

NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN

By Christina Ham; Directed by Faye M. Price



PARK SQUARE
THEATRE

2016-2017 SEASON

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DIRECTED BY MICHAEL ROBINS

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TICKETS / INFO

Tickets are available at the Illusion Theater Box Office at 612-339-4944 or online at www.illusiontheater.org.

*Members of Actor's Equity Association
Photo by Laurie Falk

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This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, and a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation of Minnesota.



Dear Park Square Patron:

There is a light here. For you (yes you). This joyous remounting of *Nina Simone: Four Women* comes on the heels of *The Ghostlight Project*, which took place across the country in theatres of all kinds on January 19.

Inspired by the theatrical tradition of keeping a “ghost light” on in a darkened theatre, this theatre vowed to create light for you in challenging times and to provide brave spaces where all can gather.

We re-affirmed that our programs welcome, invite – and in fact celebrate all – regardless of race, class, religion, country of origin, immigration status, (dis)ability, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

We also pledged:

- **To listen for the voices without representation;** to tell the stories untold;
- **To establish gender parity;**
- **To continue inclusive programming and hiring** in order to authentically serve diverse talent and audiences.

Today’s play is a unique opportunity to engage in debate and dissent through the lens of one of our country’s greatest musical artists – and leave inspired to take action. Whether you came here today to be entertained or fired up (and hopefully this production does *both!*), know that when you pass the “ghost light” in our lobby, it is on for you. **(yes you.)**



Richard Cook, Artistic Director
651.767.8482 | cook@parksquaretheatre.org



C. Michael-jon Pease, Executive Director, CFRE
651.767.8497 | pease@parksquaretheatre.org



OUR MISSION is to enrich our community by producing and presenting exceptional live theatre that touches the heart, engages the mind and delights the spirit.



Regina Marie Williams and Aimee K. Bryant
photos by Petronella J. Ytsma

This celebration of Nina Simone is the theatrical dream-child of Regina Williams.

Regina found profound inspiration in Simone's life of artistry and activism. Park Square, inspired by Regina's devotion to Simone's passionate life, commissioned this play. Playwright Christina Ham rose to the challenge of this story at this time with her own fiery voice. An extraordinary creative team and ensemble has poured their own insights and talents into this production. And the Twin Cities has understood the combined creative cry and embraced this work.

Thanks to all of you for sharing Regina's dream. Richard Cook, Artistic Director

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NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN

By Christina Ham

Director	Faye M. Price
Music Director	Sanford Moore
Dance Choreographer	Patricia Brown
Scenic Designer	Lance Brockman
Costume Designer	Trevor D. Bowen
Costume Construction	Lynn Farrington
Lighting Designer	Michael Wangen
Sound Designer	Jacob M. Davis
Properties Designer	Sadie Ward
Stage Manager	Elizabeth MacNally*

CAST

Nina Simone AKA Peaches	Regina Marie Williams*
Sarah AKA Auntie	Aimee K. Bryant*
Sephronia	Jamila Anderson*
Sweet Thing	Traci Allen Shannon*
Sam	Sanford Moore

SETTING: September 16th, 1963.

The ruins of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

PERFORMANCE TIME: The performance will run approximately
2 hours 5 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

.....
The video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

As a courtesy to our actors and those around you,
please **DEACTIVATE** all **PHONES** and **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**.

.....
"Shout, Oh Mary" by Christina Ham. Copyright © 2016 by Christina Ham.
"Brown Baby" Written by Oscar Brown, Jr. Used by permission of Edward B. Marks Music Company



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*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.
Park Square Theatre is a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.

BACKBONE OF THE MOVEMENT

Playwright Christina Ham talked to feature writer Matt DiCintio about Simone's inspiration and her own.

Can you talk about how you and Regina Williams came together on this?

