

Starting Over: A Love Story for LGBT History Month at Governors State University

University Park, IL, October 3, 2017 – On October 21 at 8 p.m., MPAACT Theatre of Chicago presents *Starting Over*, a story of love, tolerance, and identity. Shown as part of LGBT History Month, this production follows a young biracial couple from an intolerant small town to a major city years later. Their difficult past must be reconciled with an even more difficult present: one of them is transgender. Can love roll with the changes?

Playwright Shepsu Aakhu says, “Love is complicated...not by how we look, not by who we love not by how we feel. Finding someone to love who loves us in return; someone willing to give, and forgive, to be strong for and be vulnerable with. A love story is such a simple story...and so damn complicated.” Hear more from the cast and playwright Shepsu Aakhu at a post-show discussion following the performance.

Shepsu Aakhu enjoys playwright-in-residence status with MPAACT, where stories seldom told on American stages are illuminated and brought to life. He has developed several critically acclaimed works in MPAACT's Playwright's Lab, including *Speaking in Tonugues/Babel*, which Center for Performing Arts presented in 2013. Shepsu is a two-time recipient of the Theodore Ward Prize for African American Playwriting (*Ten Square* and *Kiwi Black*), six-time nominee for best Original Stage play (Aldridge Award) by the BTAA of Chicago, and the Ira Aldridge Award recipient (*The Abesha Conspiracy*, 1999, and *Trouble The Water*, 2007).

The cast includes Chicago actors Jerico Bleu, Sierra Buffum, Carly Jo Geer, Christopher Hand, Maria Montero, Shariba Rivers, and Keith Surney.

Director of the Center, Lana Rogachevskaya says, “We bring back MPAACT not just because of the originality and quality of their storytelling, but also because their work is authentic and real. Shepsu Aakhu is not afraid to reach into the core of hard issues, raising questions that may not have immediate answers, engaging his audience fully and holistically.”

For Tickets and Information

Tickets: \$28, Seniors 65+ \$25, and Students \$10

PLEASE NOTE: There is adult content and nudity in this production.

Online: CenterTickets.net

By Phone: 708.235.2222

In Person at the Box Office: 1 University Parkway, University Park, IL

Box Office Hours: Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (open to 6p.m. on Thursdays) and two hours prior to all performances Parking is free. For best GPS directions always use the location search term “Governors State University” only.

This performance is part of the Center's "Made in Chicago" Series, which brings Chicago-based theatre, dance, and musical ensemble companies to the Southland. The production is made possible by support from The Chicago Community Trust, The National Endowment for the Arts, and The Illinois Arts Council. Made in Chicago Series was designed to support Chicago artists and increase theater participation by first-time attendees, many who live in communities with little or no access to the arts.

The final performance of the series is The Blues Hip Hop Experience on Saturday, April 21 at 8 p.m. Co-produced by blues historian and Grammy nominee Billy Brach, and PBS anchor Sylvia Ewing, this production brings Billy Branch and the Sons of Blues together with a collective of spoken word artists including Avery R. Young, FM Supreme, Kevin Coval, and more.

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