



RED

SUMMER

CREATED BY SHEPSU AAKHU,
SHAWN WALLACE AND ANDREW WHITE

DIRECTED BY ANDREA J. DYMOND



WITH EXCERPTS FROM THE DRAMATURGY PACK
COMPILED AND EDITED BY SHEPSU AAKHU

Dear Educator,

Thank you for choosing us as your partners in helping students to achieve their potential, and develop into kind, compassionate, and responsive members of our community.

This is why in addition to presenting shows that incorporate Illinois Fine Arts Standards and Common Core Curriculum we have expanded our cultural experiences to promote empathy, social justice, and self-expression, while challenging bias, race, gender and ethnic injustice, stereotyping and discrimination.

We are especially excited to share this new musical created by MPAACT co-founders Shepsu Aakhu and Shawn Wallace, and Lookingglass Theatre founding ensemble member, Andrew White. We welcome these artists and their creative vision into our performance space and community.

This Study Guide has been assembled as an aid to help prepare your students for the performance and to support post-show conversations initiated by the topics and themes presented on stage. We have also included a list of the Common Core Standards that align with the information and activities in this guide. If you would like further information about the activities or standards, please let us know.

Thank you for supporting live cultural experiences and sharing the magic of live theater with your students. We look forward to having you at the theater!

Whitney Minarik

Director of Arts in Education

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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PLAY SYNOPSIS

Red Summer takes place during the Chicago race riots of 1919. Two WWI soldiers -- one black, one white – return from the battlefields of Europe only to find themselves caught in the violence of a Chicago that is struggling to accommodate the Great Migration, the return of WWI veterans, an economic downturn, and long-standing ethnic tensions. Having fought on the same side in The Great War, they are now pitted against each other as their friends, family, and neighbors wage block-by-block warfare and the city’s ethnic enclaves rage and burn. Historic figures Mayor “Big Bill” Thompson and Ida B. Wells loom in the background of this historic pivot point. One hundred years later, the same issues still simmer and smolder in every metropolitan area in the country.

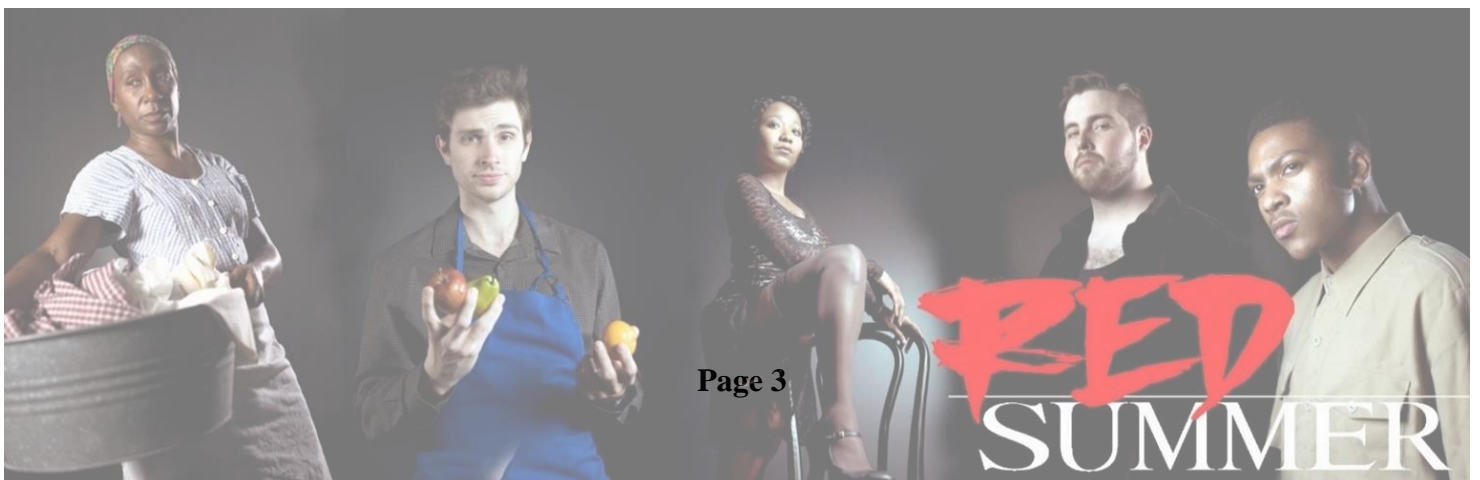
VOCABULARY

The Levee (District)- A red-light district of brothels and prostitution in Chicago from the 1880’s until 1912, when the city attempted to shut it down.

