



Brave Soul Collective

PRESENTS

# #BLACKMENFEEL

A Three Part Series  
of Virtual Panel Discussions & Performances

## **ACT III - HEALING**

Sunday December 6th, 2020

7pm (EST)

Supported in part by: **CNP**

# About Brave Soul Collective

**Brave Soul Collective** (BSC) is a Washington, DC-based multi-disciplinary arts, education, and HIV/AIDS outreach organization working to illuminate the lives of LGBTQIA people of color through the performing and healing arts. BSC aims to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, by serving as a platform for open and honest discussion about prevention, stigma, and personal responsibility. In addition to our stand-alone productions, community discussions, and artist features, BSC regularly performs and presents workshops at HIV/AIDS conferences, as well as various LGBTQIA Pride and community events. 2020 marks BSC's 14th anniversary as an arts organization & company. For more info visit: <http://wearebravesouls.com>

## Brave Soul Collective

presents

## #BlackMenFeel

### Act III: HEALING

Conceived & Produced by Monte J. Wolfe

#### PANELISTS / WRITERS

Daddy Rod  
Keith R. Green PhD, MSW  
Johnnie R. Kornegay III  
Michael Sainte-Andress  
Kevin L. Tarver

#### CAST

Barbara Asare-Bediako  
Dami3n Perkins  
PoetRaeMonet  
Rich Rocket  
Rodderick Sheppard  
JT Smitty  
Patricia Williams-Dugueye  
Monte J. Wolfe

#### PLAYWRIGHTS

Zukeh Freeman  
Lemar Johnson  
Monte J. Wolfe

**PRODUCTION COORDINATOR** : George-Raymond

# PANELISTS /CONTRIBUTING WRITERS



**Daddy Rod** is a native of San Jose, CA and currently lives in the Atlanta area. He has been a part of the Leather and BDSM/Kink Community for over 20 years with the last 18 years in the Atlanta area. He is currently the Treasurer of the ONYX National Council, Co-Founder of the Atlanta BDSM Workshops and Mr. Atlanta Eagle 2016. His involvement with the Atlanta Leather/BDSM and Kink community, and ONYX in particular, has helped Daddy Rod embrace Leather History, his kinks and become a more confident man with a passion for education and preserving Leather History! He truly enjoys

educating individuals of all races, genders and sexual orientations about the Leather and BDSM history and culture, and fetish communities. Daddy Rod is an avid fitness and bodybuilding junkie, loves traveling, and exploring new cultures. He is a former Radio DJ at a jazz station and also enjoys game shows where he has appeared and won on both “The Price is Right” and “Let’s Make a Deal”.

**Keith R. Green, PhD, MSW** is a native Chicagoan with strong community roots and an extensive history as an organizer, educator, researcher, and advocate. Dr. Green is currently an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago. His current research agenda is focused primarily on understanding the role of community-based organizations (CBOs) in the antiretroviral-based HIV prevention era as well as the rise in methamphetamine use among Black gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. In addition to his professional and academic achievements, Dr. Green is also an award-winning spoken word artist and was inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame by Mayor Rahm Emmanuel in 2012.



## PANELISTS /CONTRIBUTING WRITERS (CONT)



**Johnnie Ray Kornegay III** is the Creative Director for Counter Narrative Project (CNP), and he's also the Founder & Artistic Director of Staticc Art & Life, LLC, an arts company with the mission "delivering beauty to the world." Johnnie spent more than 15 years working in corporations, and is a subject matter expert in Recruiting, Call Center Operations and Professional Networking. As an advocate, Johnnie has been involved in HIV and civil rights advocacy for as long as he can remember. In the late-1990s he trained with the American Red Cross in HIV education, and did outreach work for the Chester AIDS Coalition. Johnnie is passionate about blending his experiences into his non-profit work. For Counter Narrative Project he has written blogs, and he has produced and hosted the podcast Counter Point. In 2016, the two public bodies of photographic and video work he exhibited - #BeTheFlame and untitled - included themes dealing with the impact of HIV on Black gay men. In 2017, Johnnie co-curated, World AIDS Day Atlanta events and I AM... Arts, Activism and HIV, an exhibit at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, about the importance of an artistic response to HIV in the community. Johnnie currently serves as co-Chair of the Georgia HIV Justice Coalition, a broad-based coalition of both individuals and organizations working across movements to bring an end to the criminalization of people living with HIV.

