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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LUCILLE LORTEL THEATRE ANNOUNCES  
RECIPIENTS OF THE 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NYC PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
PLAYWRITING FELLOWSHIP**

*10-Minute Plays by NYC Students, Directed by Kimille Howard*

New York, NY (April 11, 2023) – The Lucille Lortel Theatre is pleased to announce the recipients of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NYC Public High School Playwriting Fellowship, created as an opportunity for aspiring young writers citywide to get unparalleled access to professional theater artists for mentoring. The Fellows and Finalists of the program represent different boroughs of NYC, as well as D75 and D79 schools. Each aspiring playwright submitted an original 10-minute play and was judged by the following panel of playwrights and directors: Preston Burger, Mildred Lewis, A.J. Muhammad, Cherry Lou Sy, and Gabriel Vega Weissman. Plays were chosen based on dramatic structure and the playwright's individual voice.

Fellows will meet with a mentor to discuss their play and learn more about playwriting as a career in the hopes of inspiring the newest generation of theater makers. This year's mentors are Bleu Beckford Burrell and Nilan. Fellows work directly with their mentor, and then with director Kimille Howard (Assistant Stage Director at the Metropolitan Opera, co-founder of the Black Classical Music Archive, Assistant Director of Broadway's *Ain't Too Proud*), to learn what the role of a director is and how they collaborate with a playwright to create a theater work.

All plays will be presented in a special live performance on May 22 (location TBD) with Kimille Howard directing all works. In addition to the unique opportunity to see their plays brought to life, a collection of the Fellows' plays will be published by the Lucille Lortel Theatre and distributed to the student playwrights. Participation in this program is free.

“We were overwhelmed with the response to this program in our fourth year. It's more important than ever to encourage young artists to share their voices and part of the mission of the Lucille Lortel Theatre is to foster, support, and promote new and diverse theater voices,” said George Forbes, Executive Director of the Lucille Lortel Theatre. “We are also extremely grateful to Peter Avery and the NYC Department of Education for all their assistance.”

“One of the foundational goals of any educational initiative is to foster student voice and the chance to share points of view. I am so appreciative of The Lucille Lortel Theatre's Playwriting Fellowship which encourages NYC public school teens to consider the world around them, to express their unique insights creatively through



original plays. Beyond the stories we share, we need to continue focusing on whose stories are heard, or not yet heard, in order to truly come together as a society. How inspiring for these diverse young artists to have theater professionals see them, hear them and bring them from page to stage by a professional team of actors and directors," remarked Peter Avery, Director of Theater for the NYC Department of Education.

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



### **This Year's Fellows**

**Arianna M. Collado** - Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, Manhattan – *Dead*

**Britney Cuatlacuatl** - Fordham High School for the Arts, Bronx - *El Niño Que Fue Y No Llego (The Boy That Went And Never Arrived)*

**Victoria** - Pathways to Graduation at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Brooklyn (D79) - *A Few Choice Words*

**Imogen Russell** - Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School, Queens – *Stalling*

**Jazzy Price** - P23 Queens New York City Children's Center Upper School, Queens (D75) - *Pick Fros, Not Fights*

### **Finalists**

**Queenie Chen** - P23 Queens New York City Children's Center Upper School, Queens (D75) - *HERO and VILLAIN*

**Jolene Conti** - Repertory Company High School for Theatre Arts, Manhattan - *Forest of Arden*

**Joseph Igiebor Yusuf Fofana** - Fordham High School for the Arts, Bronx - *The Sugar Kanés.*

**Arvaa H.** - Health, Arts, Robotics, and Technology High School, Queens - *Jehoram*

### **ABOUT THE NYC PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PLAYWRITING FELLOWSHIP**

The Lucille Lortel Theatre, in collaboration with the Department of Education Arts Office Theater Program, created the NYC Public High School Student Playwriting Fellowship as an opportunity for young writers citywide to get unparalleled access to NYC professional artists for mentoring. Funded entirely by the Lucille Lortel Theatre, this innovative theater education program sends a high-profile message of inclusivity and artistry to both the educational and professional worlds. The program engages public school students of all levels of ability who devise an original one-act play. Master theater artists from across the professional theatre community and who represent the diverse continuum of the participating students will participate in the program, mentoring and directing the students to create fully realized plays based on their collective experiences and imagination. The free program provides approximately two months for students to write and submit their plays. Fellows then have another two months of play development culminating with a performance.



