

UNDERGROUND

HEAR THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

BOOK & LYRICS
BY:
AKIL DUPONT



LEAD COMPOSER:
LILI FORBES

www.DUPONTPRODUCTIONS.COM

A STORY OF THE ENSLAVED, TOLD WITH THE SPIRITUALS THAT GUIDED THEM TO FREEDOM. INSPIRED BY REAL EVENTS IN AMERICA'S HISTORY



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A SLAVE STORY TOLD THROUGH SONG, "UNDERGROUND" FOLLOWS BALI, A FIELD SLAVE WHO PLANS TO ESCAPE FROM HIS OPPRESSIVE PLANTATION LIFE AFTER LEARNING THAT HIS MASTER IS GOING TO SELL HIS YOUNG DAUGHTER, EMALA. DISCOVERING INSTRUCTIONS HIDDEN WITHIN THE LYRICS OF NEGRO SPIRITUALS, BALI FINALLY DECIDES TO FLEE WITH EMALA.

A HOUSE SLAVE, DEMBI, IS FORCED ALONG THEIR PERILOUS JOURNEY AFTER TRYING TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THEIR PATH IS TOO DANGEROUS. DEMBI BELIEVES THAT THEY WILL SURELY BE KILLED IF THEY FOLLOW THE PATH OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.

AS WE JOIN THEM ON THE FREEDOM TRAIL, ORIGINAL AND TRADITIONAL SPIRITUALS INSPIRE AND GUIDE THEM ALONG THEIR JOURNEY, IN HOPES THAT THE MASTER WILL NEVER FIND THEM AND DRAG THEM BACK TO A LIFE OF SERVITUDE.

UNDERGROUND

2 HOURS – CAST OF 9+ – 2-4 MUSICIANS



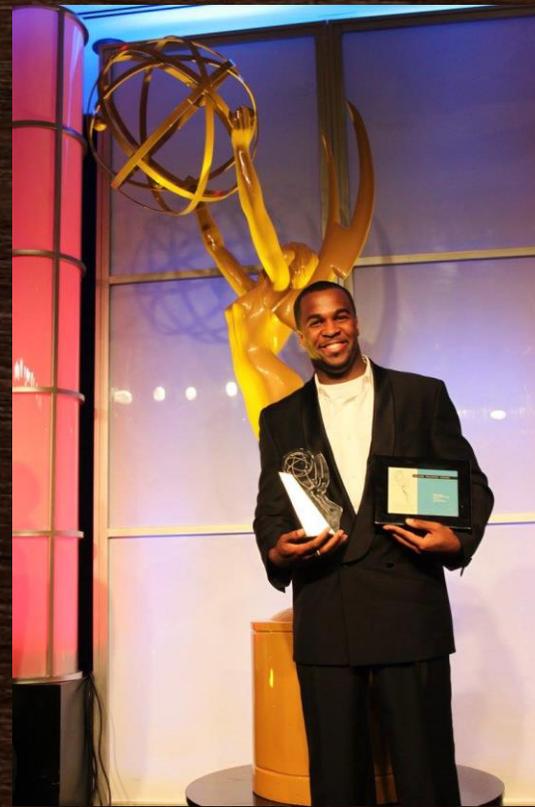
FILM PRODUCTION HISTORY

WINNER OF 21 AWARDS IN
28 FILM FESTIVALS
2 STUDENT EMMYS
PLAYED IN 60 COUNTRIES
CREATED IN 2010



PLAY PRODUCTION HISTORY

7 PRODUCTIONS IN 4 STATES
89% AVERAGE CAPACITY
CREATED IN 2015



DEVELOPMENT - PLAY

UNDERGROUND



ATLANTA BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL, ATLANTA GA - FULL PRODUCTION

OCTOBER 2015 - 99% CAPACITY - 600 SEATS, 594 TICKETS SOLD **CLOSING NIGHT EVENT**



SANKOFA ANNUAL CONCERT, TALLAHASSEE, FL - CONCERT PRODUCTION

JULY 2019 - 115% CAPACITY - 800 SEATS, 920 PATRONS **STANDING ROOM ONLY**

NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY SHOWCASE, NEW YORK CITY - STAGED READING

MARCH 2016 - 70% CAPACITY - 200 SEATS, 140 PATRONS (MINIMAL MARKETING)

DIRECTED BY TONY AWARD-WINNER BEN HARNEY



89% AVERAGE CAPACITY!