**Michael Sainte-Andress** champions arts education in public schools, adult literacy, voter registration & civil/human rights. He is an educator, a professional multi-talented entertainer (actor/producer/director), an award-winning poet and writer, but more importantly he is fully committed to making the world a better place in which to live. He honorably served in the U.S. Navy and since 1974 has made DC his home. He is a two-time Mayoral appointee to the Ryan White HIV Planning Council & a Mayoral appointee to the Citizens Complaint Review Board. He does all these things with a determination and sense of purpose that is remarkable.



## PANELISTS /CONTRIBUTING WRITERS (CONT)



**Kevin L. Tarver** is a writer, educator, activist and an overall dope ass dude. He is a Black Gay Man trying to live a joyful life by saving himself through self-care by any means necessary. He received his BA in English from Miles College in 2010. Since 2010, Kevin works to increase diverse narratives surrounding race and sexuality, sexual and emotional health, and the Black LGBTQ+ experience. Kevin is a gifted writer that has contributed his work to *TheBody.com*, *TheCounterNarrative.org*, and his personal blog, *BamaBoiBlues.com*.

## CAST / PLAYWRIGHTS

**Barbara Asare-Bediako** As a filmmaker, producer, writer, SAG-AFTRA Actor, Anthropologist, she is driven by her interest in women's stories, especially the ways in which women empower themselves. Her background in cross cultural studies merges with her artistry, creating a wonderful lens through which to create documentary film. Many of her creations are heavily influenced by her work with homeless women. She is a graduate of Kansas State University, Northwestern University, and a recent graduate of John Hopkins University Film & Media Masters Program. As a Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund Fellow, she received Development, Documentary Lab and Production funding for the making of "Ballet After Dark". She enjoyed working with an all-woman team to film and produce "Ballet After Dark" and looks forward to creating more stories about the lives of courageous, unique and dynamic women.

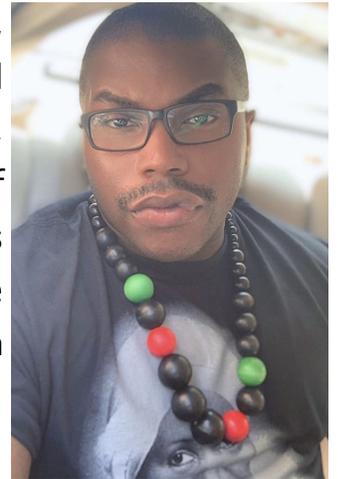


## CAST / PLAYWRIGHTS (CONT)



**Zukeh Freeman** is a DMV native who has appeared in numerous BSC productions such as "*Show and Tell*", "*Plot Twists*", "*WTF Happened To Baby Sister*". He is thrilled to have his work take the virtual stage for Brave Soul Collective's 2020 #BlackMenFeel showcase. Zukeh has been working with BSC since 2013 and is always eager to contribute to one of Monte J. Wolfe's brilliant shows with Brave Soul Collective .

**Lemar Johnson** is a playwright, and an aspiring television writer, producer, and director. He's worked on a number of theatrical productions, a TV pilot, and several music videos between NYC, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. His latest work, *Poor Richard* is a half - hour scripted dark comedy about a gay Black man coming to grips with a recent cancer diagnosis, while simultaneously dealing with the loss of his job and romantic relationship — all just before his 40th birthday! Stay connected to Lemar by visiting: [lemarjohnson.com](http://lemarjohnson.com)



**Damión Perkins** is currently an Arts Based Health Educator for Kaiser Permanente. Damión has her Master's Degree in Theatre Education from The Catholic University of America. She currently leverages external partnerships in the DC and Suburban Maryland area to increase equity in health and education for under resourced schools and communities. She develops curriculum and facilitates programming and workshops using arts based pedagogy to support trauma informed care, social and emotional wellness and resiliency. Damión has always found a way to combine her commitment to youth development and the community with her love for the performing arts. In addition to her work in the theatre community, she currently trains teaching artists in resiliency strategies for school staff and students.

