



## **New Audio-Drama Series from Make-Believe Association—a Shared Dream of Chicago’s Future—to Debut as a Tribeca Festival Audio Premiere**

CHICAGO – Make-Believe Association, the award-winning, nationally acclaimed audio storytelling company, has unveiled its latest and most ambitious project: ***Lake Song***, an epic audio-drama series set in the distant future of the company’s home city.

*Lake Song* is an official selection of the Tribeca Festival's Audio Premieres showcase. Episode 1 will be released on Tribeca’s podcast feed on Wednesday October 12. The next day, Episodes 1 and 2 will be released on the *Lake Song* podcast feed. Both feeds are freely available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and the other major podcast platforms.

It’s 2098 and the Republic of Chicago has what the world needs: fresh water. But with new opportunities come new threats, especially for a pair of siblings on the South Side. Can the people come together to save their city—and each other?

*Lake Song* is the joint creation of seven multidisciplinary Chicagoans. Combining sci-fi and music, politics and poetry, it’s a collective response to our times, and a shared dream of our future.

The series was co-created by artists from different backgrounds who are highly accomplished in different fields (poet, musician, journalist, filmmaker, composer, and more): Laura Alcalá Baker, Sydney Charles, Mikhail Fiksel, Nate Marshall, Jeremy McCarter, Natalie Moore, and Kristina Valada-Viars.

The series features sound design and original music composition by Mikhail Fiksel, who won a Tony Award for sound design this year. The score features the Chicago blues harmonica legend Billy Branch, a recent inductee to the Blues Hall of Fame.

“From the start, Make-Believe has been an experiment in collaboration,” said McCarter, the company’s founder and the executive producer of the series. “When the pandemic almost shut us down in 2020, we decided that the only reason to continue was to double down on our values—to create something big enough to hold the grief and hope that the seven of us were feeling, a new story we all wanted to tell. I can’t wait for the world to hear the results.”

*Lake Song* will run 12 episodes, totaling four hours of performance time. Episodes will be released weekly.

The script was written by Sydney Charles, Nate Marshall, Jeremy McCarter, Natalie Moore, and Kristina Valada-Viars. It features additional story by Eduardo Curley-Carrillo, Lorena Diaz, and Marcus D. Moore.

The cast of 23 Chicago actors is led by Sydney Charles (Dee) and Marcus D. Moore (Wade), with Ayanna Bria Bakari, Brenda Barrie, Billy Branch, Rammel Chan, Lillian Charles, Robert Cornelius, Eduardo Curley-Carrillo, Ian Paul Custer, Lorena Diaz, Delia Kropp, Daniel Kyri, Eddie Martinez, Al'Jaleel McGhee, James Vincent Meredith, Mia Park, Esme Perez, Justin Reed, Deanna Reed-Foster, A.C. Smith, Kristina Valada-Viars, and AnJi White.

The production staff includes Jeremy McCarter (executive producer); Laura Alcalá Baker (line producer/casting); and Kateri Halbleib and Alexandra Oparka (script supervisors).

The sound team includes Mikhail Fiksel (audio production, mixing, and mastering); Giselle Castro and Jessi DiBartolomeo (editing); Max Fabian and Ricardo Tolbert (recording engineers); Robert Hornbostel (additional sound design and editing); and Joe Palermo (additional mastering and audio repair).

Studio services were provided by Tighrope Recording and remote audio services by TechMagic Designs.

Graphics by GoodMany/Carly Pearlman. Legal services by Carolyn Casselman of Davis Wright Tremaine.

## ABOUT MAKE-BELIEVE ASSOCIATION

Make-Believe Association was founded by Jeremy McCarter in 2017 as an experiment in collaborative creation. Dedicated to the art of storytelling in public, and to reflecting the culture of its home city, the company was hailed by *Indiewire* as "a thrilling storytelling force" and by *The New York Times* as a podcast that "reaches across Chicago's cultural divides." Programs in its first season, which was devoted to adaptations of fables and folktales, were named to numerous best-of lists, including *Indiewire's* Top 10 podcasts of the year. The docudrama *City on Fire: Chicago Race Riot 1919*, a collaboration with WBEZ, also received national acclaim. *Lake Song*, the company's response to the COVID pandemic, has been selected for the Tribeca Festival Audio Premieres showcase. A 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation, Make-Believe is supported entirely by grants and donations.

