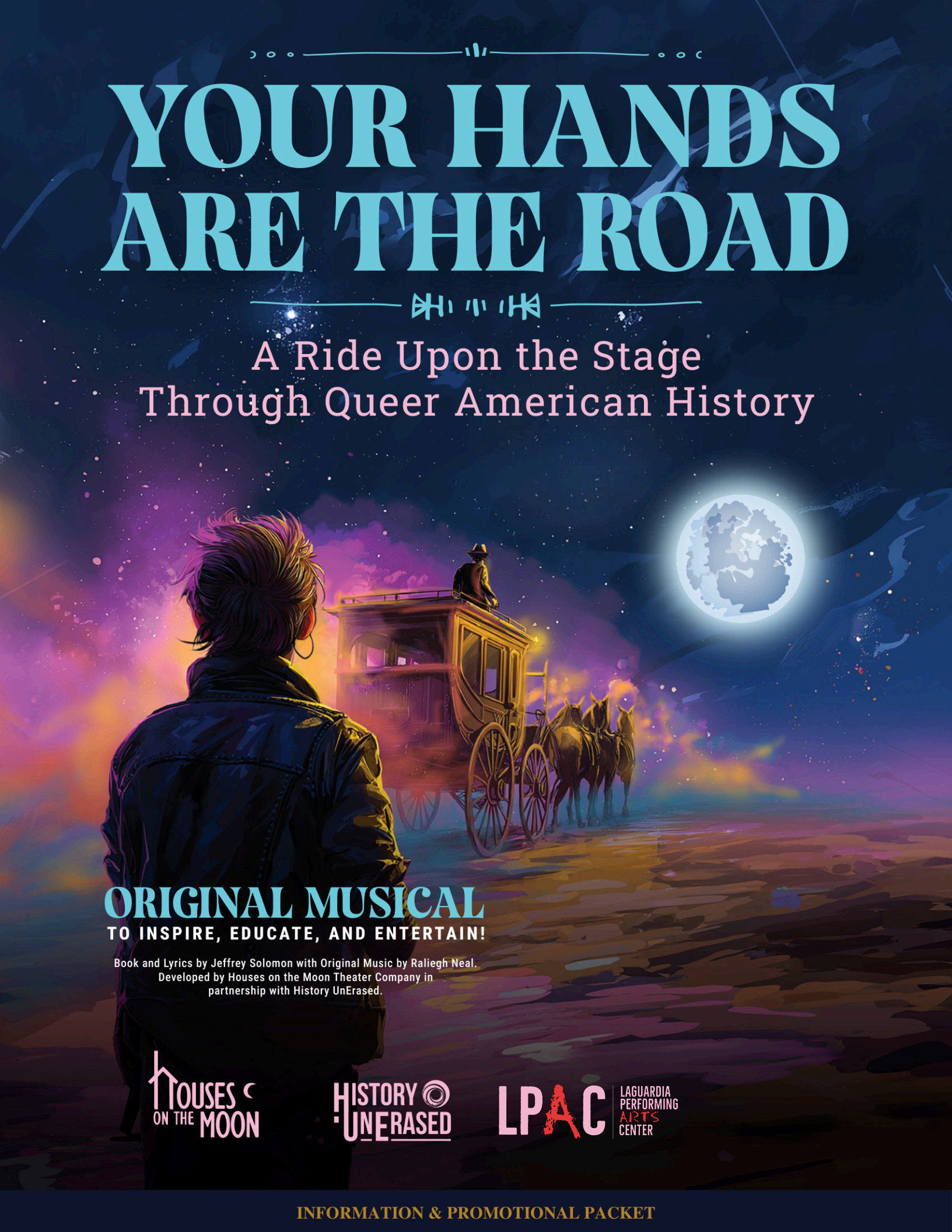
YOUR HANDS ARE THE ROAD

A Ride Upon the Stage Through Queer American History



ORIGINAL MUSICAL

TO INSPIRE, EDUCATE, AND ENTERTAIN!

Book and Lyrics by Jeffrey Solomon with Original Music by Raliegh Neal.
Developed by Houses on the Moon Theater Company in partnership with History UnErased.

Houses on the Moon

History UnErased

LPAC LaGuardia Performing Arts Center

INFORMATION & PROMOTIONAL PACKET

JOIN LAGUARDIA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER IN PRESENTING THE TRI-STATE PREMIERE OF THIS GROUNDBREAKING NEW MUSICAL

AT A GLANCE · THE SHOW

A nonbinary teen, discouraged from writing about a Gold Rush stagecoach driver believed to be trans, accidentally downloads "Ancestor Intelligence" and rides through 150 years of hidden queer American history. Built from Library of Congress primary sources, this new musical brings audiences from ages 12 to 88 face to face with the people history left out.



