

KILL MOVE PARADISE

by James Ijames

directed by Blanka Zizka

9.4.18 – 9.23.18



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THEATER

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Blanka Zizka
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

James Haskins
MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

KILL MOVE PARADISE

BY JAMES IJAMES

FEATURING

**Avery Hannon, Anthony Martinez-Briggs,
Brandon Pierce, Lindsay Smiling**

DIRECTOR Blanka Zizka
SET DESIGNER Matt Saunders
LIGHTING DESIGNER Thom Weaver
COSTUME DESIGNER LeVonne Lindsay
SOUND DESIGNER Justin Ellington
MOVEMENT CONSULTANT Silvana Cardell
DRAMATURG Walter Bilderback
PRODUCTION MANAGER Clayton Tejada
RESIDENT STAGE MANAGER Patreshettarlini Adams
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER Casey Berner

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Chay Yew, Artistic Director

As part of IGNITION Festival of New Plays 2016

New York City World Premiere produced by Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre
Harlem, NY June 2017

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The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Avery Hannon.....	Tiny
Anthony Martinez-Briggs.....	Grif
Brandon Pierce.....	Daz
Lindsay Smiling.....	Isa

WILMA HOTHOUSE COMPANY

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Kevin Meehan
Brett Robinson

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Kate Czjakowski
James Ijames
Jenn Kidwell
Forrest McClendon
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Matt Saunders
Thom Weaver

The Wilma Theater is a member of the following organizations: Avenue of the Arts, Inc., Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, League of Resident Theatres Inc., Midtown Village Merchants Association, Theatre Communications Group, Inc.

Please note: Photography or sound recording inside the theater, without the written permission of the management, is prohibited by law. Violators may be asked to leave the theater and may be liable for financial charges.

Children Policy: The Wilma Theater's productions contain strong language and adult themes that may be unsuitable for patrons 12 and younger.

Distracting Noise and Light: The noise of cellular phones and candy wrappers, and the light from electronic devices, are distracting to both audiences and actors. Please turn off all cellular phones and electronic devices.

Smoking, eating, and drinking are prohibited inside the theater.



JAMES IJAMES
PLAYWRIGHT

is a Philadelphia based performer and playwright. He has appeared regionally in productions at The Arden Theatre Company, The Philadelphia Theatre Company, InterAct Theatre Company, The Wilma Theater, Baltimore Center Stage, Mauckingbird Theatre Company, and People's Light and Theatre. James' plays have been produced by Flashpoint Theater Company, Orbiter 3, Theatre Horizon (Philadelphia, PA), The National Black Theatre (NYC), Ally Theatre (Washington DC)

and have received development with PlayPenn New Play Conference, The Lark, Playwright's Horizon, Clubbed Thumb, Villanova Theater, The Gulfshore Playhouse, The Wilma Theater, Azuka Theatre and Victory Garden. James is the 2011 F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist recipient. He also won two Barrymores for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Play for *Superior Donuts* and *Angels in America* and one Barrymore for Outstanding Direction of a Play for *The Brothers Size* with Simpatico Theatre Company. James is a 2011 Independence Foundation Fellow, a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the 2015 winner of the Terrance McNally New Play Award for *WHITE*, the 2015 Kesselring Honorable Mention Prize winner for*Miz Martha* and a 2017 recipient of the Whiting Award. James is a founding member of Orbiter 3, Philadelphia's first playwright producing collective and a mentor for The Foundry. He received a B.A. in Drama from Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and a M.F.A. in Acting from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. James is Assistant Professor of Theatre at Villanova University and resides in South Philadelphia.



BLANKA ZIZKA
DIRECTOR

Blanka Zizka has been Artistic Director of The Wilma Theater since 1981. In 2011 Blanka refocused the Wilma's energy on developing practices and programs for local theater artists to create working conditions that support creativity through continuity and experimentation. Two seasons ago she founded the Wilma HotHouse Company. At the Wilma, she has directed over 70 plays and musicals. Most recently, Blanka directed the world premiere of Christopher Chen's *Passage*, her play *Adapt!*,

