

AN AWARD-WINNING AMERICAN DRAMA

New Stage Theatre presents

AUGUST WILSON'S



# FENCES

Directed by Rob Demery

April 18 – 30, 2023

Sponsored by



Costume Designer *Myrna Colley-Lee*  
Lighting Designer *André Allen*  
Scenic Designer *Kellie Murphy*  
Production Stage Manager *Clara Seitz*  
Technical Director *Richard Lawrence*  
Sound Designer *ym myla neaj*  
Properties Designer *Jenna Kahley*

**NEW STAGE**  
*Theatre*

# FENCES

*“August Wilson’s Fences”* by arrangement with  
Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.  
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Originally Produced on Broadway by Carole Shorenstein Hays, in association with Yale Repertory Theatre World Premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre (Lloyd Richards, Artistic Director; Benjamin Mordecai, Managing Director); Second Production at The Goodman Theatre (Robert Falls, Artistic Director; Roche Schulfer, Managing Director) Initially given a staged reading at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwrights Conference.

**Content warning:** Strong language is used throughout the show, including racial slurs. They are used in the context of the show’s setting, Pittsburg in the mid-1950s.

*Fences* also covers intense subjects including infidelity, prejudice and racism, and intergenerational trauma.

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## SETTING

Backyard of the Maxson house, itself in an urban neighborhood of a Northern American industrial city.

## ACT I

Scene 1: A Friday evening, fall 1957.

Scene 2: The next morning.

Scene 3: A few hours later.

Scene 4: The following Friday.

## ACT II

Scene 1: Saturday, fall of 1957.

Scene 2: Friday, spring of 1958.

Scene 3: Three days later.

Scene 4: Two months later.

Scene 5: Summer of 1965.

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*There will be one 15-minute intermission*

## THE CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Troy Maxson . . . . .                                    | Mark Henderson  |
| Jim Bono, Troy's friend. . . . .                         | Lawrence Evans* |
| Rose, Troy's wife . . . . .                              | Olivia Dawson*  |
| Lyons, Troy's oldest son by a previous marriage. . . . . | Durrell Lyons   |
| Garbriel, Troy's brother . . . . .                       | Xerron Mingo    |
| Cory, Troy and Rose's son . . . . .                      | Timothy Magee   |
| Raynell, Troy's daughter. . . . .                        | Amani Palmer    |

## UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. For Troy Maxson: Xerron Mingo; For Jim Bono: Charlton Johnson; For Rose: Sharon Miles; For Lyons: Devin Hunter; For Gabriel: Johntia Jackson; For Cory: Hosea Griffith; For Raynell: Ella Young; For Male Swing: Joshua Gilliard

\*The actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

AUGUST WILSON (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987); and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, and *Radio Golf*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

***Fences*** premiered on Broadway at the 46th Street Theatre on March 26, 1987.

## Preface to ***Fences***

Near the turn of the century, the destitute of Europe sprang on the city with tenacious claws and an honest and solid dream. The city devoured them. They swelled its belly until it burst into a thousand furnaces and sewing machines, a thousand butcher shops and baker's ovens, a thousand churches and hospitals and funeral parlors and moneylenders. The city grew. It nourished itself and offered each man a partnership limited only by his talent, his guile, and his willingness and capacity for hard work. For the immigrants of Europe, a dream dared and won true.

The descendants of African slaves were offered no such welcome or participation. They came from places called the Carolinas and the Virginias, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. They came strong, eager, searching. The city rejected them and they fled and settled along the riverbanks and under bridges in shallow, ramshackle houses made of sticks and tarpaper. They collected rags and wood. They sold the use of their muscles and their bodies. They cleaned houses and washed clothes, they shined shoes, and in quiet desperation and vengeful pride, they stole, and lived in pursuit of their own dream: that they could breathe free, finally, and stand to meet life with the force of dignity and whatever eloquence the heart could call upon.

By 1957, the hard-won victories of the European immigrants had solidified the industrial might of America. War had been confronted and won with new energies that used loyalty and patriotism as its fuel. Life was rich, full, and flourishing. The Milwaukee Braves won the World Series, and the hot winds of change that would make the sixties a turbulent, racing, dangerous and provocative decade had not yet begun to blow full.

