

KANEZA SCHAAAL

*JACK &*

Program  
Notes

MCA  
STAGE

Thu-Sat  
May 24-26, 2018

Edlis Neeson  
Theater

Eyes  
Wide

Lights  
Low

at MCA  
Stage

Winter/Spring  
2018

*JACK &* running time  
is seventy-five minutes  
with no intermission.

Creative Engagement  
and Presenting  
Collaborator: Jane M  
Saks and Project&

Project& collaborates  
with artists and  
partners across all  
platforms to create  
new, unconventional  
models of cultural  
participation and  
experiences with social  
impact. We create work  
to reinforce agency,  
creative voice, and  
common humanity;  
support risk-taking and  
innovative artistic  
excellence; and  
stimulate dialogue and  
shifts. Project&'s  
network of  
collaborators support  
longevity and expansion  
of our cultural gestures  
and break artistic  
confines. We create  
original work focused  
on the democratic  
promise of equitable  
participation.

Central to our practice  
is bridge-building across  
fields in a rigorous  
creative process that  
demands time and  
space to risk arriving in  
places we did not  
initially imagine. These  
times call on us to  
investigate and  
challenge, putting  
long-held assumptions  
aside and privileging  
new models of  
community and cultural  
engagement. Project&  
creative collaborators  
include two-time  
Pulitzer Prize-winning  
playwright Lynn  
Nottage; MacArthur  
Fellows Lynsey Addario  
and Claire Chase; visual  
artist and Guggenheim  
Fellow Hank Willis  
Thomas; award-  
winning visual artists  
Cheryl Pope, Jim  
Hodges, and Kerry  
James Marshall; Pulitzer  
Prize-winning  
composer Du Yun,  
extraordinary scholar  
and performer E.  
Patrick Johnson; and  
Oscar-nominated  
filmmaker Yance Ford.

**project&**

Created and directed by Kaneza Schaal

Starring Cornell Alston

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Performers	Modesto Flako Jimenez, Rucyl Mills, Stacey Karen Robinson
Design	Christopher Myers
Sound	Rucyl Mills
Light	Megan Lang and Ashley Vellano
Text	Christopher Myers (Part I), Christopher Myers and Jackie Sibblies Drury (Part II), Keisha (Part III)
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PRODUCTION

Design and Production Associate	Cheyenne Williams
Stage Manager	Clarissa Marie Ligon
Producers	Rachel Silverman Jane Jung
Contributing Artists	Robert Chappelle Daphne Gaines Yahhkhem Hyman April Matthis Naomi Saito

# FROM THE CURATOR

In our very first conversations, Kaneza Schaal described *JACK &* as an occasion to hold bigger conversations inside and beyond theater walls. I admire Kaneza's dedication to the possibilities that rise to the surface when social justice and creative practice come together—in informal conversations after the show, in interactions between artist and student, and in the performers' navigation of a carefully staged scene. *JACK &* uses the flexibility of avant-garde theater to deftly transition between expressive styles, shifting the logic of a scene instantaneously. But that changeable nature is the very thing that keeps us on our toes and provides a rich set of entry points. I am grateful to Project& for supporting the broadening of audiences and engagement projects, as well as our other partners in connecting the creative team with Chicago's education, organizing, and theater communities: Prison + Neighborhood Art Project, League of Chicago Theatres, Marwen, and the MCA's own SPACE and TCA programs. The spirit of generosity and mutual care with which these artists embrace one another, their audiences, and their unique approaches to theater becomes more evident every time I see them in action.

—Tara Aisha Willis  
Associate Curator of Performance

NOTE: Haze and fog are used during  
this performance.

# KANEZA SCHAAAL & JACK

Program  
Notes  
Thu-Sat  
May 24-26, 2018

MCA  
STAGE  
Edlis Neeson  
Theater

Additional engagement programming was created in collaboration with Ben Thiem and Deb Clapp of the League of Chicago Theaters, Damon Locks and the Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy, Christian Ortiz and Cynthia Weiss of Marwen, Black and Pink: Chicago, and Sarah Ross of Prison + Neighborhood Art Project.

