



## BLACK, QUEER, AND SPIRITUAL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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**The History Project: Tony Grima- 617.266.7733**

(BOSTON) – On Sunday, September 29, 2019, following the 3PM performance of **CHOIR BOY**, SpeakEasy Stage Company will join with The History Project for a special forum entitled “Black, Queer, and Spiritual.”

Simmons School Professor Gary Bailey will moderate this special conversation, which will feature:

- Reverend Irene Monroe, African-American lesbian feminist public theologian, activist, and sought-after speaker and preacher;
- Reverend Jay Williams, Lead Pastor at Union Methodist Church; and
- Corey Yarbrough, Founding Director of Operations at Brooke High School & 8th Grade Academy.

The conversation will focus on the experiences, both rewarding and challenging, of LGBTQ people of color who have grown up in and continue to find a home in churches and faith communities.

The discussion is free and open to anyone holding tickets to the Sunday, Sept. 29 – 3PM performance of **CHOIR BOY**. Other interested in attending the conversation only should contact SpeakEasy Marketing Director Jim Torres at 617-482-3279 or [JimTorres@SpeakEasyStage.com](mailto:JimTorres@SpeakEasyStage.com)

Nominated for four 2019 Tony Awards including Best Play, **CHOIR BOY** is a powerful coming-of-age story punctuated by the soaring harmonies of live gospel, spiritual, and R&B performances. For fifty years, the elite Charles R. Drew Prep School has been dedicated to the education of strong, ethical black men; its legendary choir an emblem of all it holds true. But for Pharus Young, the opportunity to take his rightful place as the leader of these talented vocalists comes at a price. Can he still earn his place in the hallowed halls and sing in his own key?

**CHOIR BOY** is being performed now thru October 12 in the Roberts Studio Theatre in the Stanford Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont Street in Boston’s South End.

Ticket prices start at \$25, with discounts for students, seniors, and people age 25 and under. For tickets or more information, the public is invited to call BostonTheatreScene Ticketing Services at **617.933.8600** or visit [www.SpeakEasyStage.com](http://www.SpeakEasyStage.com).

### **About The History Project**

#### **The History Project: Documenting, Preserving, and Sharing New England’s LGBTQ History**

The History Project is the only organization focused exclusively on documenting and preserving the history of New England’s LGBTQ communities and sharing that history with LGBTQ individuals, organizations, allies, and the public. Formed in 1980 by a group of activists, historians, archivists, and writers, THP is now one of the largest independent LGBTQ archives in the nation, housing more than 150 collections from organizations and individuals encompassing more than one million documents. As an independent community archives, THP’s collections are highly accessible, and our outreach programs bring the stories in our collections to life.

(more)

**About Speakeasy Stage Company**

Since its founding in 1992, SpeakEasy Stage Company has distinguished itself as Boston's premiere theater, consistently winning acclaim for presenting top-quality productions of vital, cutting-edge plays and musicals. For the last 27 seasons, SpeakEasy has kept vibrant, high-quality theatre thriving in Greater Boston and has helped to make Boston's South End into an artistic and cultural destination. The company provides jobs for hundreds of locally-based artists, actors, directors, and technicians each year, and trains early career artists through its fellowship and emerging artists programs, supporting them as they develop their potential. SpeakEasy's productions create conversations among audience members that continue long after they leave the theater – challenging, connecting, and inspiring the community.

**Panelist Information**

**GARY BAILEY** (Moderator) DHL,MSW, ACSW is the Assistant Dean of Community Engagement and Social Justice and Professor of Practice at Simmons School of Social Work and at the Simmons School of Nursing and Health Sciences. He currently serves as a member of the Mass. LGBTQ Youth Commission, the board of Fenway High School, and as a Trustee of the Union United Methodist Church. Among his numerous awards and honors, Professor Bailey has been named Social Worker of the Year by both the National and Massachusetts NASW. He was made a Social Work Pioneer by NASW in 2005, making him the youngest individual to receive this honor and joining individuals such as Jane Addams and Whitney M. Young. In May 2013 Professor Bailey received the degree Doctor of Humane letters, honoris causa, from the University of Connecticut.

**REVEREND IRENE MONROE** (Panelist) An African-American lesbian feminist public theologian, an activist, and a sought-after speaker and preacher, Rev. Irene Monroe does the weekly Monday segment ALL REV'D UP on WGBH of Boston Public Radio, that's also a podcast. Monroe is a Visiting Scholar in the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program at Boston University School of Theology, and the Boston voice for Detour's African American Heritage Trail. Monroe's syndicated religion columns appear in Bay Windows, Cambridge Chronicle, Dig Boston, and in several cities across the country and in the U.K. and Canada. You can find out more about Monroe at [www.irenemonroe.com](http://www.irenemonroe.com).

**REVEREND GERALD "JAY" WILLIAMS, Ph.D.** (Panelist) Lead Pastor at Union Methodist Church in Boston, Rev. Williams is an ordained Elder in The Union United Methodist Church, and has served congregations in New York City, Boston, and San Francisco. He holds a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York and the Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude from Harvard College. In May 2017, Jay received the Ph.D. in the Study of Religion from the Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Williams's work explores the meaning of "Spirit" in black cultural discourse at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality: particularly how spirit-talk has been a marginalizing language of power.

**COREY YARBROUGH** (Panelist) is the Founding Director of Operations at Brooke High School & 8th Grade Academy. He founded and served as Executive Director of Hispanic Black Gay Coalition, which works to inspire and empower Latin@, Hispanic and Black LGBTQ individuals to improve their livelihood through activism, education, community outreach, and counseling. Before that, Corey managed college prep programs for first generation college-bound students in the New England region.

For tickets or more information on **CHOIR BOY**, the public can call BostonTheatreScene Ticketing Services at 617.933.8600 or visit [www.SpeakEasyStage.com](http://www.SpeakEasyStage.com).

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