## CAST / PLAYWRIGHTS (CONT)

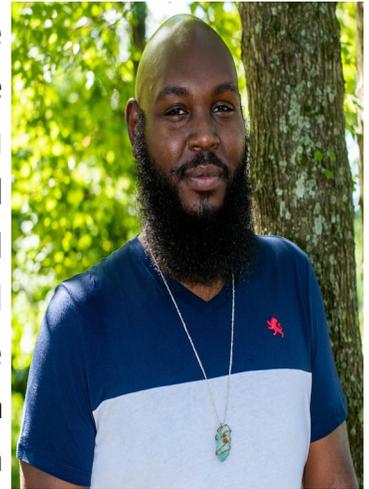
**PoetRaeMonet**, born Rheadrea' (Rae-dree-uh) Monet, DC native and author of 'The Birds, the Bees, and the Boudoir,' delivers bold and empowering erotic poems to address the blatant lack of sexual education in America. Writing is just one of the myriad talents this Renaissance woman possesses. Rae currently has 6 books available on Amazon. She produces artwork, candles, live events and seminars as well. She even runs a writer's group; helping other erotic authors get published. And she does all of this while raising an energetic toddler. PoetRaeMonet's tireless efforts to educate and enlighten the community has gained her the title of #AskRayceen 2020 Poet Laureate. PoetRaeMonet is looking forward to releasing MANY more projects, including more paperback/e-books, spoken word CD's, audiobooks, workbooks, seminars, and events.



**Rich Rocket** is creativity unleashed. Growing up with very humble beginnings, Rich learned at a very young age how to resourcefully make something from nothing. Originally out of necessity, Rich developed a love and passion for bringing visual concepts to life. After a bout with a former employer, Rich was thrust into entrepreneurship. After years of only admiring fashion, he decided to market his brand to the people, thus *Vintage Thrivals* was born. A clothing company that markets innovated, created, and vintage pieces while celebrating the coolness of today, the freshness of the 90's and the uniqueness of the 80's! Through his photography, musing, and other creative endeavors, he wants to show the world that the limits you subscribe to are only enforced by you. Rich's charisma, style and wit has put him on some of the largest stages in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia area. His goal is to leave behind a legacy of creativity that will inspire the future generation to making lasting impressions, lasting impact, and a lasting imprint.

## CAST / PLAYWRIGHTS (CONT)

**Rodderick Sheppard** is a native of Southeast, Washington, DC, where he currently resides. He considers himself forever a student of the arts and never lost his passion for creating. He became a founding member of the *2015 White House LGBTQ Champions of Change* award-winning program *Breaking Ground*. During this time, also watched the *African American Collective Theatre (ACT)* online content inspired by seeing stories like his. The connection to ACT started when he became an active member of *Brave Soul Collective* in 2018. Through his involvement with BSC, he has performed and showcased written pieces at the *John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Page to Stage Festival*. He felt a strong desire not only to be connected to his communities but to make an impact. His professional experience in public health encouraged his decision to return to school to obtain a Social Work degree at the *University of the District of Columbia*. His work continued at *AIDS Healthcare Foundation* as a Community Healthcare Worker where he was able to reconnect lost to care patients back into services successfully. Currently, he works for *Whitman-Walker Health* as a PrEP Specialist.



**JT Smitty** is an actor, writer, and producer. He has appeared in many theater productions as well as short films. Some of his stage acting credits include *Horton Hears a Who*, *Suburbia*, and *When Boys Exhale*. He has studied TV/film in Los Angeles and attended Studio Theater in Washington DC. He is currently producing an independent film and working on his own podcast. In his spare time he loves to sing, swim, and write new material for short films. He has a passion for serving marginalized communities and expressing himself through art.

## CAST / PLAYWRIGHTS (CONT)

**Patricia Williams-Dugueye** is an actor, commercial print model, voice artist, writer and poet. Stage credits include *The Vagina Monologues*, *Rose in Fences*, a band member in *Sportaculture*, *Serena* in *Porgy*, and various characters in "Spoon River Anthology". She was a minister's wife in the BET film, *Multitude of Mercies* that addressed prejudices against people with HIV. Other film roles include a government official in *Trigger Effect*, an artist in *Sara*, and an assassin in "Lethal Force". She is currently working on a poetry book and developing plays about historical women. Patricia is also an environmental activist and advocate. Her goal is for her creative work to provide insight and inform audiences about some of the world's social, civil and environmental issues.



