



IAMA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS  
WORKSHOP PRODUCTION OF  
**...but you could've held my hand**  
June 4-15, 2026

LOS ANGELES, CA (29 April 2026) — IAMA Theatre Company, established as a major cultivator of new voices and creator of boundary-pushing new work, will conclude its 18th season with the workshop production of *...but you could've held my hand*. Written by **JuCoby Johnson** and directed by **H. Adam Harris**. *...but you could've held my hand* is a time-hopping portrait of four Black friends growing up, growing apart, and growing into themselves. From a stolen slice of wedding cake at age 10 to the complexities of adulthood, *...but you could've held my hand* offers up a non-linear swirl of past and present, pulsing with 90s R&B, prom night confessions, awkward first kisses, and other touchstone moments. Through love, queerness, and friends-turned-family, the play showcases the beauty and heartbreak of relationships across a lifetime. *...but you could've held my hand* will play **June 4-15, 2026** at **Atwater Village Theatre**, 3269 Casitas Ave, Los Angeles. Tickets (\$35, includes fees) are available at [iamatheatre.com](http://iamatheatre.com).

“JuCoby Johnson's *...but you could've held my hand* is a beautiful exploration of friendship and ritual making it the perfect way to conclude our 18th season. His creativity and innovative structure, along with his poetic and honest dialogue, will immediately draw an audience in,” said IAMA Theatre Company Artistic Director **Stefanie Black**. “I'm so excited for IAMA to be a part of JuCoby's artistic journey alongside his longtime friend and collaborator, H. Adam Harris, a director and theatremaker that all of Los Angeles and the rest of the country must know. This whole workshop will be bursting with love and joy. It's not to be missed.”

IAMA Theatre Company's production of *...but you could've held my hand* will feature **Wade Allain-Marcus** as Max, **Paul James** as Eddie, **Courtney Sauls\*** as Marigold, and **Krenée A. Tolson** as Charlie. The standbys for this production are Nedra Snipes and JuCoby Johnson. (\* denotes IAMA Theatre Company Ensemble Member)

The production team bringing *...but you could've held my hand* to the stage includes **Jordan Bass** (Casting Director), **Elton Bradman** (Sound Designer), **Alexis Carrie** (Costume Designer), **Kassia Curl** (Assistant Lighting Designer), **H. Adam Harris** (Director), **Anise Hines** (Intimacy Director/Choreographer), **JuCoby Johnson** (Playwright), **Fred Kinney** (Scenic and Props Designer), **Max Kunke** (Assistant Stage Manager), **Nico Pang** (Associate Director), **Zachary Phaneuf** (Technical Director), **Avery Reagan** (Lighting Designer), and **Lanae Wilks** (Production Stage Manager).

*...but you could've held my hand* was developed at the 2020 Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference with Tony-nominated director Lileana Blain-Cruz and has since been presented at the University of Texas at Austin for a student production in 2022 and at The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio (CATCO) in Columbus in 2023. Known for its commitment to developing new work, IAMA will now stage this workshop production as a vital step in the play's creative evolution. The workshop production will feature new scenes created by Johnson, with a focus on movement and character development, and will invite audience feedback to help shape its next phase.

“My late grandmother once told me, ‘I love you forever, and ever, and ever.’ The world can often be a scary place, the task of living, daunting. But when I think about a love that expands into forever, a love that can never truly die, a love poured into me from someone I love, I feel capable of completing another day. In the writing of *...but you could've held my hand*, I find myself asking a series of questions: What does it mean to love another person, to be *in love* with another person? What does it require of me? Is romantic love the top of the food chain? Or does the love I have for my friends/chosen family hold the same weight? Must I save my deepest love for one person, forever and ever, till death do us part? Or can it be spread around among the people I hold dearest? Is there enough or will I always be working at a deficit? What does it mean for love to expand? What does it mean for me to expand?,” explained playwright **JuCoby Johnson**. “I don’t know that I’ve answered any of them just yet or if I ever will. But the simple act of asking them has changed me. It has altered the way I walk through the world. It has allowed me to expand. In creative partnership with my best friend and most frequent collaborator, H. Adam Harris, I invite audiences to bear witness to the love these characters have for one another. A love that leaps through time and endures no matter the obstacles put in its place. I hope that by witnessing such a thing, people feel capable of completing another day. Forever, and ever, and ever.”