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**LAKE SONG:  
The Co-Creators**



**LAURA ALCALÁ BAKER** (she/her) is a Chicago-based director, new play developer, and producer. She served as the Casting Director/Artistic Programs Manager at Victory Gardens Theater from 2016-2019 leading programs such as The Access Project and Directors' Inclusion Initiative. Laura has developed and directed multiple new works including Isaac Gomez's *The Leopard Play, or sad songs for lost boys* (Steep Theatre), *The Way She Spoke: A Docu-mythologia* (DCASE, Greenhouse Theater Center), Omer Abbas Salem's *The Secretaries* (First Floor Theater) and Nancy García Loza's upcoming *Bull, a love story* (Paramount Theatre). She also directed the audio drama *BRAVA* by Nancy García Loza (Make-Believe). Laura is a 2021 3Arts Make a Wave Recipient, and a proud member of the Alliance of Latinx Theatre Artists. [labdirecting.com](http://labdirecting.com).



**SYDNEY CHARLES** (she/her) is an award-winning Chicago-based multidisciplinary artist. She has worked with many theaters in the Chicagoland area, including: Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Court Theatre, and Drury Lane. Regional credits include Studio Theatre in Washington DC. Television credits include *South Side*, *The Chi*, and *Shameless*. Her other work includes assistant director and dramaturg at Steppenwolf Theatre and associate director for 16th Street Theater and Red Tape Theatre. She is a proud and active member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA and is represented by Stewart Talent. All additional credits and accolades can be viewed at [www.sydneycharlesexp.com](http://www.sydneycharlesexp.com)



**MIKHAIL FIKSEL** (he/him) is a Tony Award-winning designer, composer, audio producer, and DJ working in theatre, dance, film, immersive experiences, and audio-forward media. In addition to Make-Believe Association, where he is Head of Audio, his recent work includes multiple projects with Audible Originals, The Public Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. Other honors include 3 Lucille Lortel Awards, multiple Joseph Jefferson Awards, and the 2020 Obie Award for Sound Design. He is a proud member of USA and TSDCA and the faculty of Columbia College Chicago. [www.mikhailfiksel.com](http://www.mikhailfiksel.com)



**NATE MARSHALL** (he/him) is an award-winning author and editor. His works include two full-length books of poems, *Finna*, recognized as one of the best books of the year by NPR and The New York Public Library, and *Wild Hundreds*. With Make-Believe Association, he wrote *Bruh Rabbit and the Fantastic Telling of Remington Ellis, Esq.*, one of Indiewire's Top 10 Podcasts of the year. He teaches in the creative writing program at The University of Wisconsin-Madison. Nate was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago. [Nate-marshall.com](http://Nate-marshall.com)



**JEREMY McCARTER** (he/him) is the founder and executive producer of Make-Believe Association, for which he adapted *The Lost Books of the Odyssey* and, with Natalie Moore, co-wrote the award-winning docudrama *City on Fire: Chicago Race Riot 1919*. He spent five years on the artistic staff of the Public Theater and served on the jury of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. He is the author of *Young Radicals* and the co-author of *Hamilton: The Revolution* (with Lin-Manuel Miranda) and *In the Heights: Finding Home* (with Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegría Hudes). He has written about culture and politics for *New York Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and other publications. More at [jeremymccarter.com](http://jeremymccarter.com).



**NATALIE MOORE** (she/her) is a reporter at WBEZ and contributor to *The Chicago Sun-Times*. She contributed to “Southside,” a collection of stories about the criminal justice system in Chicago in collaboration with The Marshall Project/Amazon Original Stories. For the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1919 Chicago riots, she co-wrote the award-winning docudrama *City on Fire* with Jeremy McCarter for Make-Believe Association, which aired on WBEZ. She is a 2021 USA Fellow. The Pulitzer Center named her a Richard C. Longworth Media Fellow for international reporting. In 2021, the University of Chicago Center for Effective Government welcomed her in its first cohort of Senior Practitioner Fellows. Her most recent work is *The Billboard*, a play about abortion.