Andrew Bovell's *When The Rain Stops Falling*, Tom Stoppard's U.S. premiere of *The Hard Problem*, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Hamlet*, Paula Vogel's world premiere *Don Juan Comes Home from Iraq*, Richard Bean's *Under the Whaleback*, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, Tadeusz Słobodzianek's *Our Class*, Sarah Ruhl's *In the Next Room*, and *Macbeth*—which included an original score by Czech composer and percussionist Pavel Fajt. Her other favorite productions are Wajdi Mouawad's *Scorched*, Tom Stoppard's *The Invention of Love* and *Rock 'n' Roll*, Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice* (which featured an original score by composer Toby Twining, now available from Cantaloupe Records), Brecht's *The Life of Galileo*, Athol Fugard's *Coming Home* and *My Children! My Africa!*, and Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*. She collaborated closely with Dael Orlandersmith on her plays *Raw Boys* and *Yellowman*, which was co-produced by McCarter Theatre and the Wilma and performed at ACT Seattle, Long Wharf, and Manhattan Theatre Club. Blanka was honored to be selected into the 2017 Class of the Innovators Walk of Fame by the University Science Center, which spotlights local innovators. She is a recipient of the 2016 Vilcek Prize, which is awarded annually to immigrants who have made lasting contributions to American society through their extraordinary achievements in biomedical research and the arts and humanities. She received the Zelda Fichandler Award from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation in 2011, which recognizes individuals who are transforming the national arts landscape with their unique and creative work in the American regional theatre, and she was a Fellow at the 2015 Sundance Institute/LUMA Foundation Theatre Directors Retreat.



AVERY HANNON TINY

is a young actor & musician who made his professional debut at age 12 as 'Young Troy' at the Arden Theatre's Barrymore-nominated production of *Gypsy*. Avery is a theater major at the Burlington County

Institute of Technology and has performed locally in productions of *The Miracle Worker*, *Mary Poppins Jr.*, *High School Musical Jr.*, *Once on This Island Jr.*, *Into the Woods Jr.*, *James and the Giant Peach Jr.*, *The Wizard of Oz Jr.*, and *The Little Mermaid Jr.* He is grateful for his training at MainStage Center for the Arts and his family who support his career.



ANTHONY MARTINEZ-BRIGGS GRIF

is a collaborative spirit grateful to be working yet again with Blanka at the Wilma. He is a Resident Artist with the Wilma HotHouse, teaching artist (Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Wilma

Theater, Village of Arts and Humanities), actor (Recent: *Passing Strange*, *Adapt!*, *When The Rain Stops Falling* [Barrymore Best Ensemble] at the Wilma), social justice advocate, writer, director, sound designer (Recent: *Bienvenidos Blancos* with Team Sunshine Corp) and proud member of the band ILL DOOTS. ILL DOOTS has been seen on stage at the Wilma Theater in *An Octoroon* and in Flashpoint Theater's *Hands Up: 6 testaments, 6 playwrights* (Barrymore for Original Music). ILL DOOTS recently released their long-awaited self titled debut album available on online music platforms. Find the album and more info about ILL DOOTS at www.ILLDOOTS.com



BRANDON PIERCE DAZ

is thrilled to be making his Wilma debut! Off-Broadway: *Exit Strategy* (Primary Stages). Regional: *Welcome to Fear City* (KC Rep); *Shakespeare in Love*, *Richard II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Taming*

of the Shrew (PA Shakespeare Festival); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Metamorphoses*, *Peter Pan*, *Charlotte's Web* (Arden Theatre Company); *The City of Conversation* (Delaware Theater Company); *Dutch Masters* (Azuka Theatre); *Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare LIVE! - The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey); *Fair Maid of the West* (Philadelphia Artists' Collective). Education: BFA University of the Arts.



LINDSAY SMILING ISA

is thrilled to be back on the Wilma stage where he most recently appeared in *Passing Strange*. Mr. Smiling has performed Off-Broadway and at many regional theaters including:

InterAct, Arden Theatre Co., Shakespeare Theatre of NJ, Theatre Exile, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Milwaukee Rep., Syracuse Stage, Walnut Street Theatre, People's Light and Theatre Co., Pittsburgh Public, Two River Theatre, Victory Gardens, ACT, Dorset Theater Festival, Human Race Theatre, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Mixed Blood Theater, Bristol Riverside Theatre, Ensemble Studio Theater, Lantern Theater Co, and Shakespeare on the Sound. He is a proud Wilma HotHouse Company member. For more info: www.lindsaysmiling.net.

