

TRUE NORTH



Written by Lee Nowell

Directed by Heidi S Howard

7 STAGES

MARCH 15-31, 2024

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Managing Director.....	Mack Headrick
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7 STAGES' MISSION & VISION

7 Stages is a professional, non-profit theatre company devoted to engaging artists and audiences by focusing on the social, political, and spiritual values of contemporary culture. 7 Stages gives primary emphasis to international work and the support and development of new plays, new playwrights, and new methods of collaboration.

Our theatre will be a global center for the creation of vital conversations through collaborative performance.

7 Stages has resided on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Muscogee (Creek) people for over 43 years. While we produce content that spans nationally and internationally, it is essential for us to keep such inequities at the forefront of all that we do. We aim to honor these communities past, present and future through conversations, practices and programming that imagines and initiates what reparations look like for all. For every ticket sold, we include an Indigenous land use fee.

The proceeds are donated to our Indigenous partners annually.

True North Cast and Crew

Playwright.....	Lee Nowell
Director.....	Heidi S Howard
Assistant Director.....	Destiny Renee
Joe.....	Markell Williams
The Noosphere.....	Dorothy Bell-Polk
Anne.....	Priscilla Umphrey
Dr. Singh & Co-Music Director.....	Isis Kleef
Stage Manager	Jonesia Williams
Trusted Assistant & Asst. Stage Manager.....	Cadence Nabors
Lighting Designer.....	Ari Shah Conkright
Music Director/Composer.....	Nicolette Emanuelle
Video Designer.....	Olubajo "Bajo" Sonubi
Scenic Artist.....	Sophie Im
Costume Designer.....	Dr. L. Nyrobi N. Moss
Production Associate.....	Gabi Collard
Production Assistant.....	Ezra Stene
Production Assistant.....	Aloe Sanders
Production Assistant.....	Akua Malloy
Production Assistant.....	Nina Cajuste
Float SM & Box Office.....	Kai Lewis
Science Consultant.....	Scotty Howard
Installation Artist for "The Lady".....	Dorothy O'Connor

(CAST & CREW BIOS AT END OF PROGRAM)

About True North

Lee Nowell's play True North first came to 7 Stages as part of our Home Brew Series for works in development in 2020, and has now been developed as a full stage production. This scientific theatrical experience asks audiences to consider the things around them that they can't see, like electromagnetic energy and the way we interact with it, in addition to the ways it may affect our morals, navigation, and communication. This play in three parts uses center staging to immerse the audience in a multifaceted performance with monologues, science experiments, projections, and interaction.

All compasses point to Magnetic North, but Magnetic North is currently moving erratically—averaging 34 to 40 miles per year—and humans feel it. When magnetic fields move erratically, the part of our brain that makes ethical decisions becomes impaired, and our health can be compromised—but there are methods to counteract those effects.

Characterizations of The Noosphere (played by Dorothy Bell-Polk with live music, vocalization and movement) and Magnetic North (via projection merged with live science demos) join relatable everyday Joe (Markell Williams)—whose whole world is turned upside down when he takes part in a study about the human ability to detect Magnetic North and the effects it has on our decisions—and Anne (Priscilla Umphrey), an Indigenous scientist who draws parallels between ancient wisdom and new evidence.

True North is a creative exploration of the forces that interconnect us, and the ways we can accept and work within them to stabilize ourselves internally and create a more just, peaceful world. It is a guidebook, combining the latest scientific research with ancient practices from cultural traditions which enable each of us to ground ourselves in the midst of uncertainty. This project, developed with a scientist who has worked for NASA, illuminates the dedicated work of many scientists from around the world and lends a view of where we now stand, then proposes how we can deal with it.

7 Stages is proud to partner with Wild Cumberland and the Atlanta Science Festival for this immersive experience that brings scientists, artists, and community members together. Inspired by a recent visit to Cumberland Island, renowned artist Dorothy O'Connor designed a visual art installation that set the stage for vital dialogues during Art of Activism: Stewards of the Wild (March 10 at 7 Stages), which carry through to the world premiere of True North.

