

(<https://www.wttw.com/>) (<https://www.facebook.com/wttw11.1/>) (<https://twitter.com/wttw>) (<https://www.instagram.com/wttwchicago/>)

[schedule](https://www.wttw.com/schedule)(<https://www.wttw.com/schedule>) [watch](#) [programs](https://www.wttw.com/programs)(<https://www.wttw.com/programs>) [events](https://www.wttw.com/events)(<https://www.wttw.com/events>)

[kids](#)([ht](#)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT (/ART-ENTERTAINMENT)

Lack of Diversity Among Chicago Stage Directors, Says Victory Gardens Theater

Theater's new program targets directors of various races, genders, and abilities

Chloe Riley (/stories-by-author/Chloe Riley) | September 18, 2015 3:11 pm



Victory Gardens Artistic Director Chay Yew (lower right) and the five emerging directors chosen for a new program at the theater.

As part of an attempt to diversify its own roster of directors, Victory Gardens Theater (<http://victorygardens.org/>) has launched a program which seeks to provide a threshold for minority directors within Chicago's theatrical community.

The program extends opportunities to people of color, theater-makers who identify as transgender and gender non-conforming, women, and those with disabilities. Those chosen for the program serve as assistant directors of a Victory Gardens show, in addition to receiving complimentary tickets to the company's season and mentoring opportunities.

"One of things we have noticed is, there isn't as much diversity as we'd like with the scope of directors in Chicago theater," said Victory Gardens Associate Artistic Producer Joanie Schultz. "There is a way in which it's really hard to make it as a theater director without some sort of privilege behind you, without some sort of financial backing.

"Directors wield so much power and have so much control over the theater," she added. "I do think we have a prominence of theater directors in the city who are white men."

Of the company's five mainstage shows this season, two will be directed by white men (Gary Griffin, *Never the Sinner*; and Dexter Bullard, *Sucker Punch*). Schultz directs Sarah Gubbins' *Cocked*; Victory Gardens Artistic Director Chay Yew will direct both Lucas Hnath's *Hillary and Clinton* and ensemble playwright Marcus Gardley's *The House That Will Not Stand*.

Watch and Listen Anywhere, Anytime
(/chicago-tonight-watch-listen)



Like us (<https://www.facebook.com/wttwnews/>)

Follow us (<https://twitter.com/wttw>)

ON TONIGHT

- The Week in Review: Record Number of Deaths as COVID-19 Surges
(/2020/12/04/week-review-record-number-deaths-covid-19-surges)

TRENDING

- 1 Why Residents Across Chicago Are Not Getting Their Mail
(/2020/12/02/why-residents-across-chicago-are-not-getting-their-mail)

- 2 Cook County Jail Staffers Should Be Among First in Line for COVID-19 Vaccine, Union Says
(/2020/12/02/cook-county-jail-staffers-should-be-among-first-line-covid-19-vaccine-union-says)


According to Schultz, the impetus for the directors program came from Yew, who has previously spoken about the need to diversify the theater (https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/theater/victory-gardens-theater-in-chicago-in-new-era-with-chay-yew.html?_r=0) in terms of both playwrights and audience. Since taking over that role in 2011, Yew has directed world premieres from a melting pot of playwrights like Jose Rivera, Naomi Iizuka, Julia Cho, and David Adjmi, among others.

For this new directorial initiative, Victory Gardens chose five participants from more than a hundred applicants, Schultz said. One of those five – African-American director Toma Tavares Langston – has Chicago directing credits including Sarah Ruhl’s *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* and Jason Robert Brown’s *The Last Five Years*.

Langston is currently assistant directing English playwright Roy Williams’ *Sucker Punch* (<http://victorygardens.org/our-season/sucker-punch/>), which has its Midwest premiere at Victory Gardens on Friday. The play follows two aspiring African-American boxers in the 1980s.

The 36-year-old Langston said his opportunity with the company has already proved invaluable.

“Truth be told, I’ve kind of been stalking Victory Gardens for the last year or two – going to every show, commenting on every Twitter post,” Langston said. “They do so much work that’s particularly culturally diverse and they put a lot of emphasis on American culture and kind of uprooting what that means.”

A breakdown of the company’s five new assistant directors:



Toma Tavares Langston (assistant director, *Sucker Punch*)


In addition to being artistic director of The Enthusiasts Theatre Company, Langston – who’s originally from Flint, Mich. – also co-founded the Another Production Company and is a participant of Directors Lab Chicago. Directorial credits include Sarah Ruhl’s *Dead Man’s Cell Phone*,

Michael Cristopher’s *The Shadow Box*, Jason Robert Brown’s *The Last Five Years*, Ntozake Shange’s *For Colored Girls Who Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf*. Toma has also worked with Rebekah Theatre Project, Prologue Theatre Co. and Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre.

