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For immediate release.

**THE CIVILIANS' DIGITAL PREMIERE* OF "BLACK FEMINIST VIDEO GAME"
BY DARREL ALEJANDRO HOLNES COMES TO
CENTER THEATRE GROUP'S DIGITAL STAGE APRIL 27 – MAY 9**

**Tech Expertise, Artistic Innovation and Black Feminism
Meet in Groundbreaking Online Theatrical Experience**

Tech expertise and artistic innovation come together for a groundbreaking online theatrical experience as **The Civilians'** digital premiere production of "**Black Feminist Video Game**" by **Darrel Alejandro Holnes** is presented by **Center Theatre Group's Digital Stage**. Developed in The Civilians' R&D Group, where Holnes is a former member, "Black Feminist Video Game" is directed by **Victoria Collado** and features an original video game created by **Ché Rose** and **Jocelyn Short** of **Cookout Games**. Six live performances of "Black Feminist Video Game" will stream at 5 PM from Tuesday, April 27 through Sunday, May 2. On-demand viewing of a captured performance will be available from May 2 at 9 pm through May 9, 2021, at 8:59 pm. All times Pacific. Tickets, priced at \$10, can be purchased at CTGLA.org/BlackFeministVideoGame.

Following close on the heels of The Civilians' innovative smash hit "Russian Troll Farm," which was heralded by The New York Times as one of the best shows of 2020, "Black Feminist Video Game" centers on Jonas, a biracial teenager with autism. Jonas broadcasts all aspects of his life online, including a disastrous first date with his crush, Nicole. Desperate to regain her affections, he dusts off a long-ignored gift from his mother—a classic 2D "Black feminist video game"—hopeful that the game will grant him the key to winning Nicole back. But Jonas soon discovers that, with only the Game Master and his friend Sabine to guide him, he must confront his own misperceptions of the women in his (real) life, or risk losing not only the game but also his first chance at love.

In this mashup of live performance, video game design and online interaction, Jonas and Sabine stream their play, video-chat with each other and find their path through the game together. Along the way, at-home viewers will help (or hinder!) their progress by responding in real time to the choices they make.

"I think of the video game space as a place of people's wildest imaginations," said Holnes. "Gaming has taught me that I am not the narrative projected onto me, I am the free will I exercise; I am how I play the game not the character I am assigned. 'Black Feminist Video Game' asks questions about love on the spectrum, how we can all be better allies and why Black feminism can set us all free."

"I'm so grateful to have witnessed and supported the development of 'Black Feminist Video Game' through The Civilians' R&D Group over the past year," said The Civilians' Artistic Director **Steve Cossou**. "The absence of live theatre has been acutely felt during the pandemic, so it is particularly

heartening to see artists like Darrel Alejandro Holnes, Victoria Collado and the rest of the ‘Black Feminist Video Game’ team imagine this new theatrical space to share a different kind of live experience for audiences.”

The cast of “Black Feminist Video Game” includes **Christon Andell** as Jonas, **Kyla Jeanne Butts** as Sabine, **Starr Kirkland** as Nicole, **Darrel Alejandro Holnes** as DJ/Hype Person and other voices, **Constance Fields** as Luna (Jonas’ Mom)*, **Phillip Patrick Wright** as Mark, **Michael Diamond** as Hans, **Mia Anderson** as Marguerite and **Brandiss LaShai Seward** as Audre Lorde.

The creative team of “Black Feminist Video Game” includes producer **Ilana Becker**, media streaming designer & programmer **Julia Frey**, video co-programmer/engineer **Jeremy Allen**, video designer & editor **Erin Sullivan**, sound designer **Twii McCallum**, production design consultant **Anna Driftmier**, neurodiversity consultant **Cortland Nesley** and consulting film producer **Kiran Chitanvis**.

The Civilians are working with members of the Autistic community, as well as Neurodivergent members within the company of the show, in the development of “Black Feminist Video Game.” For detailed accessibility information please visit www.thecivilians.org. The show is intended for audiences ages 16 and up.

The digital premiere of “Black Feminist Video Game” is a national collaboration with presenters 59E59 Theaters’ Plays in Place program, Center Theatre Group, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and co-commissioner Williams Center for the Arts, Lafayette College.

Center Theatre Group’s Digital Stage is presented by American Express. As presenting sponsor of The Digital Stage, American Express Card Members enjoy special opportunities on the Digital Stage, including: presales and early access for limited-release premium events, invitations to private pre- or post-show meet and greets and access to exclusive content curated especially for Card Members.