DEVELOPMENT - PLAY

UNDERGROUND

ATLANTA MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL, ATLANTA, GA – STAGED READING
AUG 2016 – 88% CAPACITY – 184 SEATS, 162 TICKETS SOLD (MINIMAL MARKETING)



NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY, DURHAM, NC – FULL PRODUCTION
FEB 2017 – 93% CAPACITY – 300 SEATS, 280 PATRONS



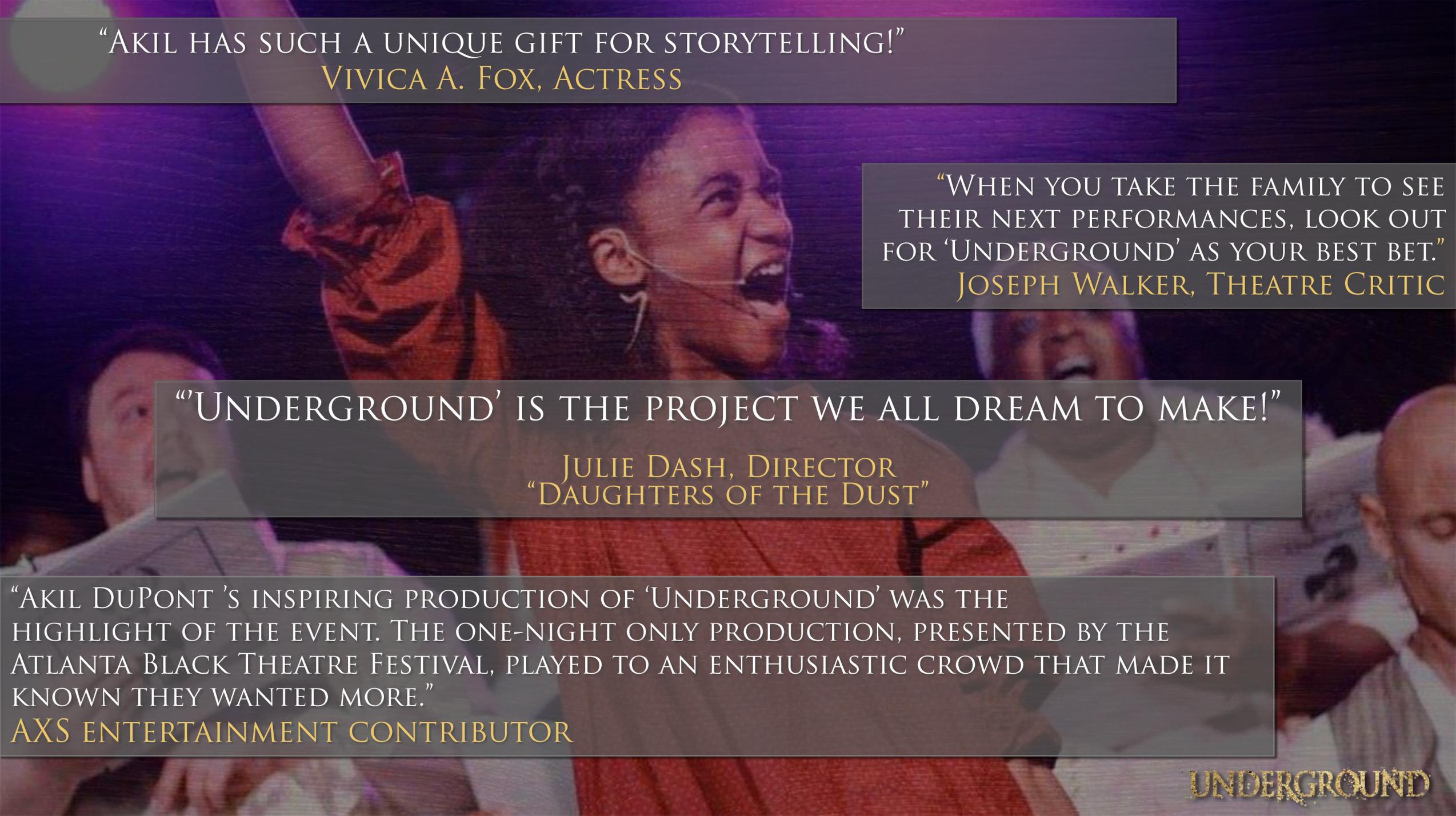
NEW YORK THEATER FESTIVAL, MANHATTAN, NYC – FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE
BEST PRODUCTION & BEST SINGER WINNER!!! (OUT OF 80 PLAYS)
JUNE 2024 – 90% CAPACITY – 291 SEATS, 261 PATRONS



