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SHOTGUN PLAYERS
PRESENTS
brownsville song
(b-side for tray)

Written by **Kimber Lee**
Directed by **Margo Hall**

Berkeley - Moving fluidly between past and present, *Brownsville* is a story about loss and renewal, grief and healing. In the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, we meet Tray, a teenager who looks after his step-sister, talks back to his grandmother, and has big plans for the future. When tragedy strikes, how do you come together? *brownsville* is a raw, visceral tale of the ties that bind. *brownsville song* begins previews on **June 15th**, opens on **June 22nd**, and runs through **July 16, 2017 at The Ashby Stage.**

Every day seven children and teens die from gun violence in America. Every day. The number of grieving friends and family is staggering. Playwright Kimber Lee gives a visceral, human perspective to these troubling statistics. In the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, we meet Tray, a teenage who looks after his step-sister, talks back to his grandmother, and has big plans for the future. He is not a number.

Director Margo Hall finds inspiration in *brownsville song* because “this powerful play not only attaches a name to the victim, it also attaches a story. Too often our young black youth that are murdered become only statistics—not children with a mother, a sister, a community and a dream.”

Dramaturg Amy Mueller (leader of the Bay Area Playwright’s Foundation), has a long rich history with the play. She’s drawn to the script as a vehicle for understanding how a community can heal. She says: “this play speaks so beautifully, and with poetic eloquence, about the pain mothers, daughters and lovers feel in the absence of their men, who have been taken by violence within their communities. What speaks to me most in this piece are the joyful moments of remembered connection, and the slow reconciliation of broken family bonds.”

Playwright Kimber Lee was born in Pyungtaek, South Korea, but was adopted to Nampa, Idaho, when she was 8 months old. In an interview with Adam Szymkowicz, she said: “Was I weirder than the average kid? Who can say. I do know that I was the only Asian American kid in my neighborhood... I guess that’ll do something to ya, to be the only one of something, and I wonder how much of my ability to absorb an environment is a direct result of being the only Asian person in a small Idaho town. Actually, this is a lie. There were occasionally other Asians.”

On stories like the one we experience in *brownsville*, Lee says: “What is our collective responsibility here? What policies create and perpetuate these troubles? What are the forces that combine to make good options for a future for some of our young people seem impossibly out of reach? What is the untruth of the seductive “one who made it out of the hood” story-line, and how does it obscure our broader societal responsibility for the

conditions in these neighborhoods? All of these questions swirl around for me, but the deepest truth about the writing of the play is that I simply wanted to bring that family's pain and loss into close, personal contact with audiences who may never even have heard of Brownsville."

What kind of theater excites Kimber Lee? "Anything with guts. Moments that hold me in the palm of their sweaty hand, tickle me, then punch me in the face. Bravery. Fuck-expectations-this-is-who-I-am writing. Willingness to risk being thought of as uncool. Ambition riding hell-for-leather toward the edge of current ability."

The cast of *brownsville song (b-side for tray)* features **William Hartfield, Davied Morales, Mimia Ousilas, Cathleen Ridley*** and **Erin Mei-Ling Stuart.**

The creative team for *brownsville song (b-side for tray)* features Set Design by **Randy Wong-Westbrooke**, Prop Design by **Devon LaBelle**, Sound Design by **Joel Gimbell II**, Costume Design by **Katherine Nowacki**, Light Design by **Allen Wilner.**

(*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.)

CALENDAR LISTING

WHAT: Moving fluidly between past and present, *Brownsville* is a story about loss and renewal, grief and healing. In the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn, we meet Tray, a teenager who looks after his step-sister, talks back to his grandmother, and has big plans for the future. When tragedy strikes, how do you come together? *Brownsville* is a raw, visceral tale of the ties that bind.

WHEN: Wednesday – Sunday, June 15 – July 16, 2017.

WHERE: The Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley

TICKET PRICES: Pay What You Can Previews. Regular tickets \$25 - \$40. Advance reservations strongly advised – shows will sell out!

For more information go to www.shotgunplayers.org or call 510.841.6500