The opportunities provided by this program encourage NYC public high school students to become the next generation of playwrights. For more information, visit <https://www.lortel.org/hspf>.

### **ABOUT THE LUCILLE LORTEL THEATRE**

The Lucille Lortel Theatre's mission is to foster both new and established artists, increase awareness and appreciation of Off-Broadway, and uphold fair and equitable business and artistic practices in service of creating a larger, more diverse community of theatre makers and audiences. The Theatre most recently produced "Dangerous Acts" in partnership with Howard University, currently streaming on All-Arts' House Seats program. This season the company also produced *Four Saints in Three Acts*, performed by David Greenspan, and co-produced Kate Berlant's sold-out one woman show *Kate*, both New York Times Critic's Picks. Its programs include NYC Public High School Playwriting Fellowship, now in its fourth season, Fellowships in NYC Theatre at Bennington College, The Lortel Theatre Music Theatre Lab: Immigrant Experiences at The New School, Lucille Lortel Awards and Playwrights' Sidewalk, Internet Off-Broadway Database (IOBDB.com), and Non-Profit Theatre Strategic and Management Services. Under the direction of its two new Artistic Directors, Caridad Svich and Michael Heitzman, the company will be announcing more new programs in support of playwrights, composers, and other theatre artists in the near future. For more information, please visit [www.lortel.org](http://www.lortel.org).

### **ABOUT THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The NYC Department of Education is the largest system of public schools in the United States, serving about 1.1 million students in approximately 1,800 schools. The Department of Education supports universal access to arts education through the ArtsCount initiative, which tracks and reports student participation in arts education and tracks progress at the school and city-wide levels for meeting New York State Instructional Requirements for the Arts. For more information, visit [NYC DOE Office of Arts and Special Projects](#).

### **ABOUT KIMILLE HOWARD**

**KIMILLE HOWARD** is an Assistant Stage Director at the Metropolitan Opera and co-founder of the Black Classical Music Archive. Select directing credits: *The Passion of Mary Cardwell Dawson* (Glimmerglass/Washington National Opera), *Songs in Flight* (Sparks and Wiry Cries/Met Live) *The Italian Girl* (Tulsa Opera), *American Apollo* (Des Moines Metro Opera), *B.R.O.K.E.N Code B.I.R.D Switching* (Berkshire Theatre Group), *Quamino's Map* (Chicago Opera Theater) *Highway 1, USA* (IU Opera), *Night Trip* (Opera NexGen), *The Visit* (ECU), *L'Amant Anonyme* (Wolf Trap Opera), *Death By Life: a live virtual opera* (White Snake Projects), *In The Open* (WCSU), *Soil Beneath* (Primary Stages/59E59), *#!thole Country Clapback* (Loading Dock Theatre), The Fellowship Plays (Lucille Lortel Theatre Foundation), *A Light Staggering* by Jeesun Choi (EST), *Low Power* (EST), *Skeleton Crew* (TheatreSquared) and TRIGGERED (Cherry Lane Theatre). Her work has also been seen at Playwrights' Horizons, 59E59, The Tank, Theatre Now, The Circle in the Square Theatre Circle Series, Queens Theatre, Juilliard, The Flea, The Lark, JAGFest, NYU, Sea Dog Theater, and Atlantic Acting School, CLASSIX/The Lewis Center, among others. Broadway: *Ain't Too Proud*



(Assistant Director) Met Opera: *Porgy and Bess* and *Tosca* (Assistant Stage Director) Recent Fellowships: NYTW 2050 Fellowship, MTC Jonathan Alper Directing Fellowship, current member of The New Georges Directors Jam, and a participant in New York Stage and Film's inaugural NYSAF NEXUS project. Kimille was the Series Producer for the first season of American Opera Project's *Music as the Message*. She and her design team are 2023 recipients of OPERA America's Robert L. B. Tobin Director-Designer Prize, generously funded by the Tobin Theatre Arts Fund.

[www.kimillehoward.com](http://www.kimillehoward.com)

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