World premiere reading, Lowell, May 2026

10	1:40	3	$10K	Oct–Nov
touring company	running time + 10-min intermission	performances per venue	per 3–4 day residency	2027 Tri-State tour

Production Footprint

HOUSES ON THE MOON PROVIDES

- **Company of 10:** cast of 8, stage manager and production assistant
- **Sound:** prerecorded musical tracks and playback files; optional live keyboard when the composer is available
- **Lighting:** company lighting plot, provided in advance for venue preparation
- **Projection:** production video and projection content, provided in advance or on-site in an agreed format
- **Set:** self-contained set that travels with the company
- **Technical coordination:** advance communication with venue staff on requirements, equipment and scheduling
- **Production materials:** script, cue sheets and technical documentation

VENUE PROVIDES

- **Sound:** 8 wireless mics
- **Projection:** projector and screen
- **Lighting:** 10 general areas and 6 specials, pre-hung and focused by the venue to the company plot
- **Staging:** a set of steps for levels
- **Crew:** at least 3 technicians (lighting, sound and projection)
- **Technical schedule:** typically one 6–8 hour load-in and technical rehearsal, with additional tech time as needed before performances; final requirements set collaboratively during the technical advance, based on venue capabilities, equipment and schedule
- **Space:** stage or flexible performance room with lighting and projection

Presenting Format

- 3–4 day residency: 3 performances, including at least one student matinee
- Post-show talkbacks with playwright and cast after student matinees, as schedule permits
- Free teaching materials sent to schools in advance
- Creative theater workshops available, arranged separately with Houses on the Moon
- Borough Spotlight: local queer history woven into campus events

Financial Commitment

- **$10,000 per 3–4 day residency** (3 performances)
- **All company costs included:** cast, stage manager, PA, creative team, set, costumes, music tracks and teaching materials
- **Travel, accommodations and related expenses** for the company of 10 are covered and arranged by Houses on the Moon
- **Presenter covers:** venue, equipment and crew listed above, box office and marketing
- Multi-venue and community partner rates available

Availability: Tri-State area (NY, NJ, CT), October–November 2027, launching at LPAC during LGBTQ+ History Month. Other regions and dates open to conversation.

BOOKING & INFORMATION
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About the Musical

THE GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

In 2024, the national education nonprofit History UnErased and Houses on the Moon Theater Company commissioned Jeffrey Solomon and Raliegh Neal II to create a new musical that brings LGBTQ+ American history to life. The commission was funded by the **Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) Program**, History UnErased's first federal grant and one of 42 TPS grants the Library awarded that year.

Every scene is inspired by primary sources from the Library of Congress and other historical archives, researched with History UnErased historians and Library of Congress archivists.

LOGLINE

When their teacher discourages them from writing their American History final on a Gold Rush stagecoach driver believed to be trans, a checked-out nonbinary teen tries to cheat with AI and accidentally downloads Ancestor Intelligence, which hurls them on a stagecoach ride through 150 years of hidden queer history and brings them home, fortified, to face the father who refuses to see them.

SYNOPSIS

Phoenix, a nonbinary high school student, wants to write their American History final on Charley Parkhurst, the legendary Gold Rush stagecoach driver who lived, worked, and voted as a man despite being assigned female at birth. When their teacher discourages the topic, citing "the climate right now," Phoenix caves, but reveals their longing to be affirmed in the ballad "Weirdos Like Me." (Listen to the demo) Three weeks later, with the paper due and their unaccepting father arriving in the morning, Phoenix has shoved every pride flag in their room into the closet. Desperate, they try to cheat with AI and download an app released, impossibly, three seconds ago. The closet floods with disco light, unleashing not Artificial Intelligence but *Ancestor* Intelligence and its Queen, who sends Phoenix on a stagecoach ride through hidden history.

Phoenix learns to drive six horses through a dust storm with Charley in 1866, rescues Gene from electroshock "treatment" in 1956, witnesses Deborah Johnson and Zandra Rolón's decision to fight discrimination in 1983 Los Angeles, and crashes one of America's first drag balls, hosted by William Dorsey Swann in 1888. As police raid the ball, Swann crowns Phoenix: "Carry it forward, child." Phoenix comes home with a history they can claim, and the nerve to face their father and refuse to get smaller.