**KRISTINA VALADA-VIARS** (she/they) is an artist, writer, and teacher working in theatre and film to foster artist-led exchange outside of traditional distribution and production models. Theatre credits include Broadway, Steppenwolf, Goodman, and Waterwell. She received the Princess Grace Award for acting and directing in residence with Steppenwolf. Her work as a screenwriter and filmmaker has been selected for film festivals in the US and Europe. She served on the Grand Jury at the Iris Int’l Film Festival (Cardiff, Wales) where she received the Best Actress in a Feature award for *Molly’s Girl*. Films in her current project, *Where Could We Go: A Map Of Finding Home*, a collection of experimental short documentaries co-created and directed with her partner, were selected for screenings at Afrikana, BlackX, and LOGOS (Rome). [wherewouldwegoseries.com](http://wherewouldwegoseries.com)

## Additional Story By:



**EDUARDO CURLEY-CARRILLO** (he/him) is a Coca-Tecuexe punk born and raised in South Side Chicago. This is a love song to the abundant riches of the Earth, from Michigan to Michoacan. Audio-drama collaborations include *BRAVA* (Make-Believe); *City on Fire: Chicago Race Riot 1919* (Make-Believe, WBEZ). Chicago and regional theatre credits include *River Bride* (American Players Theatre); *Leopard Play, or sad songs for lost boys* (Steep Theatre); and *The Hypocrites' G&S Rep* (Pasadena Playhouse, Olney Theater Center). TV/film credits include *Horchata* (DePaul, Omeletto) and *Station Eleven* (HBO Paramount).



**LORENA DIAZ** (she/her) is a hybrid of Peruvian Indigenous descent and American Latino swagger who was "Made in Chicago." She has 17 years under her belt in Chicago's theatre and comedy scenes, currently as co-artistic director of Teatro Vista. She is best known as snarky Nurse Doris on Dick Wolf's *Chicago Med/Fire/PD* franchise, and is half of the acclaimed comedy duo DOMINIZUELAN, teaming up with Fred Armisen and Mas Mejor to co-write and star in "Dominizuelan Consulate." Film credits include directing *Good Mothers* (HBO's New York Latino Film Festival) and appearing in *Who Gets the Dog*, *One Night Stand*, and *Mom & Dad*.



**MARCUS D. MOORE** (he/him) hails from the south suburbs of Chicago. Acting professionally since 2016, Marcus has worked at Chicago theatres such as the Goodman Theatre, Court Theatre, Raven Theatre, 16th Street Theatre, Drury Lane and more. His TV credits include co-starring roles on NBC's *Chicago Fire*, Fox Network's *APB* and commercials with Onion Labs and Guaranteed Rate. Marcus is represented by DDO Chicago. If you'd like to keep up with Marcus, please head to his official website at <http://www.marcusdmoore.com>.

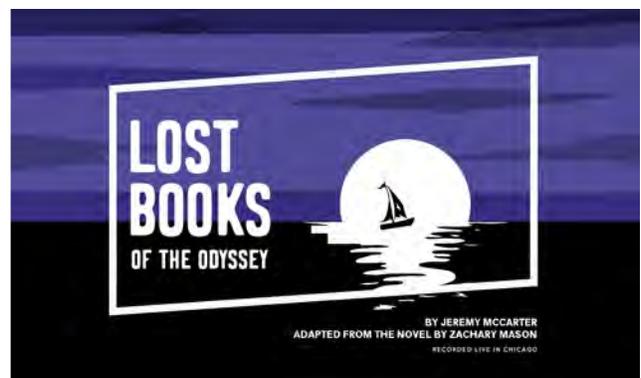
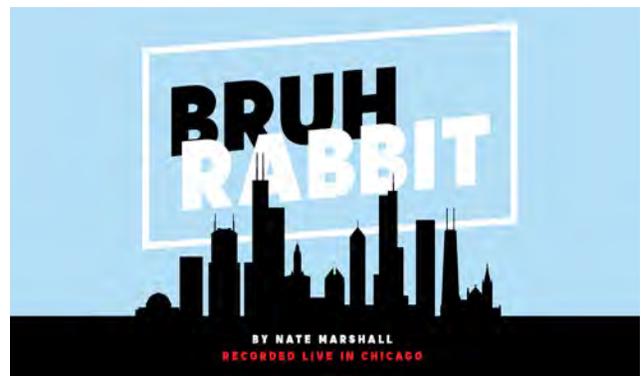
# SEASON ONE: GROWN FOLKS' FABLES (2018-19)

