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Using theater arts and conversation to heal America from the wounds of slavery without shame or blame

In Honor of Juneteenth As a Nationally Recognized Holiday: *A Tribute to the Declaration of Independence And Democracy*

Our Mission: To heal America from the wounds of slavery without shame or blame.

In Congress, June 17, 2021

The unanimous vote by the U.S. Senate and a 421–14 vote in the House of Representatives to recognize Juneteenth as the nation’s 12th federal holiday at this most complicated moment in the history of humankind prompts this tribute to the Declaration of Independence published in 1776.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for the descendants of those who since the birth of this Nation have suffered from enslavement and oppression, the Time has come to recognize and claim their long-denied inheritance and to experience the aspirations and vision of a gleaming city on the hill which holds a powerful pull for Black people who, despite being denied access to the American Dream, have known from the very first that they had a right to its promise. And it was this promise that was gravely threatened on January 6, 2021, by violent insurrectionists and supporters of the “big lie” and led by former President Donald J. Trump in his continued attempt to overthrow the United States Government and remain President despite losing the November 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among the People, deriving their just

powers from the consent of the governed, -- That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that humankind is more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain and Systemic Slavery is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States and the descendants of African people. To prove this let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Slavery have refused their Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Slavery have forbidden its Governors and Lobbyists to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Slavery have refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Slavery have called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He [the present King of Great Britain] has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly for opposing with manly firmness his invasion and He, Donald J. Trump has pressured State Houses from Arizona to Georgia to certify false 2020 election results that would deny the rights of the people.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Citizens United have refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within as experienced on January 6, 2021.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Slavery have endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose of obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither and raising the conditions of new Reparations of Lands.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and the Donald J. Trump led Republican Party have obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Citizens United have made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Racism have erected a multitude of New Offices and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Racism have kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Donald J. Trump have affected to render the Military and local police forces independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Racism have combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and

unacknowledged by our laws, giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, and by Pardon from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with Africa and other developing nations.

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases and imposing cash bail that denies many the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as, to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For attacking our legislatures and intending to declare themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Racism have abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Systemic Racism have plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He [the present King of Great Britain] and Donald Trump are at the time transporting large Armies of domestic Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the former Head of a civilized nation.

*He [the present King of Great Britain] and Donald Trump have **constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.***

*He, [the present King of Great Britain], Donald Trump and Systemic Racism have **excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the decimated Indian tribes whose customs and conditions have been destructed across all ages, sexes, and conditions.***

*In every stage of these Oppressions, we have **Petitioned for Redress in most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury** until as a nation we witnessed the murder of George Floyd in real or almost real-time, and we cannot unsee the horror. **Accountable by the weight of our gaze on these atrocious acts of God, each one of us who is of sound mind, body and heart must do our part. We shall be held accountable and thus we are obligated to contribute to improvements.***

*Nor have we been wanting in attention to our elected and appointed officials. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, **Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.***

*We, therefore, the People of the United States of America, in urban and rural outposts, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good, decent People of these United States of America, solemnly publish and declare, that these United States and Territories are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to corrupt policies that are linked to Authoritarianism, Citizen's United, Racism, Violence, Prison Pipeline from Crib to Coffin, Climate Denial, Voter Suppression, Unregulated Internet, **and all political connections between them and is and ought to be totally dissolved;** and that as Free and Independent individuals, institutions, communities and alliances, we have*

the full Power to conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.