The History

The musical centers on figures most audiences have never heard of, drawn from primary sources in the Library of Congress:

- **Charley Parkhurst**, the legendary Gold Rush stagecoach driver, assigned female at birth, who lived, worked, and voted as a man. Listen as Charley teaches Phoenix how to drive a stagecoach, and how to hold the reins of a life, in “Steady.”
- **William Dorsey Swann**, born into slavery, who became America’s first recorded drag queen and defended his community with extraordinary courage. Listen as “The Queen” traces the trajectory of Black queer pageantry from the plantation cakewalk to modern ballroom culture in “This Is How We Walk.”
- **Gene**, a composite character who carries the stories of gay Americans of the 1950s whom doctors subjected to electroshock “treatment,” and the resilience it took to survive and declare themselves whole.
- **Deborah Johnson and Zandra Rolón**, a Black and Latina lesbian couple whose fight to be seated at a romantic restaurant made legal history in 1984 and established the right to be out in public.

Historians at History UnErased and archivists at the Library of Congress have guided the research throughout. In a political moment actively working to erase these stories, *Your Hands Are the Road* is an act of unerasure.



The company of the world premiere staged reading at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, Massachusetts, May 2026, with Raliegh Neal II at the keyboard. Primary sources from the archive are projected behind the actors.

The Music

In *Your Hands Are the Road*, the music itself is a time machine, moving from blues, ragtime, folk, country, rock, and doo-wop to ballroom house.

Composer Raliegh Neal II brings a score rooted in Black American jazz, soul, and R&B and in Native American musical traditions, giving this history an emotional range that travels from a Gold Rush stagecoach to a 1950s doo-wop dorm room to an 1888 drag ball.



William Dorsey Swann and Charley Parkhurst with Phoenix, Lowell staged reading, May 2026

The Project

The musical is the centerpiece of **The Past Is Always Present Educational Theater Project**, a multi-year collaboration between Houses on the Moon Theater Company and History UnErased, Inc., launched with the Library of Congress TPS grant.

Alongside the play, the project produces free, open-access teaching materials for secondary and post-secondary classrooms:

- The play script, dramatizing hidden histories of LGBTQ+ Americans
- Animated videos that bring the primary sources to life
- Case studies and lesson materials, including units on Charley Parkhurst, William Dorsey Swann, *Rolón v. Kulwitzky*, and the documentary *CURED*
- Regional LGBTQ+ history woven in as the musical travels to new parts of the country

The long-term goal is to make the musical available free to schools and community groups, for their own productions and as a teaching tool, alongside professional productions nationwide.

About the Partners

Houses on the Moon Theater Company, co-founded in 2001 by Jeffrey Solomon and Emily Joy Weiner, works to dispel ignorance and isolation through the theatrical amplification of unheard voices. Built from first-person interviews and deep community partnerships, its plays have been produced Off-Broadway and toured to 18 U.S. states and internationally. In 2024 it received the Caffe Cino Award.

housesonthemoon.org

History UnErased, Inc., founded in Lowell, Massachusetts in 2015, is a national education nonprofit dedicated to bringing LGBTQ-inclusive history into K–12 history, civics and social studies classrooms through curriculum, teacher training and community programs.

unerased.org

Youth at the Center

Young people have shaped the musical from the start. In creative development residencies led by Jeffrey Solomon, Raliegh Neal and History UnErased educators, queer youth and their allies have read, critiqued and improvised scenes, told the writers how they wish history were taught, and discovered ancestors they never knew existed. Close to 50 youth contributors are credited:

Los Angeles, CA	Crescenta Valley High School Gender and Sexuality Alliance
Santa Ana, CA	Orange County School of the Arts
Albuquerque, NM	The Bosque School Thespian Troupe 7148
New York, NY	Hetrick-Martin Institute and National Queer Theater
West Palm Beach, FL	Teach+Heal+Build
Louisville, KY	ACT Louisville



Day one of the youth residency at ACT Louisville, Kentucky, July 2026



Youth residency at the Hetrick-Martin Institute, New York City

“I want to know how learning about LGBTQ history changes mindsets about the world.”

Casandra, youth residency participant

Milestones

2024	Commission from History UnErased in partnership with Houses on the Moon, funded by the Library of Congress TPS Program (November)
2025	Youth workshops at Crescenta Valley High School, the Bosque School, and the Hetrick-Martin Institute with National Queer Theater
October 2025	Jackie Leon of Broadway's *Hell's Kitchen* performs "Weirdos Like Me" at the Houses on the Moon benefit (Watch the performance)
2026	Developmental workshops and readings at Orange County School of the Arts, Teach+Heal+Build (West Palm Beach, Florida) and ACT Louisville (Louisville, Kentucky)
May 2026	World premiere staged reading after a two-week workshop at Middlesex Community College, Lowell, Massachusetts, directed by Jeffrey Solomon with music direction by Raliegh Neal II
September 2027	Student production at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts (LACHSA)
October 2027	New York premiere at LPAC's Companion Citywide Conference on LGBTQ American History during LGBTQ+ History Month, launching a tour of City University of New York campuses