Black and Tan Club- Originating in Harlem, these early 20th century clubs provided jazz and drinking and were open to mixed race customers, including both black and white clientele.

Ida B. Wells- Renowned activist and journalist during late 19th and early 20th century. Born into slavery, she wrote profusely to expose the violence committed against African Americans.

Mayor “Big Bill” Thompson- Mayor of Chicago during the early 20th century who was notorious for corruption, lack of ethics, and an alliance with gangster Al Capone.



Meet the Artists and Creatives of *RED SUMMER*:

CAST



Nathaniel Andrews
as DL Winters

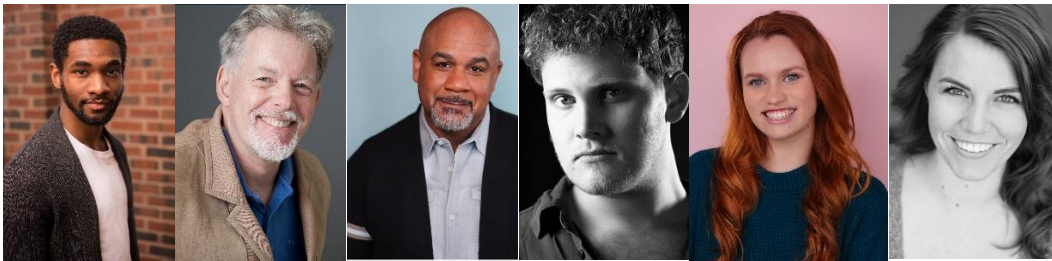
C.C. Rios as
Marlene Winters

Ryan Huemmer
as Conner Weir

Ashlea Woodley
as Mam Weir

Melanie Victoria
as Ida B. Wells

Michaelyn Oby
as Eugene Williams
and Josephine



J. Xavier
as Dixon

Bob Sanders
as Mayor Thompson

Marc A. Rogers
as Beau Elli

Alexander Slade
as Declan Weir

Katherine Delicath
As Liza

Allison Feist
as Athena



Michael J. Santos
as Doyle

Chloe Belongilot
as Cora

Lauren Wells-Mann
as Vanessa

Brian Healy
as Casmero Lazeroni

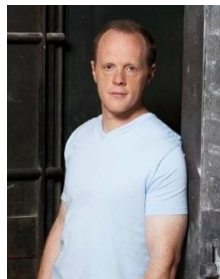
Autumn J. Price
as Baby

Anthony Augustine
as Piano Player

CREATIVE



Shepsu Aakhu
Playwright



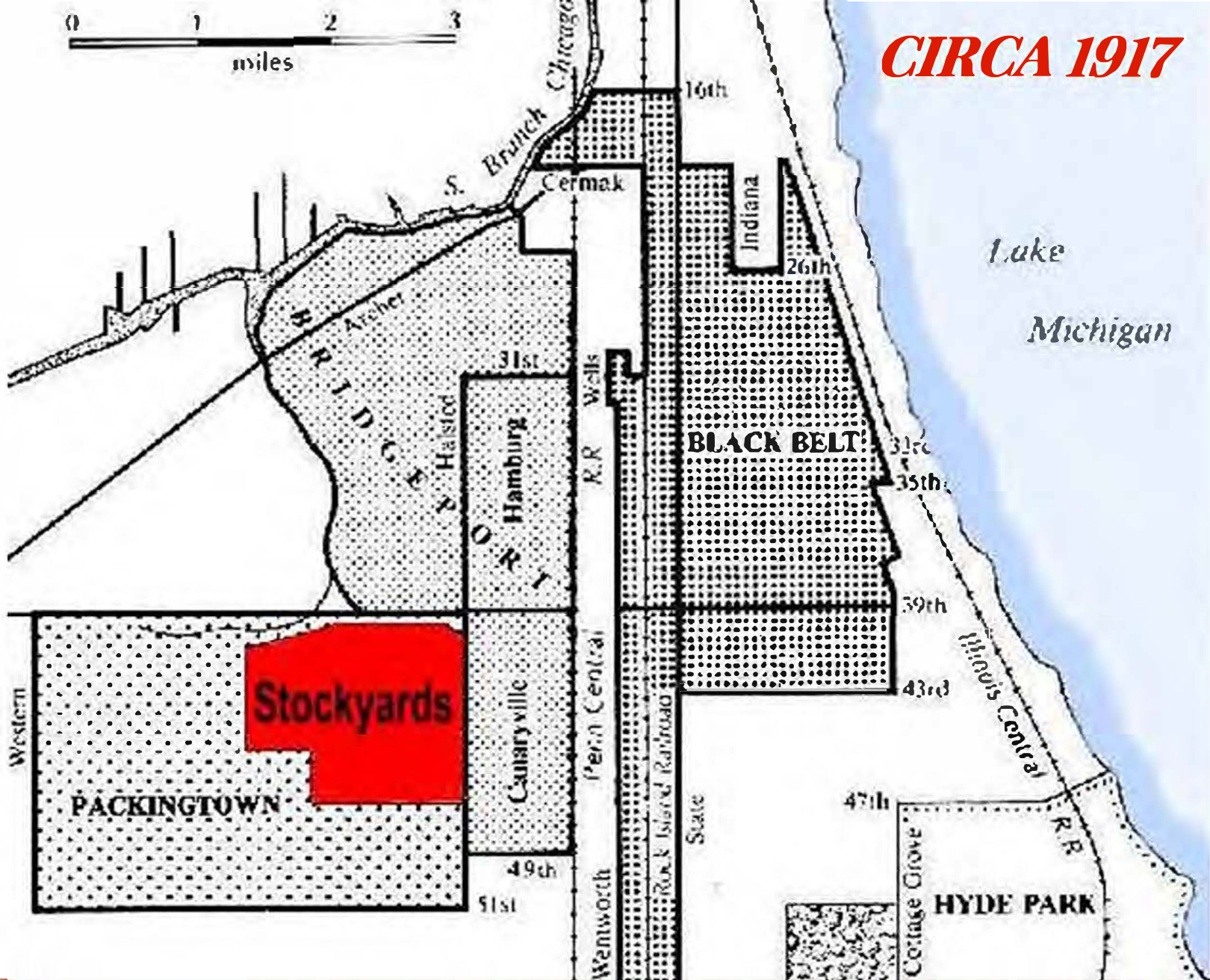
Andrew White
Playwright



Shawn Wallace
Composer, Music Director



Andrea J. Dymond
Director



CHICAGO'S HOT - ZONE

The Irish were centered on the South Side, to the north and east of the stockyards. Their neighborhoods were *Bridgeport* and *Canaryville*. They had lived in these neighborhoods for decades, since the great waves of immigration started in the 1800s. As the Irish rose to become *The Political Class* of the city - controlling large segments of government services, contracting and policing — they felt increasingly emboldened to dictate terms to *Ethnics* and Blacks near their borders.

Blacks were held in the *Black Belt* by restrictive covenants and brutal socio-political reprisals—left with little room to expand as rural migrants flooded into the area by the tens of thousands. Blacks had to cross Bridgeport to get to the stockyards. The Irish had to cross the Black Belt to get to the lakefront beaches. Their respective territories were separated by the width of the Rock Island Railroad line and Wentworth Ave. One hot summer - the tinder box finally exploded.

SITTING ON A POWDER KEG

...BY DAN BRYAN

1919 was not a good year for the overall social health of America or Chicago. With the end of the Great War and its demobilization, 2.5 million veterans were discharged within a six month period. Unemployment, labor strife, and fears of radicalism became part of the landscape.