*-August Wilson*

## THE CAST



**OLIVIA DAWSON\*** (Rose Maxson) is grateful to make her New Stage debut in *Fences*. Dawson has worked regionally with: The Louisville Orchestra, Steppenwolf Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Atlanta Shakespeare Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Madison Repertory Theatre, Theatre Lila, Forward Theatre, Horizon Theatre, and The Barter Theatre to name a few. Film/TV: *Honk For Jesus*, *Dopesick*, *Chicago Med*, and *Empire* among others. Dawson would like to dedicate this performance to her mother, Mary, and her Nana, Bertha, and all the black women who did what was necessary to keep their families together. Much love. Happy 99th Birthday, Aunt Esther!



**LAWRENCE EVANS\*** (Jim Bono) – New Stage Theatre debut. Regional: Florida Studio Theatre, Triad Stage, Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Caldwell Theatre Company (FL), Charlotte Repertory Theatre, freeFall Theatre (FL), Weston Playhouse Theatre Company (VT), Short North Stage (OH), North Carolina Black Repertory Company, National Black Theatre Festival. National tours: *And Still I Rise*, *Camp Logan*, *The Sweet Spot*. Television: *New Amsterdam*, *FBI: Most Wanted*, *All My Children*, *Another World*, *Ryan's Hope*, *As the World Turns*, *One Life to Live*, *The Good Wife*, *Law & Order SVU*. Film: *State Property II*, *The Devil Wears Prada*. Lawrence studied theatre at Jackson State University and the University of Michigan. He is a native of Forest, Miss.



**JOSHUA GILLIARD** (Male Swing U.S.) is a native of Jackson, Miss. He graduated from Jackson State University with a focus in accounting and minor in speech arts. Prior to college, he started acting in 1998. His first performances were Liturgical dramas and public plays. While at JSU, he was a member of MADDRAMA Performance Troupe. There, he developed his love for the arts. He performed in: *New Beginnings*, *Soul of Black Folks*, to name a few. After a 14-year hiatus, he recognized there was a void. He discovered it was his passion for the arts. There was never a day that went by that Gilliard was not thinking of the arts. Acting is his refuge. As a result, Gilliard is ecstatic to return and join this masterpiece of work at New Stage Theatre.



**HOSEA GRIFFITH** (Cory Maxson U.S.) is a recent graduate of the University of Mobile, obtaining a M.M. in vocal performance. Griffith enjoys performing music whenever the chance arises, both musical theatre and opera. A native of Jackson, he had the pleasure of portraying many roles in Jackson and the surrounding areas, including the roles of Pablo in *Sister Act*, Joe in *Show Boat*, and Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, as well as a recent turn in New Stage's *Little Shop of Horrors*. While pursuing graduate

studies, Griffith was granted multiple performance opportunities, his favorites being Friar Laurent in *Roméo et Juliet* and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. Griffith is excited to be back in Mississippi.



**MARK G. HENDERSON** (Troy Maxson) is a native of Canton, Miss and currently resides in Jackson. He has a B.A. from Jackson State University, an M.A from Michigan State University, M.A. from Texas A&M University, and a Ph.D. from The University of Southern Mississippi. Henderson has been a member of the speech/theatre faculty at Jackson State University for the past 28 years, where he has served as department chair, director of theatre, and theatre arts faculty fellow. He has been seen in several of New Stage's Eudora Welty New Play Series play readings, and made his New Stage debut last season in *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, followed by a Work Shop Reading of *Slipping Through The Cracks: The Blues Journey of Bobby Rush*, which chronicles the life of Blues Singer Bobby Rush. Henderson spends most of his time writing, directing, and producing theatre for MADDRAMA Performance Troupe, a group of JSU students, founded by Henderson, and who perform locally and nationally.



**K. DEVIN HUNTER** (Lyons Maxson U.S./Covid Safety Manager) is a Tallahassee, Fla. native who graduated from Florida A&M University. Recently, Hunter appeared in *A Christmas Carol*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *The Debate for Democracy* as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and *Hands Up! 7 Testament 7 Playwrights* as Holes in My Identity. He was also an acting associate at New Stage Theatre, where he not only toured Mississippi performing three productions for grade school students, but also performed in main stage productions of *A Christmas Carol* (2019), *Matilda the Musical*, and *Pipeline* where he was mentioned in American Theatre Magazine. Hunter performed in New Stage's virtual production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that was filmed for distribution to schools around the state during the 2020-2021 school year.



