



**The John F. Kennedy  
Center for the  
Performing Arts**

**FAMILY THEATER**

**October 27–November 4, 2018**

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents  
A World Premiere Kennedy Center Commission

**LONG  
WAY  
DOWN**

Based on the book by Jason Reynolds  
Adapted for the Stage by Martine Kei Green-Rogers  
Directed by Timothy Douglas

With Justin Weaks as Will

Tony Cisek  
*Scenic Designer*

William K. D'Eugenio  
*Lighting Designer*

Danielle Preston  
*Costume Designer*

Michael Redman  
*Projection Designer*

Nick Hernandez  
*Composer/Sound Designer*

Timothy Jones  
*Properties Artisan*

Martita Lee Slayden  
*Stage Manager*

Harry Poster,  
*General Manager*

Mario Rossero  
*Executive Producer*

David Kilpatrick  
*Executive Producer*

Part of The Human Journey Exploration.

Bank of America is the Presenting Sponsor of Performances for Young Audiences.

Additional support for *Long Way Down* is provided by A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation; the Kimsey Endowment; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; Anne and Chris Reyes; and the U.S. Department of Education.

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Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of the National Committee for the Performing Arts.

**Patrons are requested to turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during performances.**

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this auditorium.

## PROGRAM NOTE

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Welcome to the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences' production of *Long Way Down*, based on the *New York Times* best-selling book by D.C.-area native Jason Reynolds. This piece follows the journey of a heartbroken and confused teen as he contemplates retaliation after his brother is shot and killed.

Although this story is new to our stage, unfortunately, it is a tale that many young people know all too well. We are proud to bring to our Family Theater stage a story that not only dives deeper into an issue our community is grappling with, but does so through the eyes of a young man who is of a similar age to many of our audience members. At its heart, however, *Long Way Down* is not a story about gun violence. It is a story about the legacies of trauma and a boy grappling with an impossible decision. Our director, Timothy Douglas, and our dramaturg, Martine Kei Green-Rogers, brilliantly used Jason Reynolds's words to explore the 67 seconds in which Will, our protagonist, must make a choice: to even the score and honor his brother or go against "The Rules."

This play is not a solution to the problem, merely an avenue to begin dialogues between people of all ages. We encourage you to stay for our post-show deep dive to help better unpack the themes of *Long Way Down* and continue the conversation.

If you have comments or questions about the show or would like to share feedback, please contact Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences at [kctya@kennedy-center.org](mailto:kctya@kennedy-center.org). We'd love to hear from you!

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for more information on our season!

@KenCenTYA

## SYNOPSIS

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Sixty seconds. Seven floors. One elevator. Fifteen-year-old Will's brother has just been shot, and Will is ready to follow "The Rules": 1) "No Crying." 2) "No Snitching." 3) "Get Revenge." But on the ride down, with his brother's gun in his pocket, his plan is interrupted by a few visitors.

Jason Reynolds's *New York Times* best-selling book comes to the stage in a compelling and timely production. Told entirely in free-form poetry, *Long Way Down* captures the potent minute Will contemplates retaliation. As mysterious guests appear at each floor, Will realizes there might be a bigger story to be told. He knows who he's after. Or does he?

## CAST

Will .....JUSTIN WEAKS



*Long Way Down* is a professional production employing members of Actors' Equity Association.

The Director/Choreographer is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, an independent national labor union.

UNITED SCENIC ARTISTS represents the designers and scenic painters for the American Theatre.

Please check houseboards for any program changes.

## MEET THE TEAM

**Tony Cisek** (*Scenic Designer*) has collaborated with Douglas on more than 40 productions including *The Color Purple* at Portland Center Stage; *Hospice/Pointing at the Moon* with Alliance Theatre; *A Raisin In the Sun* for Indiana Rep and Syracuse Stage; *Disgraced* at Arena Stage and Great Theatre of China (Shanghai); *Jitney* and the premiere of *Safe House* at Cincinnati Playhouse; *Father Comes Home From the Wars* and *Two Trains Running* with Round House Theatre; and *Dontrell, Who Kisses the Sea* at Theatre Alliance; as well as productions for Guthrie Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, South Coast Rep, Cleveland Play House, Folger Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Woolly Mammoth, and others. Cisek's designs for the Kennedy Center include *Orphie & the Book of Heroes*, *The Light of Excalibur*, *Dreams in the Golden Country*, *Color Me Dark*, *The Great Quillow*, and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*. Additional Off-Broadway and regional credits include *Roundabout*, *Goodman*, *Ford's*, *Intiman*, and *New York Theatre Workshop*. Cisek has received four Helen Hayes Awards and numerous other citations for outstanding design. He was the principal theater consultant for the Atlas Performing Arts Center in Northeast Washington, D.C. [tonycisek.com](http://tonycisek.com)