In Chicago, the economic issues played out in the stockyards. To get to their jobs, thousands of blacks had to commute across the Irish neighborhoods, and were subject to assault and intimidation in transit. Where there had been a labor shortage just a couple years previously, there now came layoffs. This made the different Ethnic groups (re: White) of Chicago very uneasy with each other. At the stockyards, a huge strike was being planned behind the scenes. Most ethnic groups feared that the Blacks would undermine it by refusing to participate.

Additionally, the mayoral election of 1919 had returned a narrow win for the Republican -- William Hale Thompson. The margin of 21,000 votes was dwarfed by the number of new arrivals from the South. To the Irish Democrats, this was yet another source of their resentments.

For their part, the Black community had been victim to numerous home bombings. Starting in 1917, any home occupied by Blacks that was near the edge of the neighborhood, or across the "color line," was at high risk of being firebombed. 25 homes were bombed in 1918 - and a 6 year old girl was killed early in 1919. The police were not helpful in prosecuting these cases.

On June 21, an incident occurred that drove home to the Black community how little protection they had from the police. Two unarmed Black men were attacked and killed by the Irish (likely from Ragen's Colts) on "no pretext whatsoever" - said witnesses. The police refused to make any arrests. Rumors and outrage spread almost instantly. By now the Black Belt contained thousands of veterans from the War, who had expected better upon their return than unemployment and racial violence. The "New Negro," as he was called, was appalled by the negligence of the system. More importantly, he was prepared to do something about it. *The Chicago Defender* and *The Whip* gave up on the police, and began to advocate militant self-defense by the summer of 1919.



"The Whip informs you, the whites, that the compromising peace-at-any-price Negro is rapidly passing into the scrap heap of yesterday and being supplanted by a fearless, intelligent Negro who recognizes no compromise but who demands absolute justice and fair play."

In the weeks after this incident, there was talk on both sides of confrontations and trouble, and a general edge to the ambience. The peril of rioting was ready to strike at any moment. Only the ultimate catalyst was in doubt.

...That arrived with the stoning of Eugene Williams.



Way Off the Streets,
Let the Law Settle It

THE Chicago Defender

WORLD'S GREATEST WEEKLY

Foolish Talk Is No
Good Now. Stop It

PL. XIV NO. 31. ☆☆ SATURDAY CHICAGO, AUGUST 2, 1919 SATURDAY PRICE FIVE CENTS

RIOT SWEEPS CHICAGO

GHASTLY DEEDS OF RACE DISTURBANCE TOLD

LIST OF SLAIN IN
FOUR DAYS RIOTING

Gun Battles and Fighting in Streets Keep the City in an Uproar ...BY DAN BRYAN

It was a typically hot summer and on Sunday, July 27th, the segregated beaches were packed.

Feelings were inflamed that afternoon when a group of Blacks tried to make use of the 29th St. Beach. There was a big scuffle with several assaults on both sides, before the group of Blacks was driven away. It wasn't a particularly noteworthy event, but it did heighten the volatile "racial atmosphere" on the beaches. Later, another group of Black teens drifted by raft, over the "color line" into 29th St. waters. Rocks and bricks flew at them—**Eugene Williams**, was hit squarely in the forehead. He dropped into 15 feet of water and drowned. Again a crowd of blacks formed - but a policeman refused to arrest the perpetrators, but did arrest another black man involved in the scuffling of that day. When a wagon arrived to take the black man into custody, another fight broke. A Black man fired at the police with a revolver, and he was shot to death.

It did not take long for the Irish athletic clubs to hear about the 29th Street incident -- in versions that were twisted around to the rhetoric of a black invasion. It was known that Blacks were gathering in anger in the Black Belt, and the athletic clubs went on a preemptive offensive that Sunday night. **John Mills** boarded an eastbound streetcar on 47th St. A few blocks later, the car was disengaged from its line by a band of "hoodlums." Mills and five other black men jumped from the car and ran as fast as they could. Mills was caught and beaten to death on the streets. Several hundred whites stood on the sidewalk and cheered the proceedings, including some women and children. Whites who ventured into the Black Belt were also at risk. A peddler named **Casmero Lazeroni** steered his goods onto 36th and State. Obviously he underestimated the severity of the situation - Blacks threw stones and bricks at him until his wagon stopped—then dragged him into the street and stabbed him to death.