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Our inaugural season was devoted to contemporary versions of fables and folktales, the tradition of stories passed down from time out of mind: a Mexican folktale, Brer Rabbit stories, a new riff on Homer.

Our season finale bent the rules to showcase a little-known short play by Lorraine Hansberry that she called "a fable."

All four of these audio dramas were recorded in front of live audiences in Chicago, and were followed by freewheeling conversations.



## SEASON TWO (2019-20)

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To mark the centennial of a decisive moment in our city's history, we created the docudrama *City on Fire: Chicago Race Riot 1919*. Drawn from press accounts, government reports, and the imaginations of co-authors Natalie Moore and Jeremy McCarter, the audio drama showcased the voices of Chicagoans as they struggled through the deadly week that remade the city—including Ida B. Wells-Barnett.

It had its world premiere on WBEZ, our partner in the production.



When the COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into lockdown, we took our cue from an account of how people survived an earlier plague: *The Decameron*.

Inspired by Boccaccio's tale of people in Florence sharing stories during the Black Death, we invited fascinating individuals to talk about what different fables and folktales meant to them, sparking lively conversations.

And then, as lockdown dragged on, we decided to tell a *new* story—one all our own.

So we turned our attention to *Lake Song*...

1/22/2019

A Podcast Reaches Across Chicago's Cultural Divides | The New York Times

**The New York Times**

## A Podcast Reaches Across Chicago's Cultural Divides

By **Jennifer Schuessler**

Jan. 16, 2019

Chicago — The list of things born in this city includes the skyscraper, the Ferris wheel and (supposedly) brownies. And then there are its wonkier claims to fame.

Chicago was the crucible of 20th-century urban sociology. It was also midwife to today's boom in audio storytelling, thanks to "This American Life," which originated here.

Jeremy McCarter, the founder and executive producer of Make-Believe Association, a new nonprofit podcast production company, makes no claim to inventing anything. But he's hoping that the company's first season, which made its debut this week, might usefully combine those last two Chicago creations.

Each episode in the season, titled "Grown Folks' Fables," features an audioplay based on a traditional folktale representing one strand of Chicago's cultural diversity, reinterpreted by a homegrown writer. The plays are recorded live and presented along with excerpts from the post-show discussion among an audience carefully selected to reach beyond the usual theatergoers, who in this deeply divided city (as elsewhere) tend to run whiter, older and wealthier than the overall population.

Make-Believe, as Mr. McCarter likes to put it, is a podcast that's "one part live theater, one part TV production, one part social science."

When it comes to bridging social divides, he said recently over breakfast, "stories have an important role to play."

Stories, of course, are also easier to come by than ever, thanks to the internet. The podcast universe is vast, and the biggest challenge for any new offering isn't getting people talking, but simply being heard.



Jeremy McCarter, right, Make-Believe's founder and executive producer, at the listening party with Nate Marshall and Nancy Garcia Loza, whose original audioplays are featured in the first season.  
Whitten Sabbatini for The New York Times

But some important players in Chicago — where about 80 people turned out at the National Museum of Mexican Art to celebrate the release of Make-Believe's first episode, "Brava," a feminist update of a traditional Mexican tale — are already paying attention to Make-Believe's model.

"We're watching their evolution very closely," said Brian Bannon, the commissioner and chief executive of the Chicago Public Library, who attended two Make-Believe tapings held at its flagship Harold Washington Library.