**JOHTIA JACKSON** (Gabriel Maxson U.S.) is a native of Raymond, Miss. He attended Jackson State University where he received a B.A. in speech communication. After undergrad he wanted to focus on a particular area where he could flourish and excel. Jackson decided to attend Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). It's there he honed his skills of performing arts and received his MFA. Utilizing both degrees, Jackson became a professor and actor. He has been in movies such as *A Day to Die*, *Birth of A Nation* (by Nate Parker) and *Tears*. He has been in a host of stage plays where he has worked with notable actors such as Coleman Domingo, Yohance Miles, and Deron Horton.

## actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Fences* following the show on Wednesday, April 19 and Wednesday, April 26 after the evening performances. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



**CHARLTON L. JOHNSON** (Jim Bono U.S.) is excited to make his return to live theatre with this incredible team of creatives at New Stage Theatre. A native of Greenville, Miss where he performed his acting debut as Lion in *The Wiz*, as Scroo in *If Scrooge Was a Brother*, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Rustin*, and as Rev. Booker in *Hell in High Water*. Johnson is excited to explore the balance and conflict that exists in everyday life in August Wilson's *Fences*. Johnson holds a Master of Divinity degree and serves as pastor of Sweetwater

CME Church (Bassfield, Miss) and Chaplain with UMMC.



**DURRELL LYONS** (Lyons Maxson) is excited to make his New Stage Theatre debut as a guest artist. From the humble beginnings of Wichita Falls, TX, he initially graced the stage as a spoken word poet, and has since grown into a multifaceted talent for the stage and screen. His theatre credits include playing Blue in *Paradise Blue* at Gloucester Stages in Gloucester, Mass, Oscar in *The Odd Couple* at the WaterTower Theatre in Addison, TX, and Nunn in *Holler If You Hear Me* at Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre in Atlanta, GA. His screen credits include a recurring role

on *Tyler Perry's The Haves and Have Nots*, a co-starring role on Fox's hit series *The Resident*, and a supporting role in the NAACP award winning film *Alice*. Lyons currently resides in Atlanta, GA.



**TIMOTHY JAMES MAGEE, JR.** (Cory Maxson/Acting Associate) is currently a sophomore at Hinds Community College and will be attending the Norwalk Conservatory in Connecticut this fall to join the musical theatre class of '25. He attended the Mississippi School for the Arts and Wells APAC as a graduate from Murrah high school. He is currently an associate artist at the theatre, and was the assistant acting instructor in the 2022 Broadway Jr. Day Camp at New Stage. He has been in New Stage's *A Christmas Carol*, *Aladdin, Jr.*, *Once On This Island, Jr.*, *Beauty and the*

*Beast*, and more recently *Sunset Baby*, *CLUE*, and *The Sound of Music*. Being a big time Packers fan he also enjoys spending time with loved ones, watching movies, appreciating art, and playing cards in his free time. Magee would like to thank his friends and family for their love and support, and to New Stage for the opportunity to extend that family and tell meaningful stories.





**SHARON MILES** (Rose Maxson U.S.) is an actor, singer, director, educator, and playwright. Her original script, *If Not Us Then Who: Freedom Rides to Freedom Summer*, toured throughout the state of Mississippi through New Stage's award-winning education program. Born and raised in Mississippi, Miles is an avid lover of Mississippi history and seeks to use theatre arts to teach character development, youth empowerment, and empathy. Miles holds a BFA in acting from The University of Southern Mississippi. She will forever be grateful for every opportunity to

grow as an artist at New Stage Theatre.



**XERRON MINGO** (Gabriel Maxson/Troy Maxson U.S./Education Director) is a Graduate of Florida A&M University. Born in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Mingo recently resided in New York City where he worked as a health & safety manager for productions on Apple TV and HGTV. He also worked as a testing secretary and production coordinator for television shows with LIONSGATE and Apple Music Reviews. For the past ten summers, Mingo has worked at Raquette Lake Camps teaching musical theatre to students from all across the world. He recently made a return to the

stage and served as choreographer while playing the role of Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol* at New Stage in 2021. He has worked professionally at a plethora of regional theatres in a handful of states. Mingo continues to live in the Light and could not be more blessed to do so as he embarks on his journey as education director at New Stage Theatre.



