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Carlyle Brown Receives the 2022 Legacy Award from the Legacy Playwright's Initiative

(Minneapolis, MN)

Illusion Theater congratulates Carlyle Brown for receiving a 2022 Legacy Award from the Dramatist's Guild Foundations' Legacy Playwright's Initiative. The honor recognizes established American Playwrights for their sustained influence on the American theater in hopes of bringing renewed attention to their body of work.

Todd London, the Director of Theatre Relations for the Dramatists Guild of America and the Head of the MFA Playwriting Program at the New School of Drama presented the Award to Carlyle saying, "In my own life, playwrights have taught me much of what I know about freedom, what it means to look the world dead in the eye and imagine a better one, what it means to assert your truth in your own voice, whatever the cost. No playwright has taught me more about this freedom than Carlyle Brown."

London continued, "One of our most wide-ranging writers, though too little seen in NY, Carlyle's plays include *The African Company Presents Richard the Third*, *Pure Confidence*, *The Negro of Peter the Great*, and *Down in Mississippi*. Whether set during the Freedom Summer of 1964, Civil War Kentucky, or 18th century Czarist Russia, Carlyle masterfully dramatizes moments in Black history that illuminate our present." As his nominator wrote: "Carlyle's contributions to the theatrical canon have been monumental."

"I am deeply gratified and honored to receive a Legacy Playwrights' Initiative award for a number of reasons," shares Brown in a statement. "For being recognized for one's full body of work, to be acknowledged and even memorialized for one's contribution to the theatre, to be encouraged in your twilight, in your third act and supported just when one may be on the cusp of a creative expansion, are the rarest of gifts. As a young man I marveled that Goethe wrote *Faust* when he was 80. Now, it doesn't seem so far-fetched."

The announcement of Carlyle being selected as a Legacy Award winner occurred in New York City at a Reading of Carlyle's work *A Play by Barb and Carl* which Illusion premiered this Spring in Minneapolis. Illusion's Producing Director, Michael Robins said, "Congratulations to Carlyle Brown for this recognition of his body of work. Carlyle is in residence at Illusion as the Andrew W. Mellon Playwright-in-Residence, and we are honored and pleased to be his home for the work that is yet to flow from his pen." Bonnie Morris, Illusion's other Producing Director continued, --- "Carlyle has

added so much to the creative culture of Illusion as a mentor, writer, and friend. This summer we premiered Carlyle's *The History of Religion* with music by Victor Zupanc, and we will workshop this summer his newest play, *'Nobody, No Time'* inspired by the life of the celebrated black headliner of the Ziegfeld Follies, Bert Williams."

This is the second year the Award has been offered, the first year's recipients were Constance Congdon, Philip Kan Gotanda and Ed Bullins. Carlyle received the award along with the Playwright Milcha Sanchez-Scott at the Dramatists Guild Foundation 60th anniversary Gala October 24 in New York.

As part of his selection, Carlyle will receive a monetary grant, advocacy, and financial incentives for professional productions of his work, the reissuing of previously published plays, programs to raise awareness for his body of work within the theater community and in universities, and a filmed interview highlighting his career. Support is provided via grants from the Tides Foundation's Venturous Theater Fund, the Dramatists Guild Foundation, and individual gifts.

About Carlyle Brown

Carlyle is a playwright/performer, curator and artistic director of Carlyle Brown & Company based in Minneapolis. He is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Playwright-in-Residence at Illusion Theater in Minneapolis MN. Brown has written over 20 plays which have been produced nationally and internationally, including: *The African Company Presents Richard the Third*, *Pure Confidence*, *Down in Mississippi*, *Are You Now or Have You Ever Been?*, *Finding Fish*, *Acting Black*, *Demystifying Racism*, *A Play By Barb and Carl*, *History of Religion*. He is an alum of New Dramatists and a LifeTime Core Writer at the Playwrights' Center. A list of Carlyle's works is here

<https://carlylebrowncandcompany.org/works/>.

Illusion has premiered Carlyle's *Finding Fish* and *A Play by Barb and Carl*. During COVID, Illusion presented Zoom virtual versions of Carlyle's *Down in Mississippi* and *A Play By Barb and Carl*.

Carlyle directed *We Take Care of Own* written by Zainabu Jallo, a play that came out of The African Cultural Diaspora Project.

Link to Todd London's story about Carlyle Brown: <https://howlround.com/lovers-guide-american-playwrights-15>

About the African Cultural Diaspora Project

Carlyle conceived of The African Cultural Diaspora Project with sponsorship from the Camargo Foundation. The mission of the Project is to support accomplished Black playwrights with diverse cultural backgrounds, and to spark a dialogue about the disparate ways in which the African Diaspora experience has shaped their perspectives and creative output. He has now curated two of the Cultural Diaspora Residencies, in 2018 and 2022, at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France. He also developed, with The Playwright's Center and the Camargo Foundation The Afro-Atlantic Playwrights' Festival held at The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, MN.

About Illusion Theater

Illusion Theater was founded in 1974 and presents its season at its new home at the Center for Performing Arts at 3754 Pleasant Ave in South Minneapolis. Tree O'Halloran has joined Illusion as an Associate Producer with Michael Robins and Bonnie Morris as the leadership of Illusion Theater to illuminate the illusions, myths, and realities of our times and to use the power of theater to catalyze personal and social change.

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