"Chicago has a very close-knit, collaborative culture," Mr. Bannon added, noting that Make-Believe's goals dovetail with the library's own mission of engaging the broadest possible public. "What Jeremy is doing is an example of a lot of really cool things going on here."

Mr. McCarter, 42, who moved here from New York in 2014, brings a résumé long on the civic engagement side of theater. He interned with Anna Deavere Smith after college, and more recently spent five years at the Public Theater, where he created the event series Public Forum. (His wife, Julie Bosman, is a reporter for The New York Times.)

He was the co-author, with Lin-Manuel Miranda, of “Hamilton: The Revolution,” and last year published “Young Radicals,” a group portrait of five idealistic intellectuals wrestling with the challenges to American democracy posed by World War I.

Mr. McCarter’s approach to audio storytelling similarly mixes idealism and high-flown intellectual scaffolding. As an “overture” to Make-Believe’s first season, he posted an interview about the power of stories with the star Harvard philosopher Michael Sandel.

Describing Make-Believe, he weaves in references to the work of the political scientist Robert Putnam (the author of “Bowling Alone”), the social critic Jane Jacobs and the philosopher John Dewey — a Chicagoan, he’s quick to note.

The listening party for “Brava” was held at the National Museum of Mexican Art in the Pilsen neighborhood, where the episode was taped in front of an audience last fall. People “recognized this kind of oral tradition,” Ms. Garcia Loza said.

Whitten Sabbatini for The New York Times

“Grown Folks’ Fables” is also 100 percent local, starting with a core writing team of up-and-coming collaborators. (The first season, whose budget Mr. McCarter described as running into the low six figures, is sponsored by the Poetry Foundation.)

First onboard was Nate Marshall, 29, a South Side-born poet and editor who was commissioned to reinterpret the African-American folktale of Brer Rabbit, the trickster figure who was sanitized in Disney’s gauzy plantation reverie “Song of the South.” (Mr. Marshall’s title: “Bruh Rabbit.”)

Next Mr. McCarter recruited Nancy Garcia Loza, 35, a producer-turned-playwright with family roots in Jalisco, Mexico, who wrote “Brava,” based on a traditional Jalisco tale featuring a dragon-slaying heroine. Ms. Garcia Loza also wrote an original corrido, a traditional Mexican ballad form, which was performed by an all-female mariachi band.

Mr. Marshall and Ms. Garcia Loza had never met. They and Mr. McCarter spent six months developing the plays in the writers’ room: in this case, a space at The Den, a hub of Chicago’s storefront theater scene. The first rule: Drafts would only be read out loud, not circulated in print.

“Some of my theater friends were surprised by that,” Ms. Garcia Loza said. “But you learn so much by just hearing it.”

Mr. McCarter also had skin in the game. The third episode features his adaptation of Zachary Mason’s novel “The Lost Books of the Odyssey,” which imagines 44 variations on the story of Odysseus. (Mr. McCarter settled for five.)

The fourth, which has yet to be recorded, is an outlier: a presentation of “What Use Are Flowers?” — a little-known dystopian short play by Lorraine Hansberry (another Chicagoan), written for television in 1961. Subtitled “a fable,” it asks whether humanity, if nearly wiped out in a cataclysmic war, would be worth salvaging. (The episodes, to be released biweekly, are about an hour: a roughly 40-minute audioplay, plus audience discussion.)

Ms. Garcia Loza addressing the crowd at the listening party for “Brava,” which also features an original corrido, or traditional Mexican ballad. Whitten Sabbatini for The New York Times

Mr. Marshall, also a co-organizer of the annual Chicago Poetry Block Party, said that it took a while for Make-Believe’s approach to storytelling to take shape. But where the shows would be taped (non-theater spaces, they decided) and “how the audience is built and invited into the space was something we talked about from the very beginning,” he said.

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A Podcast Reaches Across Chicago’s Cultural Divides - The New York Times

Daniel Kyri, 25, an actor, director and filmmaker who is directing the Hansberry play, grew up in the Jackson Park neighborhood on the South Side. He has performed at the city’s most prestigious theaters (the Goodman, Steppenwolf, Lookingglass), as well as in his own crowd-funded web series, “The T” (created with Bea Cordelia), which explores queer and transgender friendship across Chicago’s divides of race, class and geography.