The Black community - bunkered in their own neighborhood - defended it mercilessly. Some who went to work on Monday were pulled off of trolley cars and beaten or stabbed to death. By Tuesday, they almost unanimously stayed away from their jobs -- since the commute required them to ride directly through the Irish neighborhoods. Groups of Irish gangsters drove through the Black Belt and fired at or assaulted any blacks they saw, in one of history's first examples of the "drive-by shooting." Black men sniped at these cars with revolvers and rifles. The police were unable to maintain order. Those arrests that were made were overwhelmingly of the blacks -- very few of the Irish were stopped. For two days, the mayor and the governor sparred with each other on the necessity of mobilizing the state militia. Neither wanted to be the first to order troops in against the Irish. Governor Lowden told the papers that he was ready to send in troops as soon as the Mayor approved it, while Thompson reiterated that the responsibility rested with Lowden.

Eventually, thousands of state militia were posted on the "color line" in the south side, ordered to restrict access to the area, and given very strong instructions to take the Irish gangs seriously. For several days, troops escorted the trolley lines and remained posted on site, to defuse any violence.

The Chicago press took the side of the Irish with vigor. But they rioted not as frenzied individuals, but together in their "athletic clubs," which operated with the tacit approval of political and community leaders. When they grew up, members of these clubs formed the core of the Irish political machine.

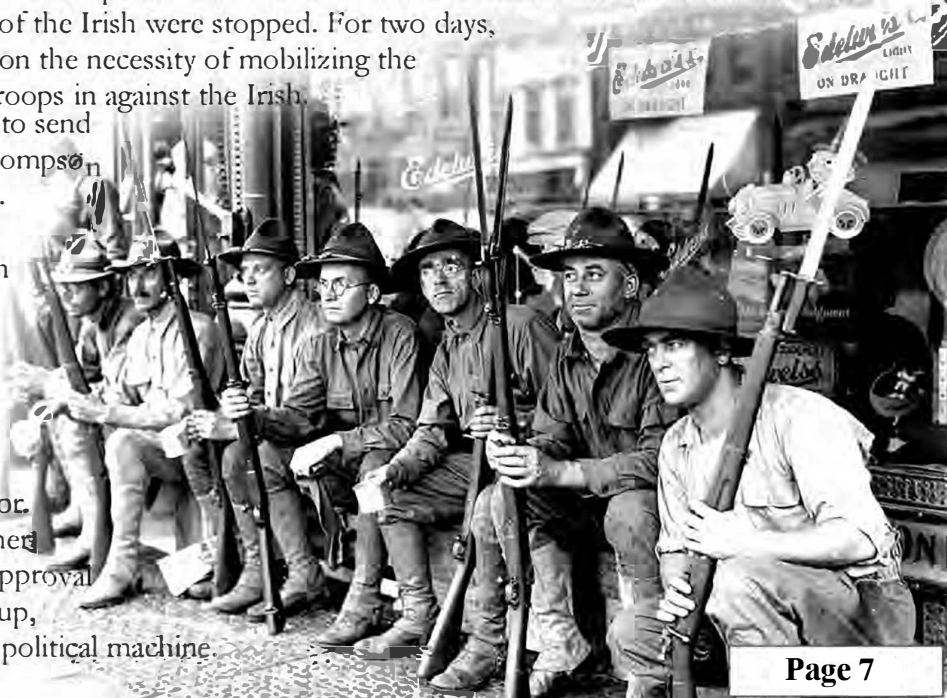




Photo from “Beyond Conversation” panel, March 2022 by C. Kimberly Gonzalez
[Access to full video from the panel discussion at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioITsEACFKI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioITsEACFKI)