Acknowledgements from the playwright

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Tim Hamilton for generously reviewing the script in minute detail, reading the source research, and advising me on specific phrasing to ensure that the script is scientifically true to the research on which it is based. I am sincerely grateful to Priscilla Umphrey for sharing her Native knowledge and wisdom, which became foundational in writing Act Three of this piece. I wish to thank Scotty Howard for his kind guidance and input on scientific theories and trains of logic in the early development of the script. I send much gratitude to Heidi S Howard and Mack Headrick, who steadfastly worked for many years to bring this project to fruition. I am deeply thankful for Phillip DePoy, who has patiently listened for countless hours and offered insight as I worked through the implications of this research and developed it into a unified theory. Thank you.

THE RESEARCH:

This play includes research findings from hundreds of brilliant scientists.

They include, in no particular order:

Roger Nelson, Princeton University

Drew Shindell, NASA

Gavin A. Schmidt, NASA

David Rind, NASA

Joseph Kirschvink, Magnetic Field Laboratory,
California Institute of Technology

Atsuko K. Kobayashi, California Institute of Technology

Shinsuke Shimojo, California Institute of Technology

Daw-An Wu, California Institute of Technology

Barbara J. Woodford, University of Southern California

Richard Blakemore, Woods Hole Oceanographic
Institution

James Gould, Princeton University

N. Chandra Wickramasinghe, Buckingham Centre for
Astrobiology,

University of Buckingham, UK

Edward J. Steele, Centre for Astrobiology, University of

Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

M. Wainwright, CY O'Connor ERADE Village

Foundation, Australia

Gensuke Tokoro, Department of Infectious Disease
Control, Tiajin Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention, China

Manju Fernanco, Department of Molecular Biology
and Biotechnology,

University of Sheffield, UK

Jiangwen Qu, Institute for the Study of Panspermia
and Astroeconomics, Japan

Robin Baker, University of Manchester, UK

Henrik Mouritsen, University of Oldenburg, Germany

David Dickman, Baylor College of Medicine

Daryl J. Bem, Cornell University

Michael Winklhofer, University of Oldenburg, Germany

Ayu Matani, University of Tokyo, Japan

Abdullah Alabdulgader, Prince Sultan Cardiac Center,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Nikola Kasabov, Knowledge Engineering & Discovery
Research Institute,

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

Alexandre Legros, Utilities Threshold Initiative

Consortium and Lawson

Health Research Institute and Western University,
Canada

Valeriy Zaporozhan, Odessa State Medical University,
Ukraine

Adriy Ponomarenko, Odessa State Medical University,
Ukraine

Hans Fromme, Frankfurt Zoological Institute, Germany

Yuta Katori, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan

Kan Okubo, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Japan

Cristiano Fidani, Central Italy Electromagnetic Network, Italy

Hynek Burda, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

Jaroslav Červený, Czech University of Life Sciences, Czech
Republic

Julia Neef, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

Carlo Ventura, National Institute of Biostructures and
Biosystems, Italy

Pavel Nemeč, Charles University, Czech Republic

Oldřich Vojtěch, Šumava National Park Research, Czech
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Rollin McCraty, HeartMath Institute

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Annette Deyhle, Global Coherence Initiative Research Team,
HeartMath Institute

Mike Atkinson, HeartMath Institute

Inga Timofejeva, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

Roza Joffe, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences,
Lithuania

Alfonsas Vainoras, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences,
Lithuania

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Lithuania

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Sabine Begall, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany

Diana W Bianchi, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD

Kiarash Khosrotehrani, The University of Queensland,
Queensland, Australia

Sing Sing Way, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine,
Cincinnati, OH

Tippi C MacKenzie, University of California, San Francisco,
CA

Ingeborg Bajema, Leiden University Medical Center, Leiden,
The Netherlands

Keelin O'Donoghue, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland

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Sip and Share Wines

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Michele Tedesco

Edwin Jameson

Robby Myles - Director of Cinematography 2020

Carmen Halagahu and Turtle Island Trading

Shane Umphrey

Aileen Loy

Scott Turner Schofeild

Java Lords

Dana Buskovitz and the entire team at Atlanta Science Festival

Bamboo and Orion

Marilynn Pedek Howard

Aigauge Beane

Kavon Saddler

Doug Earnhardt

Teresa Holcombe

Michelle Barnard



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To find out more about how NEA grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov



Cast & Crew Bios

Lee Nowell (Playwright) - Lee's plays have been workshopped, commissioned, and produced by Actor's Express, Ex Somnium, Horizon Theatre, 7Stages, Found Stages, Synchronicity Theatre, and Georgia Public Broadcasting. Her work has been nominated for The List, two Suzi Bass Awards, Best Play of the Year by Atlanta Theatre Fans, Top Ten Productions of the Year by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and an NEA Distinguished New Play Development Award.
www.leenowellplaywright.com

Heidi S Howard (Director) loves creating devised performances, directing new and classic plays, teaching arts-based curriculum, and collaborating with international, national, and local artists. By aligning education programs with all programming, she strives to create a brave space to connect everyday life to the creative process. Directing highlights include Secretaries by the Five Lesbian Brothers, FML: How Carson McCullers Saved My Life by Sarah Gubbins, Lauren Gunderson's The Revolutionists, and Michael Molina's Mass Transit Muse. She has toured throughout the USA as well as to The Netherlands, Serbia, Israel and China. She is the founder of Youth Creates, an international performance program for teenagers. She initiated Art of Activism, Service Saturdays, and The Big Read programs. She is an alum of the ALMA (Arts Leaders of Metro Atlanta w/ ARC), an Artistic Associate with Synchronicity, served on the Board of The Atlanta School and Theatre Emory, and is a National Performance Network representative. Notable collaborators include Joseph Chaikin, Walter Asmus, Dijana Milosevic, Nesa Paripovic, Pearl Cleage, Sean Dorsey, Topher Payne, Eric Ehn, Jim Grimsley, Robert Earl Price, Mondo Bizarro, Karolina Spaic, Lydia Stryk, Scott Turner Schofield, and Del Hamilton. Thanks to her biological and chosen family and her ever loving dad, the wind beneath her wings. "When we create together, we remind ourselves that anything is possible regardless of our differences."

Destiny Renee (Assistant Director) is an actress, teaching artist and poet who leads the Youth Creates program as the Education Director of 7 Stages. She holds a B.A. in theatre from Florida State University as well as a minor in child development. She has studied performance in London as well as with Double Edge Theatre Company. She has taught theatre in several schools, for Drama Kids International and the first of its kind Boy's & Girl's Club dedicated solely to arts and innovation. Renee was a member of the Shakespeare On Draught theatre company and is a founder of the Topsy Tales show. She aims to create change by rousing dialogue about the issues that are deeply affecting the society in which we live through mediums like devised theatre, film, and poetry.

Markell Williams (Joe) is an award winning actor, writer and teaching artist based in Atlanta. He helms from the state of SC where he earned a BS in Chemistry with strong encouragement from his parents. After 10 plus yrs of working in Quality Control and R&D he allowed his heart to direct him to his original passion for performance art. He has performed for the Alliance Theater, 7 stages, Horizon Theatre, True Colors, Out Of Hand, Birmingham Children's Theatre, Found Stages, Weird Sisters, NC Black Repertory Co., The Object Group, Center for Puppetry Arts, Impulse Rep, and Theatre in the Square. Most notable TV/Film credits include a guest star role on ABC's hit series Will Trent as well as the Disney Plus series She-Hulk and a guest star role on the FX TV series Atlanta. Follow him on Instagram @Markell.Williams to see what he's up to next.

Cast & Crew Bios Continued

Dorothy Bell-Polk (Noosphere) is an Atlanta based actor, singer, songwriter and teaching artist. She lives for collaboration. Her vision is to be a catalyst for many people to learn how to use art in understanding and sharing their own stories; especially the unheard: to find, to love, and to use their voices. Music and Theatre has afforded Dorothy to use her gifts and voice throughout America, Quebec, The Netherlands and South Africa. Since 2000 she has explored multicultural, interdisciplinary and mixed art and is always on a mission to bring those formats into the classroom. She is an experienced theatre educator, beginning at her alma mata Clark Atlanta University and most recently Dekalb Elementary School of the Arts. She is also a lead teacher for 7 Stages Youth Creates!