The first time he ever interacted with a white person, Mr. Kyri recalled, was when he was 9, on a school field trip.

“Chicago is multiple cities,” he said. “The discourse becomes more authentic when you can bridge — let’s call it what it is — segregation.”

During the post-show discussion of “Bruh Rabbit,” Mr. Marshall’s mother talked about the “invisible line” on Rainbow Beach, a public beach in the South Shore neighborhood, where, in 1961, whites attacked an interracial group staging a “freedom wade-in.”

The excerpts from audience discussion included with “Brava” emphasize how Latina women in the audience identified with its heroine. But the experience also stirred some different jolts of recognition.

“There were people there who hadn’t heard a radio play since they left Mexico,” Ms. Garcia Loza said. “They recognized this kind of oral tradition.”

After “The Lost Books of the Odyssey,” the conversation gravitated in a different direction: toward the placeless place of the internet, and the way social media allows us to act out different identities, different selves, different stories.

Mr. McCarter hopes Make-Believe’s stories will get people who find them online talking too.

“We want to open up a space and try to get people to travel an imaginative distance together,” he said.

Follow Jennifer Schuessler on Twitter: @jennyschuessler

A version of this article appears in print on Jan. 20, 2019, on Page C1 of the New York edition with the headline: A Podcast Connects A Divided Chicago

PEOPLE

# 'Lake Song' audio drama imagines a futuristic Chicago where water is everything, brought to life by cast of 23 Chicagoans

By Darcel Rockett  
Chicago Tribune • Nov 29, 2022 at 12:36 pm



Chicago actor Marcus Moore records a scene from the Make Believe Association's audio drama "Lake Song." (Adam Marcantoni/303am Photography)



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One would think within the land of Make Believe, anything is possible, even during the pandemic — Make Believe being the [Make Believe Association](#), a five-year-old Chicago-based storytelling company that produces audio dramas. or “plays for your ears.”

But according to founder and executive producer Jeremy McCarter, it was when preparing to do the second season of production that the pandemic changed the trajectory of how Make Believe told stories. The interactive part of telling stories — recording them in front of a live audience and having the audience discuss the story — came to an end with the pandemic. But instead of shutting down, McCarter said the association doubled down.

“The whole world changed in 2020,” he said. “It felt like the only reason to keep going is to try something that would be more ambitious ... try to find a way to make something more collaborative than what we thought we were going to do before.”

The result is “[Lake Song](#),” a 12-part episodic (four-hour) audio drama that intersects with poetry, music, science fiction and politics, and centers on Chicago in the year 2098. The Chicago landscape is now the Republic of Chicago; climate change has altered the land to the point where water is at the center of daily life and living. Threats still abound, but Chicago residents persist, as do cultural mainstays like art and music. The story unfolds through the eyes of South Side siblings Dee and Wade, who are dealing with individual growing pains and shared trauma. Episodes have come weekly since Oct. 12 and will end Dec. 21.

“Lots of stuff these days is adapted from source material, this was the opposite of that. We had no story, all we had was each other — seven of us from our very different backgrounds, we’re going to try to tell a story together about Chicago and we’re going to set it sometime in the future and then everything that came after that is what the seven of us dreamed up over the last 2½ years,” McCarter said.

Not to give spoilers, but there’s references to the pandemic and quarantines, iconic landmarks, the late Harold Washington and Karen Lewis, a golden age in the 2040s, and how the county jail was knocked down and turned into fields to feed the city, a brief end to the long history of the city’s

segregation, and a [fictional poet named Esperanza](#) that Chicago poet Nate Marshall has embodied with his work. Marshall's last work with Make Believe was [a Chicago-based version of the trickster folk tale character Brer Rabbit](#) called "Bruh Rabbit & The Fantastic Telling of Remington Ellis, Esq."