Regina Williams had brought the concept of her one-woman Nina Simone show to Park Square, and she and Richard Cook contacted me because they wanted a playwright to help develop it. Regina had starred in my play *Scapegoat* at The Playwrights' Center, and she admired how I was able to dramatize history in that play. I had listened to Ms. Simone's music since I was a child, but her civil rights work didn't become known to me until much, much later. I said yes to joining Regina on this project because it's one of the most ambitious plays I've ever written, and I saw the challenge of telling the story of how Ms. Simone went from being a mere artist to an artist-activist (an important distinction) in a way that has yet to be seen. She felt very strongly after the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church and the murder of Medgar Evers that her music needed to change direction. She had written instrumentals before, but never songs with lyrics. "Mississippi Goddam" was her first foray into lyric writing and she wrote it in about half an hour in real life. Her people were fighting in the streets for their rights, and her old music did not reflect that struggle. She had to start creating art that reflected the times for black people. If it meant making her mostly white audience uncomfortable, she didn't really care.

Can you talk about the play's title and how it reflects Simone's music and politics?

Ms. Simone examines issues of colorism and black female archetypes in her song "Four

Women." There are painful things about being a black woman that still have yet to be put to bed 50 years after this song's release. Regina and I spoke about how Ms. Simone seemed to embody a different vocal quality depending on what song she was singing. The "four women" framework helped to reflect the multiple vocalities as seen through these four women who also represent bits of Ms. Simone's life as well. I saw great value in telling a story that could delve deeply into the question of what exactly is an artist's responsibility to reflect the times – as Ms. Simone proclaimed – and how black women and our solidarity fare in this battle. Some of my other plays examine women caught in the cross hairs of history (Ruby Bridges, the four little girls, and now Nina Simone). It's a topic I have an incredible affinity for. Incidentally, Ruby Bridges is being produced at the same time as this show at SteppingStone Theatre which makes me happy to see how these two women bookmark the movement in similar ways at very different ages.

Many audience members, especially younger generations, may not be aware of the role musicians like Simone played in the Civil Rights Movement. Why do you feel it's important that we don't forget them?

This play shines a light on the black women who were and were not musicians during this movement who were often marginalized and forced into the background—even though we were the backbone of the movement. Until 1970, Ms. Simone's music was such a substantial part of the movement, but after this she was basically pushed into relative obscurity. Books on the Civil Rights Movement don't even index her or discuss how critical she was to the movement. If anything, we can see how art and activism can come together to provide a platform for an artist.

Matt DiCintio holds a PhD in Drama from Tufts. He works at Boston University and teaches at Emerson College.



JAMES A. WILLIAMS

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Full Circle Theater Core Artist

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Christina Ham's plays have been developed and produced both nationally and internationally with the Kennedy Center, The Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Goodman Theater, Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, SteppingStone Theatre, Arielle Tepper Madover off-Broadway at Theater Row with the Summer Play Festival, and the Tokyo International Arts Festival among others. Her play *Four*

Little Girls was directed by Phylicia Rashad at the Kennedy Center to a sold-out audience to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. It was simultaneously presented and/or produced in 47 states across the country on the same day with Condoleezza Rice and Eric Holder conducting the talk back in Birmingham. Christina is a two-time recipient of a McKnight Fellowship for Playwrights and a Jerome Fellowship from The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, the Marianne Murphy Women & Philanthropy Award in Playwriting, and a MacDowell Colony Residency. She has received commissions from The Guthrie Theater, SteppingStone Theatre, and Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation among many others. Her plays are published by Dramatic Publishing, Heinemann, PlayScripts, Inc., and Smith and Kraus. A graduate of the University of Southern California with an M.F.A. in Playwriting from The UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television, Christina is a Core Writer at The Playwrights' Center, a former member playwright of the Workhaus Collective, and The Dramatists Guild of America. She is currently the Resident Playwright at Pillsbury House Theatre. www.christinaham.com

