

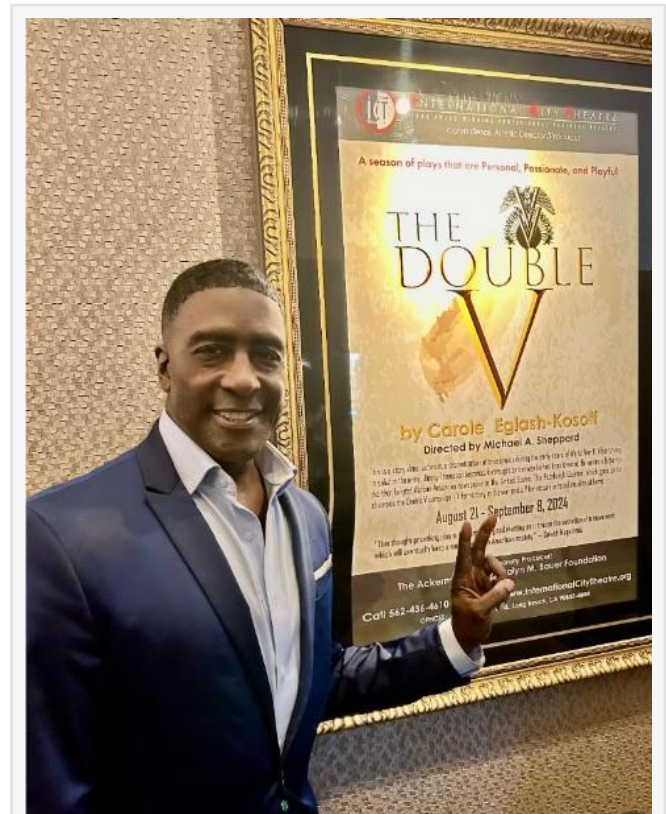
Idrees Degas Captivates in International City Theatre Production's The Double V, the First Black Civil Rights Campaign

Launched by the Pittsburgh Courier on February 7, 1942, the Double V campaign promoted democracy for Blacks both overseas and in the USA during World War II.

LONG BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, August 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the United States is experiencing a political divide, often described as "Double America." Amidst these divisions, a new stage play, "The [Double V](#)," directed by Michael A. Shepperd and penned by Carole Eglash-Kosoff examines a defining historical moment that mirrors current societal splits. Drawing inspiration from the 1942 "Double V" campaign, which advocated for victory overseas in World War II and victory against racial discrimination domestically, the play portrays the bravery, perseverance, and ongoing challenges of African Americans during this significant period.

The performance, presented by a gifted ensemble that includes [Idrees Degas](#), Nicolette Ellis, Nic Few, Lee James, John E. Phillips, KJ Powell, and Jennifer Shelton, takes place at the Beverly O'Neill Theater within the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center, located at 330 East Seaside Way, Long Beach, CA 90802. The production continues until September 8, with performances on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are on sale now. For additional information, please visit [InternationalCityTheatre.org](#) or call (562) 436-4610.

Based on true events, the "Double V" movement began with a letter sent on January 31, 1942, by James G. Thompson of Wichita, Kansas to the editor of The Pittsburgh Courier. Thompson expressed his strong desire to enlist but was denied due to his race. This movement embraced



Award-winning Actor Idrees Degas takes on two roles, Clem and Frank, in The Double V stageplay running now at the Beverly O'Neill Theater within the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center. Photo credit: Platinum Star PR.

the famous 'V for Victory' slogan to call for triumph not only in World War II but also in the fight for racial equality within the military and across the United States.

Actor Degas brings to life the stories of Clem, the father of 26-year-old Thompson and Frank, a reporter for The Pittsburgh Courier. Through a compelling narrative and evocative performances, this theatrical production not only revisits a significant chapter of American history but also prompts reflection on the ongoing quest for justice and unity in today's society.



In a scene from the stage play "The Double V" are actors Idrees Degas (Clem), K.J. Powell (James Thompson), and Nicolette Ellis (Annie Culver). Photo Credit: Kayte Deioma.

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Idrees Degas, a Shakespearean trained actor from Chicago.

"Stepping into the role of Frank, a journalist for The Pittsburgh Courier, a leading African American newspaper pivotal in the Double V Campaign, felt natural to me because I aspired to be a journalist/reporter during my time at Morehouse College. Journalism was my major, and my greatest ambition was to work for a major television network," Degas shared. "Interestingly, Frank initially opposes the idea, fearing it might alienate the white advertisers and financially impact The Courier, but he ultimately changes his stance."

Degas, a versatile classically trained actor, seamlessly portrayed the hard-working old-fashioned father of Thompson. "Clem is the second role I portray in the play," Degas explained. "To truly capture the essence of the character, I explored the depths of his physical presence, his gait, and his voice. Clem is a widower who is raising his son, Jimmy, and has spent many years as a machinist at The Cessna Factory, working on airplanes. He suffered a severe leg injury on the job and now walks with a limp."

Degas continues, "To fully grasp Clem's character, consider the behavior of Black men in the 1940s, shaped by segregation and discrimination. Frank, the character, is underpaid and

encounters substantial obstacles to equal opportunities in education and employment. Many Black men of that time, like Frank, opted to maintain a low profile and concentrate on their work to sidestep conflict and repercussions. In contrast, his son Jimmy is vocal and desires for his country to fulfill its promises. To delve deeper into Frank's physicality, I observed older men who gather at McDonald's on Sunday mornings, listening to their dialogues and studying their movements, and integrated these observations into my portrayal of Clem."



Chicago-native Actor Idrees Degas plays a second character, Frank, appears in a scene with Nic Few as Ira Lewis. Photo Credit: Kayte Deioma.

"The Double V" play primarily focuses on the campaign, but it also touches on other significant events and themes from the era, including:

World War II: The backdrop of the war and the contributions of Black soldiers.

Racial Segregation: The challenges faced by African Americans both in the military and on the home front.

Civil Rights Activism: The early efforts and struggles for racial equality in the U.S.

Shakespearean trained Idrees Degas is an award-winning actor who is the recipient of the 2023 Hollywood and African Prestigious Awards Show "Best Actor of a Short Film - The Rain Has Passed." Follow Degas on IG @idreesdegas.

To arrange a press interview with Degas, contact info@platinumstarpr.com.

Marie Y. Lemelle

Platinum Star Public Relations, Inc.

+1 213-276-7827

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