MATT SAUNDERS (SET DESIGNER)

Recent Off-Broadway includes, *Futurity* for Soho Rep and Ars Nova, *Good Person of Szechwan* at The Public Theater, *The Tempest* for The Public Theater at the Delacorte, and *As You Like It* for The Acting Company at The New Victory and Lincoln Center. Regionally, Matt has designed at the Mark Taper Forum, Huntington Theatre Company, Guthrie Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis, Spoleto Festival, Arden Theatre Company, Pig Iron Theatre Company, Philadelphia Theatre Company, and Yale Repertory Theatre. Matt is a long-time collaborator with Blanka Zizka and The Wilma Theater. Recent design work at the Wilma includes *Constellations*, *When The Rain Stops Falling*, *The Christians*, *An Octoroon*, *The Hard Problem*, *Hamlet* and *Don Juan Comes Home from Iraq*. Matt holds an MFA from Yale School of Drama. He is a 2014 Pew Fellow in the Arts, as well as 2015 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University. Matt is the Associate Artistic Director of the OBIE Award-Winning theatre company, New Paradise Laboratories; and Assistant Professor of Design in the Department of Theater at Swarthmore College. mattsaunder.net.

THOM WEAVER (LIGHTING DESIGNER)

Wilma Hot House Associate Artist, where he has designed 15 productions including *Blood Wedding*, *Adapt!*, *An Octoroon*, and *The Christians*. His work has been seen at NYSF/Public Theatre, Roundabout Theatre, Primary Stages, Signature Theatre (NY), Arden, PTC, Lantern, Theatre Exile, New Paradise Laboratories, Walnut, Center Stage, Huntington Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare, Syracuse Stage, Milwaukee Rep, Shakespeare Theatre, Asolo, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Williamstown, Folger Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Roundhouse Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Hangar, Spoleto Festival, City Theatre,

Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and Yale Rep among others. 3 Barrymore Awards (25 nominations), 4 Helen Hayes nominations, Jeff Award, and 2 AUDELCO Awards. Co-Founder of Die-Cast with Brenna Geffers. Education: Carnegie-Mellon and Yale.

LEVONNE LINDSAY (COSTUME DESIGNER)

is the Costume Shop Manager and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at University of the Arts. She has a BS in fashion design from Philadelphia University and an MFA in costume design from University of Maryland, College Park. Academic positions held at Stevenson University, James Madison University, and Valdosta State University. Lindsay was an Allen Lee Hughes Fellow at Arena Stage from 2001-2003. Notable design credits include: Arden Theatre Company: *The Bluest Eye*; Theater Horizon: *White*; Simpatico Theater: *Time Is On Our Side* (world premiere); Virginia Stage Company: *The Hampton Years* (world premier); Arena Stage: *Yellowman*; Kennedy Center Theatre for Young Audiences: *Jason Invisible*, *Color Me Dark*; Everyman Theatre: *Topdog/Underdog*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Brothers Size*; Hangar Theatre: *Gem of the Ocean*.

JUSTIN ELLINGTON (SOUND DESIGNER & ORIGINAL MUSIC)

Broadway: *Other Desert Cities*.
Off Broadway: *The House That Will Not Stand*, *Fetch Clay Make Man*(New York Theatre Workshop). Pipeline, *Pass Over*, *Other Desert Cities*(Lincoln Center); *He Brought Her Heart Back In A Box*, *Winter's Tale*(TFANA); *The Pride*(MCC). Regional/International: Guthrie Theatre, Goodman Theatre, People's Light, PlayPenn, Alliance Theater, Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre of London. Obie Award for Sound Design.

SILVANA CARDELL (MOVEMENT CONSULTANT)

Award-winning choreographer Silvana Cardell has been creating and presenting collaborative work in her native Argentina, in the US and internationally since 1990. Cardell is the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards including Fundacion Antorchas, Subsidio Nacional de Teatro, Temple University Fellowship, Swarthmore College Project, Pew Center for the Arts & Heritage Performance grant, New England Foundation for the Arts, National Dance Project, Mid Atlantic Foundation for the Arts, and The Philadelphia Cultural Fund. She holds a Masters in Fine Arts in Choreography from Temple University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from The University of the Arts. She is currently the Chairperson and Director of Dance at Georgian Court University in New Jersey and Cardell Dance Theater artistic director.

PATRESHETARLINI ADAMS (RESIDENT STAGE MANAGER/AEA)

has been the stage manager at The Wilma Theater since the theater made its home on the Avenue of the Arts in 1996. "Pat" is celebrating season #23 at the fabulous Wilma! Her career has included 7 seasons as stage manager at the Tony Award-winning Crossroads Theatre in New Brunswick, NJ; and, in past years, Pat has worked the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta, GA and the National Black Theater Festival in Winston-Salem, NC. She has also found herself traveling the world with critically-acclaimed dance company Noche Flamenca! Most recently, she is using all her free time to spoil her grandsons, Isaiah and Elijah. God Is Good!

