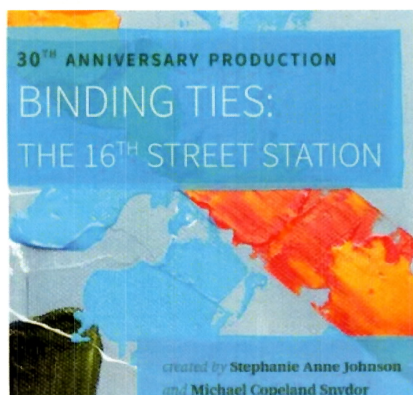


Oakland Theater Project Launches 2021 Drive-In Season with **BINDING TIES: THE 16TH STREET STATION**

From Feb 11—28, the production will be remounted at Oakland's historic 16th Street Station as a drive-in theater production.

by BWW News Desk Jan. 25, 2021



Oakland Theater Project is launching its 2021 Season of drive-in theater with the 30th anniversary production of *Binding Ties: The 16th Street Station*, a site-specific installation at the historic Southern Pacific Railroad Station (16th Street Station, 16th St & Wood St, Oakland CA 94607) in West Oakland. Originally commissioned by the City of Oakland Cultural Arts Division in 1991, the piece was one of its first Public Arts Projects funded, and was originally created by Stephanie Anne Johnson with Michael Copeland Snyder. From Feb 11-28, the production will be remounted at Oakland's historic 16th Street Station as a drive-in theater production, created by Stephanie Anne Johnson, with a new sound score by Kevin Myrick, recalling the lives and legacies of the West Oakland community in the early 20th century.

Merging archival techniques and digital technologies, the piece will transport audiences to Oakland in the early 1900s. *Binding Ties* immerses audiences in original interviews, music, poetry and narratives as the sounds of the show transmit over FM radio in their own vehicles and as video projections on the exterior of the historic station bring to life the stories of early Southern Pacific Railroad workers and explore the experiences of Oakland's 16th Street community in the first half of the 20th century.

A powerful mix of live storytelling by OTP Company Member William Oliver III as the Conductor, combined with original video interviews and historical images, capture the moving stories of the workers, community members, and civic leaders who made up the West Oakland and 16th Street Station community, and highlight the ways in which the station brought dignity, opportunity, and transformation to its residents.

Binding Ties tells a powerful story of Black and immigrant communities flourishing when given economic opportunity and pathways for upward mobility. Southern Pacific Railroad workers were Black, Indigenous, Chinese, Mexican, and Pakistani, and the production explores the stories of several close-knit, multi-generational families with a deep sense of belonging, appreciation for one another, and interdependence. The piece offers a timely invitation to reflect on what contributed to so much prosperity, what has changed since, and how a city can move forward in protecting and preserving communities.

"In current times with the internet, there's so much that's seen but so little that's understood," said Dr. Stephanie Anne Johnson. "Binding Ties is an homage to the past, to those people who paved the way forward. It's a historical story about them, but it's also an inspiration for immigrants and marginalized publics: this is an example of the best that the United States culture can offer. When we come together in common cause as neighbors, community builders, healers, families, and world shifters, the possibilities are limitless."

Binding Ties is an intergenerational experience—for elder community members, a reminder of how we travelled; for younger residents, the opportunity for discovery. From those who travelled by train, whose own experiences intersect with the stories of the 16th Street Station, to those learning about the pivotal role of the railroads for the first time, this love letter to West Oakland gives families a chance to learn, connect, and deepen their own bonds between people, place, and empowerment. By celebrating the stories of the past and honoring our shared history, *Binding Ties* offers a chance to be invigorated, inspired, and invited to participate in the preservation of the community's history and the protection of its future.

Information:

30th Anniversary Production

Binding Ties: The 16th Street Station

created by Stephanie Anne Johnson with Michael Copeland Snyder

Feb 11-28, 2021

Preview: Thu, February 11th at 7:30 p.m.

Opening Night: Fri, February 12th at 7:30 p.m.