

IN[HEIR]ITANCE PROJECT PRESENTS

# EXODUS: RECREATION



**FRIDAY MARCH 31**  
**SATURDAY APRIL 1**  
LIMIT BREAKER CHURCH

**MONDAY APRIL 3**  
THE HALLORAN CENTRE  
AT THE ORPHEUM THEATRE

IN[HEIR]ITANCE PROJECT PRESENTS

# EXODUS: RECREATION

CREATED BY THE  
PEOPLE OF MEMPHIS

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The In[HEIR]itance Project is a collaborative theater company that has spent the last year working with communities all around Memphis to create the brand new play that you are experiencing today!

Throughout this process we held creative salons, text studies, virtual conversations and open rehearsals inspired by three interwoven ideas; **the history of the city, the experiences of the people who live here, and themes of the story of Exodus.** So many Memphians generously shared their time and insights with us and with each other, and helped contribute to the kind of understanding that enables longer-term, meaningful community relationships.

800+ participants  
27 Partner Organizations  
31 Public Events  
18 Local Collaborating Artists  
8 BBQ restaurants  
5 Performances  
1 Memphis

**WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE  
AND THE CITY OF MEMPHIS.**

# CAST

Chris Franceschi\*  
Emily Rooker\*  
Niambi Webster\*

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# PRODUCTION

Director.....Zhailon Levingston  
Associate Director.....Karon Samuels\*  
Artistic Producer.....Jon Adam Ross  
Music Team.....Ellie Kahn & Denise Manning  
Playwriting Team.....Writeous Soul\*, Dassia Rose\*,  
Unbroken Poet\*, Jon Adam Ross  
Visual Designer.....Sumo the Artist\*  
Sound Designer.....Rice Barber III\*  
Music Director.....Nate Smith\*  
Production Stage  
Manager.....Sherronda Johnson\*  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Danet James\*  
Company Manager &  
Production Assistant.....Marijke Silberman  
Impact Producer.....Ariel Warmflash  
Local Liaisons.....Princeton James\* &  
Marcy Stagner Wurzburg\*  
Dramaturg.....Rebecca Schorsch  
Community Care.....Monique Thomas  
Poster Art .....Marcy Stagner Wurzburg\*

*\*denotes a local artist*

## THE IN[HEIR]ITANCE PROJECT

Executive Director.....Jon Adam Ross  
Director of Community Impact.....Ariel Warmflash  
Director of Marketing &  
Communications.....Nicole Dancel  
Director of Development.....Zena Hinds

# MUSIC TEAM

Lead Music Devisers, Co-composers & Lyricists.....Denise Manning & Ellie Kahn  
Sound Design & Additional Music.....Nate Smith  
Original Rap verses & Additional Lyrics.....Chris Franceschi  
Sound Design & Audio Engineer .....Rice Barber III

# PRODUCTION BIOS

**Alicia “Unbroken Poet” Jones** (Playmaker) is a poet, writer, and mental health advocate from Memphis, Tn. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of Tennessee and in Organizational Leadership from the University of Memphis. Alicia is a graduate student at Capella University to obtain her MS in Clinical Psychology, specializing in Clinical Counseling. Being involved with the In[HEIR]itance Project, Alicia is able to combine her passions for poetry and writing.

**Carin “Writeous Soul” Malone** (Playmaker) is the #10 lady poet in the world. Writeous Soul enjoys taking local poets to regional and national poetry slam competitions, her roles as a Teaching Artist at the Orpheum Theatre, and Artist in Residence for Historic Clayborn Temple. Writeous Soul Productions provides a diverse platform for local and global artists to share their talents. She recently collaborated with the Memphis Grizzlies to teach youth to write and perform poetry on the “Driving the Dream” theme for the 2023 King Day. She looks forward to using her gift of poetry to help others become the best version of themselves.

**Chris Franceschi** (Cast & Music Team) better known as Franceschi, is a rising recording artist and actor. Growing up in the heart of the city, Franceschi found solace in music, developing his

unique style and distinctive sound at a young age. With his soothing vocals and thought-provoking lyrics, Franceschi is quickly becoming an artist to watch, as he works to bring something new and exciting to the music scene. Writing and co-producing all of his own music, he is sure to make waves in the industry.

