

# Up Next

## The Coast Starlight

*By Keith Bunin*

Next with Unframed, A young man armed with a secret that can land him in terrible trouble boards the Coast Starlight, the long-distance train that runs from Los Angeles to Seattle. With the help of his fellow travelers, all of whom are reckoning with their own choices, he has roughly one thousand miles to figure out a way forward. The Coast Starlight is a smart, funny, and compassionate story about our capacity for invention and re-invention when life goes off the rails.

## Chicken & Biscuits

*By Douglas Lyons*

Next on the Mainstage, Rivval sisters, Baneatta and Beverly, are trying to bury their father without killing each other first. When a family secret is revealed at the church altar, decorum flies out the stained glass window. With fast-paced jokes that will have audiences rolling in the aisles—and Grandpa turning over in his grave—this dysfunctional family comedy is even more satisfying than its namesake! Chicken & Biscuits is a laugh-out-loud celebration of Black joy, love, and laughter!

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*"Is God Is" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. [www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)*

UNFRAMED at New Stage Theatre Presents:

# IS GOD IS

By Aleshea Harris

Directed by Vern Allen

March 1st & 2nd, 7:30pm  
March 3rd, 2:00pm, 2024

Tickets online or  
by phone \$10

Tickets at  
the door \$15

New Stage's  
Warehouse Theatre

1000 Monroe St.  
Jackson, MS

[www.newstagetheatre.com](http://www.newstagetheatre.com)

601.948.3533 EXT 222

Warning:

This play contains haze, strobe, flashing lights, fire, scenes of violence, and strong language.

**UN  
FRAMED**  
@ NEW STAGE THEATRE  
NEW NEXT.

Set Designer  
Antonio Juarez

Sound Designer  
Morgan McKay

Stage Manager  
Camden Clem

Properties Coordinator/  
Fight Choreographer  
Baxter Evans III

Lighting Designer  
Vern Allen

Costume Designer  
Jade Krystal Dyer

SFX Make-up Designer  
Claire Stinson



# Cast

Shunn JoLee.....	Racine
Jayla Lomax.....	Anaia
Antommeshir Jackson.....	She
Nick Patrick.....	Chuck Hall
Lewis Hines.....	Riley
Simeon Taylor.....	Scotch
Ashia Benford.....	Angie
Avery Purvis.....	Man
Laquanda Cook.....	Ensemble/Racine US
Tiffany Watt.....	Ensemble/Anaia US
Jermay Gray.....	Ensemble/Riley US

# Creative Team

Vern Allen*.....	Director
Camden Clem .....	Stage Manager
Antonio Juarez.....	Set Designer
Michael Montgomery.....	Set Dresser
Deonica Davis .....	Costume Consultant
Jade Krystal Dyer*.....	Costume Designer
Morgan McKay* .....	Sound Designer & Operator
Baxter Evans III*.....	Fight Choreographer & Properties Designer
Mattea Pierce.....	Poster/Social Media Designer
Paul Pelletier*.....	Marketing Director
Claire Stinson.....	Sfx Makeup Artist

\*Indicates that this member is one of New Stage's Acting or Directing Associates.



**JAYLA M. LOMAX (ANAIA)** a native of Jackson, MS. She holds a B.S in speech communication from Jackson State University where she gained a lot of experience from mentors about theatre. She has appeared in *Black Nativity*, *Mama I Want to Sing*, and *Livin Fat*. She made her New Stage debut in *Little Shop Of Horrors* since then she has appeared in *9 to 5 The Musical*, *Slippin Through The Cracks* (*Blues Journey of Bobby Rush*), *The Sound of Music* and *Ring of Fire and Elf the Musical*. She's had the opportunity to tour with Bright Star Children's Theatre. She participated in *The Color Purple* at Jackson State which was record breaking show in the university's history. She is very appreciative of her family, friends and anyone who supports the fine arts.