SOUTHAMPTON PRODUCTION STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY, SOUTHAMPTON, NY
FEB 2025 – 71% CAPACITY – 400 SEATS, 185-380 PATRONS

89% AVERAGE CAPACITY!



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a red jacket and a microphone, is performing on stage. She has her mouth open as if speaking or singing. The background is dark with purple and blue lighting. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the performer.

“AKIL HAS SUCH A UNIQUE GIFT FOR STORYTELLING!”

VIVICA A. FOX, ACTRESS

“WHEN YOU TAKE THE FAMILY TO SEE THEIR NEXT PERFORMANCES, LOOK OUT FOR ‘UNDERGROUND’ AS YOUR BEST BET.”

JOSEPH WALKER, THEATRE CRITIC

“‘UNDERGROUND’ IS THE PROJECT WE ALL DREAM TO MAKE!”

JULIE DASH, DIRECTOR
“DAUGHTERS OF THE DUST”

“AKIL DUPONT’S INSPIRING PRODUCTION OF ‘UNDERGROUND’ WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE EVENT. THE ONE-NIGHT ONLY PRODUCTION, PRESENTED BY THE ATLANTA BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL, PLAYED TO AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD THAT MADE IT KNOWN THEY WANTED MORE.”

AXS ENTERTAINMENT CONTRIBUTOR

UNDERGROUND

UNDERGROUND

EVERY AMERICAN BORN FORM OF MUSIC – ROCK AND ROLL, COUNTRY, GOSPEL, HIP-HOP, ETC. – TRACES BACK TO THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL. OUR ANCESTORS HAD THE VISION AND INGENUITY TO WEAVE INSTRUCTIONS INTO THESE SONGS TO GUIDE THE TORMENTED THROUGH THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.