**Denise Manning** (Music Team) AKA “The Lizzo of the American Theater” is a New-York City-based Actor-vist, Comic, and Musician. Her recent credits include; the title role in *Amani* By a.k. payne & directed by Josiah Davis, *What to Send Up When It Goes Down* by Aleshea Harris & directed by Whitney White, *God is A Comedian*, a self-written and self-produced comedic short film, award winning series and short film *For the Boys* by Ellis Dawson & Mekhai Lee and *Keep This Far A Part* by Tyler English-Beckwith, *G.O.A.T* by Ngozi Anyanwu, [Denisemichellemanning.com](http://Denisemichellemanning.com)

**Danét James** (Assistant Stage Manager) is a 27-year-old Memphis native, born and bred. She is a walking model of Love, Peace, Truth, and Justice. She is a spoken word artist, a soon-to-be published author, a spiritual counselor, and ever a student of life.

**Ellie Kahn** (Music Team) is a vocalist, music director, keyboardist, & coach in Chicago (hometown’s in Jersey!). Ellie has written music for I[H]P’s EXODUS

series alongside her angel collaborator, Denise, since 2021. She is a member of the music team for *SIX the Musical* (US+int'l), and of Chicago's newest Pride Festival band, Too Much Molly Band. Previous: Music Supervisor for 20+ productions onboard Norwegian Cruise Line; *Fun Home*, *Just Between The All Of Us*, *Honky Tonk Angels*. Ellie is MD for multiple music improv troupes in Chicago (living her Laura Hall & Linda Taylor dreams). Love to the Kahns. @elliekahn\_

**Emily Rooker** (Cast) is a vocalist, songwriter, and artist residing in Memphis, Tennessee by way of Michigan. She's the Memphis Songwriter Association's 2022 Songwriter of the Year, an award-winning music video director, and a current student at the University of Memphis. Rooker debuted her original rock opera, *The Long Goodbye*, to sold-out crowds at the historic Evergreen Theater. She is also a founding member and current President of the multidisciplinary artist collective Artkognito.

**Jon Adam Ross** (Playmaker) has spent more than 25 years making art with communities around the country as an actor, playwright, and teaching artist and the last 8 years as a co-founding artist and Executive Director of the In[HEIR]itance Project. His stage credits include: a dog, a 2,000-year-old bird, a spurned housewife, a horse, a British naval officer in 1700s Jamaica, a goat, a lawyer, a wrestler, a hapless police chief, and a cyclops. As a parent to a 2 year old, Jon has recently provided silly voices to such inanimate objects as a winter hat, a rubber ducky, and a syringe of children's tylenol. He is a proud Memphian and graduate of White Station High School. #GoTigers

**Karon Samuels** (Associate Director) is Program Director for Princeton James Project, a local non-profit providing space for creatives to network and share original works. To ensure that art is accessible,

Karon serves as Teaching Artist for Memphis Dream Academy, Memphis Black Arts Alliance, and other educational non-profits. She formerly served as Associate Artistic Director for Hattiloo Theatre. A proud Howard University Alum, Karon received her BFA in Musical Theatre. She performs in musicals, plays, operas, and spoken word venues in Memphis. She's delighted to serve on this Project and hopes to work with this brilliant cast and crew again in the near future.

**Marcy Stagner** (Local Liaison) is a Memphis who pursued her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Colorado. When she returned, Marcy worked at the Memphis Jewish Community Center curating their art gallery, Cultural Arts Series, and International Jewish Film Festival. Today, Marcy is the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Opportunities for Church Health partnering with local and national organizations to advance health equity. When she's not working or with her boys, Marcy is often painting. She designed the cover art for this project. Check out her art on [www.marcystagner.com](http://www.marcystagner.com).

**Nate Smith** (Music Team) is a musician and a producer. As a musician, Nate is a multi-instrumentalist secret weapon who emphasizes melody and feel in his playing. As a producer, Nate prizes collaboration and experimentation, always working towards the best version of a song and making sure not to record anything that doesn't make the song better. Nate was the band director for *The Long Goodbye: A Rock Opera* and has produced multiple albums, including works by Emily Rooker and Tony de Velasco.

**Niambi D. Webster** (Cast) is a multi-hyphenated artist, an educator spanning early childhood through college-level instruction of ethnic studies, theatre, dance, English, and literature. Rev. Webster is an ordained minister,

motivational speaker, diversity trainer, director, and creator of her own one-woman shows. As a cancer survivor, she sends motivational messages to friends, colleagues, and church members. She is tickled red for the support of her son Kobie and her loving granddaughter, Camille Njeri.