**ASHIA BENFORD (ANGIE)** is excited to be back on the stage working with a fantastic group of artists. She holds a B.A in Sociology and Theatre from Jackson State University. After graduating, Ashia joined the professional acting internship program at New Stage Theatre, where she was seen in *Race*, *9 Parts of Desire*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, and *Hairspray*. Currently, she is an acting instructor and privately trains children and adults preparing for educational and professional auditions. Ashia has recently been seen as Ella Baker in *The Debate for Democracy* and Mrs. Spears in *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Her directing credits include: *Aladdin, Jr.*, *Shrek*, *Children of Eden Jr.*, *Matilda the Musical*, *Pipeline*, *Mean Girls Jr.*, and *Sunset Baby*. She would like to thank Destin and Audrey-Grace for their love and support.



**JERMAY GRAY (ENSEMBLE/ RILEY U/S)** is delighted to be performing in his first production. Hailing from the City With Soul - Jackson, MS, Jermay is a Master's of Public Policy and Public Administration student at Thee Jackson State University. Jermay has always had an strong appreciation of the arts. This interest inspired him to take a leap of faith and finally step out onto the big stage. He hopes to grow his skills and to participate in more productions!



**AVERY PURVIS (MAN)** Brandon MS native, he has been in a few films around the metro area and has done stage plays early in his career. His recent credits includes short films called *Get it Own Jones*, *Hotaru* and *Flashpoint* . Other credit are *Tales of the Natchez Trace* and *The System*



**LEWIS HINES (RILEY)** is a Jackson, MS based entertainer with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre degree from Belhaven University. He is no stranger to performing in front of a large audience and is excited to be returning to the stage with this CRAZY show. Some of his stage credits include *The Music Man* (Marcellus Washburn/Dance Captain), *Tipsy Bard: Much Ado About Nothing* (Benedick), & *Almost, Maine* (Steve). Some of his film credits include *An Unspoken Truth*, *Just Say That*, & *Jade 2* on YouTube and *Children of Sin* on Amazon Prime and Tubi. He is also a member of the Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honor Society. He's extremely grateful for the gift of performing and storytelling and would like to thank his family and this cast for putting up with his unique weirdness. <https://www.lewishines.org>



**SIMEON TAYLOR (SCOTCH)** is an enthusiastic performer and native of Jackson, Mississippi. He is the youngest of 10 siblings, so inevitably he was always around music, singing, dancing, and the best "artistic chaos". Simeon is newer to the theatre world, and most of his performing experience comes from singing in church, on competition shows, or as an independent music artist. Some of his recent stage credits include *Best of Broadway: Big City Dreams* (The Strand Theatre), *Dr. Fright's Dead Man's Party* (Six Flags Over Georgia), *Elf The Musical* (New Stage Theatre), and, this coming summer, *9 To 5* (Metropolis Performing Arts Centre). He also competed in the fourth season of *American Idol* on ABC. Simeon is always excited for opportunities to share his gifts and love for the arts! You can follow him @simeontaylormusic.



**SHUNN JOLEE (RACINE)** was born August 2, 1996, in Jackson Mississippi. At th age of 22, she received a dual degree of Mass Communication & Theatre Arts at Jackson Stage University. Powell had her stage debut in Theatre her freshman year at JSU, in a play written by Professor Prince Duren called, *Caught In The Net*. From that moment forward, Rashundra has done a series of dramas, comedies, musicals, & independent films. In 2018, Rashundra was nominated to compete at KCACTF, for the acting role of Kimber in *Stick Fly*, & for her dramaturgy work on, *The Drums of Sweet Water*. She scored her first role for New Stage-Unframed as Verity 5, in the play *Find Me*, by Olwen Wymark, & her most recent Unframed performance was as Marigold for *Act of Creation* by Brianna Barrett; Directed by Lindsey Neville. Most Rashundra is currently continuing to build her YouTube channel, & expanding her talents into voice acting.