CREATING A NEW MUSICAL

Playwrights Shepsu Aakha and Andrew White (pictured above; second from left and second from right) have been friends and colleagues in Chicago theater for more than thirty years and had long looked for an opportunity to work together but had not found the right project. Finally in 2017, they began co-writing RED SUMMER in response to our country’s continued racial divisions that chronically simmer and, too often ignored, eventually boil over. As an African-American playwright, Shepsu is a prolific writer who has written many plays chronicling a black perspective of growing up in Chicago; as a white and Jewish playwright, Andy has put race relations at the heart of his writing as well. This project appealed to both men for the same reasons – an opportunity to finally work together creatively, and to address an issue about which they both cared deeply. (Additionally, it would entail an archaeological dig through Chicago’s troubled racial past, which offered further excitement to these two mild history buffs). This is a play about two men whose histories and fates are co-written by historic elements outside of their control, but who face and make choices that are within their power; similarly, this play is co-written by two writers who, despite similar points of view, often find themselves on different sides of the fickle coin of opportunity, and face similar choices about how best to bridge the racial divide and make the world a little less brittle and mean.

Post-show Discussion

Here are some questions to help your students **start a conversation** after seeing the show.

Students can first discuss the questions **with a partner** and then share with the larger group:

- ❖ After seeing the performance, what is **important to you** about the subject matter?
 - How did it impact you? How do you feel talking about it?
- ❖ What were the **main events** of the musical?
 - Although the play takes place over a hundred years ago, did any of the events remind you of current events? What was similar and what was different?
- ❖ Did any of the **characters** in the play remind you of yourself or someone you know?
 - What are the similarities between that person and the character?
 - What are the differences between that person and the character?
- ❖ What was your favorite **song** from the musical?
 - What style of music was the song?
 - When you heard the song, how did it make you feel?
- ❖ Thinking about the **technical aspects** of the production (lights, sound, costumes, props, scenery) are there any moments or specific details you remember most?
 - What was happening in the play that stood out to you?
 - How did the technical features help enhance the moment?
- ❖ How did the **musical end**?
 - Why do you think the show's creators chose that ending?
 - How did you feel about the characters at the end?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Character Journal

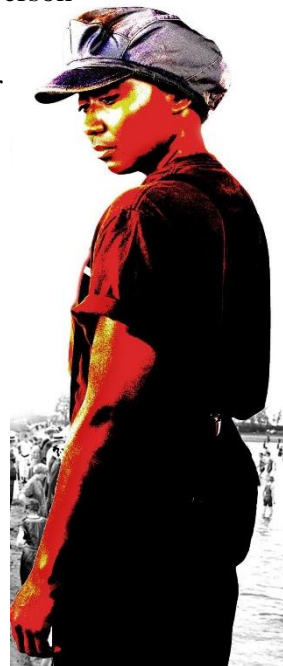
1. After students engage in a post-show discussion, have them look at page 4 to help recall the characters in *Red Summer*. Ask students to pick a character they recall and find interesting.
2. Once they have selected the character, students should pick a moment from that character's life. The moment could be something they saw in *Red Summer* or a moment they imagined the character to have experienced. Examples:
 - i. D.L. journeys home from War and anticipates being with his wife and baby.
 - ii. Marlene's baby, Ruth Ann, dies from Spanish Flu.
 - iii. Conner comes home from War and experiences reactions to his injury.
 - iv. Dixon thinks about the murder of Eugene Williams.
 - v. Mam Weir/Marlene Winters think about their lives as a washer women.
3. Students will write a journal entry from the point of view of that character, as a first-person narrative. Students should consider what the character would be thinking and feeling.
4. Once the journal entries are complete, ask for volunteers to read aloud their character journal. Students should try to embody (act like) the character while they read.
 - i. How would the character move and speak?
 - ii. What aspects of the characters lives impact them physically?

Poetry and Music

And the sky so blue
And the water too
Nothing here for me to do
But feel myself float up and away
Above it all, the mix and fray
Just me and my pals, my tribe, my friends
Floating out here forever
Where the summer never ends.

The above words are sung by Eugene Williams in *Red Summer* just moments before he is murdered. The words express the joy and escape he feels floating on his raft with his friends. What began as poetic language was transformed into a song by music director Shawn Wallace.