**Princeton James** (Local Liaison) - Princeton James is a multi-talented producer, director, playwright, and actor. His unique brand of storytelling has captivated audiences with compelling projects that showcase the importance of justice, love, faith, and family. He's worked as an Executive Assistant on NBC's Young Rock starring Dewayne "The Rock" Johnson. On the screen, Princeton is a principal cast member in the Netflix film *Uncorked*. He also co-starred in NBC's *Bluff City Law*, appeared in the Baz Brother film *Making Moves*, and regularly appears on BET. He is the founder of *The Cooler*, a program building a diverse creative economy and *The Kooler Kids*, a performing arts training and enrichment development for over 5,000 underserved youth.

**Rhonda "Dassia Rose" Meadows** (Playmaker) is an author, spoken word artist, performance poet, educator, and freelance writer, born and raised in Memphis, TN. Her company *Resounding Ink* specializes in resumes, notarizations, and copywriting. She has been featured as an author and editor for two Memphis anthologies and is currently a Creative Writing teacher for Shelby County Schools.

**Rice Barber III** (Sound Designer) is a native Memphian who specializes in lighting and audio production. He has been involved in the field since 2012 and launched *WyzLights Entertainment LLC* in 2023. He currently works as a light board operator for the Memphis Grizzlies as well as the light designer for Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church.

**Sherronda Johnson** (Production Stage Manager) is excited to work with the In[HEIR]tance Project cast and creative team. She recently managed *Shakin' The Mess Outta Misery* and is directing *Sistas The Musical* (Hattiloo Theatre). You'll also find her working as an Intimacy Choreographer or as an Orpheum Theatre Group Teaching Artist bringing the magic of brave storytelling to the next generation. She thanks this joyous collective for teaching her how to play freeze tag correctly!

**Somijah Archer** (Set & Props Designer) also known as Sumo The Artist, has curated intentional spaces and events for 9 years. She effortlessly dives into every form of artistry and creative expression. Her visual art uses color, sound, space, and healing frequencies to teach the healing power of being intentional. Somijah believes that being intentional has a ripple effect upon the Memphis community. She's ecstatic to bring her theatre and poetry experience to the IHP family to bring a much-needed storytelling experience to Memphis.

**Zhailon Levingston** (Director) is a Louisiana-raised storyteller, director, and activist. He co-created and serves on the Board of the Broadway Advocacy Coalition and teaches at Columbia University. Recently, he directed *Chicken and Biscuits*, which premiered on Broadway, *Patience* at Second Stage Uptown. Zhailon was the resident director for *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* on Broadway and the Associate Director of *Hadestown* in South Korea. He is the Associate Director of *Primer for a Failed Superpower* and *Runaways* at The Public Theater.

# PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

**Beth Sholom Synagogue** | [bsholom.org](http://bsholom.org)

**Bickford Oasis Senior Center** | [bickford-center-memphis.edan.io](http://bickford-center-memphis.edan.io)

**Black Clergy Collaborative** | [blackclergycollaborative.org](http://blackclergycollaborative.org)

**BRIDGES USA** | [bridgesusa.org](http://bridgesusa.org)

**Cazateatro** | [cazateatro.org](http://cazateatro.org)

**Church Health** | [churchhealth.org](http://churchhealth.org)

**The Cooler** | [thisisthecooler.com](http://thisisthecooler.com)

**Creative Aging Memphis** | [creativeagingmidsouth.org](http://creativeagingmidsouth.org)

**Crosstown High School** | [crosstownhigh.org](http://crosstownhigh.org)

**Facing History & Ourselves** | [facinghistory.org](http://facinghistory.org)

**Hattiloo Theatre** | [hattiloo.org](http://hattiloo.org)

**J.K. Lewis Senior Center** | [memphisparcs.com/park/  
j-k-lewis-senior-center](http://memphisparcs.com/park/j-k-lewis-senior-center)