**William K. D'Eugenio** (*Lighting Designer*) returns to the Kennedy Center where he has previously designed *MC LYTE: Lyte as a Rock 30th Anniversary Concert*, *Sound Health: Music and the Mind*, *August Greene*, *The 2018 Kennedy Center Spring Gala*, *Artes de Cuba Festival Opening Performance*, and *Alan Cumming: Legal Immigrant*, among others. Recent work includes: *The Events*, *Still Life with Rocket*, *Mnemonic*, and *Word Becomes Flesh* (Helen Hayes Award, Theater Alliance); *Color's Garden* (National Gallery of Art); *Nat Turner in Jerusalem* (Forum Theatre); and *Lela & Co* (Factory 449). Upcoming: *Cinderella* (Imagination Stage); *Jason Moran—The Absence of Ruin* (the Kennedy Center); and *The Brothers Size* (1st Stage).

**Timothy Douglas** (*Director*) currently serves as an associate artist for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park where he has staged the world premiere of Keith Josef Adkins's *Safe House*, *Jitney*, *Buzzer*, *Clybourne Park*, *The North Pool*, *The Last Firefly*, a mixed-race *Mothers & Sons*, and his African American take on Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*. Most recently he directed the five-city China tour of Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced* for Ping Pong Productions, which also

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played the Great Theatre of China in Shanghai. He has directed productions of *Seven Guitars* for Yale Repertory Theater; *Nina Simone: Four Women*, *Disgraced*, and *King Hedley II* for Arena Stage; *Father Comes Home from the Wars Parts 1, 2, & 3* for Roundhouse Theatre; *Richard II* for Shakespeare & Company; and Off-Broadway with *Brontë* for the Alloy Theatre Company.

Douglas has directed nationally and internationally and counts among his many credits the world premieres of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* for Yale Rep and Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect* for Chicago's Silk Road Rising (2013 Jeff Award for Best New Work), the NPN rolling world premiere of *Dontrell Who Kissed the Sea* (six Helen Hayes Award nominations) for Theater Alliance, as well as his critically acclaimed, Caribbean-inspired *Much Ado About Nothing* for the Folger Shakespeare Theatre, the premiere of a new translation/adaptation of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* Off-Broadway for Oslo Elsewhere, and *Mourning Becomes Electra* and Marivaux's *Changes of Heart* for Remy Bumppo Theatre Company where he served for a time as artistic director. He is the recipient of the 2017 National Black Theater Festival Lloyd Richards Director Award. [timothydouglas.org](http://timothydouglas.org)

**Martine Kei Green-Rogers** (*Adapter/Dramaturg*) is an assistant professor at SUNY: New Paltz, a freelance dramaturg, and the president of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas. Her dramaturgical credits include: *The Greatest* with the Louisville Orchestra, *Fences* and *One Man, Two Guvnors* at Pioneer Theatre Company; *Clearing Bombs* and *Nothing Personal* at Plan-B Theatre; the Classical Theatre Company's productions of *Uncle Vanya*, *Antigone*, *Candida*, *Ghosts*, *Tartuffe*, *Shylock*, and *The Jew of Venice*; productions of

*Radio Golf*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Blues for An Alabama Sky*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Mountaintop*, *Home*, and *Porgy and Bess* at the Court Theatre; *The Clean House* at CATCO; *The Book of Will*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *UniSon*, *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, *Comedy of Errors*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Fences* at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *10 Perfect* and *The Curious Walk of the Salamander* as part of the 2006 and 2007 Madison Repertory Theatre's New Play Festival; and *A Thousand Words* as part of the 2008 WI Wrights New Play Festival. She also works with the Great Plains Theatre Conference and is affiliated with NPNP.