WALTER BILDERBACK (DRAMATURG/LITERARY MANAGER)

has been the Dramaturg/Literary Manager at The Wilma Theater since 2004. During that time he's helped select seasons and has worked on the vast majority of the plays produced in that time. Particular recent favorites include *Our Class*, *Don Juan Comes Home From Iraq*, *Hamlet*, *When the Rain Stops Falling*, and *Blood Wedding*. Before coming to Philadelphia, Walter worked for numerous theaters across the country, including Center Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Alliance Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, and on Broadway. He's read plays and sat on selection committees for many organizations, most recently the O'Neill and the Playwrights Center.

CLAYTON TEJADA (PRODUCTION MANAGER)

is celebrating his 14th season at the Wilma, serving the first seven as Technical Director. Clayton started his professional career as an Apprentice at Arden Theatre, and then worked there for several years as Stage Supervisor. Before coming to the Wilma, he worked as a freelance Technical Director or Production Manager for 1812 Productions, Mum Puppettheatre, Lantern Theater, and Azuka Theatre. Clayton is a graduate of the Theater Arts program at The University of Puget Sound. He is proud to make Philadelphia his professional and artistic home. Thanks and love to his sweet Kate, and their boys Alex and Gabriel.



JAMES HASKINS (MANAGING DIRECTOR)

is now in his thirteenth season in partnership with Blanka Zizka, the Board of Directors, and staff to advance the mission of The Wilma Theater. James began his work in theater

administration at Circle Repertory Company, where he learned early on the value and resonance of an artist-centered approach to running a theater company. He went on to work with a variety of theaters in New York and Seattle as an actor, director, and administrator. Upon moving to Philadelphia, James worked as Managing Director of InterAct Theatre Company and then Executive Director of the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia before coming to the Wilma. As a theater artist, he is most proud of his directorial and dramaturgical work on the plays of his husband Michael Whistler. James holds an MFA from the University of Washington and a BA from The College of Wooster (Ohio), where he currently serves as President of his alumni class.

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OPEN STAGES

We asked HotHouse actor Lindsay Smiling to interview playwright James Ijames about *Kill Move Paradise* and being an artist in Philadelphia. Lindsay Smiling plays Isa in the Wilma Production of *Kill Move Paradise* and also acted in James Ijames' play *Moon Man Walk*, which was produced by *Orbiter 3* in 2015.

Lindsay Smiling: You recently wrote that "the Wilma has had a tremendous impact on my work as a playwright" and that your first full length play was written in the dressing room while you were in the Wilma's production of *Angels in America*. How do you think your relationship with the Wilma has influenced your writing?

James Ijames: Everything I've ever seen at the Wilma whether I loved it or not has always felt both wild and precise. These sort of became my guiding principles as a writer. Be wild and precise. That production of *Angels in America* in particular was inspiring because Blanka created a whole world really out of blank white emptiness. That set! It was like the Wild West

and it forced everyone in the cast to engage in these large performances. When I sit down to write I'm aiming for that level of scale. Huge. But I'm also tethered to the ground by the desire for the world I write to feel precise and to make sense. It doesn't always have to make sense to everybody but the hope as I work is that it will connect and move people.

You're very familiar with the Wilma HotHouse, and have been commissioned to write a play for us. How do you think the Wilma's process will elevate *Kill Move Paradise*?

James Ijames: The play is incredibly physically demanding. The characters are caught in a space that I've come to think of as like the bardo [in Tibetan Buddhism, a transitional or liminal space between death and rebirth]. The HotHouse practice meets this kind of writing really beautifully because the play is open. Right? I think the play is more a gesture than an instruction manual. The HotHouse approach is playful and exploratory and then it irises down to something quite precise and I believe *Kill Move Paradise* will benefit from this.

Photo of James Ijames from *Angels in America*,
by Alexander Izilioev



You quote Jonathan Lethem's *The Fortress of Solitude*: "At what age is a black boy when he learns he's scary?" The idea that my skin alone is something society fears certainly resonates with me as I'm sure it does with many people of color. Can you talk about how you are challenging the audience to confront this fear in *Kill Move Paradise*?

You remember that Samuel Jackson movie *A Time To Kill*? A young black girl is brutally beaten and raped by a group of Confederate flag-wearing white men. They get acquitted. Sam Jackson shoots them in the lobby of the courthouse. The rest of the movie is about Sam Jackson's trial. His lawyer is the "Alright alright alright" guy that does those car commercials. Skip to the end of the movie Mr. Alright Alright Alright is doing his closing argument. He describes in graphic detail what this young girl has gone through. And then at the end he says to the jurors. "Now...Imagine she's white."

