

Black Arts MKE: The biggest Milwaukee Black Theater Festival ever returns with events across the city

Posted on Wednesday, Aug 3, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MILWAUKEE (August 3, 2022) - Next week, [Black Arts MKE](#) presents the biggest Milwaukee Black Theater Festival ever, hosting events at venues across the city August 10-14. The week-long celebration of Black arts and culture features full-production and staged reading plays, an R&B and Gospel fundraiser concert, spoken word and dance performances, and talk-back and panel discussions. All events are free and open to the public, except for the fundraiser concert, which is a ticketed event. A full festival schedule can be found on the [digital program](#) or official website: blackartsmke.org/festival

This year's theme is *The Black Family: Generations Speak!*, presented by generations of Black artists, includes events for the entire family, acknowledges community challenges, and encourages everyone to come together now to celebrate Black theater, healing, and unity.

"For the first time, the festival will be held across multiple venues in an effort to expose more of the city to rich cross-disciplinary artistic and cultural activity produced by Milwaukee-based Black artists," says Cory Nettles, Black Arts MKE Board Chair. "We're proud to produce Milwaukee Black Theater Festival to share more of our stories and put a spotlight on emerging young Black playwrights and professional theater organizations, including Bronzeville Arts Ensemble and Lights! Camera! Soul!" Expanded venues include Marcus Performing Arts Center, St. Ann Center Indaba Community Band Shell, Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, and The Table Vocational Center.

Milwaukee Black Theater Festival events include:

- Two theatrical world premieres produced by Bronzeville Arts Ensemble: *Milwaukee Voices of Gun Violence* by Sheri Williams Pannell and *Khloe's Beautiful Blues staged reading* by La'Ketta Caldwell
- Theatrical production of *Hidden Heroes* by Shà Cage – The Black Women of NASA produced by First Stage and directed by Samantha Montgomery
- Youth & Family Night kicks off the festival with preview performances from several collaborating BIPOC youth theater and dance organizations including First Stage, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Next Act Theatre, and Signature Dance Company
- *This Just In* staged reading by Malaina Moore, an emerging young MKE-based Black playwright
- Family Reunion Concert Fundraiser produced by Antoine Reynolds and featuring Milwaukee's most talented R&B and Gospel artists and musicians
- Milwaukee Black Theater Community, Let's Talk! Including a History of Milwaukee Black Theater, moderated panel discussion, and an Adolphus Ward Scholarship presentation produced by Lights! Camera! Soul!'s Dimonte Henning
- Healing Through the Arts Showcase performances presented by several artists and survivors as portrayed in *Milwaukee Voices of Gun Violence*

“We’re honoring the Black Family during the third year of the Milwaukee Black Theater Festival which provides an opportunity to tell stories which entertain us while sharing our history, exploring our challenges, uniting our generations, and celebrating our beauty!,” adds Sheri Williams Pannell, co-founder Milwaukee Black Theatre Festival and Bronzeville Arts Ensemble producing artistic director. “

This festival would not be possible without the generous support of the [United Performing Arts Fund](#) (UPAF), [Wisconsin Humanities](#), The Black Seed, [National Endowment for the Arts](#) and BMO Harris Bank.