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For immediate release

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Hi-resolution photos are available on request.

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## **Naked Stages premieres the work of three fellows at Pillsbury House Theatre, Dec 11 – 20, 2014**

Minneapolis, MN—The 2014 *Naked Stages* fellows, **Eric F. Avery**, **PaviElle French**, and **B Billy Xiong**, will each premiere a new performance at Pillsbury House Theatre this December. French and Xiong's productions will be presented on a traditional stage, whereas Avery's work will inhabit spaces outside of the theatre in a building-wide performance installation.

Interdisciplinary artist Eric F. Avery's piece, [\*\[Play\]ing + \(P\) House\*](#), invites audiences to try on a new identity and experience Pillsbury House through a new lens. Acclaimed soul singer PaviElle French uses song, storytelling, and dance in her piece, [\*Runnin'\*](#), to revisit her life growing up in Saint Paul's Rondo neighborhood. And, B-Boy and actor B Billy Xiong's [\*Ntov Ntoo\*](#) is a glimpse into a Hmong son's life in the wake of his parents' divorce. (See more information, including artist biographies, below.)

All tickets are Pick Your Price. (Regular price = \$16. Anything over \$16 is considered a donation.) French and Xiong's productions are performed back-to-back at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays through Saturdays, December 11 – 20. Avery's performance takes place at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 14. Post-show discussions with the artists will happen on Fridays, December 12 and 19.

***Naked Stages*** is a 7 month development program that provides time, money, and mentoring to three performance artists, culminating in a series of public performances. This is the first year that one of the fellow's performances will be an installation, taking place outside of the theatre.

### ***Runnin'* by PaviElle French December 11 – 13 & 18 – 20 at 7:30 p.m.**

*Runnin'* is an autobiographical, one-woman performance by acclaimed soul singer PaviElle French. Using song, storytelling, and dance, PaviElle shares the highs and lows of her life growing up "Young, Gifted, and Black" in Saint Paul's historic Rondo neighborhood, and how those experiences have formed her

into the person she is today. Confronting addiction, death, sexuality and self-worth, it's a candid look at one woman's life that touches the humanity in us all. *Runnin'* is PaviElle's debut piece as a playwright and the first installment in a series of stories she is creating to "release her life's demons and get free." This piece will move you, open your eyes, and awaken your spirit.

**BIOGRAPHY:** PaviElle French is an interdisciplinary artist who focuses on bringing an aesthetic of love, light, and ancestral spirit to the stage. Growing up in the Rondo neighborhood of Saint Paul as a child performer, she was classically trained in voice by Patty Lacy and Libby Turner as well as in voice and piano at the Walker West Music Academy. She sang with the Saint Paul youth choir "City Songs" from 1994-1996. In 1997, she was trained in acting at the Penumbra Summer Institute, and shortly thereafter, she was featured in two plays at Steppingstone Theater. In 2001, PaviElle joined the spoken word / hip hop collective EduPoetic Enterbrainment at 17 years old. She participated as a singer songwriter on one album, *Patriotic Duty* (2002) and two US tours, opening for Anthony Hamilton and The Last Poets. Since 2002, PaviElle has been a solo artist. Most recently, she has been seen in Ahanti Young's one man show, *Aklund Sowell* (2012), Penumbra Theatre's *Black Nativity* (2013), and her own live music residency with her 9-piece band at Icehouse in Minneapolis.

### ***Ntov Ntoo* by B Billy Xiong**

**December 11 – 13 & 18 – 20 at 7:30 p.m.**

Moments of family, love, sadness, and darker things. Moments hidden. Moments from a Hmong son's life. Actor and B-Boy B Billy Xiong uses dance, narrative, and an original hip-hop score to explore blame and resilience when things fall apart. In a world shaped by the reverberating ripples of his parents' divorce, *Ntov Ntoo* is a glimpse into Xiong's journey to stitch back together what has been torn. And, in doing so, he finds self-love, acceptance, and beauty.