**Nick Hernandez** (*Composer/Sound Designer*) has created hip-hop inspired soundtracks for various productions such as *Havana Hop* and *All the Way Live* with sibling Paige Hernandez, *The Hip-Hop Children's Trilogy* (Imagination Stage) with playwright/artist Psalmayene 24, *Darius & Twig* (the Kennedy Center) [Helen Hayes Award], *Words Become Flesh* by Marc Bamuthi Joseph (Theater Alliance), *The Peter Rosenberg Show* (Hot 97 FM), and the independent film *Loose Change 9/11* (directed by Dylan Avery). Additionally he has performed live as an artist for the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, FOX News, Smithsonian, Glimmerglass Festival, Red Bull Music Academy, and even in an elevator. Peace and thanks to Maiya, Ameya, TYA, Jason Reynolds, and Kia...No Ls.

**Timothy Jones** (*Properties Artisan*) is presently the props shop supervisor and an instructor at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland. He has also worked as a freelance props and scenic designer throughout the Washington, D.C., area.

## MEET THE TEAM

His prop design work was last seen on stage for the Kennedy Center's TYA production of *Mockingbird*, *The Mostly True Adventures of Homer P. Figg*. His work has also been seen on stage at Mosaic Theatre, Theatre J, EveryMan Theatre, The African Continuum Theatre, Round House, and Rep Stage. Before returning to the D.C. area he was prop master and instructor at PlayMakers Repertory Company at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He has also worked as prop master or artisan at other theater companies around the country including the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespeare Festival. Jones is a member of the USITT and the Society of Properties Artisan & Masters. He holds a masters of fine art in scenery and properties design from the University of Memphis and a B.A. in communication from the Salisbury State College. Jones is a native of Prince Georges County, Maryland, but has lived and worked throughout the United States.

**Michelle Kozlak** (*Casting Director*) is in her 12th season as casting director, and is responsible for casting the Kennedy Center's Theater for Young Audiences in-house and touring productions, as well as the New Visions/New Voices new play festival. In addition to her work with the Kennedy Center, she has also served as the casting director for the VSA Playwrights Discovery Program productions (2008–2011), and a casting consultant for the NSO Pops *Showboat* Concert, and the National Gallery of Art's productions of *Color's Garden*, *Forward, 54th!*, and *Who's in the Hopper*. Prior to her work as a casting director, she was the national touring coordinator for the Kennedy Center's Theater for Young Audiences program and then the manager of theater programming. Kozlak is currently working as a freelance casting director in the Washington, D.C.,

area and is the producing artistic director and founder of Arts on the Horizon, a nonprofit theater company specifically designed for children ages zero–six in Alexandria, Virginia.

**Jake Owen** (*Assistant Director*) is happy to be joining *Long Way Down*, the Kennedy Center, the crew, and Washington, D.C. Owen is an actor/director who just moved from New York City where he premiered *The Nina Variations* (NY), *Verona Walls*, *Heart of Oak*, and his *Richard III* (director), which was listed as a Top Ten Off-Broadway Plays 2016. Thanks to Timothy, Justin, Gregg Henry, Tom Kenan, Jimmy and Rhonda Owen, and the miraculous Kennedy Center. Keep up with Owen on Instagram and Twitter: @the\_jake\_owen

**Danielle Preston** (*Costume Designer*) is a freelance costume designer based in Washington, D.C. Preston has recently designed for the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts's Theater for Young Audiences, Lincoln Center, Theater J, Triad Stage, Theater Alliance DC, 1st Stage, Totem Pole Playhouse, and Bristol Valley Theater. Preston was a recipient of the William R. Kenan Jr. Fellowship at the Kennedy Center for costume design and A.J. Fletcher Opera Institute Fellowship for costume design. She is a member of the Costume Society of America and United Scenic Artists Local 829. She holds a B.A. in theater production from Meredith College and an M.F.A. in costume design from The University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

**Michael Redman** (*Projections Designer*). A projections and scenic designer, Redman's credits include Off-Broadway: *My Life On A Diet* (Julian Schlossberg/Theatre at St. Clements). New York: *Hairspray* (Argyle Theatre at Babylon Village), *Across the Park*, *Seph* (Araca

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Project), *Bamboo in Bushwick* (Working Theatre), *Neighborhood 3: Requisition of Doom* (Brooklyn College at Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre), and *The Woman Who Shed Her Skin* (Llama Theatre at Dixon Place/HEREArts). Washington, D.C.: *Long Way Down* (the Kennedy Center), *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* (Theatre Alliance, Helen Hayes nomination), and *Greyspace* (Georgetown University). Nashville: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* (Nashville Children's Theatre), *She Kills Monsters*, and *boom.* (Actor's Bridge Ensemble). Assistant technical director, Brooklyn College. Training: University of North Alabama.