**AMANI PALMER** (Raynell Maxson) is 11 and in the sixth grade at Shirley Simmons Middle School. She is the daughter of Jonathan and T'Ondrea Robinson; and Jermaine Kelly. Palmer enjoys cooking, painting, tumbling and spending quality time with her family. Palmer has been in *The Snow Queen* at Ballet Magnificat, played young Abel in the *Children of Eden, Jr.*, and Marta in *The Sound of Music* at New Stage Theatre. Palmer would like to thank her family for always supporting and encouraging her in all of her endeavors.



**ELLA JAI YOUNG** (Raynell Maxson U.S.) is a native of Durant, Miss. She attends Old Town Middle School in Ridgeland where she now resides with her mother, father, and her two brothers and her sister. While in Ridgeland she was cast in her first starring role as the young Ti Moune in the hit Broadway musical *Once on this Island*. Young attends Ms. B. On the Keys music school as a middle level piano student. She is also a part of the Old Choral ensemble, The Singer Things. Young loves to perform and sees musical theatre in her future. Young is

excited to be a part of this production because of the opportunity to expand her acting reach and bring enjoyment to her audience.

## THE PRODUCTION STAFF

**ROB DEMERY** (Director) is no stranger to New Stage Theatre. You've seen him in *Lombardi* (Dave Robinson), *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Tom Robinson), *A Christmas Carol* (Fred) and *A Soldier's Play* (Corporal Cobb) where he also served as the assistant director for the show. He also served as head acting instructor for New Stage Theatre's summer camp from 2008-2010. A graduate of Jackson State University, Demery's career began in Flint, MI in the production *The Watsons Go To Birmingham* (Byran). Some of his stage credits are: Broadway: *A Soldier's Play* (Tony Award Winning Play, Best Revival), *Topdog Underdog* (Booth/Lincoln), Regional: *Good Faith* (A World Premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre), *SARAFINA*, *No Man's Land*, *Othello* (St. Louis Black Rep), *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *Fetch Clay*, *Make Man* (Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre), *Too Heavy For Your Pocket* (World Premiere at Alliance Theatre).

After having much success in theatre as an actor and director, Demery started adding film to his resume. Some of his Film/Television credits are: Dr. King in *Robin Roberts Presents: MAHALIA!* (Lifetime/Emmy Nominated Movie), *4400* (CW), *The Resident* (FOX), *Lovecraft Country* (HBO), *Underground* (CW), *Get On Up*, *Second Generation Wayans* (BET), *Devil's Knot*. He was recently seen in his recurring role as Chopper on *Law & Order: Organized Crime* (ABC).

Demery lives in Brooklyn, NY and Atlanta, GA. In 2010, Demery engaged his efforts full-throttle in the development of his own company. He is currently the founder/artistic director of Red Light Performing Arts Company (Red Light Arts). Red Light Arts' mission is to enhance intelligence, creativity, and social skills in young people by continually applying quality productions/workshops universal to diverse audiences. Red Light Arts helps youth and young adults motivate themselves to grow socially and emotionally, examine stereotypes, and gain new understandings about life with one another. Rob has over 20 years of experience working with youth. Since 2010, he has had many contracts with Public School Districts performing over one hundred skits and plays for thousands of students as well as after school programs and Saturday acting camps. Demery has produced and is directing his own show *REVOLUTIONIZED*, which has toured in Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Georgia. "Sending love to my Wife, Amber Demery, and my beautiful kids, Leah and Kobe. I do it for you." [www.RedLightArts.com](http://www.RedLightArts.com)

**ANDRÉ C. ALLEN** – (Lighting Designer) was born and raised in Queens, New York. He moved to Atlanta to attend Morehouse College in 1989. There he discovered the art of storytelling with light and later founded BlackLight Productions Inc. in 1990. He has designed for many artists and organizations including productions for the Freddie Hendricks' Youth Ensemble of Atlanta, the Atlanta Falcons, and India.Arie. Soon after, he served as Production Manager with the Rialto Center for the Arts at Georgia State University and Operations Manager with the Ferst Center for the Arts at Georgia Tech. You can also find his work on the small screen with networks such as Netflix, BET, TVOne, OWN, and REVOLT TV. André is committed to teaching the next generation of designers through his role as the lighting design professor at Spelman College. [www.BlackLightProductions.com](http://www.BlackLightProductions.com) "Gen. 1:3"