**BIOGRAPHY:** B Billy Xiong is an up-and-coming Hmong artist practicing in many forms: dancing, writing, singing, and acting. He is pursuing Creative Writing at Metropolitan State University and just recently finished up a theater intensive on a full scholarship through Mu Performing Arts' new M.T.I. program. Billy first became interested in performing when he was invited to a dance class at the Center for Hmong Arts and Talents as a teenager. Since then, he has been in over 60 dance showcases and theater productions.

### ***[Play]ing + (P) House* by Eric F. Avery**

**December 14 at 4:00 p.m.**

This building-wide performance explores how we are treated and how we treat others when who we are becomes reassigned and the context for our interactions shifts. From childcare to clinics to support groups, *[Play]ing + (P) House* takes an unflinching look at the power dynamics at play in the world of social service and grapples with the complexities of authentic exchange in settings mediated by rules and roles. Hilarity takes a sharp turn into profundity as you are invited to try on a new identity and adventure through a re-imagined Pillsbury House + Theatre.

**BIOGRAPHY:** Over the past decade, Eric has created over a dozen of his own works and has been involved in the creation and production of numerous other original works of performance. They have ranged from works written by new playwrights, devised works, improvised pieces, and more recently, performance installations and other genre-busting experiments. His undergraduate training at University of Kansas exposed him to the canon and traditional theatre training, as well as to experimental performance and the possibility of creating his own work. After graduating, he moved to Minneapolis and co-founded Savage Umbrella, a theatre partnership dedicated to creating socially relevant new works of performance. During this time, he has also maintained a freelance career as a performer and educator. Currently, he is navigating a professional and artistic balance between the worlds of visual and performing arts.

### **ABOUT NAKED STAGES**

*Naked Stages* is a 7 month development program for three performance artists, culminating in a series of public performances. In addition to regular feedback sessions and money to support development, hiring other artists, and material requirements, the Naked Stages fellows work with local creators like Hijack, Late Nite Series Artists and Naked Stages Alums Juma B Essie, Katie Vang, Moe Lionel, Gabrielle Civil, and Julia Babb. In addition, the fellows receive in depth, ongoing mentorship throughout their creative process with nationally renowned artist Sharon Bridgforth (*River See*). They also participate in monthly meetings where they learn skills to help further develop their artistic careers including: new approaches to giving and receiving artistic feedback, developing and strengthening an audience base, communication skills with technical support staff, and the elements they need to develop an original work. Molly Van Avery continues in her second year as Director of the Naked Stages program, taking over from seminal artist Laurie Carlos.

### **ABOUT PILLSBURY HOUSE THEATRE**

From the Mainstage series to Chicago Avenue Project and Naked Stages to the Power of Our Voices teen ensemble, **PILLSBURY HOUSE THEATRE** brings audiences closer—to the edge, to the actors, to affordable, adventurous theatre, to fellow audience members, and to a strong community. Now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the theatre continues to inspire choice, change, and connection through raw, intimate drama. Pillsbury House Theatre is proud to be a professional theatre unlike any other. An integral part of Pillsbury United Communities, one of the largest human services organizations in the state, Pillsbury House Theatre demonstrates that the highest quality art is an integral part of all healthy communities, winning awards for theatre across the metro while also inspiring choice, change, and connection as part of our social service mission in South Minneapolis. [www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org](http://www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org).

### **CALENDAR EDITORS**

*Naked Stages*

**December 11 – 20, 2014**

Thursdays – Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. – PaviElle French and B Billy Xiong

Sunday at 4:00 p.m. – Eric F. Avery

Pillsbury House Theatre  
3501 Chicago Avenue S.

Minneapolis, MN 55407

Tickets: Pay-What-You-Want (Reg. \$16)  
612.825.0459 or [pillsburyhousetheatre.org](http://pillsburyhousetheatre.org)

More information and artist profiles: <http://pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org/mainstage/naked-stages>

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