Bank of America is Center Theatre Group’s Season Sponsor, including Digital Stage programming. For more than 20 years, Bank of America has partnered with Center Theatre Group to provide innovative Education and Community Partnerships programs as well as present world-class productions at the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum. Their generous support now extends online to the Digital Stage.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

About the Artists

Darrel Alejandro Holnes (playwright) is a Panamanian American writer, performer and educator. He is the author of “Migrant Psalms” (Northwestern University Press, 2021) and the forthcoming “Stepmotherland” (Notre Dame Press, 2021) winners of the Drinking Gourd Poetry Prize and the Andres Montoya Poetry Prize from Letras Latinas, respectively. His plays have received productions or readings at the Kennedy Center for the Arts American College Theater Festival (KCACTF), The Brick

Theater, Kitchen Theater Company, Pregones Theater/PRTT, Primary Stages, and elsewhere. He is a member of the Lincoln Center Director’s Lab, Civilians R&D Group, Page 73’s Interstate 73 Writers Workshop and other groups. His play, “Starry Night,” was a finalist for the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwrights Conference, the Princess Grace Award in Playwriting, and several other awards. His plays include “Black Feminist Video Game,” “Bayano,” “Franklin Ave” and “The Burning Room.” He is also the founder of the Greater Good Commission, a fund that supports emerging Latinx playwrights. <http://darrelholnes.com/>

Victoria Collado (director) is a Cuban-American, Miami born and raised, director currently living and working in NYC. She recently directed the immersive theatre piece, “The Amparo Experience” written by Vanessa Garcia in partnership with Havana Club by Bacardi. Collado has directed for Repertorio Español, MCC Youth Company, Sheen Center, IATI theatre, Juggerknot Theatre Co., Microteatro Miami, Columbia University and others. Her production “El Burlador de Sevilla” received various nominations from the ACE awards and won for Outstanding Ensemble. She was a Van Lier Directing Fellow with Repertorio Español, part of the Directing Corps in the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and a recipient of the SDCF Observership. Collado was the assistant director to Tony Taccone in John Leguizamo’s “Latin History For Morons” on Broadway. www.victoriacollado.com

Ché Lovell Rose (video game designer) is the founder and Creative Director at Cookout Games. After “Black Feminist Video Game,” Cookout Games will be debuting “Estranged,” a female led dog-fighting space shooter that exists in both 2D and 3D at the same time. Ché is also a partner and instructor at TagLabs.org, which brings computer-science education programming to inner-city kids in the DMV. He is also a proud navy veteran, teacher and esports coach.

Jocelyn Short (video game co-designer) is a concept artist for the entertainment industry with a Bachelor’s in Visual Development from the Academy of Art University in 2017. Freelancing since then, she’s worked for many independent comic and video game projects as well as developing her own I.P. entitled “Bearers.” www.jocelynshort.com

Ilana Becker (producer) is a producer and director specializing in new play and musical development, investigative and verbatim material, and community-driven projects. Currently The Civilians’ R&D Group Program Director and Gingold Theatrical Group’s Associate Director, Ilana has served on the staffs of All For One Theater, Lincoln Center Education and Bret Adams Ltd, and spent a year as Associate Artistic Director and then Interim Artistic Director of Company of Fools/Sun Valley Center for the Arts. She’s the creator of “Argument Sessions,” an ensemble-led series of immersive theatrical events weaving verbatim SCOTUS transcripts with collaboratively developed material. A proud alum of WP Theater Producers Lab, Civilians’ R&D Group, LCE Directors Lab, DirectorsLabChicago, FGP PlayGroup, Orchard Project Liveness Lab, and a Playwrights Horizons Robert Moss Directing Fellow. She recently founded ToGather Today with arts and education colleagues and is managing a campaign in FL. www.ilanabecker.com

Julia Frey (media streaming designer & programmer) is a performer, deviser, projection designer and video programmer working in New York and Philadelphia. Recent video design credits include “Medea” (BAM - 2020 Drama Desk Nomination for Outstanding Projection Design), “A People’s History of Silicon Valley” (ANT Fest at Ars Nova), “Will: A Coverup” (University of the Arts), “Starlight Express”

(Marymount Manhattan), “The Jungle” (St Ann's Warehouse, associate designer), “Containertopia” (Jalopy Theatre, Brooklyn and Philly Fringe), as well as projects at the Public Theater and MassMoCA, and the online play-reading series Play PerView. She co-founded the new media theater duo Casual FreyDay with Sam Day Harmet and is a company member of the Obie-winning experimental ensemble New Paradise Laboratories and the classical repertory company Quintessence Theatre Group. MFA: Performance and Interactive Media Arts (PIMA) at Brooklyn College. BA: Bard College.

<https://www.juliafrey.net/>

Jeremy Allen (video co-programmer & engineer) is currently the Assistant Video Supervisor at The Public Theater in New York. Formerly the ATD, FOH Sound Engineer, and Studio A Designer at the Valentine Theater in Toledo, Ohio. Jeremy studied technical theatre and minored in music at Campbell University, in North Carolina. Since college, he has worked and toured professionally as a technician and a designer for the following: ASP, BME, Bob Seger, Burning Coal Theatre, CCHS, CPG, Dance Caravan, Florida Georgia Line, IATSE 24,38, and 417, Markey's, Peace College, the REP, Starfield, Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Toledo Opera, Toledo Symphony, TSA, Valentine Theatre, Vintage21, and the WWE, to name a few. Jeremy also works as a photographer and digital storyteller.