Dorothy has been seen on many stages, including 7 Stages Theatre, Horizon Theatre, Push Push Theatre, Decatur Playhouse, The Rialto, Jomandi and the Grahamstown Arts Festival. She is now expanding her horizons and using her voice to the fullest.

I dedicate this show to my family - you have all got me to this moment with your love. Thank you Detrick for always having my back. I couldn't do this work without your support. Thank you 7 Stages for an amazing 15 years of play. Follow @deedrama77 on Instagram.

Priscilla Umphrey (Anne) Daughter, Mother, Sister, Wife, Child of Creator, Jingle Dress Dancer. She dances for those who are no longer with us, those who no longer can, and to make a positive energetic ripple for the sake of future generations. Embracing each moment with a curious heart, she is quiet, reserved, spiritual, loving, strong, and is a moral bridge to inspire and to be inspired. For her, loving is not expecting love in return, but to heal others into feeling self-worth. She is steadfast in doing her part in healing Mother Earth and bringing peace to all.

Isis Kleef (Dr. Singh, Co-Music Director) is a singer, musician, writer and educator from Amsterdam. This year she is graduating from the 'University of the Arts' in Amsterdam for her degree 'Music in Education'. Back in the Netherlands she works as a teacher and as a conductor for a youth orchestra. She started playing flute 15 years ago and never stopped developing herself with other instruments. This led her to the guitar and finding herself as a singer and so she started writing her own songs.

Isis has been around 7 Stages since 2018, where she started as a student at 'Youth Creates'. She came back in 2023 to 'Youth Creates' as a teaching intern. In March 2024 she will work on 7 Stages' new play True North as a musical director.

Cadence Nabors (Trusted Assistant & Asst. Stage Manager) is delighted to be working with 7 Stages on the world premiere of True North. Having recently graduated university they are grateful for the opportunity to be working with such talented artists as an apprentice with 7 Stages. In the past they have stage managed The Mad Hatterpillar (Out Front; Stage Door) and Chicana Legend (SheATL). Additional academic credits include Hearing Voices (Dooley's Players), The Lightning Thief (Ad Hoc), and Our Town (Theater Emory).

Cast & Crew Bios Continued

Ari Shah Conkright (Production Manager & Light Designer) is a Lighting Designer and Theatre technician who got their start here at 7 Stages in Youth Creates many moons ago. They are very excited to have worked on True North as their first production on staff for 7 Stages as Production/Facility Manager. Ari has a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Technical Theatre with a focus in Lighting Design and Stage Management from Guilford College. Most recently, Ari has worked on Black Metal Burlesque, Pinnocchio and with The Admix Project on their Summer Intensive Showcases. Ari is so excited to be at 7 Stages full time now, and cannot wait for what the future holds!

Olubajo "Bajo" Sonubi (Video Designer) is a graduate of University of Georgia, and Southern Methodist University. When not working in film/tv, Bajo throws himself into supporting the arts as a volunteer, director, producer, teacher, actor, and supporter of emerging artists and community focused organizations.

Dr. L. Nyrobi N. Moss (Costume Designer) is an award-winning costume designer with more than 30 years of experience in theatre and entertainment. In addition to serving as the Co-Vice Chair on the Board of Directors, Nyrobi has been a collaborating teaching artist with 7 Stages for more than 20 years. Previous 7 Stages' productions designed by Nyrobi include Angry Fags, Waiting for Godot, REVOLT. SHE SAID. REVOLT AGAIN, White Woman in Progress, The Doctor, The Devil & My Dad, HAIR, My Left Breast, and The Little Prince. Nyrobi's costume design work has appeared in theatres regionally and nationally across Atlanta, DC, Orlando, New York, Virginia, Las Vegas, and Dallas, as well as, internationally in Holland, West Africa, South Africa, and Dubai. Nyrobi won two awards for Outstanding Costume Design in a Play for Eclipsed at Synchronicity Theatre and Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery at Horizon Theatre. Additionally, her list of costume award nominations includes Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical for Five Guys Named Moe at Theatrical Outfit; Outstanding Design Team TYA for Bob Marley's Three Little Birds at Synchronicity Theatre; Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical for The Color Purple at Actors' Express and Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical for Blackberry Daze at Horizon Theatre. In addition to costume design, Nyrobi is a Certified Relationship Specialist, and Business Consultant for non-profit organizations, entrepreneurs, artists, start-ups, and small businesses. Instagram: @drnyrobi @goddesscomplexcostumes, Facebook: iamdrnyrobi