- 3

Chicago is Failing to Enforce Recycling Laws: Watchdog


[\(/2020/12/02/chicago-failing-enforce-recycling-laws-watchdog\)](/2020/12/02/chicago-failing-enforce-recycling-laws-watchdog)



[\(/2020/12/02/chicago-failing-enforce-recycling-laws-watchdog\)](/2020/12/02/chicago-failing-enforce-recycling-laws-watchdog)
- 4

General Iron’s Parent Company Acquiring Another North Side Metal Recycler


[\(/2020/12/01/general-iron-parent-company-acquiring-another-north-side-metal-recycler\)](/2020/12/01/general-iron-parent-company-acquiring-another-north-side-metal-recycler)



[\(/2020/12/01/general-iron-parent-company-acquiring-another-north-side-metal-recycler\)](/2020/12/01/general-iron-parent-company-acquiring-another-north-side-metal-recycler)
- 5

Pilsen Landmark District Plan Rejected By Key City Council Panel

[\(/2020/12/01/pilsen-landmark-district-plan-rejected-key-city-council-panel\)](/2020/12/01/pilsen-landmark-district-plan-rejected-key-city-council-panel)



[\(/2020/12/01/pilsen-landmark-district-plan-rejected-key-city-council-panel\)](/2020/12/01/pilsen-landmark-district-plan-rejected-key-city-council-panel)

WTTW NEWS DAILY BRIEFING

Subscribe

COMMENTS

- Court: Rittenhouse Bound Over for Trial in Protest Shootings
(<https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/03/court-rittenhouse-bound-over-trial-protest-shootings>)
25 comments · 8 minutes ago
- The Holiday Train Is Running But Its Schedule Is Top-Secret, For Good Reason
(<https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/04/holiday-train-running-its-schedule-top-secret-good-reason>)
2 comments · 3 hours ago
- Get Ready to Expect the Unexpected From This Year’s La Nina Winter
(<https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/04/get-ready-expect-unexpected-year-s-la-nina>)



Lavina Jadhvani (assistant director, *Never The Sinner*)
Named *Time Out Chicago's Best Next Generation Stage Director* in 2013, Jadhvani, who has an MFA in Directing from DePaul University's Theatre School, has a history of non-traditional casting choices for classic plays like *The Duchess of Malfi* and Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. She's directed at Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, Chicago Dramatists, Oak Park Festival Theatre, and Stage Left Theatre, among others.



Lexi Saunders (assistant director, *Cocked*)
Chicago directing credits include *LezFest II* and *Jack & the Box Store* (staged reading) with Pride Films and Plays, *And I Don't Feel Any Different* with Dandelion Theatre, and The 5th Annual One Minute Play Festival at the Den Theatre. Lexi has also trained and worked in Chicago with Walkabout Theater Company, The Women's Theatre Alliance, Theatre Y, and The Lost Geneva Project. This fall, Saunders will direct a staged reading of *Missed Connections* for Pride Films and Plays' LezPlay Weekend, in addition to assistant directing *Charlotte's Web* with E.D.G.E. Theatre's Constellation Project for young people with special needs.



Kevin Matthew Reyes (assistant director, *Hillary & Clinton*)
To date, Reyes has been more actor than director in Chicago – his acting credits include Griffin Theatre's *Balm in Gilead*, The Hypocrites *All Our Tragic*, Goodman Theatre's *The World of Extreme Happiness*, and Steppenwolf's *Lord of the Flies* to name a few. Directing credits include *The Pillowman* with Company 157 and short films for Condensed Milk, Triton TV, and hitRECORD.org, where he acts as a project collaborator.

winter)

1 comment · 3 hours ago

- Unveiling Economic Team, Biden Pledges, 'Help is on the Way' (https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/02/unveiling-economic-team-biden-pledges-help-way)

12 comments · 1 day ago

Thanks to our sponsors:

View all sponsors (/sponsors)

Thanks to our sponsors:

View all sponsors (/sponsors)

Thanks to our sponsors:

View all sponsors (/sponsors)

RECURRING FEATURES

Ask Geoffrey (/recurring-segments/ask-geoffrey)



Chika Ike (assistant director, *The House That Will Not Stand*)

Most recently, Ike worked as an assistant director for the world premiere of The Gift Theatre's *The Royal Society of Antarctica*. Since graduating from Indiana University with a degree in Theater and Drama History, she's worked with Chicago companies Eclipse Theatre, American Blues Theater, and Prologue Theatre Company.