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**JAMILA ANDERSON***

Sephronia

Park Square *Romeo and Juliet* **Representative****Theatre** Guthrie Theater/ Pillsbury House Theatre:

Marcus; or the Secret of Sweet; Pillsbury House Theatre: *Angels in America: Parts I and II*; Penumbra Theatre: *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*; Mixed Blood Theatre: *An Octoroon*; History Theatre: *These Shining Lives*; Children's Theatre Company: *Grimm Tales* **Film** *Strange As Angels; The Just* (short film featuring Michael Madsen) **Training** B.A., Theatre Arts, University of MN by way of Prairie View A&M University, TX **Awards** Ivey Award for Best Ensemble, 2015; PV Choice Award for Best Actress, PVAMU; Jane Enroth Undergraduate Actress Award for Most Outstanding Contribution, University of MN **Upcoming Projects** Producer and Director of *#RRRRiot* at Phoenix Theater (Arts Nest)

**AIMEE K. BRYANT***

Sarah AKA Auntie

Park Square *A Raisin in the Sun, Nina Simone: Four Women, The Color Purple, Constant Star* **Representative**

Theatre Congo Square Theatre: *Spunk*; Ten Thousand Things: *The Music Man*; Children's Theatre Company: *Akeelah and the Bee*; Pillsbury House Theatre: *Marcus, or the Secret of Sweet*; Theatre Forever: *The Nature Crown*; Guthrie Theater: *My Fair Lady* **Training** B.F.A., Musical Theatre, Howard University **Awards/Other** *City Pages* Best Actress 2015; 2015-2016 McKnight Theatre Artist Fellow **Upcoming Projects** Ten Thousand Things: *Intimate Apparel*

**SANFORD MOORE**

Sam

see bio on page 13

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**TRACI ALLEN
SHANNON***

Sweet Thing

Park Square Nina

Simone: Four Women,
Stick Fly **Representative**

Theatre National Tour: *The Color Purple*;
Children's Theatre Company: *Wizard of Oz*;
Pillsbury House Theatre: *the road weeps the well runs dry*; Theater Latté Da:
Aida; Ordway: *Cinderella*; Theatre at the
Center: *Footloose*; Cortland Repertory
Theatre: *Once on This Island* **Training**
B.F.A., Theatre Arts, Howard University



**REGINA MARIE
WILLIAMS***

Nina Simone

AKA Peaches

Park Square Nina

Simone: Four Women,

The Color Purple, Doubt, Gee's Bend,
Constant Star **Representative Theatre**
Chanhassen Dinner Theatres: *Sister Act*;
Guthrie Theater: *A Christmas Carol, To Kill a Mockingbird, Othello*; Ordway:
Damn Yankees; Ten Thousand Things:
Romeo & Juliet, Doubt; Pillsbury House
Theatre: *Scapegoat, Death Tax, the road weeps...*;
Mixed Blood Theatre: *Barbecue, Next to Normal*;
Capri Theater: *Nina...I Put a Spell on You, Eartha...the Whole Kitt & Kaboodle Awards* Ivey Award
Recipient (Mixed Blood Theatre *Ruined*);
Helen Hayes Nominee (Roundhouse/
Penumbra Co-production); McKnight
Theater Artist Award; MSAB Community
Partnership Grant 2017 with Hennepin
Theatre Trust **Other** Solo Recordings:
When A Woman Loves A Man; Feel The Spirit...Spirituals, Gospels, and Hymns;
Regina is...Songs of Dinah Washington;
Proud Penumbra Theatre Company
Member **Upcoming Projects** Guthrie
Theater: *The Bluest Eye*; Chanhassen
Dinner Theatres: *Sister Act*

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**FAYE M. PRICE**

Director

Park Square *Nina**Simone: Four Women;**(as Actress) Well,**Boesman and Lena,**Standing on My Knees* **Representative****Theatre** Pillsbury House Theatre: Co-