**Jason Reynolds** (*Author*) is a *New York Times* bestselling author, a Newbery Award Honoree, a Printz Award Honoree, National Book Award Honoree, a Kirkus Award winner, a two-time Walter Dean Myers Award winner, an NAACP Image Award winner, and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King honors. Reynolds was the American Booksellers Association's 2017 spokesperson for Indies First, and served as the national spokesperson for the 2018 celebration of School Library Month in April 2018, sponsored by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). Reynolds's many works of fiction include *When I Was the Greatest*, *Boy in the Black Suit*, *All American Boys* (co-written with Brendan Kiely), *As Brave As You*, *For Every One*, *Miles Morales: Spider Man*, the Track series (*Ghost*, *Patina*, *Sunny*, and *Lu*), and *Long Way Down*, which received both a Newbery Honor and a Printz Honor. He is on faculty at Lesley University for the writing for young people M.F.A. program and lives in Washington, D.C. You can find his ramblings at [JasonWritesBooks.com](http://JasonWritesBooks.com).

**Martita Lee Slayden** (*Stage Manager*). Kennedy Center: New Vision New Voices 2012, 2014, and 2016; *Handspeak*; *The Lisbon Traviata*; and *Ragtime*. Off-Broadway: *Bob Marley's Three Little Birds*. Ford's Theatre: *A Christmas Carol* (2009–2011 and 2013–2016), *One Destiny*, *Papa Day*, *Liberty Smith*, *Sabrina Fair*, *The Carpetbagger's Children*, *The Rivalry*, and *Black Pearl Sings!* NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awards. Adventure Theatre: *Ella Enchanted*, *Charlotte's Web*, *If You Give A Pig A Pancake*, *The Red Balloon*, and *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*. Former director of production at Adventure Theatre MTC. Company manager at Ford's Theatre.

**Justin Weaks** (*Will*) returns to the Kennedy Center after appearing as Bud in *Bud, Not Buddy*, alongside Charlayne Woodard and Frankie Faison, and as Darius in the premiere and tour of *Darius & Twig*. Other D.C.-area credits include: *Gloria* (Woolly Mammoth); *Curve of Departure* (Studio Theatre); *Word Becomes Flesh* (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor, Outstanding Ensemble), *Still Life With Rocket* and *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* (Theater Alliance); *Charm* (Mosaic Theater Co.); *The Christians* (Helen Hayes nomination, Theater J); and *Lobby Hero* (1st Stage). Additional regional and New York appearances include New York Theatre Workshop, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Shakespeare & Company, Barter Theatre, and *Hamlet Isn't Dead*. Education/training: Greensboro College (B.A. in theater). Weaks can be seen in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963* later this season at the Kennedy Center. Upcoming: August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* directed by Timothy Douglas at Round House Theatre. [jweaks.com](http://jweaks.com)

## EDUCATION AT THE KENNEDY CENTER

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, the Center offers programs and events that strive to reflect the nation and its communities, and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From the Center's stages to classrooms and communities across the country, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the curious explorer, the student (of any age), the teacher and teaching artist—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change.

As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center's Education programs utilize the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and cultivate the Citizen Artists in all the people we serve. For more information, please visit [kennedy-center.org/education/](http://kennedy-center.org/education/).

### Upcoming Performances for Young Audiences

October 28, 2018

***Halloween Spooktacular***

Concert Hall

Ages 5+

November 21–December 16, 2018

***How to Catch a Star***

Family Theater

Ages 3+

January 11–13, 2019

***Cartography***

Family Theater

Ages 12+

February 13–28, 2019

***She A Gem***

Family Theater

Ages 12+

The Human Journey is a collaboration between the Kennedy Center, National Geographic Society, and the National Gallery of Art, which invites audiences to investigate the powerful experiences of migration, exploration, identity, and resilience through the lenses of the performing arts, science, and visual art.

# STAFF

## Education Staff for Long Way Down

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**\*Timothy Guillot** ..... **Theater Manager**  
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 William Taylor, Johanna Wilder .....Assistant Head Ushers  
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The technicians at the Kennedy Center are represented by Local #22, Local #772, and Local #798 I.A.T.S.E. and Local #798 I.A.T.S.E. AFL-CIO-CLC, the professional union of theatrical technicians.

The box office at the Kennedy Center is represented by IATSE #868.

Steinway Piano Gallery is the exclusive area representative of Steinway & Sons and Boston pianos, the official pianos of the Kennedy Center.