*...but you could've held my hand* will also mark the fifth collaboration between Johnson and Harris as they have previously worked on Johnson’s plays *5*, *Heritage*, *The Red Man*, and *How It’s Gon’ Be*. Los Angeles audiences will be the first to experience their collaboration in Southern California before the upcoming world premiere of *Three-headed Monster* at South Coast Repertory in 2027.

“I’m so happy to be reunited with my best friend and longtime collaborator, JuCoby Johnson, for *...but you could've held my hand*. IAMA Theatre Company was built by friends who wanted to make great art with great people. Since JuCoby’s very first play, that has been our mission as well. So this workshop production at IAMA feels like the perfect alignment,” shared director **H. Adam Harris**. “In *...but you could've held my hand*, four Black folk, across time and space, fight to love each other despite their own inadequacies. They try to hold one another in this big ole world that wants to squeeze the breath out of them. It is a play. It is a ritual. It is an invitation to make your way back to joy, to vulnerability, and to compassion. JuCoby’s writing is epic and intimate, funny and visceral, and bringing it to life onstage is one of my favorite things. Our challenge to each other is always to bring our very best, and we’ve never let each other down. This here is personal, and I’m so excited to work with the incredible cast, design team, and my best friend at IAMA, a company I’ve long admired.”

## **ABOUT THE CAST & CREATIVES**

**JuCoby Johnson** (*Playwright*) is a New York-based playwright, actor, and screenwriter originally from Jacksonville, FL. Johnson is a second-year playwright in The Juilliard School's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program. As an actor, he has performed at The Guthrie Theater, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Jungle Theater, Theater Latté Da, Theater Mu, Ten Thousand Things, and others. With two world premieres slated for 2027, his plays include *How It's Gon' Be* (The Echo Theater Company, 2023; Underdog Theatre, 2019), *...but you could've held my hand* (The Contemporary Theatre of Ohio, 2022; Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, 2020), *5* (Jungle Theater, 2023; Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, 2022; Seven Devils Finalist), *Heritage* (International Black Theater Festival, 2024), *The Red Man* (Upcoming world premiere: Alliance Theater 2027; Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition Winner; Ojai Playwrights Conference, Pacific Playwrights Festival, Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference Finalist, Seven Devils Finalist - all 2025), *Three-headed Monster* (Upcoming world premiere: South Coast Repertory 2027; Powers Festival 2026, Pacific Playwrights Festival 2026), and *Help! Help! Want. Want. Want.* (The Playwrights' Center's PlayLabs Festival, 2025; Juilliard's Norman Festival, National Capital New Play Festival, both 2026). His screenwriting credits include "The Runarounds" (Amazon). Johnson is the recipient of McKnight and Jerome Hill Artist Fellowships, was a finalist for the 2026 Page 73 Playwriting Fellowship, a member of the 2022 Sony Pictures Television Diverse Writers Program and was part of the inaugural artist cohort at the Jungle Theater in Minneapolis.

**H. Adam Harris** (*Director*) is a director focused on heart-driven, textually rich, imaginative productions of both classics and new works. His directing credits include the world premieres of *Heritage* by JuCoby Johnson with NC Black Rep and *5* by JuCoby Johnson at Jungle Theater. Other works include *Tick Tick...Boom* at Chance Theater, *Snow White* and *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* at South Coast Repertory (SCR), *Romeo & Juliet* at Great River Shakespeare Festival, *Redwood* at Jungle Theater, and *Luna Gale* and *How It's Gon' Be* with Underdog Theatre. Harris has directed readings and development workshops with SCR's Pacific Playwrights Festival, The Old Globe's Powers New Voices Festival, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, IAMA Theatre Company's Emerging Writers and New Works Festivals, The Inge Festival, National Black Theater, Theater Mu, and Chance Theater. He is the artistic/audience engagement associate at SCR and board chair emeritus of Ten Thousand Things.