**Limit Breaker Church** | [facebook.com/LimitBreakerChurch](https://facebook.com/LimitBreakerChurch)

**Memphis Jewish Community Center** | [jccmemphis.org](http://jccmemphis.org)

**Memphis Jewish Federation** | [jcpmemphis.org/federation](http://jcpmemphis.org/federation)

**Memphis Library Foundation** | [memphislibraryfoundation.org](http://memphislibraryfoundation.org)

**Memphis Public Interest Law Center** | [mpilc.org](http://mpilc.org)

**Memphis Public Libraries** | [memphislibrary.org](http://memphislibrary.org)

**Memphis Rox** | [memphisrox.org](http://memphisrox.org)

**National Civil Rights Museum** | [civilrightsmuseum.org](http://civilrightsmuseum.org)

**Orpheum Theatre** | [orpheum-memphis.com](http://orpheum-memphis.com)

**Plough Towers** | [ploughtowers.org](http://ploughtowers.org)

**Rock Development Corps** | [facebook.com/RockDevelopmentCorp](https://facebook.com/RockDevelopmentCorp)

**Saint Mary's Episcopal School** | [stmarysschool.org](http://stmarysschool.org)

**Temple Israel** | [timemphis.org](http://timemphis.org)

**Trezevant Manor** | [trezevantmanor.org](http://trezevantmanor.org)

**Westwood-IndianHills & Neighboring Developments (WIND)** |  
[windmemphis.org](http://windmemphis.org)

**White Station High School** | [schools.scsk12.org/whitestation-hs](http://schools.scsk12.org/whitestation-hs)

# A NOTE FROM JON

I inherited my mother's nose and my father's avid love for Tigers basketball; my Grandpa Marshall's sense of humor, and my Papa Irwin's feet. My ancestors are with me every day, but recently, one has loomed larger. My grandmother, Dr. Selma Lewis (z'l), went back to school at the U of M to get her Masters and PhD after rearing three kids. The early subject of her scholarship was the Sanitation Workers' Strike in 1968. She was a scholar and an activist ahead of her time.

My Grandma Selma has been front of mind as I've returned home with the In[HEIR]itance Project to devise a new play. I've learned so much more about Memphis in the past year than I did in my 18 years growing up in the 901. In all, nearly 800 people shared their perspectives to create this play. We met tour guides, historians, clergy, students, seniors, Memphians on the street, and incredibly talented artists of all mediums (something I'm convinced Memphis has more of, per capita, than any other city in America).

I have known I was an artist since I was a young child. But I've resisted accepting that I am also an activist. And yet, this work is activism. Art as activism. Meeting your neighbors, learning their perspectives on your community, and co-creating new art with them along the way - that is a direct challenge to ignorance and division.

I hope this play process has helped bridge the divides. I hope new relationships have formed that might last beyond this week. And I hope Grandma Selma would be proud.

Go Tigers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Adams Rose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jon" being the most prominent.

Executive Director and Co-Founding Artist, In[HEIR]itance Project  
White Station High School Class of '99



# THANK YOU!

A Tour of Possibilities  
Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library  
Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein  
David and Rose Ross  
Dory Lerner  
Crosstown Concourse  
Ed Harris  
Emma Figarsky  
Inspire Cafe  
Herb and Marlene Gerson  
Isabel Gonzalez-Whitaker  
Jimmy Lewis  
Jody and Danny Becker

Laura Linder  
Lynn Whitney Williams  
Memphis Grizzlies  
Memphis Slim Collaboratory  
Dr. Noelle Trent  
Nancy and Gary Raileanu  
Paul and Phyllis Berz  
Rachel Knox  
Rachel and Steve Shankman  
Shirley Bondon  
Slim & Husky's  
South Main Artspace Lofts

**THIS PROJECT IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED IN PART  
BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**



**AS WELL AS:**





**MAKING SPACE.  
SHARING STORIES.  
CREATING ART.  
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES.**

The In[HEIR]itance Project works with intersectional, intergenerational and interfaith communities to build relationships across divides through collaborative theater projects inspired by shared cultural touchstones. Our work brings people together to listen, learn, and collaborate. The script starts with conversations and individual stories and ends as a unified collective narrative in the shape of a public performance. Every project is unique. Every project starts with you.

[www.inHEIRitance.org](http://www.inHEIRitance.org)

**“I’VE LOOKED OVER AND I’VE SEEN THE PROMISED LAND. I MAY NOT GET THERE WITH YOU, BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT TONIGHT WE AS A PEOPLE WILL GET TO THE PROMISED LAND. SO I’M HAPPY TONIGHT.”**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *I’ve Been to the Mountaintop*  
April 3rd, 1968 | Memphis, Tennessee

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**“[A 19TH CENTURY POLISH RABBI] SAID THERE ARE THREE WAYS [WE] EXPRESS [OUR] DEEP SORROW: ON THE LOWEST LEVEL [WE] CRY: ON THE SECOND LEVEL [WE ARE] SILENT: ON THE HIGHEST LEVEL [WE] KNOW HOW TO TURN SORROW INTO A SONG.”**

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man’s Quest for God*  
1954 | Manhattan, NY