Accessible programming for *JACK* & is supported by artist and scholar Carrie Sandahl, director of Bodies of Work: A Network of Disability Arts and Culture and faculty in the Department of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

MCA Stage acknowledges the support of Jeanine Pollard, Master's candidate in Museum and Exhibition Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and primary liaison for Bodies of Work at MCA Stage in the 2017-18 season.



DISABILITY AND  
HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COLLEGE OF  
APPLIED HEALTH  
SCIENCES  
UIC

## ABOUT THE WORK

### PART I : THE MONOLOGUES

*What had happened was . . .*

### PART II : THE SITCOM

*The Good Life . . .*

### PART III : THE COTILLION

*Goldfish with wings . . .*

"Jack" works the night shift at an industrial bakery. He returns home to bake a cake for his wife, "Jill." "Jack" ends up whirling through a dance—part dream, part ritual—reentering his own internal life. The performance draws from aspirational class stories like those in *The Honeymooners* and *Amos 'n' Andy*; the paintings of Agnes Martin, Ellen Gallagher, and Ruth Azawa; tigers in Harlem; real and imagined society-entrance ceremonies like Cotillion balls; and markers of transition from John Canoe traditions, to the mirroring and mimicry found in African American dance pageantry of the late nineteenth century. The performance considers reentry into society after prison; focusing not on the time one has served, but the measure of one's dreaming that is given to the state.



Kaneza Schaal: *JACK* &. Image by Christopher Myers.

## RELATED PROGRAMS

MCA Stage's series of artist-centered talks, workshops, and open studios engages the public with the artists in intimate settings and provides a closer look at the creative process.

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### TCA ACTIVITY

Sat, May 26, 6 pm

The MCA's Teen Creative Agency lead an activity for audiences in the Street prior to the evening performance. Rewrite history by typing your own story over historical documents and discuss who has been left out of history.

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### TALK: IMAGINING CHANGE IN CYCLES OF INCARCERATION

Tue, May 22

Kaneza Schaal and Cornell Alston joined Heidi Mueller, Director of Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, and Shawn Reddy, Social Science Specialist for Elementary Schools (K-8) for Chicago Public Schools, on a panel moderated by Natalie Moore, WBEZ's South Side Bureau Reporter, to discuss how imagination and art, both inside and outside of the prison experience, can interact with civic efforts to interrupt the cycles of neglect and isolation that prison creates.

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### TCA WORKSHOP SERIES

Fri-Sat, Mar 16-17

Schaal and Alston led two workshops to share their creative practices with the MCA's Teen Creative Agency (TCA) and students from Marwen Lab, a local arts education program.

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### STORIES THAT BUILD OUR FUTURE: EXCELLENCE, EXPERIMENTATION, AND AUDIENCE

Wed, Mar 14

Schaal joined theater professionals and artists from the League of Chicago Theaters to discuss the myth that experimental art forms are inherently for small, elite audiences. The group also explored how we build theater that embraces the dreaming capacity of all audiences—our desire to synthesize the abstract and enjoy the hybrid.

## RELATED PROGRAMS

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IN PROGRESS: *JACK & WITH KANEZA SCHAAL*  
Tue, Mar 13

Director Schaal, Alston, and Myers gave a sneak peek of the library of media and textual materials that influenced the process of developing *JACK &*.

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SPACE WORKSHOPS  
Tue, Mar 13

Schaal, Alston, and Myers led workshops for art and civics students at Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy through the MCA's School Partnership for Art and Civic Engagement (SPACE) program as guests of Embedded Artist Damon Locks.