Erin Sullivan (video designers and editor) is a Projection Designer and Film Editor based in NYC. Recent credits for theater include “Soldiergirls” (Rattlestick Theater), “Auntie Vanya”(Ars Novas Festival), “This American Wife” (New York Theater Workshop) and Jeremy O’ Harris’ “YELL: A Documentary of my Time Here” (The Carlotta Festival of New Plays). She was the Visual Effects Editor for “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” (Amazon Studios) and “The Goldfinch” (Warner Brothers). She produced and edited the stop-motion feature film “In Reality,” which won the Special Jury Award at the Los Angeles Film Festival. MFA in Design from the Yale School of Drama. www.ErinMSullivan.com

Twii McCallum (sound designer) is a sound designer living in NYC, by-way of Baltimore, MD. Her favorite theatrical credits include Kansas City Rep, National Black Theatre, The Public Theater and Baltimore Center Stage. She is currently working as an apprentice sound editor on a television show for STARZ and a show for NBCUniversal. Most importantly, she credits her artistry to being a former student of Howard University's theatre department and a certificate student in Yale School of Drama's one-year sound program class of 2021. When not working, she loves taking care of her pet snails named Nicki Minaj, Beyonce, Rihanna, Megan thee Stallion and Cardi B. www.twiibackstage.me

Anna Driftmier (production design consultant) a scenographer and production designer whose work extends across the US and Europe. As of Fall 2019 she is a designer and scenography mentor for the Juilliard School's Center for Innovation in the Arts. Stage design includes: “The Threepenny Opera” (City Lyric Opera); “Beyond the Machine” (Juilliard); “Love, Medea” (split/decision); “Dead Equal” (British Army); “The Actor's Nightmare” (Park Theatre); “La Tragedie de Carmen” (City Lyric Opera); “Dido and Aeneas” (Queille Festival); “Wickedest Woman” (Strange Sun Theatre); “Cabaret,” “Machinal” (Columbia University); “A Midsummer Night's Dream” (Rooke Theatre); “Dolphins and Sharks” (Finborough); “Radioman” (Old Red Lion Theatre); “SCRAWW” (Trebah Garden); “A Village Romeo and Juliet” (New Sussex Opera); “Dust Child” (English Touring Opera). Production design includes: “Leylak,” “Mahler's Titan,” “Return to Me,” “The Nude Model,” “November,” “Nation Down.” She holds an MA from Central Saint Martins and a Technical Theatre Diploma from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

Cortland Nesley (accessibility consultant) is an Autistic dramaturg, educator, and neurodiversity consultant. His work centers on how stories affect a culture’s perception of disability. He aims to dismantle and replace the narratives constructed by sanist social structures by lifting up stories built on lived experiences in their place. Cortland founded NeuroTales, a writers group that connects Neurodivergent and Mad writers, strives to develop their work, and ultimately aims to put Neurodivergent and Mad people behind the wheel of their own narratives (www.Neurotales.com). He graduated from Boston University with a BFA in Theater Arts and attended The National Theater Institute’s Playwrighting program

Kiran Chitanvis (consulting film producer) is a writer and producer with a BA in politics from Princeton (but don’t hold that against her). After going on to graduate from NYU with an MFA in film and television production, Kiran has worked consistently on fiction and documentary projects. You may have seen her work on Viceland, at Anthology Archives, or at festivals such as Tribeca, Slamdance, Breckenridge, and more. Most recently, she worked on “The Internet” as the senior video producer for Deadspin where her work was streamed by millions online, played the film festival circuit, and was nominated for a 2020 Webby Award. She is a WGAE member based in New York City.
<http://kirancfilms.com/>

About The Civilians

Founded in 2001, The Civilians is dedicated to making new theatre at the intersections of art and real life. Its signature work is “investigative theatre,” projects created through field research, community collaborations, and other methods of in-depth inquiry. Centered in a group of Associate Artists, the company also works with the theatre field as a whole. Shows originated by The Civilians include Anne Washburn’s “Mr. Burns, a post-electric play,” Lucas Hnath’s “Dana H.,” José Rivera’s “Another Word for Beauty” and many works with composer Michael Friedman: “Gone Missing,” “Pretty Filthy,” “Paris Commune” and more. The Civilians has participated in several BAM Next Wave Festivals, has been produced at many major regional and off-Broadway theatres, and was the first theatre company to be Artist-in-Residence at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. With Ghostlight Records, The Michael Friedman Recording Project is creating nine albums of our founding member’s works. To hear the first five albums, visit themichaelfriedmancollection.com. The company supports a number of emerging and established artists each year through its new work programs which include the R&D Group new works lab, and a cabaret series of new musicals. The Civilians produces a podcast on SoundCloud; publishes Extended Play, an online journal about its work and the broader theater field; and sustains an active Education Program. www.thecivilians.org

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March 24, 2021

***Revised March 25, 2021**

***An earlier version of this release referred to “Black Feminist Video Game” as a world premiere. It should be referred to as a digital premiere.**

***Revised April 23, 2021**

***Constance Fields plays the role of Luna (Jonas' Mom). An earlier version of this release referred to the character as Mother**