1. Ask students to think about a moment from *Red Summer* when a character was having strong feelings. Or they can think about strong feelings they had while watching the performance.
2. Using vivid, descriptive, and detailed language, students create a short poem expressing the feelings of that moment. Is there rhythm to the words, could they set to the tune of a song they know?
3. Ask students to volunteer to share their poetry aloud.



Common Core State Standards

Below are some of the Common Core Standards aligned with the material found in this Study Guide:

Common Core State Standard for Social Science, SS.9-12.H.8.:

Analyze key historical events and contributions of individuals through a variety of perspectives, including those of historically underrepresented groups.

See post-show discussion pg. 9, and classroom activities pg. 10

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, Standard 2:

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See play synopsis pg. 3, and post-show discussion questions pg. 9

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading, Standard 7:

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

See post-show discussion pg. 9, and classroom activities pg. 10

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, Standard 3:

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

See classroom activities pg. 10

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, Standard 1:

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

See 1919 historical background pgs. 5-7, post-show discussion pg. 9, and classroom activities pg. 10

Headlines from 1919

Public Notice! SPANISH INFLUENZA

IT'S "FLU" with PNEUMONIA
Undoubtedly the Highest Qualifications (backed by the experience of Medical Men and Actual Users) are possessed by NICOLAS' "ASPRO" TABLETS.

185,440 people die in the third wave of the Flu Pandemic.



Rotary dial telephones are introduced by AT & T.



Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity is confirmed when the Royal Astronomical Society sees the predicted effect during a solar eclipse

83 Negroes are lynched—many of them soldiers returning home from the Great War. At the same time, the Ku Klux Klan is operating in 27 states. The pamphlet, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1898-1918* is published by the NAACP. The report is used to appeal to lawmakers to end the social, political and economic terrorism associated with lynching.



The adoption of constitutional amendments giving women the vote and establishing Prohibition denoted the high-water mark of the moral impulses of the Progressive era.

The pop-up toaster, short wave radios, and arc welders were invented in the US in 1919.



January 6 – Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States, dies in his sleep at the age of 60.

January 16 – The 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution, authorizing Prohibition, goes into effect .

February 5 – Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith launch United Artists in an attempt to control their own work.

February 26 – An act of the United States Congress establishes most of the Grand Canyon as a United States National Park.

March – The Red Scare begins - Vladimir Lenin starts a revolution in Russia that changes the government to communism. As a result, the U.S. passed an act that would blacklist anyone that had been thought to be involved with communism.

April 30 – Several bombs are intercepted in the first wave of the 1919 United States anarchist bombings.