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PROJECT& ENGAGEMENT DINNER  
Mon, Mar 12

Schaal, Alston, and Myers shared dinner and discussion on dreaming and prison justice with twenty local cultural workers, activists, and educators, hosted by Jane M. Saks, Creative Engagement and Presenting Collaborator, and Project&.

## ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

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RELAXED PERFORMANCE WITH ASL INTERPRETATION  
Sat, May 26, 2 pm

Relaxed performances are for people with or without disabilities who prefer some flexibility in terms of noise and movement in the theater. Stage lighting and sound have been adapted by the artists to be less intense. Patrons are free to leave and reenter the theater as necessary, and theater lights are kept at a glow to facilitate movement. Sensory rest areas are available outside the theater for patrons to take a break before returning to the show. Trained volunteers are present to assist.

Shannon Moutinho provides ASL interpretation for this performance.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

KANEZA SCHAAL (CREATOR AND DIRECTOR) is a New York City-based theater artist. Her recent work *GO FORTH* premiered at Performance Space 122, then showed at the Genocide Memorial Amphitheater in Kigali, Rwanda; Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's River-to-River Festival; Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans; Cairo International Contemporary Theater Festival in Egypt; and Wesleyan University. Schaal received a 2017 MAP Fund award, a 2016 Creative Capital Award, and is the current Aetna New Voices Fellow at Hartford Stage. *JACK &* was co-commissioned by the Walker Arts Center, REDCAT, On The Boards, PICA, and the Center for Contemporary Art Cincinnati with support from the National Performance Network and NEFA National Theater Project. This spring, her new piece, *CARTOGRAPHY*, will be workshopped through New Victory Theater Lab and NYU Abu Dhabi, and will show at The Kennedy Center's New Vision New Voices. Schaal's work has been supported by Baryshnikov Arts Center, Performance Space 122, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Nathan Cummings Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Theater Communications Group, and a Princess Grace George C. Wolfe Award. Her work with The Wooster Group, Elevator Repair Service, Richard Maxwell/New York City Players, Claude Wampler, Jim Findlay, and Dean Moss has brought her to venues across the globe including Centre Pompidou, the Royal Lyceum Theater in Edinburgh, The Whitney Museum, and MoMA.

CORNELL ALSTON (LEAD PERFORMER) is a longtime member of Rehabilitation Through the Arts, a nonprofit that uses the arts as a springboard to teach life skills to individuals both inside and outside of state correctional facilities. He started the Youth Empowerment Through the Arts initiative launched in Queens, NY, and he continues to work as

an arts-in-education advocate. He is the recipient of a 2016 Creative Capital Award. Alston performed and collaborated with Kaneza Schaal on *PLEASE, BURY ME* at Baryshnikov Arts Center and *GO FORTH* during a Performance Space 122 RAMP residency. Other performance highlights include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *12 Angry Men*, and the title role in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

MODESTO FLAKO JIMENEZ (PERFORMER) is a Dominican-born, Bushwick-raised theater maker, producer, and educator. Jimenez was the ATI Best Actor Award Winner for 2016, HOLA Best Ensemble Award Winner for 2015, and HOLA Outstanding Solo Performer for 2017. He has also been profiled by the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. Jimenez is best known for original productions and three signature festivals—Ghetto Hors D'Oeuvres, One Catches Light, and Oye! Avant-Garde Night!—produced with his company Oye Group. Jimenez has appeared on TEDxBushwick, *Early Shaker Spirituals* (The Wooster Group), *Last Night At The Palladium* (Bushwick Starr/3LD), *Yoleros* (Bushwick Starr/IATI theater), *Conversation: How to Make it in Black America, Pt.1* (JACK), *Take Me Home* (3LD/Incubator Arts Project), Richard Maxwell's *Samara* (Soho Repertory), and *iOye! For My Dear Brooklyn* (Abrons Art Center). Jimenez received the 2016 Princess Grace Award Honorarium in Theater. In 2018 he became the first Dominican-American Lead Artist in The Public Theater Under the Radar Festival.

