

Theatre Professor Receives NEA Grant

St. Paul, Minn. – Theatre Prof. Harry Waters Jr., in partnership with Bedlam Theatre, has received a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) \$10,000 grant for the development of a new performance work, *AKA: Father/Sons*, exploring relationships between African-American fathers and sons around sexuality and sexual identity.

Waters, a professional actor, director, and community facilitator will lead public engagement workshops to build the performance. The workshops, process and performance will take place primarily at non-traditional theatre sites in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota such as union headquarters and YMCA's.

AKA Father/Sons began as a collaboration between Waters and his son, Jordon Waters, working together with local rap artist Kevin "Kaoz" Moore. A seed of the performance premiered at Queertopia in 2011, curated by Jefry Lusiak in partnership with Bedlam Theatre and Intermedia Arts.

Waters is excited to expand this project throughout the summer and coming year and to work with his son.

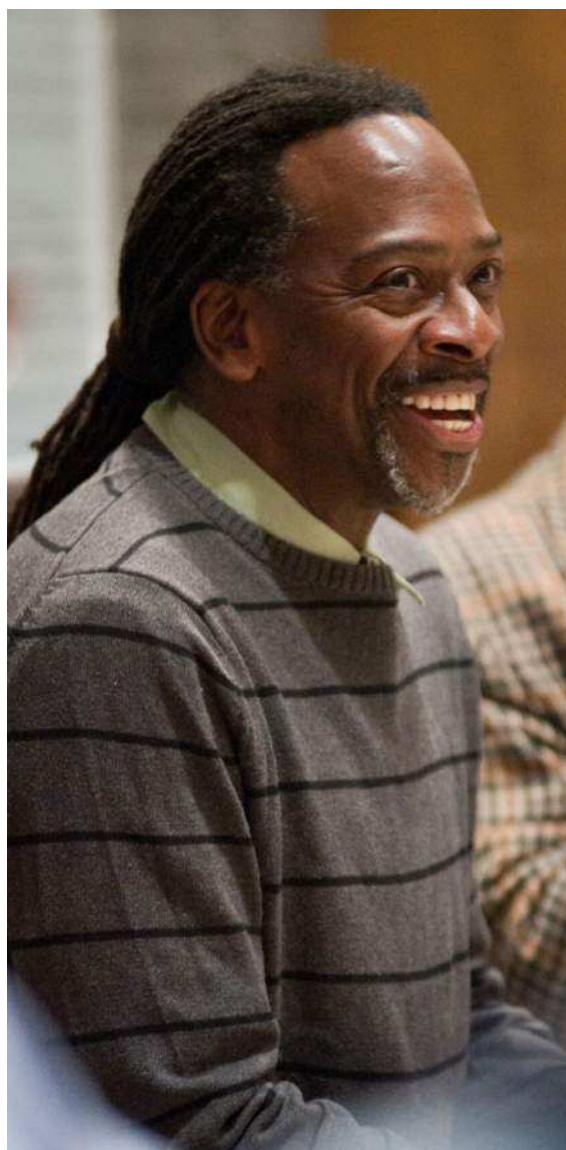
“This has been an extremely important element in my evolution in the relationship I have with my son, Jordon,” Waters said. “Our conversations and sharings have been quite frank and upfront, so we are still surprised that other fathers and sons have not had the comfort of dealing honestly with each other's feelings and experiences.”

Waters hopes this work will help change that.

“This project is an effort to reach out to other fathers and sons who may not have the opportunities or willingness to talk across the most difficult subject matter between us – sexuality,” he said. “It is an unspoken assumption that you know who you are, and you know what to do. But is that the end of the discussion? We believe it is the beginning of the discussion. Using the elements of Hip Hop culture, we will explore many of the ways these conversations can develop.”

NEA Art Works grants support the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts.

Bedlam Theatre, led by founders John Bueche '92 and Maren Ward '93, is a Twin Cities- based company with a national reputation for socially inspired performance and community collaboration.



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