

**THE NEXT WAVE
INITIATIVE**

THE NEXT WAVE INITIATIVE

IMPACT REPORT



2021

**THE
DIRECTORS
COMPANY**

INTRODUCTION

The Next Wave Initiative is a developmental branch of The Directors Company, committed to amplifying future Black voices in The American Theatre.



A Statement from Douglas Lyons

Founder and Director of the Next Wave Initiative:

Our nation is currently mourning, while simultaneously healing itself. In times like these I always look towards a solution; a way to pave a path towards America's future. The Next Wave Initiative allows the conversations around "Broadway equality" to become action. This program will fight to erase the ugliness of our past, while investing in the future of our profession.

fight to erase the ugliness of our past, while investing in the future of our profession.



PRIORITY

GOALS

01. **AWARD 4 SCHOLARSHIPS TO YOUNG BLACK ARTISTS**

We received over 120 submissions from our first round of scholarships. Initially the goal was to award 4 scholarships (directing, playwrighting, acting, dance/choreography) which we did. However one particular student stood out above the rest that we established the "Black Excellence Award". See more on the following pages.

02. **HOST "ZOOM ROOMS"**

Zoom-Room Series: "To Be Young, Gifted, Black...and Cast."

This 70 minute private discussion featured an extraordinary panel including actress Carly Hughes ("American Housewife", Chicago), director Zhailon Levingston (Tina, Chicken and Biscuits), manager Harold Lewter of CLA Partners, and Mychael Chinn, recent executive producer of Lifetime's "The First Ladies of Gospel".

03. **ESTABLISH THE JAMES BALDWIN GROUP**

The James Baldwin Group is a partnership between Black youth ages 12-18 and Black Broadway performers using poetry, art, dance, and writing as a means of healing.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Lorraine Hansberry Writing Scholarship

A scholarship payment of \$1,959 honoring 1959, the year Lorraine Hansberry made history as the first African-American playwright to debut on Broadway with *A Raisin in the Sun*. This scholarship is granted to a promising Black artist pursuing a career in Literature, Creative writing, Theatre or Screenplay writing.

The Spike Lee Directing Scholarship

A scholarship payment of \$1,986 honoring 1986, the year Spike Lee made his directorial debut with *She's Gotta Have It*. This scholarship is granted to a promising Black artist pursuing a collegiate education in direction for stage or screen.

The Hattie McDaniel Acting Scholarship

A scholarship payment of \$1,940 honoring 1940, the year Hattie McDaniel became the first Black actor to win an Oscar award for her performance in *Gone with the Wind*. This scholarship is granted to a Black actor/actress pursuing theatre or film acting on the collegiate level.

The Alvin Ailey Dance Scholarship

A scholarship payment of \$1,958 honoring 1958, the year Ailey founded his Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. This scholarship is granted to a Black artist pursuing dance on the collegiate level.

The Black Excellence Impact Award

A prize of \$1,000 awarded to a Black collegiate artist who's used their art to impact their community.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Next Wave Initiative Winners
THE SPIKE LEE DIRECTING AWARD

Ifeyinwa Arinze
(NYU, MFA in Film Production, Class of 2022)

THE ALVIN AILEY DANCE AWARD

Quashierra Muhammad
(Montclair State University, B.F.A. Dance Major, Class of 2021)