JANE JUNG (PRODUCER) is a manager and producer for individual artists, artist-led companies, and theater projects. Jung is currently working with Ping Chong + Company, Writer and Performer Diana Oh, and Gung Ho Projects. From 2014–17, she was Managing Director of The Civilians, where she oversaw all administrative, fundraising, general management, and producing areas of the company. During her time at

SUPPORT FOR  
THE ARTISTS

*JACK &* is a project of Creative Capital, the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Theater Project, and The Map Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; a National Performance Network (NPN) Creation Fund Project co-commissioned by the Contemporary Arts Center (Cincinnati) in partnership with On The Boards (Seattle), Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), REDCAT (Los Angeles), and NPN; a commission by Hartford Stage through the Aetna New Voices Fellowship; and with support from BRICLab, the Baryshnikov Arts Center, and THE LUMBERYARD. *JACK &* will have its New York City premiere in BAM Next Wave Festival in October 2018.

Thank you to Miya Carey, Ama Codjoe, Lisa Dent, Charles Fenner, James Finch and Country Boy Bakery, Miranda Haymon, Daniel Alexander Jones, Thomas O. Kriegsmann, Eddy Kwon and MyCincinnati, Sam Miller, Steve Neil, Raquel Palmas, Jane Saks and Project&, Annie Sieg, and Cathy Zimmerman.

## ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Select MCA Stage performances include open-captioning, sign-interpretation, listening devices, or are relaxed sensory.

Please call 312-397-4010 in advance to reserve seats and inclusive services.

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## BUY TICKETS

ONLINE  
mchicago.org/stage

BY PHONE  
312-397-4010

AT THE MCA  
BOX OFFICE

220 E Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60611

Single performance tickets starting at \$30; \$10 for students, limited availability.

Groups of ten or more save 20% on full-price tickets; call 312-397-4010.

## FREE MUSEUM ADMISSION WITH TICKET

Present your MCA Stage ticket stub to receive FREE ADMISSION\* and 10% off your purchase at the MCA Store.\*\* Or become an MCA Member and save 15%.

Ticket stub is valid during regular hours up to seven days after the performance date.

\* Not accepted for special ticketed exhibitions.  
\*\* Regular price, in-stock merchandise only; no other discounts apply.

The Civilians, the company was the first theater company in residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and produced premieres of a new musical *Pretty Filthy*, which was nominated for Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding New Musical, and *The Undertaking*, which premiered at BAM Next Wave Festival and toured to Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, France. Previously, she was General Manager at Ping Chong + Company from 2010-14. She has worked as a producer with *Little Lord* and the Women's Project and produced new works presented at the New Ohio Theater's Ice Factory Festival, The Public Theater's Under the Radar Festival, City Center Stage II, and The Bushwick Starr. She is a board member of Network of Ensemble Theaters and is on the editorial board of the Yale Theater Management Knowledge Base.

MEGAN LANG (LIGHTING) has a BA from Fordham University and has designed lighting at BAM, La Mama, Abrons Arts Center, EST, Under St. Mark's, the Wild Project, Dixon Place, 59E59, JACK, and Atlantic Theater Company Stage 2, among other projects. Recent designs include *A Star Has Burnt My Eye* (BAM Next Wave, directed by Paul Lazar), *Riot Antigone* (La Mama, directed by Seonjae Kim), and *Furry!/La Furia!* (The Bushwick Starr, directed by William Burke). She is the resident lighting designer for the Ubumuntu Arts Festival in Rwanda. Assistant or associate special effects work includes Sting's *The Last Ship*, *Our Lady of Kibeho*, and *An Act of God*.

