viBe Theater Experience Names New Co-Executive Directors Beryl Briane Ford and Michelan Le'Monier

Ford and Le'Monier, who succeed Toya Lillard, promise a new chapter for the organization.

BROOKLYN, NY, May 17, 2022 – viBe Theater Experience's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of **Beryl Briane Ford** and **Michelan Le'Monier** as the organization's new Executive Co-Directors. The organization has been under their interim leadership in this capacity since November 2021, and viBe's Board unanimously approved their permanent appointments in March 2022.

Ford and Le'Monier are well suited to lead viBe in its next chapter, having lived, institutional experience and demonstrated success in growing the organization's operations, budget and programming. They are poised to shape, manage and inspire viBe's advancement as collaborators and in partnership with its talented staff and deeply committed Board of Directors and Junior Board.

"I'm very ecstatic to be co-leading this organization with Beryl Briane! Ever since my participation in the viBeApprentices program in 2017, I knew that I wanted to contribute something to this community of artists and being in this position really brings my experiences as a participant and as a staff member full circle. As Co-Executive Director, my vision is for abundance to be a lifestyle, not a privilege for Black girls, young women, and femmes through art and wellness. viBe has grown immensely over the past few years and it's my goal to continue to guide that growth with the support of our Board and Staff."- **Michelan Le'Monier**

"I firmly believe that investing in the leadership of Black girls, young women, and gender expansive youth is one of many critical pathways to liberation. I am eager to build and sustain these pathways in my new role as Co-Executive Director. I came to viBe in October 2020 from The Museum of Modern Art with a desire to support viBe's larger mission of creating safer spaces for youth to make art that's deeply rooted in their lived experiences. It's an honor to be amplifying their work alongside Michelan, viBe's Staff & Board. I am thrilled to be co-leading an organization that's responsible for nurturing the artistic & professional praxis of emerging artists, administrators, and educators. I look forward to continuing this legacy."- **Beryl Briane**

This shared leadership model is a living manifestation of viBe's ethos of investing in and activating leadership opportunities for young people. So much of viBe's work uniquely positions the organization in the larger nonprofit sector, cultivating pathways for program participants to become arts practitioners in the field, and leaders in their own right. In fact, the co-executive leadership model is not new to viBe – the organization was co-founded and led by Dana Edell and Chandra

Thomas when they were both under the age of 25. Ford and Le'Monier look forward to continuing the organization's nearly 20 year commitment to centering the voices of young Black women.

"viBe was co-founded on the leading principle of collaboration and shared leadership. chandra and I co-directed every viBeStages show in our first 10 years as an organization. We were striving to dismantle hierarchical models that center individual leaders as if they alone are doing the work and making the change single handedly. Arts & social justice work demands coalition-building and viBe's new model of co-directors reinforces our core values of strength through collaboration."- **Dana Edell**

Both Ford and LeMonier have tenured histories as leaders within viBe Theater Experience, having been trained and mentored by former Executive Director, Toya Lillard, as Development Associate and Operations Director respectively.

"It is with great pride and pleasure that I celebrate Michelan and Beryl Briane as viBe's new Co-Executive Directors! During my tenure as Executive Director, I felt duty-bound to support the leadership of Black girls, young women, and gender-expansive youth by creating pathways within viBe, such as training programs like viBeApprentices, viBeLeadershipInstitute and viBeCompany to exist as incubators for talent and leadership. It's quite fitting,that Michelan and Beryl Briane's leadership is demonstrative of what it means to trust and invest in young Black women." - **Toya Lillard**

"As Board Chair, I couldn't be more proud of viBe's growth and impact — and our new co-leaders are proof positive that our way WORKS! Inclusive and dynamic programming, an unwavering purpose, implicit trust in Black women, centering lived experiences and cultivating leaders from within is what we practice and preach." **Cheryl Overton**

Ford and LeMonier are committed to continuing viBe's impact within the theater community both locally in NYC and nationally, bringing greater visibility and supporting more young people who seek to share their artistic genius with the world around them. They're committed to deepening the organization's advocacy work in its core areas of focus : racial equity, gender & healing justice, youth and women's empowerment, and financial equity. Together, they will strive to ensure that viBe's at the forefront of these issues through key partnerships with individuals, community and impact-oriented organizations, and mission-aligned corporations.

With a clear vision for the present and a larger vision for viBe's future, their appointment will preserve viBe's historical impact while also leading the organization into a new era of growth. Their appointment demonstrates a deep commitment to [centering Black women's leadership in the arts](). As an organization, viBe is dedicated to building pathways for the professional and artistic advancement of Black women. This appointment not only exemplifies this investment, it's also a clarion call to the larger community to consider and build up the systems and structures that will ensure the success and advancement of Black women in the arts.

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