May 1 – The May Day Riots of 1919 - Cleveland

Headlines from 1919 cont'd

- May 10** – Following postwar social tensions related to the demobilization of veterans of the Great War and competition for jobs among whites and blacks, the first race riot of what became known as **Red Summer** occurs in Charleston, South Carolina.
- June 2** – In seven U.S. cities, eight mail bombs are sent to prominent figures as part of the anarchist bombings. All eight bombs exploded within approximately 90 minutes of one another, rocking some of the biggest urban areas in America.
- June 4** – Congress approves the 19th Amendment, which would guarantee suffrage to women, and sends it to the U.S. states for ratification.
- June 15** – Pancho Villa attacks Ciudad Juárez. When the bullets begin to fly to the U.S. side of the border, two units of the U.S. 7th Cavalry Regiment cross the border and repulse Villa's forces.
- June 28** – Treaty of Versailles is signed and ends The Great War.
- July 2** – Cost of a first-class stamp rises from 2¢ to 3¢.
- July 6** – The British dirigible R34 lands in New York, completing the first crossing of the Atlantic by an airship.
- July 21** – The Wingfoot Air Express catches fire over downtown Chicago; two passengers, one crew member, and 10 people on the ground were killed. Two others were able to parachute to the ground safely.
- July 27** – The Chicago Race Riot of 1919 begins when a white man threw rocks at a group black teens on a raft, killing Eugene Williams.
- August 11** – The first NFL team for Wisconsin (the Green Bay Packers) is founded by Curly Lambeau.
- August 30-31** – After a three-way splintering of the Socialist Party of Am., the leadership of the remaining 30,000 members of the Right Wing of the Socialist party continues their national convention in Chicago, Illinois. The leadership of the 10,000 native-born English-speaking members of the Left Wing forms the Communist Labor Party of America on August 31.
- September 9** – About three-quarters of the Boston police force goes on strike. Massachusetts Governor John Calvin Coolidge acts quickly to dismiss the strikers, saying that no one has the right to strike against public safety.
- September 10-15** – The Florida Keys Hurricane kills 600 people in the Gulf of Mexico, Florida, and Texas.
- September 21** – The Steel strike of 1919 begins across the United States. It collapsed on January 8, 1920.
- September 28** – Omaha Riot: A lynch mob besieges the police station and courthouse in Omaha, Nebraska, and lynches alleged rapist Will Brown.
- October 1** – The Elaine Race Riot breaks out in Arkansas.
- October 2** – President of the U.S. Woodrow Wilson suffers a massive stroke, leaving him partially paralyzed. The stroke incapacitated the president, his wife controlled access, and he remained in office, though he should have been removed. He worked minimally during the remainder of his term but did approve the Palmer Raids. Essentially, the country ran without a president for nearly 18 months. The public turned on Wilson over the assault on civil liberties, The Great War, and the events of 1919, resulting in a humiliating rebuke in the 1920 election.
- October 9** – Major League Baseball - nine players from the Chicago White Sox throw the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds. It is forever known as the Black Sox Scandal with players, such as immortal Shoeless Joe Jackson, banned from the game and Hall of Fame forever.
- October 28** – Prohibition begins: Congress passes the Volstead Act over President Woodrow Wilson's veto.
- November 7** – The first Palmer Raid is conducted on the second anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Over 10,000 suspected communists and anarchists are arrested in twenty-three different U.S. cities.
- November 11** – The Centralia Massacre in Centralia, Washington results in the deaths of four members of the American Legion, and the castration and lynching of a local leader of the Industrial Workers of the World.
- November 19** – The Treaty of Versailles fails a critical ratification vote in the US Senate. It will never be ratified by the U.S.
- December 21** – United States deports 249 people, including Emma Goldman to Russia, during the Red Scare.
- December 26** – Babe Ruth is sold by the Boston Red Sox to the New York Yankees for \$125,000, the largest sum ever paid for a player at that time. The deal was announced on January 6, 1920
- December 30** – Average Grocery Price – 1 pound apples 11¢, 2 pounds roast beef 38¢, 3 pounds steak 60¢, 1 pound bread 5¢, 1 pound butter 39¢, 3 pounds chicken 19¢.

Thank you for joining us at GSU's Center for the Performing Arts!

Help us spread the word to parents and community members:

MPAACT presents



**RED
SUMMER**

by Shepsu Aakhu and Andrew White
Music composed by Shawn Wallace

Making Its World Premiere September 16 – 25, 2022
A pandemic ravages the land. An innocent Black teenager brutally murdered.
A country divided.
It's not 2022. It's 1919.
A new musical that bridges the past to the present.



Set during the Chicago race riots of 1919, *RED SUMMER* paints a brutally honest picture of a crucial moment in history that eerily mirrors our present time. Two soldiers—one Black, one white—return from the battlefields of World War I only to find themselves caught in the violence of a city struggling to accommodate the Great Migration, a global pandemic, the reintegration of veterans, a downturn in the economy, and long-standing ethnic tensions. Having fought on the same side and now pitted against each other as their neighbors wage block-by-block warfare, and the city's ethnic enclaves rage and burn.

Tickets: \$29 – \$39
Students: \$10

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University Park, IL 60484

Preview – Friday, September 16 at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 17 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 18 at 2 p.m.
Saturday, September 24 at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, September 25 at 2 p.m.

Visit www.govst.edu/RedSummer
or scan QR code for more info
and to reserve your tickets!



This project is supported in part by
the National Endowment for the Arts



We are happy to extend a 20% discount to your school network with the code: **COMMUNITY Redeemable** by phone 708.235.2222 or online.

Red Summer is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional contributions from the Illinois Arts Council Agency



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation
deserves great art.