CLARISSA MARIE LIGON (STAGE MANAGER) is a stage manager, designer, and classically trained singer. She makes art because she believes it can change the world. Recent production work includes *Cruel Intentions: The Musical* at Le Poisson Rouge, *The Rise and Fall of Marcus Monroe* at Jeffrey and Paula Gural Theatre, *3/Fifths* at 3LD, *Penny Arcade's Longing Lasts Longer* at St. Ann's Warehouse, and *La Paloma Prisoner* at Hi-ARTS.

RUCYL MILLS (SOUND DESIGNER) is a sonic new media artist. Her work revolves around a live experimentation performance process, centering sound as a medium to represent non-tactile concepts like time, emotion, identity, and physics. During her live performances, she uses MIDI controllers, loopers, and effects processors, often with accompanying visual vignettes composed of found footage and abstract personal video.

## CHRISTOPHER MYERS (DESIGN AND TEXT)

is an artist and writer who lives in New York. While he is widely acclaimed for his work with literature for young people, he is also an accomplished fine artist who has lectured and exhibited internationally. His practice can be divided into two categories: interventions in historical narratives and work crafted with artisans from around the globe. Myers's work has been exhibited at MoMA PS1 and included as part of Greater New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Prospect Biennial in New Orleans, and Contrasts Gallery Shanghai. Myers has curated shows in Vietnam, designed theater that has travelled from P.S. 122 in New York City to the Genocide Memorial Theater in Kigali, Rwanda, and collaborated with Hank Willis Thomas on the short film *Am I Going Too Fast*, which premiered at Sundance. Myers participated in the Whitney Independent Studio Program. He has written essays that have been published by the *New York Times* and is currently working on a book comparing global censorship methodologies.

## STACEY KAREN ROBINSON (PERFORMER)

is a multidisciplinary theater artist. She performed her new solo work, *You Never Can Always Sometimes Tell*, in New York at JACK. She developed the show with the support from the Foundation of Contemporary Arts, a 2017 Process Space Residency from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and a work-in-progress production at Salvage Vanguard Theater, Texas. Her previous one-woman show,

*Quiet Frenzy*, is published in *solo/black/woman: scripts, interviews, and essays*, Northwestern University Press, 2014. Performances of *Quiet Frenzy* included JACK, the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, Northwestern University, and the Wild Project. A Bronx native, she is a proud recipient of the Bronx Recognizes Its Own (BRIO) Award for Playwriting, 2009. Robinson has appeared as an actress in many productions, including Daniel Alexander Jones's *Duat* (Soho Rep.), Toshiki Okada's *Quiet, Comfort* (Hoi Polloi), and Erik Ehn's *Her Speech* (Planet Connections - Playwrights for a Cause).

## RACHEL SILVERMAN (PRODUCER)

is a New York City-based theater artist and producer. She works on the artistic staff at New York Theatre Workshop as a curator and producer of all workshops and artist development programs, NYTW's NEXT DOOR series for artists and companies producing their own work, and the 2050 Fellowship for early career directors and playwrights. Silverman served as festival producer for PRELUDENYC in 2012 and 2013 and was the associate producer of 13P for its final years. Other producing credits include 13P's OBIE Award-winning *A Map of Virtue* and UglyRhino's site-specific *What it Means to Disappear Here*. She holds a BA from Wesleyan University in Theater and Sociology.

## ASHLEY VELLANO (LIGHTING DESIGNER)

graduated from the University of Mississippi with a BFA in Technical Theater emphasis in Lighting Design. She has been designing lights in New York City since 2008. She is one the founding members of Kidz Theater in NYC, a company which provides a free professional training ground for young performers. Vellano has worked with Kaneza Schaal since 2014 and designed the lighting for *GO FORTH*.

## CHEYANNE WILLIAMS (DESIGN AND PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE)

is a New York-based theater artist. Recent design collaborations include Assistant Set Designer for *{mylingerieplay}*, Rattlestick

Playwrights Theater and Props Designer for *Cute Activist*, The Bushwick Starr. Upcoming projects include Props Design for Big Green Theater at The Bushwick Starr in spring 2018, as well as the premiere of *up your aesthetic.*, a devised retelling of the ancient Greek myths of the Amazons, at the DC Fringe Festival this summer.