**Monte J. Wolfe** is an experienced producer, writer, director, musician & theatre professional with an extensive background in theatre performance, management, arts administration, and production. He has worked professionally in the DC metropolitan area since 1999. He is also a trained actor with various stage, film & television appearances to his credit. He is a graduate of the Howard University Theatre Arts Department, where he earned a BFA in Theatre Arts Administration in 1999. In his role as Artistic and Managing Director of *Brave Soul Collective (BSC)*, Monte has devoted much of his time and energy to curating and producing intentional performances and community discussions which give voice to the identities, people and narratives that often still live in the margins of society and conventional theatre experiences. With BSC as his vehicle, Monte keeps his finger on the pulse of what's happening in the world at large, but most importantly to him, in the lives of Black LGBTQIA individuals. He lovingly dedicates this the entire *#BlackMenFeel* project in loving memory, to his friend and HU Theatre Arts brother, Chadwick Boseman.



## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I think about the ways in which patriarchy, misogyny and so many other toxic behaviors have been and continue to be carried out by men in society, it saddens me. As someone who is usually pretty obsessed with examining human behavior, I typically find myself fascinated as I witness situations play out in my life, the lives of those around me, in characters on television shows / films, and the world at large. As frustrated as I usually find myself when I see male fragility rear its ugly head, there's always a question in my mind that I cannot let go of thinking about which is - *WHY? Why are we like this? How did we get to this place where so much of what happens with men is shaped, informed, and colored by ego, sexual prowess, capitalism and a bunch of (what looks and feels to me like) pure immaturity and stupidity?*

Prior to March of this year, at any given point I was subject to feelings of sadness, despair, hopelessness, anger and depression pretty often. All of that has only increased and been magnified since the onset of COVID-19. After some pretty heavy mood swings and emotional ups and downs brought on by the financial strain of the pandemic in the four months time between March and July, I found myself in a frightening state of emotional fragility - more so than usual, which for me, is saying something. Looking back now, it makes perfect sense that on July 6th, 2020, I had a pretty serious suicide scare. While I'd had other run-ins with feeling like I wanted to end my life, this time felt markedly different and far more serious. The only way I know how to describe what I felt is to say here what I kept thinking that morning as I operated under a dark cloud that I could not seem to shake; *"I just don't have any more fight left in me"*. There's a lot more that I'm sure I'll write about and reflect upon at a later time but for sake of context, the valley that I found myself in that day was a definite catalyst for all of what we will talk about, write about and offer up artistically as part of this *#BlackMenFeel* virtual series.

If ever there was a time for the work of deconstructing black male emotions to happen, as far as I'm concerned, 2020 is that time. The severity of what we're facing right now, coupled with the weight and absence of what we knew as being "normal" before March 2020 means the stakes are beyond high.

*(continued on following page)*

## **NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR (CONT)**

So many of us as Black Men have been living, breathing, and operating as “the walking wounded” for far too long and for many of us particularly as Black Queer Men, the challenges we face feel even more insurmountable. It’s for that reason that I committed myself to seeing this project become a living and breathing thing. In doing so, I can only hope this will serve as an agent of change and healing for not only my Black Queer brethren, but for anyone who decides to take this journey with us as we begin the work of unpacking the wellspring of our individual and collective emotions.

Each writer, contributor, panelist and artist/performer who is part of this virtual series, I asked to participate because not only do I find myself inspired by each of them, but I also know that many of them share similar experiences with being challenged by the emotional weight of what happens when we fail to really truly deal with whatever it is that is hurting or harming us. That being said - talking about emotions and what’s underneath them - is anything but a straight line. It’s complicated and messy, like life. As we continue with *ACT II*, we take a deep dive into examining our “WOUNDS” - which is never easy, but is ALWAYS beneficial.

- *Monte J. Wolfe*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*#BlackMenFeel* would not be possible without the support of some key individuals.

We send our most heartfelt thanks to:

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Kevin L. Tarver  
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Patricia Williams-Dugueye  
JT Smitty  
Michael Sainte-Andress  
Keith R. Green  
Zukeh Freeman  
Rich Rocket  
Damión Perkins  
Barbara Asare-Bediako  
Michael Sainte-Andress  
Rodderick Sheppard  
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Zar  
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& lastly, THANK YOU to each one of you reading these words, for taking an interest in our work!  
We appreciate the support immensely!