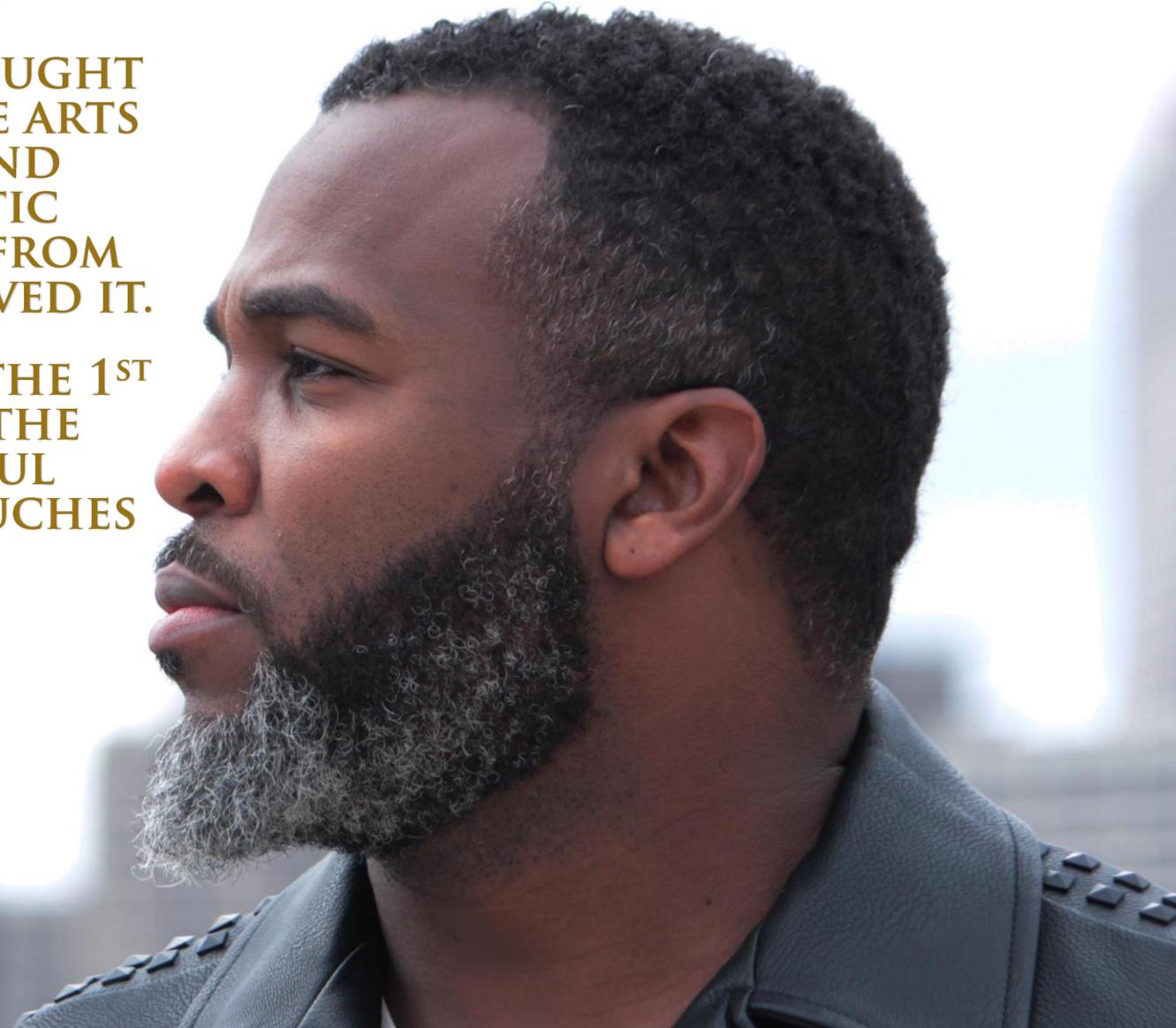
CREATOR'S NOTE

THE TRUTH ABOUT OUR HISTORY IS UNDER ASSAULT IN AMERICA. POLITICIANS ARE TRYING TO STRIP IT FROM SCHOOLS - ELEMENTARY THROUGH COLLEGE.

WHILE THIS BATTLE IS STILL BEING FOUGHT IN THE HALLS OF POLITICS, WE IN THE ARTS HAVE A UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE AUTHENTIC REALITY OF THE ROAD TO FREEDOM FROM THE DESCENDANTS OF THOSE WHO LIVED IT.

SHOWCASING OUR STORY THROUGH THE 1ST AMERICAN BORN FORM OF MUSIC, THE SPIRITUAL IS NOT ONLY A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE, BUT ALSO ONE THAT TOUCHES THE SOUL.

~AKIL DUPONT



UNDERGROUND

HEAR THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

BOOK & LYRICS
BY:
AKIL DUPONT

HEAD COMPOSER:
LILI FORBES

www.dupont.com



CREATOR'S NOTE

AFTER 7 PRODUCTIONS IN 4 STATES (AND THE SHORT FILM), UNDERGROUND FEELS LIKE IT IS ENTERING INTO ITS MATURED CREATIVE FORM.

THE AUDIENCE FEELS THE WEIGHT OF THE CHALLENGES, THEY LAUGH DURING THE MOMENTS OF LEVITY, THEIR HEARTS SOAR IN THE MOMENTS OF HOPE & ANCESTRAL CONNECTION AND THEY MOVE WITH THE MUSIC.