**MYRNA COLLEY-LEE** (Costume Designer) makes her New Stage debut with *Fences*, her sixth August Wilson play. This is Colley-Lee's third production of *Fences*, the first two in the early 90's at Pennsylvania Stage Company and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Actively designing since 1971, her most recent works include *Trouble in Mind* at Utah Shakespeare Festival; *Freedom Riders* at New Jersey's Crossroads Theatre and Alabama Shakespeare Festival; *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (August Wilson) at Writer's Theatre in Illinois. Other works comprise *of All My Sons* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* at the St. Louis Repertory Theatre; *Two Trains Running* (August Wilson) at Geva Theatre; *Radio Golf* (August Wilson) at Pittsburgh Public Theatre; the world premiere of *The Ballad of Emmett Till* at Chicago's Goodman Theatre; *Gee's Bend*, *The Piano Lesson* (August Wilson) and *Forest City* for Cleveland Play House; the Off-Broadway production of *Becoming Adele* for Gotham Stage Company; *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Relativity* at The St. Louis Black Repertory; *Wedding Band* at Steppenwolf Theatre; *Bus Stop* for Allentown Playhouse; *Seven Guitars* (August Wilson) for Arizona Theatre Company among many others. While most of her six decades of work were across the US, she designed Langston Hughes's *Black Nativity* for touring companies in Europe and The Caribbean.

*A Theatre of Color: Costume Design for the Black Theatre* by Myrna Colley-Lee debuted at Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in 2014. A comprehensive exhibition of the designer's work, the show highlighted over 200 original costume designs, renderings and collages as a study of her design process. Her costume design work and art has toured in venues around the country and the state of Mississippi. The Myrna Colley-Lee Costume Collection is a working costume collection housed by Theatre MSU at Mississippi State University for the theatre community of Mississippi. MSU Libraries also houses a research collection of Myrna's theatre costumes and antique clothing. Myrna has received numerous awards including: Mississippi Governor's Award for Excellence in Costume Design, Outstanding Costume Design from the National Black Theatre Festival, the Winona Lee Fletcher Award for Outstanding Achievement as a Designer from the Black Theatre Network, Honored Artist from the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Lifetime Achievement Award as well as a foundation member of Phi Beta Kappa at Mississippi State University where she was also awarded a Doctorate of Creative Arts, honoris causa.

**KELLIE MURPHY** (Scenic Designer) was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. She began her career in arts and entertainment after moving to Atlanta, GA. She started in production management, designing and cosmetology work for live events, film, and theatre. After years of working in entertainment, she changed paths to solely focus on her passion for scenography and production management. While designing, she worked to obtain her Master of Arts in scenic technology and design from Louisiana State University. Her experiences include scenic design, scenic art, production management, hair and makeup and properties. This production of *Fences* is her debut as the scenic designer at New Stage Theatre; however, she has worked here in the past as an assistant scenic designer for Sound of Music. Along with designing, she enjoys sharing her knowledge through education and mentorship in Atlanta area theatre arts programs.

**ym myla neaj** (Sound Designer) is an artist's artist. Their work as a musician, composer, singer, songwriter, producer, and designer creates more than a performance, but a full sensory experience. With a distinctive voice and melodic lyrical storytelling, neaj makes the most out of the moments between the sounds. Start to end. Neaj has done scoring, arranging, and foley work for The Julliard School, Where Art and Activism Meets (WAM Theatre), 59e59, as well as voiceovers for LEGO. Neaj is also musical director and a fabricator, as a part of the creative board for Hartford based puppetry production company Nightfall.

**JENNA KAHLEY** (Properties Designer) is from Rockford, Ill. She has a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing from Belhaven University. She's previously worked for Gateway Playhouse in Bellport, NY.

