

**REGIONAL
PREMIERE**



**KEN LUDWIG'S
LEND ME A
SOPRANO**

Directed by **Francine Thomas Reynolds**
September 12 – 24, 2023

SHEnanigans
abound!

Sponsored by



NEW STAGE
Theatre

Costume Designer
Caleb Blackwell

Lighting Designer
Anna Dunbar

Technical Director / Scenic Designer
Richard Lawrence

Production Stage Manager
Mattea Pierce

Production Manager
Clara Seitz

Properties Designer
Jenna Kahley

Sound Designer
Alberto Meza

KEN LUDWIG'S LEND ME A SOPRANO

The World Premiere of Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me A Soprano* was produced
by the Alley Theatre, Houston, TX

Rob Melrose, Artistic Director Dean R. Gladden, Managing Director

Developed with support from the Vanguard Arts Fund at Olney Theatre Center in Olney, MD.

"Ken Ludwig's Lend Me a Soprano" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on
behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com.

WARNING:

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

SCENE

September 1934

Hotel Suite in Cleveland, Ohio

THE CAST

MRS. LUCILLE WILEY	JO ANN ROBINSON*
JO	SARAH BETH SOLOP
JERRY	MICHAEL KINSLOW
PASQUALE FIRENZI	JOE FROST
ELENA FIRENZI	ANNIE GILL
LEO	JACK BAUGH
BEVERLY THE BELLHOP	MARQUITA LEVY
JULIA	VIOLA DACUS
RADIO ANNOUNCER	CAMERON PITRE

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. For Mrs. Wyle: Mandy Kate Myers; For Jo: Claire Justice Porter; For Jo: Morgan McKay; For Jerry: Paul Pelletier, Jr.; For Pasquale Firenzi: Cameron Pitre; For Elena Firenzi: Sarah Wade; For Leo: Baxter Evans III; For Beverly the Bellhop: Jade Krystal Dyer; For Julia: Ashia

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

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

New Stage Theatre

Celebrate Season 58: Laughter, Love and Wonder!

Thank you for coming to our 2023/24 season opener *Lend Me a Soprano*. *The Celebrate Season 58* has us leaning into fun and entertainment at New Stage Theatre.

We are proud and delighted to be one of the first regional theatres to present *Lend Me a Soprano* by Ken Ludwig after its world premiere last year at the Alley Theatre in Houston. I love that this madcap screwball comedy features ladies in the leading roles. I predict that it will quickly become very popular at theatres around the country. This first show will be followed in October by the Pulitzer Prize finalist and Tony nominee *What The Constitution Means to Me* by Heidi Schreck. Hilarious and hopeful, this new boundary breaking play breathes life into our Constitution. To capture the true spirit of the play, this production will be in New Stage's Hewes Room Theatre with general admission seating.

In the New Year, the wonder continues with the classic musical *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*, which can be enjoyed by the entire family. This special shortened version of the beloved musical by composer Lucy Simon and playwright Marsha Norman is as beautiful and spirited as the original Broadway hit and a tribute to the healing power of nature and love. April will feature another regional premiere of a new play filled with southern comfort and comedy. *Chicken and Biscuits* by Douglas Lyons serves up Black joy and family love with loads of laughter.

Closing out the season is the Broadway hit musical *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. With book by Doug McGrath and words and music by Gerry Goffin, Carole King, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, *Beautiful* celebrates the rise of a superstar and the power of friendship. Filled with the songs you remember, *Beautiful* will make you feel the earth move under your feet.

Elf The Musical brings heart, hilarity and holiday joy as an extra fun winter treat. Season subscribers can receive 25% off the regular ticket price of this high quality entertainment for the entire family. We'll also present challenging, contemporary plays, in our Warehouse and Hewes Room Theatres, through our *Unframed at New Stage Theatre Series* and our *Actor Chats* between the audience and company will occur after the first Wednesday and second Tuesday evening performances of main stage productions.