# DATE NIGHT



Marisol Escobar. Photo: Herman Hiller.

Join us for dinner or drinks before or after the theater at Marisol, named one of the hottest restaurants in Chicago by Zagat and one of *Vogue's* "Six Chicago Restaurants You Should Know About Now." Call 312-799-3599 to make reservations.

# MARISOL

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## SEASON CALENDAR

2017

Sep 7-10

600 HIGHWAYMEN  
*The Fever*

Oct 5-8

Marc Bamuthi Joseph/  
The Living Word Project  
*/peh-LO-tah/-a futbol  
framed freedom suite . . .*

Nov 9-12

Faye Driscoll  
*Thank You For  
Coming: Play*

Dec 7-10

Twyla Tharp  
*Minimalism and Me*

2018

Jan 25-28

Federico León  
*Las ideas*

Feb 8-11

Claire Cunningham  
& Jess Curtis  
*The Way You Look  
(at me) Tonight*

Apr 6-7

Mind Over Mirrors  
*Bellowing Sun*

Apr 12-15

Okwui Okpokwasili  
*Poor People's TV Room*

May 24-26

Kaneza Schaal  
*JACK &*

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Program notes are  
compiled by  
Tara Aisha Willis.

MCA  
CHIC  
AGO

## SUPPORT FOR MCA STAGE

Lead support for the 2017-18 season of MCA Stage is provided by Elizabeth A. Liebman.

## GENEROUS SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY:

Lois and Steve Eisen  
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Additional generous support for MCA Stage is provided by Enact, the MCA's performance affinity group.

The MCA is a proud member of the Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

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\*Enact Chair  
As of May 2018

The MCA's newest affinity group, Enact, is a group of MCA donors dedicated to supporting the renowned programs of MCA Stage. Join today for opportunities to meet artists, gain behind-the-scenes access, and discuss groundbreaking directions with leading curators—all while providing vital support.

## BENEFITS OF ENACT MEMBERSHIP INCLUDE:

- Members-only programming throughout the MCA Stage season, such as intimate gatherings with MCA performance leadership, pre- and post-performance discussions with artists, and behind-the-scenes access to select rehearsals
- Invitation to Season Reveal, an annual preview of the upcoming season
- Opportunities for complimentary drinks and tickets

Circle Donor membership is required to join Enact. Enact dues are an additional \$1,000 annually. For more information, contact us at [enact@mcachicago.org](mailto:enact@mcachicago.org).

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## ABOUT MCA STAGE

As an internationally renowned institution devoted to contemporary culture, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago presents the most thought-provoking visual art and performing arts of our time. MCA Stage is a vibrant series presenting theater, dance, and music by leading artists from the United States and around the world in the MCA's three-hundred seat Edlis Neeson Theater.

MCA Stage's groundbreaking performances are an integral part of the MCA's artist-activated, audience-engaged programming. Along with the museum's exhibitions and educational initiatives, they encourage a broad and diverse community to experience and discuss the work and ideas of living artists.

## PARKING

Validate your ticket at coat check for \$12 parking in the MCA garage (220 E Chicago Ave) and the Bernardin garage (747 North Wabash). The \$12 parking is limited to six hours on the date of performance.

## LOST AND FOUND

To inquire about a lost item, call the museum at 312-280-2660. Unclaimed articles are held for thirty days.

## SEATING

Please switch off all noise-making devices while you are in the theater.

Patrons are seated at the management's discretion. Food and open beverage containers are not allowed in the seating area.

## REPRODUCTION

Unauthorized recording and reproduction of a performance are prohibited.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

312-280-2660

## BOX OFFICE

312-397-4010

## VOLUNTEER FOR PERFORMANCES

312-397-4072

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