Artistic Producing Director since 2000 –

plays include *Scapegoat, The Children,**The Brother/Sister Plays, Buzzer, No Child,**Hot Comb, River See, Jomama Jones;*

Guthrie Theater: Production Dramaturg

1996-2000; (as Actress) Penumbra

Theatre Company member: *The Amen**Corner, Zooman and the Sign, Three Ways**Home, Jar the Floor; Circle in the Square:**From the Mississippi Delta; Baltimore*Center Stage: *Police Boys; Mixed Blood*Theatre: *A...My Name Is Alice; Pillsbury*House Theatre: *The Story; Boesman and**Lena; Bel Canto* **TV/Film** *Law and Order***Training** M.A., Theatre Arts (Dramaturgy

and Literary Criticism), University

of Minnesota **Awards/Other** First

recipient of August Wilson Fellowship

in Dramaturgy and Literary Criticism,

Sally Ordway Irvine Award, Catherine

Lealtad Service to Society Award from

Macalester College

TREVOR D. BOWEN

Costume Designer

Park Square *My Children! My Africa!,**Nina Simone: Four Women, The Color**Purple, The House on Mango Street***Representative Theatre** Theater Latté Da:*Lullaby; Mixed Blood Theatre: Charm, DJ**Latinidad's Dance Party; History Theatre:**George Bonga: Black Voyageur; Pillsbury*House Theatre: *Scapegoat, Bright Half**Life; Ten Thousand Things: Henry IV Part**I; Guthrie Theater: Choir Boy* MacalesterCollege: *The Glass Menagerie* **Training**

M.F.A. West Virginia University

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LANCE BROCKMAN

Scenic Designer

Park Square *A Raisin in the Sun, Nina**Simone: Four Women, My Children! My**Africa!, Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace**Murders, Red* **Representative Theatre**

Penumbra Theatre: numerous productions

including *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark;**Black Nativity; Minnesota Centennial*Showboat: numerous productions **Training**

B.A./M.S., Kansas State Teachers College

Awards/Other Twin City Scenic Collection

and Theatre of the Fraternity Exhibits of

historic scenic art sketches

ARTISTIC STAFF

PATRICIA BROWN

Dance Choreographer

Park Square *Nina Simone: Four Women*
Representative Theatre Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center, Macalester College: *The Clean House, Life's Journey*; Pillsbury House Theatre: *Brother/Sister Trilogy*; History Theatre: *Adrift on the Mississippi*; Ten Thousand Things: *The Island*; Penumbra Theatre: *Children of the Buffalo Soldiers, A Raisin in the Sun* **Training** Faculty, Theatre Arts and Dance, African-based Movement, University of Minnesota; Faculty, Theatre and Dance, African-based Movement, Macalester College **Awards/Other** 2013 Ivey Award, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre: *Between the Worlds*; 2013 Sage Award Nominee: Outstanding Dance Educator; 2004 Distinguished Teaching Award: University of MN

JACOB M. DAVIS

Sound Designer

Park Square *Flower Drum Song, The Soul of Gershwin, Love Person, Nina Simone: Four Women* **Representative Theatre** Theater Latté Da: *Sweeney Todd*; Nimbus Theatre: *The Kalevala*; Theatre Pro Rata: *Beauty Queen of Leenane*; Tedious Brief Productions: *Meed Hall*; Gremlin Theatre: *Sea Marks*; Minneapolis Musical Theater: *Big River* **Training** M.F.A., Sound Design, California Institute of the Arts; B.F.A., Theatre Design, University of Minnesota Duluth **Awards/Other** Professional Member: Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association; Company Member: Theatre Pro Rata; Member: United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 **Upcoming Projects** Theatre Pro Rata: *Goodbye, Cruel World*