**Wade Allain-Marcus** (*Max*) is a writer, director, and actor. He was a supervising producer on "Bel-Air," "Everything's Trash" and "Grown-ish," where he also directed. His credits include notably "Brooklyn's Finest" and "Take Me Home Tonight." He co-wrote, directed, and starred in "French Dirty," which won jury prizes at Las Vegas Film Festival. He directed "Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead," and has appeared in "Eric," "Insecure," and "Snowfall." He is developing projects for MGM, Amazon, and others.

**Paul James** (*Eddie*) returns to the stage having most recently played Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Old Globe and Johnson in the world premiere of *Really, Really* at Signature Theatre VA. Television credits include "Lessons in Chemistry," "I Love That For You," "Soundtrack," "The Hot Zone," "The Path," "The Last Ship," and "Greek" (NAACP nominated). Film credits include "Nash Bridges," "Goldie," "Unloveable," "Spinning Into

Butter,” “The Architect,” and “Cry Wolf.”

IAMA Theatre Company Ensemble Member **Courtney Sauls** (*Marigold*) a Houston native, is an alumna of NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts and is an active member in two theatre companies formed by fellow NYU grads, IAMA Theatre Company and Ammunition Theatre Company. Theatre credits include *trinity* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Little Children Dream of God* (The Road Theatre Company), *Sinners Laundry* (IAMA Theatre Company), *Mama Metal* (IAMA Theatre Company), *I Am An American via Los Angeles* (Ammunition Theatre Company). She’s also known for her role as Brooke on “Dear White People” (Netflix). Other television and film credits include “Brockmire” (IFC), “Bad Hair” (Hulu), and “The Chi” (Showtime).

**Krenée A. Tolson** (*Charlie*) is an actress, producer, and writer from Baltimore, MD. On stage, Tolson has collaborated with new playwrights to devise and perform original work at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Center Stage, and Congo Square Theatre Company. Her on-screen credits include “Chicago P.D.,” “Easy Abby,” and “The Great Controversy.” She holds an MFA in Producing for Film/TV and New Media from USC’s School of Cinematic Arts (Peter Stark Producing Program) and is a recipient of the Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund Production Grant for her debut short film, “Finding Phoebe,” in which she also starred.

### **ABOUT IAMA THEATRE COMPANY**

Founded in 2007, **IAMA Theatre Company** is a Los Angeles-based ensemble of artists committed to cultivating new voices, creating new works that push boundaries and take risks, and fostering an inclusive community that inspires a new generation of theatremakers and audiences. Designated by *Playbill* as “one of 20 regional houses every theater lover must know,” “an LA intimate theater gem” by *KCRW*, and a “creative force on the local theatre scene” by the *Los Angeles Times*, the award-winning company is dedicated to developing and producing new plays and musicals by emerging and established playwrights, including over 40 world, West Coast and Los Angeles premieres. Recent Broadway productions that first started at IAMA include Max Wolf Friedlich’s *JOB* and Leslye Headland’s *Cult of Love*. The backbone of the company, IAMA’s Ensemble Members have been featured in numerous critically acclaimed TV shows and films as well as a vast array of theatre and live performances on and Off-Broadway, across the country, and around the world. IAMA is invested in challenging audiences with authentic experiences that reflect the complex modern world.

### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** **IAMA Theatre Company**, established as a major cultivator of new voices and creator of boundary-pushing new work, will conclude its 18th season with the workshop production of *...but you could’ve held my hand*. Written by **JuCoby Johnson** and directed by **H. Adam Harris**. *...but you could’ve held my hand* is a time-hopping portrait of four Black friends growing up, growing apart, and growing into themselves. From a stolen slice of wedding cake at age 10 to the complexities of adulthood, *...but you could’ve held my hand* offers up a non-linear swirl of past and present, pulsing with 90s R&B, prom night confessions,

awkward first kisses, and other touchstone moments. Through love, queerness, and friends-turned-family, the play showcases the beauty and heartbreak of relationships across a lifetime.

**WHEN:** June 4-15, 2026

**SHOWS:** Thursdays – Mondays: 8:00pm (no performance Monday, June 8)

**WHERE:** Atwater Village Theatre, 3269 Casitas Avenue, Los Angeles

**TICKETS:** \$35 (includes fees)

**INFO:** Information and tickets are available at [iamatheatre.com](http://iamatheatre.com)

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