**CLARA SEITZ** (Production Stage Manager) previously served New Stage as assistant technical director and scenic artist. She left in 2016 to pursue a nomadic lifestyle of working on a cruise ship. She is a graduate of Mississippi University for Women (and smart men too) where she earned a B.A. in theatre. Her previous New Stage credits include stage management for *Pipeline*; lighting design for *Constellations*, scenic design for *A Wrinkle in Time*, props design for *All the Way*, costume design for *Dog Sees God*, and sound design for *Mrs. Mannerly*. Seitz recently directed *Small Mouth Sounds* as a part of the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre. She is excited to be at New Stage working with all these wonderful people on such a brilliant show.

**RICHARD LAWRENCE** (Technical Director) serves as the vice president of Fondren Theatre Workshop and has appeared in *A Christmas Memory* at New Stage, FTW's *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Buck Nekkid for Jesus*, directed FTW's *Every Christmas Story Ever Told*, and most recently appeared as Trekkie Monster in *Avenue Q*. He was also the director of the widely successful productions of *Cabaret* and *Company*, which were joint productions of FTW and Actor's Playhouse of Pearl, with support from New Stage. Lawrence has been seen in New Stage productions of *The Trip to Bountiful* and UnFramed's *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *The Weir*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, and *Dublin Carol*. Lawrence has won three Best Set awards at Mississippi Theatre Association conferences, and has also won Best Set at Southeastern Theatre Conference.

**RAKAELA THOMPSON** (Assistant Director/Acting Associate) was born and raised in Pearl where she attended Pearl High School. She recently received a BFA from The University of Southern Mississippi. She has been involved in several wonderful productions such as *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *She Kill's Monsters*. She was president of Harlem, a BIPOC organization that focused on helping BIPOC students in the theatre department learn their voice in a safe space. Most recently, Thompson has appeared in *What Every Girl Should Know*, *Sunset Baby*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Clue* at New Stage Theatre. She is very grateful to be part of the New Stage family and to have the privilege to work with such a wonderful group of diverse people.

**JAVION LYONS** (Assistant Stage Manager) – is from the wonderful city of Jackson, Miss. He is currently in a sophomore theatre major with a concentration in sound and playwriting attending THEE Jackson State University. Javion currently serves as the assistant stage manager of the play *Fences* at New Stage. He has a great deal of experience

when it comes to theatre both on and off stage. He has been an assistant stage manager for the play *Zooman and the Sign* at Jackson State and has done sound for countless other plays. He is looking forward to many other opportunities within theatre in the future.

**CALEB BLACKWELL** (Resident Costume Designer/Costume Shop Manager) is native of Magee and is excited to return to the New Stage family! Blackwell holds a B.A. in theatre from the University of Southern Mississippi and has worked all over the South and Mid-South, including Wayside Theatre (resident designer) and Playhouse on the Square (designer for the second stage). Season 57 will mark the eleventh season he has teamed up with New Stage. Past favorite credits include *The Sound of Music*, *Hairspray*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Bright Star*. Much love to his family and friends for the love they've shown at the start of this new adventure.

**ALBERTO MEZA** (Assistant Sound Designer/ Resident Sound and Projection Designer) is a graduate of Belhaven University '19 with a BFA in Theatre. He is from Brandon, Miss. and is excited to work in the only regional theatre near his hometown. He began working with New Stage Theatre since January 2020 and has continued to work here for over the past 3 years. Some of his regional design credits for both sound and projections include: *Pipeline*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Christmas Carol*, *I Just Stopped by to See the Man*, *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *9 to 5*, *Clue*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Every Brilliant Thing*. He has also worked with Belhaven University Theatre as their professional guest artist as the sound engineer/designer for their main stage productions of *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Spitfire Grill*. Meza was also the streamer and editor behind the *Thursday Night Virtual Plays, Conversations, & Cocktails* that was presented over the virtual season at New Stage Theatre.

**NINA FROST** (Assistant Costumer/Wardrobe Supervisor) is from Jackson and is a recent graduate of Belhaven University with a B.A. in theatre. She has constructed many costumes over the past three years, but her favorite was Dorothy's blue dress in *The Wizard of Oz* at Belhaven. Recently, she spent her summer at the New London Barn Playhouse in New London, N.H. as a stitcher and wardrobe crew. Frost's most recent credit was costume designer for the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre's production of *What Every Girl Should Know*. Frost is excited to be at New Stage Theatre this season!