New Stage Theatre's educational programs will continue to reach thousands of Mississippi students. We will perform two touring shows, *Junie B. Jones, The Musical* for elementary students and *Anne and Emmett* for middle and high school students. Each season, New Stage Theatre entertains an audience of more than 24,000 in Jackson. Thousands of tickets are discounted tickets sold or provided for students attending school day matinees of our mainstage shows. I urge you to go to our website www.newstagetheatre.com and sign up to receive email news about all our exciting artistic and educational programming

New Stage Theatre is committed to providing playgoers with a first-class, theatrical experience at truly affordable prices. I would like to take this opportunity to make a special request. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to New Stage. Ticket sales account for only half of what it costs to bring our plays to life on the stage and our programs to the community. Your support makes our work possible and helps us reach thousands of young Mississippians through our educational and touring programming.

Whether you are new to our audience or a long-time patron, we are glad you are here to experience the fun and wonder of live theatre as we **Celebrate Season 58!**

Sincerely,

Francine Thomas Reynolds

Artistic Director

THE CAST



JACK BAUGH (Leo) is so excited to join the amazing team at New Stage Theatre. Most recent credits include *Next to Normal* (Henry), *The Pretty Pants Bandit* (Jaye), *High School Musical: On Stage* (Troy), *Here I Am* (Spencer), and *The Office! A Musical Parody* (Dwight and Others). He is a recent graduate of The American Musical and Dramatic Academy where he studied musical theatre. He would like to thank his family and friends for coming out to see him!



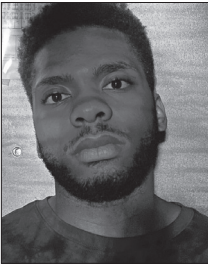
ASHIA BENFORD (Julia U.S.) is excited to be back on the stage working with a fantastic group of artists. She holds a BA in sociology and theatre from Jackson State University. After graduating, Benford joined the professional acting internship program at New Stage Theatre, where she was seen in *Race*, *9 Parts of Desire*, *The Cat in the Hat*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, and *Hairspray*. Her directing credits include: *Once on this Island, Jr.*, *Aladdin, Jr.*, *Matilda the Musical*, and *Pipeline*, and *Sunset Baby*. Currently, she is an acting instructor/director with local theatre companies and privately trains children and adults preparing for educational and professional auditions. Last year Benford earned a MA in clinical mental health counseling and is a therapist at Progressive Movement Counseling. She enjoys working with children and integrates various theatre techniques into the counseling process. She has recently been seen as Ella Baker in *The Debate for Democracy*, a show commissioned by the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. She would like to thank Destin and Audrey-Grace for their continuous love and support.



VIOLA DACUS (Julia) was most recently seen at New Stage Theatre as Princess Dragomiroff in *Murder on the Orient Express*. She has also appeared with New Stage as Mrs. Van Daan in *Diary of Anne Frank*, Emily Brent in *And Then There Were None*, Ouiser Boudreaux in *Steel Magnolias*, and Lady Bird Johnson in *All the Way* among others. As a concert soloist, Viola has performed throughout the Southeastern U.S., New York and London, as well as cities in Israel, Jordan, and Greece. She is associate professor of music and voice area coordinator at Mississippi College, where she was the 2021 recipient of the Mississippi Humanities Council's Teacher Award.



JADE KRYSTAL DYER (Beverly the Bellhop U.S./Swing/Acting Associate) 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 *Tri- County*. As an actor and a person, Dyer prioritizes kindness, respect, and enjoyment for all! She is ecstatic to be a part of the New Stage team, and all of the wonderful things that are yet to come! You can find her on Instagram @jade.krystalll



BAXTER EVANS III (Leo U.S./Swing/Acting Associate) is an actor and combatant from Clinton, Miss where he went to Hinds Community College, and performed in shows called *Water Engine* and *Bus Stop*. Evans then moved to Hattiesburg, Miss 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 KCATCF Region IV back in February 2023. He also served in 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!



JOSEPH FROST (Pasquale Firenzi) lives in Jackson, with his wife Shannon, and their children Nina, Darby, Emory, Beau, and Violet. He has previously appeared in more than 20 New Stage Theatre productions including *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Peter Pan*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *Hell in High Water*, and *A Christmas Carol*, as well as the UnFramed productions of *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Betrayal*, and *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*. As a writer, Frost's plays have been staged around the country, including the premieres in Jackson of the comedies *The Mayfair Affair* and *Mayfair Ma Chère*, as well as *Big Mama's Kitchen*, which was commissioned by Hearth and Mantel Theatre and received a virtual reading with New Stage in the fall of 2020. Frost is currently a theatre teacher at Wells APAC, and is the artistic director of the floodlight theatre company.