Creative Team

Jeffrey Solomon	Book, Lyrics & Director. Award-winning playwright and Houses on the Moon co-founder; creator of Off-Broadway and touring verbatim works
Raliegh Neal II	Composer & Music Director. ASCAP composer, master teacher, Emmy-nominated *CityKids* composer, and Michael Franti & Spearhead keyboardist
Emily Joy Weiner	Artistic Director, Houses on the Moon Theater Company
Deb Fowler	Executive Director & Co-Founder, History UnErased. Project manager leading national Library of Congress–funded K–12 curriculum initiatives
Cheyenne Fox Tree	Indigenous Consultant
Jocardo Ralston	Teaching coach, content developer & residency facilitator
Kathleen Barker	Program Director
Dinah Mack	Content Developer
J. Eric Fisher · Robb Leigh Davis	Artists & Educators
Jayson Caluag · Mor Erlich	Graphic Design · Video & Animation

The 2027 Tour

NEW YORK PREMIERE · LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH

Companion Citywide Conference on LGBTQ American History

Your Hands Are the Road will have its New York premiere as the centerpiece of a citywide conference on LGBTQ American History, held during LGBTQ+ History Month in October 2027 and hosted by the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center. The conference brings together New York City students, educators, historians and history makers for dynamic workshops on LGBTQ American history led by History UnErased educators and historians alongside living queer history pioneers, and hands-on, theater-based creative workshops offered by Houses on the Moon.

ANCHORED BY LPAC: 3–4 DAY VENUE RESIDENCIES

- **3–4 Day Residency Model:** three performances per venue, including at least one student matinee.
- **Tour Coalition:** a minimum of four CUNY campuses and New York City arts venues, anchored by LPAC.
- **Borough Spotlight:** local New York City queer history woven into campus events.

Artistic Excellence & Reach

- **Workshop Continuity:** cast returning from the May 2026 Lowell staged reading.
- **East Coast Training:** young New York City actors from premier conservatories.
- **Broad Appeal:** the musical resonates with audiences aged 12 to 88.

Partnership Terms & The Ask

PRESENTING PARTNER COMMITMENT & CO-FUNDING

PRESENTING PARTNER ASK

$10,000 per presenting venue

3–4 day residency (3 shows)

PROJECTED COMPLEMENTARY FUNDING

- **Library of Congress TPS:** Teaching with Primary Sources federal grant support.
- **NYC Public Agencies:** projected support from the NYC Department of Education and the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs.
- **Full Production Budget:** detailed line-item tour budget available upon request.

Partners and Supporters

The project reaches students and teachers through dozens of distribution partners in history education, higher education, museums and LGBTQ+ community organizations, among them:

- National Council for the Social Studies
- William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum
- New-York Historical Society
- New York Public Library
- New York City Public Schools
- Harvard Graduate School of Education
- University of California, Los Angeles
- Sonoma State University
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of Michigan
- American University
- Fordham University
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- Middlesex Community College
- Central Connecticut State University
- University of Southern Maine
- National Queer Theater
- Colorado LGBTQ History Project
- Invisible Histories Project
- Out Youth Texas

The Lowell premiere was funded by New England Biolabs, the Library of Congress TPS Program, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation's LGBTQ+ Fund, the Equality Fund at the Boston Foundation and the Eastern Bank Foundation, in partnership with Middlesex Community College and Geminai LLC.

About the Writers

Jeffrey Solomon (Book, Lyrics & Director) is co-founder of Houses on the Moon Theater Company and has been lead playwright on this project since 2024, leading youth residencies across the country and directing the world premiere staged reading. His plays *De Novo*, *Tara's Crossing* and *Building Houses on the Moon* have been produced Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theaters, New York Theatre Workshop and the Lucille Lortel, and are used as teaching tools in law schools, universities and communities. His solo plays *MotherSON* and *The Santa Closet* have toured internationally; *The Santa Closet* will be published by Concord Theatricals in 2027. He wrote the Emmy-nominated pilot for Jim Henson's *CityKids* (ABC), is a Moth GrandSLAM Champion, and holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College.

Raliegh Neal II (Music & Music Director) is a composer, keyboardist and music director who has performed with Herbie Hancock, including a duet at Carnegie Hall, as well as Carlos Santana, Nile Rodgers and John Mayer, and toured the world with Michael Franti & Spearhead. He wrote the theme song and scored thirteen episodes of the Emmy-nominated ABC/Jim Henson series *CityKids*, and as Music Director of the CityKids Foundation developed hundreds of young performers. He is an Artist Master Teacher at The People's Conservatory in Oakland and studied jazz piano and music business at the University of Miami.

Learn more: unerased.org/resource/the-past-is-always-present · housesonthemoon.org

BOOKING & INFORMATION

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