**ANTONIO JUAREZ** (Production Associate) is very excited to be taking his first few steps in the world of theatre. He is a recent graduate of Hinds Community College where he studied simulation and animation. He was raised in the Brandon area and first became involved with theatre at Northwest Rankin High School where he created costumes and set design for a production of *The Zombie Prom*. He found working in the theatre environment fulfilling and when he was offered an opportunity to work with New Stage Theatre in November 2021 making the phantom cloaks and working as the sound board operator for *A Christmas Carol*, he didn't hesitate to accept the offer. Juarez most recently designed the set for the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre's production of *Sunset Baby*.

**MATTHEW MCMURTRY** (Lead Electrician) is a senior theatre major at Belhaven University. His recent work with New Stage includes *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Clue*, and *9 to 5: The Musical*. He served as the lighting designer for New Stage's summer camp productions of *Frog and Toad*, *Kids* and *Children of Eden, Jr.* McMurtry has also served as lighting designer for Belhaven University's productions of *Steel Magnolias* and *The Burial at Thebes*.

## CREW

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Assistant Director/Sound Board Operator.....        | RaKaela Thompson        |
| Assistant Stage Manager.....                        | Javion Lyons            |
| Covid Safety Manager/Company Liason.....            | Devin Hunter            |
| Production Associate/Running Crew.....              | Antonio Juarez          |
| Resident Costume Designer/Costume Shop Manager..... | Caleb Blackwell         |
| Assistant Costumer/Wardrobe Supervisor.....         | Nina Frost              |
| Properties Designer/Running Crew.....               | Jenna Kahley            |
| Sound Engineer/Projectionist.....                   | Alberto Meza            |
| Lead Electrician.....                               | Matthew McMurtry        |
| Scenic Artist.....                                  | Jane Phillips           |
| Lead Carpenter.....                                 | Jimmy “JR” Robertson    |
| Carpenters.....                                     | Dave Ellis, Darby Frost |

## THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS** (Artistic Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 35 years. She recently directed *The Sound of Music*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, *The Debate for Democracy*, *Pipeline*, *Bright Star*, *Hell in High Water*, *Sweat*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Silent Sky*, and *Best of Enemies*. Favorite acting roles include Dr. Katherine Brandt in *33 Variations*, Polly in *Other Desert Cities*, Lucille in *Dividing the Estate*, and Edna Earle in Eudora Welty’s *The Ponder Heart*. She has directed a variety of shows including *All The Way*, *The Whipping Man*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Our Town*, *Red*, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Hairspray*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Lombardi*, *Boeing, Boeing*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Gee’s Bend*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Annie*, *A Soldier’s Play*, and *I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change*. Reynolds is a 2022 recipient of a Directing Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission. She served three terms on the board of directors for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre; and is on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the Mississippi Theatre Association. She was a session leader for the 2018 and 2017 TCG National Conference Conventions and panelist for the 2022, 2020, and 2016 Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association Contest. She was a speaker for the 2021 Story State, [www.storystate.msstate.edu](http://www.storystate.msstate.edu), produced by Mississippi State University. Originally, from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Reynolds enjoys living in Jackson with her husband, Chuck.

**DAWN BUCK** (Managing Director) has worked on staff at New Stage for more than 20 years. She began her career at New Stage in the fall of 1981 as a box office assistant. Since that time, she has worked as box office manager, audience services director, house manager, bookkeeper, business manager and marketing director. Buck’s other professional artistic credits include the USA International Ballet Competition, the Thalia Mara Arts International Foundation – World Performance Series presenting a series of performing artists including American Ballet Theatre, Aquila Theatre of London, Joshua Bell, Alvin Ailey, Cirque Eloize, Wynton Marsalis, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. She attended Belhaven University and is an alumnus of Leadership Jackson and a graduate of Dale Carnegie. Buck also completed a residency on

theatre management at the Eugene O'Neill Center through a grant from the Foundation for the Extension and Development of Professional American Theatre (FEDAPT). Prior to serving on the staff of the USA International Ballet Competition, she worked with America Reads - Mississippi overseeing and training 270 AmeriCorps members who provided one-on-one tutoring in reading for students in primary K through the 3rd grade across the state. Buck also worked with Imageworks - Films for Business, assisting with the production of commercials, documentaries and training videos. She resides in the Heatherwood neighborhood with her husband David and has two sons who live in the big "N" cities of New York and Nashville.