I'M PROUD OF HOW THE WORK HAS MATURED AND CONTINUOUSLY LOOK FOR AREAS TO IMPROVE THIS STORY TOLD THROUGH SONG.

~AKIL DUPONT

NEXT STEPS

UNDERGROUND

1) AN OFF-BROADWAY PRODUCTION

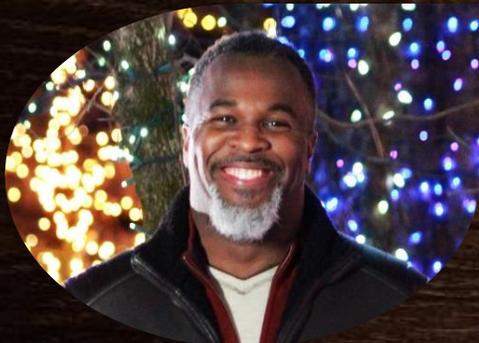
ESTIMATED DATE: 2026

2) A BROADWAY PRODUCTION

ESTIMATED DATE: TBD



THE UNDERGROUND TEAM



BOOK & LYRICS
PRODUCER

AKIL DUPONT, MFA
WINNER OF 2 STUDENT
EMMYS, 40+ FESTIVAL
AWARDS



LEAD COMPOSER

LILI FORBES
WINNER OF 7
CARIBBEAN GOSPEL
MUSIC AWARDS



MUSIC DIRECTOR

JAMEEL MCKANSTRY
LEAD TEACHING ARTIST
VOCAL AND MUSICAL THEATER
HARLEM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

AUTUMN BAILEY
FORD
NATIONAL BOARD CHAIR
PRODUCER GUILD OF
AMERICA



LEAD ACTOR /
CO-PRODUCER

TRAVIS PRATT
AMERICA'S GOT
TALENT ALUM



MUSIC
ARRANGER

CHRISTIAN
MAGBY
THE FLASH TV SHOW



CHOREOGRAPHER

RAY MERCER
21 YEAR VETERAN OF
THE LION KING ON
BROADWAY

NEWS ARTICLES

- 1) [STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER WITH FIRST MAJOR THEATRICAL PRODUCTION IN YEARS - 2025](#)
- 2) [UNDERGROUND COMES TO THE AVRAM THEATER - 2025](#)
- 3) [STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON HOSTS LI PREMIERE - 2025](#)
- 4) [UNDERGROUND ON NPR - 2025](#)
- 5) [SOUTHAMPTON INN SUPPORTS THE UNDERGROUND - 2025](#)
- 6) [PACE PROFESSOR WINS BEST PRODUCTION AWARD AT NEW YORK THEATER FESTIVAL - 2024](#)
- 7) [THE LINKS LOOKS BACK AT "DRIVING FORWARD" MOVIE EVENT - 2021](#)
- 8) [MUSICAL UNDERGROUND RETURNS TO TALLAHASSEE AT SANKOFA CONCERT - 2019](#)
- 9) [SLAVERY SAGA HAS CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS - 2019](#)
- 10) [UNDERGROUND PERFORMANCE PACKS THE MOON - 2019](#)
- 11) [UNDERGROUND CRITIC REVIEW - 2015](#)



UNDERGROUND

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UNDERGROUND



A BREATH STOPPING
MUSICAL THAT EXPLORES
ONE SLAVE'S FAITH AND
DETERMINATION TO GAIN
FREEDOM FOR HIS FAMILY

HEAR THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

BOOK & LYRICS BY: AKIL DUPONT
LEAD & VOCAL COMPOSER: IYIY FORRCE
MUSIC BY: MICHAEL WILLIAMS, MICHAEL HIGGLIN, GREGG SUTHER, JAMES PARRIS,
JOSH WARDEN, T.J. TORO & JEFF COPPIN; HEAR JALOUX AND UNCLELOOPER COLLECTIVE

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