THE LORRAINE HANSBERRY WRITING AWARD

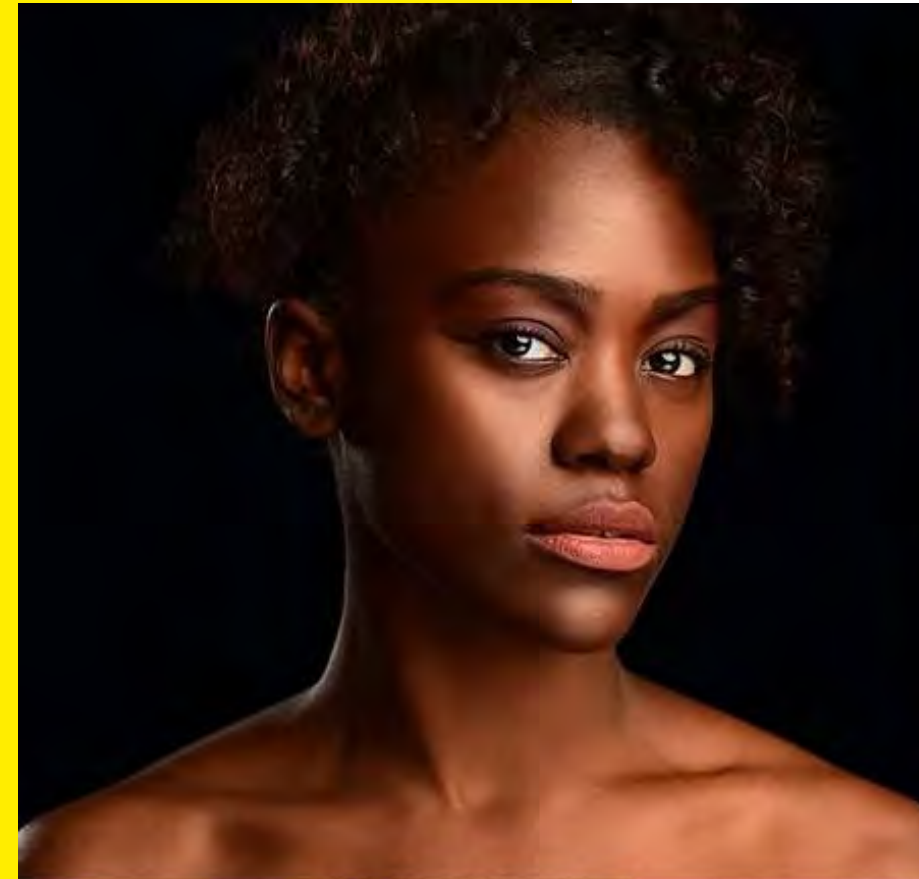
Sally Dean
(George Mason University, Creative Writing, Class of 2023)

THE HATTIE MCDANIEL ACTING AWARD

Omolade Wey
(UNC-Chapel Hill, MFA Acting, Class of 2022)

THE BLACK EXCELLENCE IMPACT AWARD

Ural Grant
(MFA in Acting at Michigan State University. Class of 2024)



T-SHIRT CAMPAIGN



To raise awareness to the Black Lives Matter Movement and the Next Wave Initiative, we launched this t-shirt campaign with all proceeds directly funding our program.

ZOOM ROOMS



Carly Hughes, Zhailon Levingston and More Join Next Wave Initiative's First Summer Programming

by Chloe Rabinowitz Jun. 26, 2020



Founded by **Douglas Lyons** (Beautiful, Beau), The Next Wave Initiative is a developmental branch of **The Directors Company**, committed to amplifying future Black voices in The American Theatre. On July 1st, at 7pm EST, NWI will host its first Zoom-Room Series: "To be Young, Gifted, Black...and cast."

This 70 minute private discussion will feature an extraordinary panel including actress **Carly Hughes** ("American Housewife", Chicago), director **Zhailon Levingston** (Tina, Chicken and Biscuits), manager **Harold Lewter** of CLA Partners, and Mychael Chinn, recent executive producer of Lifetime's "The First Ladies of Gospel".

NWI's initial scholarships include The **Lorraine Hansberry** Writing Scholarship, The **Spike Lee** Directing Scholarship, The **Hattie McDaniel** Acting Scholarship, and The **Alvin Ailey** Dance Scholarship. Developmental and outreach programs include The First Burp Grant and The **James Baldwin** Group.

In just 10 days since launching, the Next Wave Initiative has grossed over \$15,000 towards its mission. Lyons says, "Our nation is currently mourning, while simultaneously healing itself. In times like these I always look towards a solution, a way to pave a path towards America's future. The Next Wave Initiative allows the conversations around 'Broadway equality' to become action. This program will fight to erase the ugliness of our past, while investing in the future of our profession." The "Young, Gifted, Black...and cast" Zoom room is free for any current African-American High-school or College students. The encouraged donation for Adults is

NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead

01. Award 5 New Scholarships & Maintain Artist Support

5 new scholarships will be awarded to exceptional black theatre artists currently pursuing graduate or undergraduate degrees. Within the goal of artist support, we will launch The First Burp Grant- This grant is awarded to a new play or musical written by a Black artist that has yet to be produced.

02. Quarterly Q&As

Expand our "zoom rooms" to live Q&As with professional black theatre artists to at least quarterly. In-person when current covid guidelines allow.

03. Expand the James Baldwin Group

The James Baldwin Group is a partnership between Black youth ages 12-18 and Black Broadway performers using poetry, art, dance, and writing as a means of healing. Our goal is to connect these students around the country utilizing zoom .

CONTACT

We thank you for your continued support
in our efforts to amplify the future of black
voices in the American Theatre.

The Next Wave Initiative
at The Directors Company

101 E. 15th ST New York, NY 10003
c/o Daryl Roth Theatre

212-246-5877

www.directorscompany.org

nextwaveinitiative@directorscompany.org

@nextwaveinitiative