NEIGHBORHOOD:

LINCOLN PARK (/CHICAGO-NEIGHBORHOODS/LINCOLN-PARK)



Sign up for our morning newsletter to get all of our stories delivered to your mailbox each weekday.
(<https://wttw.com/dailybriefing>)

(<https://wttw.com/dailybriefing>)

Animals and Nature (/tags/animals-nature)
Chicago Portrait
(<https://news.wttw.com/tags/chicago-portrait>)
Firsthand: Gun Violence
(/tags/firsthand)
Hedy Weiss Reviews (/recurring-segments/hedy-weiss-theater-reviews)
Homegrown, WTTW's organic garden
(/homegrown)
Jay's Chicago (/stories-by-author/jay-shefsky)
Spotlight Politics (/tags/spotlight-politics)
The Week in Review (/recurring-segments/week-in-review)

ALSO ON WTTW (WWCI)

Pilsen Landmark District Plan ...

3 days ago • 1 comment

A rancorous debate that stretched for more than 18 months ended Tuesday ...

COVID-19 Vaccine Could Be Available ...

3 days ago • 1 comment

The first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine could be administered to health ...

Vaccine Rollout Barrels on With ...

a day ago • 3 comments

As the decision looms for President-elect Joe Biden, a new analysis argues for ...

Among F Biden to

a day ago • 3

The preside frequently e mask-weari

WTTW (WWCI) Comment Policy

Please read our [Comment Policy](#) before commenting.



0 Comments WTTW (WWCI) Disqus' Privacy Policy

Login ▾

Recommend Tweet Share

Sort by Newest ▾



Start the discussion...

wttw news (<https://news.wttw.com>)

schedule (<https://schedule.wttw.com>)

watch
(<https://video.wttw.com>)

Main (<https://news.wttw.com>)

WTTW (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

All Video (<https://video.wttw.com>)

Video (<https://news.wttw.com/video>)

WTTW Prime (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

Kids Video

Archive (<https://news.wttw.com/archive>)

WTTW Create/World (<https://schedule.wttw.com/>)

(<https://www.wttw.com/kids>)

- Politics (<https://news.wttw.com/politics>)

Education (<https://news.wttw.com/education>)

Business (<https://news.wttw.com/business>)

Culture (<https://news.wttw.com/culture>)

Science/Technology (<https://news.wttw.com/science-technology>)

Contact Us (<https://news.wttw.com/contact>)

Advertise (<https://news.wttw.com/content/wttw-business-partners>)

About Us (<https://news.wttw.com/about>)

Internships (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/employment/internship-program-information>)
- WTTW/PBS Kids (<https://www.wttw.com/kids>)

Program Guide (https://www.wttw.com/sites/default/files/WWCIGuide_December_2020.pdf)

programs (<https://www.wttw.com/programs>)

Programs A-Z (<https://www.wttw.com/programs>)

Playlist (<https://interactive.wttw.com/playlist>)

events (<https://www.wttw.com/events>)

Event Calendar (<https://www.wttw.com/events>)

about (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/mission>)

Our Mission (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/mission>)

Our History (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/history>)

Our Sponsors (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/sponsors>)

Chicago Production Center (<https://cpc.wttw.com/>)

Local Productions (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/productions/wttw-local-productions>)

National Syndication (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/productions/wttw-national-productions>)

Pressroom (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/pressroom>)

Management & Board (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/management-board>)

Advisory Board (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/community-advisory-board>)

Financial Information (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/financial-information>)

Employment (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/employment>)

Volunteer (<https://interactive.wttw.com/volunteer>)

Directions (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/location>)

Contact Us (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/contact-us>)

support (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support>)

- Support WTTW (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support>)
- Join/Renew - Pledge (<https://secure.wttw.com/>)
- Offers & Contests (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/contests>)
- Member Perks (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/membership/member-perks>)
- Membership (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/membership>)
- Family Membership (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/membership/kidsclub>)
- Corporate/Foundation Gifts (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/corporate-support>)
- Major/Planned Gifts (<https://wttw.giftplans.org/>)
- Vehicle Donation (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/vehicle-donation>)
- Volunteer (<https://interactive.wttw.com/volunteer>)
- Membership FAQs (<https://interactive.wttw.com/support/membership>)
- Contact Us (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/contact-us>)

Privacy Policy (<https://interactive.wttw.com/wwci-privacy-policy>) | Terms of Use (<https://interactive.wttw.com/terms-of-use>) |

Public File (<https://publicfiles.fcc.gov/tv-profile/wttw>) | Registered 501(c)(3), EIN: 36-2246703 | © 2020 WWCI (<https://interactive.wttw.com/about/mission>)



(<http://make-fruitwine.com/bullatepile.php?isbn=o>)