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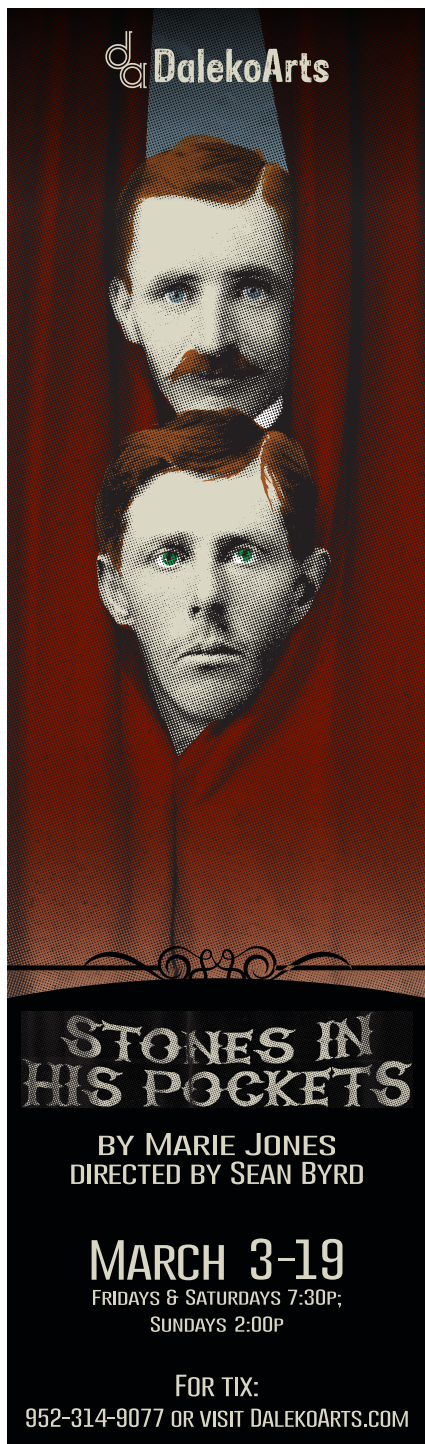


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**ELIZABETH R. MacNALLY***

Stage Manager

Park Square *Nina Simone: Four Women; 2**Sugars, Room for Cream; The Left Hand Singing***Representative Theatre** Pillsbury House Theatre:*The Children; Scapegoat; Bright Half Life; Prep; The**Gospel of Lovingkindness; Gideon's Knot; Marcus, or the**Secret of Sweet; the road weeps, the well runs dry; The**Brothers Size; Buzzer; Bug; Jungle Theater: Next Fall;**Orange Flower Water; Recent Tragic Events; Guthrie**Theater: 9 Parts of Desire; Caroline or Change;**A Streetcar Named Desire; Sharon Bridgforth**Productions: River See (Minneapolis, Chicago and**Boston) Training B.F.A., Rockford College***SANFORD MOORE**

Music Director

Park Square *Nina Simone: Four Women, Hot**Chocolate* **Representative Theatre** Penumbra*Theatre: By the Way, Meet Vera Stark; The Ballad**of Emmet Till; The Amen Corner; Come on Children**Let's Sing: an Evening with Mahalia Jackson; I Wish**You Love; Ma Rainey's Black Bottom; Black Pearl**Sings; Black Nativity; Ain't Misbehavin'; Get Ready;**Dinah Was; Threads Dance Company: Composer**for Warriors of Light; Guthrie Theater: The Parchman**Hour, Degraced, To Kill a Mockingbird, Choir Boy,**Crowns, Dream on Monkey Mountain (directed by**Bill T. Jones), Triumph of Love, As You Like It; Mixed**Blood Theatre: Two Queens, One Castle; Black**Belts I, II and III, featuring Jevetta Steele; Illusion**Theater: Blues in the Night, Co-creator of Always**and Forever; The Lab Theater: Co-creator of When**a Man Loves a Diva* **Other** As Founder, Director

and Arranger for the award-winning vocal jazz

ensemble Moore by Four. Mr. Moore has traveled

extensively with his ensemble doing concerts and

workshops in the U.S., Europe and Japan and has

shared the stage with notable jazz artists Bobby

McFerrin, Harry Connick, Jr., the late Joe Williams,

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VocalEssence; Adjunct Professor at the U of M