**BILL MCCARTY III** (General Manager), a graduate of the University of Mississippi, has extensive background in wholesale and retail sales and real estate property management with the Jitney Jungle supermarket chain. The company was founded by his Grandfather Will McCarty and two Holman cousins in 1919. The families grew the business into a profitable billion dollar Mississippi-based company led by Bill McCarty Jr, his father, Henry Holman and many talented associates which sold in 1996. During his grocery career, Jack Stevens and Ivan Rider recruited Bill in 1973 to run a follow-spotlight for *The Gershwin Show* at the theatre's original Gallatin Street location. He has continued to volunteer with New Stage for more than 48 years in all areas including production, lighting and sound design, back-stage, and for New Stage fundraising events. He is involved in the day-to-day management, maintenance, and production for the theatre and serves on the Board of Trustees as a lifetime member. His favorite design credits are *A Christmas Carol* (1984), *Greater Tuna* (1986), *The Gin Game* (1987), and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1990).

**MELISSA TILLMAN** (Director of Business Services) is a graduate of Belhaven University where she received a B.A. in technical theatre. She served as the audience services director and marketing director at New Stage, has worked as a box office associate at Lawlor Events Center in Reno, Nevada, and assisted with many box office activities at Belhaven University. Tillman has stage managed many shows in several parts of the country, including Las Vegas and Tennessee. Her stage managing credits include *Oklahoma!*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *Love's Labours Lost*; and *Noye's Fludd* and *La Boheme* with the Mississippi Opera. This is Tillman's seventeenth season with New Stage. She currently resides in Madison with her husband, Kyle, their son, River, and their dog Vash.

**JERIANNA SHAW** (Marketing Director) is a graduate of Mississippi State University where she received a B.A. in communication studies. This is her first season with New Stage Theatre. She currently resides in Jackson with her partner, Gray, their daughter Poppy, and their two cats in the yard, Pepperoni and Salami.

**LIZZY DELP** (Box Office Manager) is a graduate of Belhaven University where she received a BFA in acting, a B.A. in English, and a minor in vocal performance. During her last few years of school, Delp served as Belhaven's special events coordinator, an administration/production intern for Opera Mississippi, and the president of Alpha Psi Omega, the national honor society for theatre students. During her time at Belhaven, Delp acted in nine productions, including *The Illusion*, *Women of Lockerbie*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. She also directed a short feminist play called *The Twelve Pound Look*. Prior to attending Belhaven, Delp was a pre-professional ballet dancer, teacher, and choreographer. She was the resident choreographer for the Community Learning Project, and assistant to Broadway choreographers

Jennifer Paulson Lee and Brandon Powers. In the U.S., she trained at Newtown Centre of Classical Ballet, Open World Dance Foundation, and Broadway Dance Center. Additionally, she trained for one summer at Moscow State Academy of Choreography. Delp is very excited to be with New Stage as box office manager, and is grateful to serve the Jackson community!

**BETTY WONG** (Box Office Assistant/Education Assistant) begins her 18th season at New Stage. She continues to enjoy traveling to schools and towns throughout the state with the Professional Apprentice Company to provide live theatre experiences for students and adults of all ages. When not on the road, you can find her in the box office. She has also served for many years as a volunteer in other areas of the theatre. Her professional work experiences in education and her passion for live theatre have contributed to the growth and expansion of New Stage's Education Department. She has served as a consultant to school districts throughout the state of Mississippi. Wong has a B.S. in educational psychology from Mississippi State University, a M.Ed. from Delta State University, and recently won the 2019 Exemplary Arts Service Award from the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education.

**CARLA MARSH** (House Manager) received her B.A. in criminal justice with an emphasis in juvenile justice from Jackson State University. She is pleased to be returning to New Stage for her nineteenth season. Marsh is employed full time with the Hinds County Sheriff's office.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of New Stage Theatre wishes to thank the following individuals and companies for the generous donation of time and resources to this production and the 57th season.

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Artistic Director: ext. 224

Managing Director: ext. 246

Marketing Director: ext. 225

Education Director: ext. 232

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