"I think a lot of what we were doing with the piece was really trying to think about and almost pay forward what's important in the cultural life of the city now and what would those things look like in the future," Marshall said about the fictional poet, Esperanza. "Perhaps I'm biased, but I think Chicago is a really important literary city, especially as it relates to poetry. And thinking about who might that be, who would embody that? That's where that character came out of."

Marshall is one of "Lake Song's" seven co-creators, along with McCarter, Laura Alcalá Baker, Sydney Charles (who voices the Dee character), Mikhail Fiksel (2022 Tony Award winner for sound design), WBEZ journalist Natalie Moore and Kristina Valada-Viars. The series score features Chicago blues harmonica legend Billy Branch, a 2022 inductee to the Blues Hall of Fame.

A cast of 23 Chicago actors round out the creative team, including Edgewater resident [Marcus Moore](#), who plays Wade. He joined the project for the camaraderie, the idea of overcoming something and discovering who you are as an individual and as a community.

"[What drew me to Wade](#) was he has some obstacles to overcome himself. I can relate to that because I've had to do that in my own personal life, more specifically, because Wade is queer, I am bisexual in real life, so having to find my identity as a bisexual Black man, but also as a Black man, a Black adult, a human being, all of those intersections that I am currently going through myself," Moore said. "The acting I had in this particular environment was new for me, and I'm really proud of what we created in all of our closets."

The world-building is detailed and the nuances intentional, according to Marshall and McCarter, as was the feeling of hope in spite of ongoing daily challenges. Marshall said the creators of the series didn't want the piece to be dystopian, but a futuristic drama couldn't pretend like climate change is not an issue.

The world-building is detailed and the nuances intentional, according to Marshall and McCarter, as was the feeling of hope in spite of ongoing daily challenges. Marshall said the creators of the series didn't want the piece to be dystopian, but a futuristic drama couldn't pretend like climate change is not an issue.

"I think our thought was this is how history happens. Hard things happen, folks find new ways to sort of navigate through it and then time kind of marches on and I think that's a lot of what we really wanted to do with this piece," he said. "Whether thinking about things like inequality and segregation and a lot of those structural ills that really govern the way that people get to live and who gets to feel good within the space of Chicago within the space of the U.S., a lot of that stuff does find some resolution in the story, which I think was exciting for us."

Moore thinks the release of the series was perfect timing given the recent election cycle. A firm believer that things happen for a reason, Moore said "Lake Song" shows people have more power than they have been led to believe, and while we are strong on our own, we will always be strongest together.

"That's what 'Lake Song' is about — chosen family and community coming together and overcoming obstacles," he said. "I think this project came at an absolutely perfect time."

Marshall agrees, saying he thinks this may be a time where the temperature can break around some societal, cultural issues and concerns. He said even though this is a fictional Chicago, it's rooted in real things that people have in common, mainly the city. McCarter said the spirit of this project is so much about bringing voices into the room, mostly Black and Latinx voices.

"There's been a trajectory to Make Believe, to this point," McCarter said. "It began as an experiment in collaboration to give different kinds of people a chance to find each other in a very divided city that wants to make that difficult, and 'Lake Song' is just the furthest that I think we could think of to push that experiment. It's nice to feel like there's room out there in podcast land for a story that is a big swing in the way that ours is. ... This is a story about people trying to save their city by coming together and I hope people will stick around to Episode 12 to hear how it goes."

*[“Lake Song.”](#) is available free on [lakesong.fm](#), and on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts and other major podcast platforms. New episodes are released Wednesdays.*

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## Podcast The Newsletter

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🎧 It's 2098 and the world is out of fresh water—not an unlikely scenario. And **Lake Song** imagines that there is one place that has it—the Republic of Chicago, which offers more problems than opportunity. Lake Song is the story of siblings Dee and Wade on the South Side who are struggling to survive with the problems unique to this fantasy world, and the ones that are universally human. With poetry, music, science fiction and politics, Lake Song is a play for your ears, turning dystopian Chicago into a playground for the arts, with some of the greatest audio acting I've heard. (The cast is made of 23 Chicagoans.) It's not like other podcasts you've listened to before. It will be an absolute favorite if you like audio dramas, and will open your ears to the fiction world if you're not already there. [Listen here.](#)