Jonesia Williams (Stage Manager) is excited to once again be working with 7 Stages Theater. As a stage manager, technician and carpenter, she has found joy, assisting others in bringing their visions and productions to life. For thirteen years, she has had the pleasure to work for the Alliance Theatre, The Atlanta Opera, One Music Fest, Center of Puppetry Arts, Polar Express, and on and on that goes. She is always thrilled, however, when she gets to come back to Little 5 Points and work in a place that feels like home.

Gabriella "Gabi" Collard (Production Associate) - Gabi's journey with 7 Stages began in 2013 when she joined Youth Creates program. Over the years, her involvement has evolved, holding various roles as a Production Associate, Stage Manager, and Scenic Painting Assistant. Beyond her theatrical commitments, Gabi is a familiar face in the background of numerous TV shows and movies. She attributes much of her creative growth to 7 Stages, cherishing it as a constant source of inspiration and belonging.

Cast & Crew Bios Continued

Sophie Im (Scenic Artist) is a South Korean designer primarily serving the design community in Atlanta as a set designer. She is also an integral part of the events industry with floral design and creating environments through set decoration at corporate events, social events and weddings. Sophie's perspective in design is that it will uplift the people and provide solutions with integrity and benevolence. Her creative journey reflects the rich tapestry of her multicultural embodiment of Asia, America, Europe and Africa. She treasures our world as a place where diversity is not just embraced but celebrated, all while carving a niche for herself as a visionary in set design in theater and filmmaking, puppetry, and floral artistry.

In the realm of set design, Sophie's visionary approach transforms spaces into immersive experiences. She understands that sets are not mere stages; they are dynamic landscapes that tell stories, embracing the audience in a visual symphony of aesthetic, research and a load of collaboration of other talented artists. Sophie's designs are a testament to her ability to bridge cultural gaps through the universal language of art and humanity. She hopes the world will grow stronger by giving reason for transcending borders, celebrating differences, and uniting hearts through the universal language of art.

Dorothy O'Connor (Installation Artist, "The Lady") - Dorothy's constructed, fantastical works often combine elements of photography, installation and public art. A native Atlantan, she graduated with degrees in Literature and Studio Arts and a certificate in photography. As a fabricator, she is largely self-taught. Inspired by the natural world, and shaped predominantly by events in her life, her themes explore various personally meaningful subjects both broad, such as animal welfare and environmental concerns, to the more intimate; friends, family and community.

She has received grants from Possible Futures, FLUX, Forward Arts Foundation, Art on the Beltline, Crusade For Art, Fulton County Arts and Culture and most recently, City of Atlanta ElevateART to present her installations as public art. In 2013, she was artist in residence at Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art in Nashville where she built and presented her installation, "Shelter." She is a Hambidge Fellow and was part of the Hambidge Hive Collective in 2017. 2019 concluded with a solo show of her photography series, Scenes, at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia in Atlanta. Ms. O'Connor's work is part of the permanent collections at MOCA GA, Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art, the Center for Fine Art Photography, Fulton County Arts and Culture, and is included in numerous private collections.

Scotty Howard (Science Consultant) I am the father of the amazing 7 Stages' artistic Director Heidi S Howard and I have waited 75 years for this rare opportunity to work with my daughter on the world première of True North. I am a retired science educator and science enthusiast. My theater past includes Man of La Mancha, and Glad Hand and Doc in West Side Story. I've been an avid follower and supporter of 7 Stages for 25 years. Go Science! Go Art! They CONNECT!
YAHOOOOO!