

# AUG 1<sup>st</sup>: SHOWCASE FOR EMERGING BLACK PLAYWRIGHTS OPENS

*Citywide theatre producers expected to view new plays that feature Black LGBT heroes.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 24, 2007

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What: Stage Reading Showcase of up-and-coming Black playwrights (Free Admission)

When: Wednesday, August 1st, 2007 at 7pm

Where: South Oxford Space, 138 South Oxford Place, Brooklyn, NY

Brooklyn, NY -- On Wednesday, August 1st (7pm) at South Oxford Space, Freedom Train Productions will open Fire! - a staged reading series and showcase that features new work in development by up-and-coming Black playwrights: Jesse Cameron Alick, Andrea E. Davis, yvonne fly onakeme etaghene, Andre Lancaster, and Nick Mwaluko. Opening night festivities will be hosted by Djola Branner, Hampshire College Theatre Professor and playwright of Mighty Real: A Tribute to Sylvester and include a stage reading of Nick Mwaluko's new play Are Women Human? **Following Opening Night, there will be Fire! stage readings at South Oxford Space every Wednesday and Thursday (8/1, 8/2, 8/8, 8/9, 8/15, 8/16, 8/22, 8/23, 8/29, 8/30) at 7pm in August (Free Admission/No Ticket Necessary).**

From Shakespeare to Eugene O'Neill, theatre has always been a space where artists dramatize important social questions and concerns. That being said, playwrights like Lorraine Hansberry, Ntozake Shange, August Wilson and Susan-Lori Parks all put Blacks as leading figures in their dramatic works. Essentially asking their theatre audience to view human struggle through the perspective of a Black protagonist. The producers who challenged their audiences and selected these playwrights' works for production are trailblazers of their respective times.

**Freedom Train Productions is a showcase and platform for today's theatre producers and companies that seek lead characters on their stages who are not only of African descent but who are also Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT).** Our resident playwrights all have work in development that features plays with Black LGBT hero and shero characters. Their residency consisted of a four-month play development workshop facilitated by professional playwrights Djola Branner, playwright and member of the legendary performance troupe Afro Pomo Homos, and Zina Camblin, Juilliard Playwriting Fellow and playwright of And Her Hair Went With Her (Phoenix Theatre). Our 5 residents playwrights are writers with previous stage experience at HERE Arts Center, WOW Cafe Theatre, Blue Heron Theatre, and the Fresh Fruit Festival.

"We're like a middle person," says Resident Playwright and Artistic Director Andre Lancaster. "Freedom Train connects the work of up-and-coming Black playwrights with companies and producers for full production at their respective venues."

"New Professional Theatre, knows how important it is for Black playwrights' works to be promoted to the larger theatre community. That's the business we are in as well in fact," says Sheila Davis, Artistic Director of New Professional Theatre. "I've seen Mr. Lancaster's theatre work and I'm impressed by it. I look forward to the opportunity of checking out the four other resident playwrights' work of Freedom Train."

Freedom Train Productions promotes new work written by up-and-coming Black playwrights. All of our plays feature Black LGBT hero and shero characters. Our playwrights have had work staged at Fresh Fruit Festival, Blue Heron Theatre, HERE Arts Center, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, WOW Cafe Theatre, and other NYC theaters. We are supported by a generous grant from NYU Wagner School and the OSI/Soros Foundation. Freedom Train Productions has been named among POZ Magazine's "35 ones to watch out for in 2007." More information can be found at <http://freedomtrainproductions.org>.