**LAQUANDA COOK (ENSEMBLE/ RACINE U/S)** is from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, but spent the beginning part of her childhood living in the Southside of Chicago-The Windy City. She is an honors graduate from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock with a bachelor's in PR (Public Relations.) She is an administrative assistant for a Utility and Contracting company, and is relatively new to Mississippi and the world of theater. Her goal is to learn as much as she can about the ins and outs of the industry, do some behind-the-scenes work, and snag my first lead role. Who knows you may even see her on your TV screen one day!



**TIFFANY WATT (ENSEMBLE/ANAIA US)** is thrilled to make her theatrical debut at New Stage Theater. Originally from the heart of the delta, Greenwood, MS, she has harbored a lifelong interest in music and performing arts. As a mother to an energetic six-year-old, Tiffany understands the art of juggling responsibilities and following one's dreams. Her decision to audition for New Stage was fueled by a desire to step into the theater world. Working alongside the talented cast and crew at New Stage, Tiffany is excited to share her passions with the audience. She is grateful for the opportunity to grow and be part of a community that shares her love for storytelling.



**NICHOLAS PATRICK (CHUCK HALL)** is excited to return to theater. He was a 2010 graduate of Clinton High School and part of Attaché Show Choir from 2008-2010. He is also a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University, Class of 2023. Nicholas is a trained classical vocalist and has been featured in multiple stage plays including *It's A Wonderful Life* (The Center Players), *Never Lost My Faith* (P4 Entertainment), *Slippin Through the Cracks*(New Stage), and *The Wiz* (Jackson State University) as well as an extra in *A Day To Die* (available on streaming platforms). In his free time, Nicholas enjoys photography (4Tha Kulture), fishing, and volunteering.



**ANTONMESHIR JACKSON (SHE)**, is a native of Jackson, MS, mother of a beautiful daughter, and works as an educator for the Jackson Public School District. Kenya graduated from Ole Miss in 2010 and received her graduate degrees at Belhaven University. She has been recognized nationally as one of America's Top 100 Educators, was chosen as Teacher of the Year for the 2022-23 school year and is the author of a children's book series. This will be her first debut in an Unframed performance at New Stage Theatre.

**VERN ALLEN (DIRECTOR)** Vernell Allen (He/him/his) is a New York based producer, director, writer, and stage manager originally born in Mississippi. Currently working as a directing associate for New Stage theatre, he's directed and managed two touring shows, Theatre for Young Audiences, community theatre, and collegiate plays, the most notable being *All American Boys* by Jody Alperin and Vicky Crouch. He also served as second second AD for Wes Miller's *A Day to Die* starring Bruce Willis and Dallas Jackson's *The System* starring Tyrese Gibson. Vern is an alumnus of Mississippi State University and the Mississippi School of the Arts, and remains a student of the game

**CAMDEN CLEM (STAGE MANAGER)** is a Senior English Literature student at Mississippi College. She is the stage manager for Mississippi College's Lyric Stage where she has stage managed productions of *Little Women*, *Carmen*, and the upcoming *Closer Than Ever*. With New Stage she has been the ASM for *Elf the Musical* and stage manager for the Unframed staged reading of *Soup Wars*. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with such a phenomenal cast and crew to present this impactful narrative and would like to thank everyone involved for all that they do!

**ANTONIO JUAREZ (SCENIC DESIGNER)** 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 stimulation 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 the sound board operator for *A Christmas Carol*, he didn't hesitate to accept to accept the offer. Juarez most recently designed the set for the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre's production of *Sunset Baby*.

**MATTEA PIERCE (POSTER DESIGN)** is a graduate from Belhaven University with degrees in both Theatre and Graphic Design. She currently serves as the Production Stage Manager for New Stage Theatre's main stage productions. Past productions include *Lend Me a Soprano*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Elf*, and *The Secret Garden*.