School of Music conducting the Gospel Choir;

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Baptist Church in Minneapolis. **Upcoming Projects**Penumbra Theatre: *Girl Shakes Loose*

ARTISTIC STAFF

MICHAEL WANGEN

Lighting Designer

Park Square *Nina Simone: Four Women* **Representative Theatre** *Jungle Theater: Bars and Measures*; *Illusion Theater: Night at Olympus*; *History Theatre: George Bonga, Black Voyageur*; *Pillsbury House Theatre: The Gospel of Lovingkindness*; *Marin Theatre Co.: Gem of the Ocean*; *Transatlantic Love Affair: Emilie/Eurydice*; *Illusion Theater: For the Loyal* **TV/Film** *A Prairie Home Companion*, *Stage Lighting Supervisor* **Awards** 2012-2013 McKnight Theater Artists Fellowship **Upcoming Projects** *Transatlantic Love Affair: Promise Land*; *Illusion Theater: Miranda*; *Frank Theatre: Citizen*

SADIE WARD

Properties Designer

Park Square *A Raisin in the Sun*; *Nina Simone: Four Women*; *Murder for Two*; *The Other Place*; *2 Sugars*, *Room for Cream*; *33 Variations*; *Behind the Eye*; *Of Mice and Men* **Representative Theatre** *Theatre in the Round*, *The Phipps Center for the Arts*, *Lyric Arts*, *Theatre Unbound*, *Theatre Pro Rata* **Training** B.A., *Theatre Studies*; B.F.A., *Arts Administration* **Other** *Human Resources Generalist at the Guthrie*

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Jaya Robillard

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Clara Cavins-Wolford

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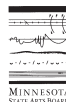
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Tuesday – Friday:

12:00 – 5:00pm & 6:30 – 8:00pm (performance days only)

12:00 – 5:00pm (non-performance days)

Saturday: 2:00 – 8:00pm* (performance days only)

*For Sat matinees, ticket office & phones open at 12:30pm

Sunday: 1:00 – 3:30pm (performance days only)

Proscenium Stage seats 348. Andy Boss Thrust Stage seats 203.
 The Historic Hamm Building is smoke-free.
 Latecomers are seated at the discretion of the House Manager.
 Restrooms and water fountains on main floor and lower level.
 Cameras/audio/video equipment and laser pointers prohibited.

COMING SOON TO PARK SQUARE:

Linda Kelsey* and Tracey Maloney* / photo by Petronella J. Yisma / *member, actors' equity association

AMY'S VIEW

on the Proscenium Stage
MAY 12 – JUN 4

By David Hare; Directed by Gary Gisselman

Regional Premiere

Everyone has a different view. Amy's view is that love conquers all. In 1979 Amy visits her mother, actress Esme Allen, with a big favor to ask and a brash new boyfriend in tow. When the pair meet, Amy will find the views she holds dear are painfully tested as she has to decide what's worth fighting for. Twin Cities' favorites Tracey Maloney and Linda Kelsey play Amy and her mother, a grande dame of the London stage in this don't-miss drama!



LOOKING AHEAD...

The 2017–2018 season includes these two great shows plus many more!

Dot Dec 8, 2017 – Jan 7, 2018

By Colman Domingo / Midwest Premiere / Comedy-Drama / Proscenium Stage
A riotous mid-life family brawl where losing your mind and losing your sanity are two different things.

Cardboard Piano Jan 19 – Feb 18, 2018

By Hansol Jung / Midwest Premiere / Drama / Andy Boss Thrust Stage
A powerful examination of the human capacity for violence, love and forgiveness.

See the complete 2017–2018 season listing online.

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