic beverage service to anyone at their discretion.

Elevator

An elevator between levels is located at the east end of the building.

Emergency Exits

Please note the exit nearest your seat location. In the event of an emergency, ushers will provide direction.

Etiquette

Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the play. Lobby chimes are sounded five minutes before

House Information

curtain as well as the close of intermission. Disruptive, unruly guests, regardless of age, will be asked to leave. Cell phone ringers should be turned off.

Lost Items

Lost items will be held in the ticket office.

Parking

Free parking is available in The Playhouse lots and on streets surrounding the theatre. After 5:00 PM daily, free parking is available in the Shops at Roosevelt's east/back parking lot. Parking in the west/front Shops parking lot is restricted to Shops customers at all times. The Playhouse is not responsible for loss of any personal property left in vehicles.

Performance Content

The Playhouse does not rate subject matter as sensitivities vary from person to person. Questions about content, age appropriateness, or other aspects of the show such as strobe lights and other theatrical affects should be directed to the ticket office.

Performance Schedule

The regular John Viars Theatre performance schedule is 7:30 PM Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2:00 PM Sundays. The regular Kate Goldman Children's Theatre performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. The Family Holiday Classic performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. All times are subject to change.

Tickets

Each audience member must occupy a seat and have a ticket, including infants.

Ticket Office Hours

The ticket office is open Noon to 3:00 PM, Tuesday through Friday. Tickets are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online. Ticketing fees are the same whether purchased online, by phone, or at the ticket office.









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