

STUDIO

THEATRE

DAVID MUSE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

REBECCA ENDE LICHTENBERG
MANAGING DIRECTOR

PRESENT

PIPELINE

BY **DOMINIQUE
MORISSEAU**

DIRECTOR
AWOYE TIMPO

SET DESIGNER
ARNULFO MALDONADO

COSTUME DESIGNER
SARITA FELLOWS

PROPERTIES DESIGNER
PATTI KALIL

LIGHTING DESIGNER
JESSE BELSKY

SOUND DESIGNER
FAN ZHANG

PROJECTION DESIGNER
ALEXANDRA KELLY COLBURN

DRAMATURG
LAUREN HALVORSEN

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
SARAH ELIZABETH FORD*

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION
JOSH ESCAJEDA

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
JEFFERY MARTIN

Pipeline is generously underwritten by
Joan and David Maxwell

Originally produced by
Lincoln Center Theater in
2017, New York City.

Pipeline was commissioned
by Steppenwolf Theatre
Company, Chicago; Martha
Lavey, Artistic Director,
David Hawkanson, Executive
Director.

Begins January 15, 2020
in the Mead Theatre

Pipeline is
presented by special
arrangement with
Samuel French, Inc.



**Member Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional
Actors and Stage Managers in the United States*

Dominique Morisseau's distinctive, lyrical dramas chronicle the systems, legacies, and forces that have impacted African-American lives. But while her plays tackle complex subjects—class, race, education, justice—she resists hard statistics in favor of emotional immersion, exploring resilient individuals and makeshift families grappling with instability and tension in their ever-shifting world. “For me as a storyteller,” she says, “my job is to illuminate the humanity behind the social issue.”

In *Pipeline*, Morisseau delves into the school-to-prison-pipeline, described by the writer Ijeoma Oluo as “the alarming number of black and brown children who are funneled directly and indirectly from our schools into our prison industrial complex, contributing to devastating levels of mass incarceration that lead to one in three black men and one in six Latino men going to prison in their lifetimes.”

Morisseau was inspired by Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (2010), an explosive examination of how the American criminal justice system targets Black men, and by two real-life incidents: the online pitchfork mob endured by her surrogate-nephew after an incident at his school and the heavily biased “he-was-no-angel” press coverage following the murder of Michael Brown. She reflects, “It shocked me and concerned me how quickly we criminalize and don't give second chances to young men of color, and particularly young African-American men.”

Morisseau also drew on her two decades of experience as an educator in public and private schools, and her mother's 40 years of teaching in Highland Park, Michigan, one of the most economically devastated cities in the country. “In public schools, we often see infrastructural failures. In private schools, we see cultural failures—a lack of understanding about barriers related to a student's background,” she says. “Cultural bias is hard to solidify and pin down. I want to give voice to that issue.”

Pipeline captures the complications of the American educational ecosystem and the ferocity of a parent's love—but at its core, it's an exploration of the humanity of young Black men. “Omari represents so many young men in schools, public and private, who are trying to navigate their emotions, at a moment in our nation when they have a lot of social vulnerability and fragility,” says Morisseau. How can these students manage the day-to-day reality of living within oppressive structures without losing the capacity for imagination? How can teachers and parents meaningfully support their growth and development? *Pipeline* doesn't provide easy solutions—they don't exist in our world—which is why, still, we fight to make a more humane one.

—Lauren Halvorsen