Now. Even as a kid I was like "Huh?" Why is that necessary for compassion or empathy? Are only white people offered this piece of human kindness?

Fast forward to the beginning of the 21st century and black people are being killed left and right by vigilantes, by law enforcement who say things like "I was scared for my life" when talking about teenage boys. And that thought kept running through my mind, "Now...Imagine she's white."

Fast forward to me sitting down to write *Kill Move Paradise* and trying to create a space in which the humanity of the people on stage is undeniable. These characters embody all the ways in which we try to be human. They are jealous, they are kind, they maternal

and paternal, they are pushed physically to the edge of something and then fall. You can't deny their humanity. And they are all black. So the audience has to see them as they are. Imagining the white version of them is not an option.



Photo of Lindsay Smiling and Aime Donna Kelly from *Moon Man Walk* written by James Ijames. Photo by Plate3 Photography.



Photo of Jaylene Clark Owens and Jessica Bedford from *WHITE*, written by James Ijames. Photo by Matthew J Photography.

CAFE CHATS-TALKBACK

CAFE CHATS

We know you want to unpack the show, hang out with friends, maybe have drinks? Join us for *Kill Move Paradise* Cafe Chats, post-show conversations on issues raised in the play. Pick up a coaster at the Good Karma Café counter or the box office for thoughtful conversation starters to get you and your friends thinking and talking about *Kill Move Paradise*. Read the guidelines below to help ensure a safe welcoming environment for everyone.

COASTER QUESTIONS

1. Why in the white imagination are black males aged far beyond what is natural?
2. How did you feel when the characters cast you as representatives of America?
3. How did your participation in playing the roles of the family sitcom studio audience/the other side of a police lineup affect the characters?
4. What does Black Lives Matter mean to you?
5. Why is this play set in the afterlife?

GUIDELINES

By Entering into these conversations, you agree to the following:

1. You will take responsibility for what you say, and how it is received. The impact of our words and actions is more important than what we meant.
2. You will speak from your own experience, and respect the experiences of others. Don't try to minimize, contextualize, or edit someone else's experience (Example: don't say "we're all having these thoughts," say "I'm having these thoughts").
3. An opinion does not have the weight of lived experience. Opinions can be wrong.
4. You will invite someone into a conversation only when you are ready to listen. Please leave space for valid reactions to conversations about pain and trauma.
5. These conversations are hard. Leaving a conversation or not accepting an invitation to talk is an acceptable option!
6. It's ok (and good) to be uncomfortable. Vulnerability inspires change.

BACKS AT THE WILMA

TOPICAL POST SHOW EXPERIENCES

Drop by one of the special topical post-show Cafe Chats led by our invited guests—everyday people doing extraordinary work—and participate. **It's free.**

Thursday, September 13, Post 7:30PM Performance

Dr. Krystal Strong, *Kill Move Paradise In Action: A Scholar-Activist Perspective*

Dr. Strong is an assistant professor in the Graduate School of Education at University of Pennsylvania, and a faculty affiliate of Anthropology and Africana Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research and teaching focus on activism, the cultural and political power of youth, and the role of schools as sites of political struggle in Africa and the African Diaspora. A native of Philadelphia, Krystal is actively involved in community organizing work in her hometown and brings this commitment to local issues and communities to her scholarship and pedagogy.

Wednesday, September 19, Post 7:30PM Performance

Michael O'Bryan, *The Healing Power of Kill Move Paradise*

Michael O'Bryan serves as Director of Youth and Young Adult Programs at The Village of Arts and Humanities and as a consultant on a range of projects, locally and nationally, exploring the intersections of trauma informed practice and community well-being. Mike was awarded "Child Advocate of The Year, 2014" for the Philadelphia Region by The Pennsylvania Department of Education for his work assisting youth living in emergency housing. This past year Michael was named an Urban Innovation Fellow at Drexel University's Lindy Institute and a Corzo Fellow at The University of The Arts' Corzo Center for The Creative Economy.

Saturday, September 22, Post 2:00PM Performance

Ralph E. Godbolt, *Kill Move Paradise as Resistance: Artist Practices and Structures of Power*

Ralph E. Godbolt uses the scholarship of academics such as Henry Louis Gates, Cheryl Keyes and James Peterson to frame hip hop within the larger dialogue of the black expressive tradition. The Interim Director of Access and Success and the Director of the Frederick Douglass Institute for Academic Excellence at Bloomsburg University also serves on the faculty of the Pennsylvania State University - Harrisburg, where his research and teaching focuses on the areas of American Studies, African American Studies and the black expressive tradition.

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