**JADE KRYSYAL DYER (COSTUME DESIGNER)** is a 2023 graduate of Florida State University with a bachelor of arts in theatre on a performance track. Some of her performance experience includes *Hair the Musical*, *Julius Caesar*, *Sweet Charity*, and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. When not on stage, Dyer also enjoys taking on other roles in entertainment, such as writing, producing, and directing an original Choreopoem titled *Dear, [BLANK]; Love, Anonymous* as well as acting as an associate producer and production coordinator on an indie television series called *TriCounty*. As an actor and a person, Dyer prioritizes kindness, respect, and enjoyment for all! @jade.krystall

**BAXTER EVANS III (PROPS COORDINATION/FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER)** is an actor and combatant from Clinton, MS where he went to Hinds Community College, and performed in shows called *Water Engine* and *Bus Stop*. Evans then moved to Hattiesburg, MS to study theatre at the University of Southern Mississippi, performing in the shows *Once in a Lifetime*, *She Kills Monsters*, *The Addams Family*, and *Macbeth*. While at USM, Evans received a KCATCF nomination, allowing him to travel to the Alpha Psi Omega, *Harlem* (a BIPOC theatre club), and *Skip the Script* (an improv club). Evans is excited to come back home to learn more and to work for a professional theatre company and is excited for what comes!

**MORGAN McKAY (SOUND DESIGN/OPPERATOR)** is a recent graduate from Liberty University with a BFA in musical theatre, where some of her favorite roles included Harriet Smith in the musical *Emma*, Charlotte in *Oliver!*, and Rebecca Gibbs in *Our Town*. In 2022, she was the co-director of creative and performing arts at Sandy Hill Summer Camp, and this past summer she was an actor and improv teacher at WinShape Camps for Girls in Georgia. She is looking forward to working with such a wonderful group of artists at New Stage Theatre. She would like to thank her parents for all of their love and support, and God for His unconditional love and the gifts and passion He has given her.

**PAUL PELLETIER JR (MARKETING DIRECTOR)** is an actor, singer, playwright, and combatant. Pelletier is also a graduate of The University of Central Florida, having graduated with a BFA in acting. Over the course of his 7+ year career in the theatre, Pelletier has been a part of several fantastic productions. Ranging from spectacular musicals like *RENT*, *Little Women the Musical*, and *Into The Woods*, to classic pieces such as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Indecent*. Pelletier is also a huge advocate for new voices and pieces in the theatre, having been both a playwright and actor for companies such as Project Spotlight and The Orlando Fringe Festival, organizations that help produce first time playwrights and independent company's works. [www.paulpelletierjr.com](http://www.paulpelletierjr.com)

**DEONICA DAVIS (COSTUME CONSULTANT)** is from Pearl, MS with her BFA from The University of Southern Mississippi. She is a graphic designer by day and seamstress and maker by night. She makes her own costumes and props for holiday parties and recently brought her talents back to the local theater scene. She has held the position of wardrobe mistress for Pearl Community Theater's production of *The Drowsy Chaperone* and assisted New Stage Theatre with costume needs for shows such as *Clue* and *The Sound of Music*. *Is God Is* will be her third Unframed show on the costume team.

WARNING: This show contains several MATURE THEMES. Viewers should expect to hear about/witness the following content.

- Depictions of violence and blood, death and murder, fire, burns, and blood
- Depictions and references of suicide and suicidal ideation, and emotional abuse by a parent
- References to familial and generational abuse, and domestic violence

# Special Thanks

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Special thanks to Destin Benford for his photography skills, CSI Parking Lot, and Anna Dunbar.

Thank you for your support!

# Volunteer with Us!

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Are you interested in volunteering with New Stage's Unframed series this season? Get in touch with our Producing Director, Xerron Mingo, with the email below! Give your name, contact information, and how you would like to get involved with us!

To volunteer, reach out at:  
[xmingo@newstagetheatre.com](mailto:xmingo@newstagetheatre.com)