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Lend Me A Soprano* following the show on Wednesday, September 13 and Tuesday, September 19 after the evening performances. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



ANNIE GILL (Elena Firenzi) is a singer/actor whose work spans many genres including film, television, theater, opera, and commercials. Most recently, Gill sang the role of Élisabeth Vigée le Brun in the world premiere of *Girondines* with Wilmington Concert Opera, and premiered the title role in *Cooking with Catherine!* as part of the Kennedy Center Theater Festival. Other recent engagements include the Soprano Soloist with the Classic Theatre of Maryland, Easton Choral Arts Society, Landon Symphonette, and the Baltimore Musicales. Gill has performed over 60

roles in opera and musical theater, and has appeared in over 40 concert performances throughout the U.S. and Europe.



MICHAEL KINSLOW (Jerry) is so excited to be performing with New Stage Theatre again. Hailing from Edwards, MS. Kinslow has been seen at New Stage Theatre performing in *Crimes of the Heart*, *A Time to Kill*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Shakespeare in Love* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Other professional theatre credits include *Ripcord*, *Death of A Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf*, *Junk* and *Ink* at Circuit Playhouse in Memphis, TN and *The Laramie Project* with John Maxwell's Fish Tale Group. Other notable performances include

The Pillowman and *Building the Wall* with New Stage Unframed and *Fool for Love*, *See Jane Quit* and *The Rocky Horror Show* with Fondren Theatre Workshop. When not performing, Kinslow enjoys playing board games and working out with his wife, Amanda, and their two sons, Zac and Ashton. Kinslow would like to say a special "Thank You" to all the family and friends who have supported and encouraged him throughout the years.



MARQUITA K. LEVY (Beverly the Bellhop) is excited to be returning to New Stage Theatre to work with such an astounding cast. Levy last appeared at New Stage as Yvette in *Clue*. She is a graduate of THEE Jackson State University with a BS in mass communications. Levy would like to thank her family and friends for their continuous love & support. She dedicates this performance in the loving memory of her mentor, N. Earlean Bogan.



MORGAN McKAY (Jo U.S./Swing/Acting Associate) 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.



MANDY KATE MYERS (Mrs. Wylie U.S.) is excited to be back with New Stage Theatre! She was most recently seen as Mother Abbess in New Stage's 2022 production of *The Sound of Music*. Additional New Stage credits include Mrs. Peacock in *Clue*, Roz in *9 To 5: The Musical*, Babette in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, Ghost of Christmas Past in *A Christmas Carol*, Mrs. Darling in *Peter Pan*, Mama Bear in *Shrek the Musical*, Cindy Lou in *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, Audrey II Puppeteer in *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*. Other favorite performances are

54/54/54 at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York, Kate Monster in *Avenue Q*, Kate Keller (Mother) in *All My Sons*, Latrelle in *Sordid Lives*, CB's Sister in *Dog Sees God*, Amy in *Company*, and Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*. Myers has acted as New Stage's musical director and instructor for the First Stages and Broadway, Jr. Summer Camps for several years. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Myers serves on the Board of Directors for both Fondren Theatre Workshop and Cheshire Abbey canine rescue. She also works as talent coordinator and workshops coordinator for BroadwayCon in New York.



PAUL PELLETIER JR (Jerry U.S./Swing/Acting Associate) 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 in 2023. Over the course of his 7+ year career in the theater, 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 theater, having been both

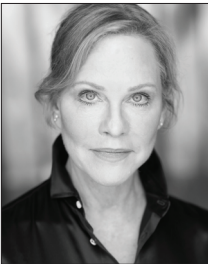
a playwright and actor for companies such as Project Spotlight and The Orlando Fringe Festival, organizations that help produce first time playwrights and independent company's works. Paul seeks to bring laughter to those he meets, both on stage and off it, with a quick joke and chipper outlook on life. When not on the stage, Pelletier is an avid Dungeons & Dragons player, having been in games lasting over 4 years. He also enjoys drawing, video games, swimming, and cooking. Paul is incredibly grateful to be a part of the New Stage Artist Associate program, and can't wait to make new and exciting art with such amazing individuals! www.paulpelletierjr.com



CAMERON PITRE (Pasquale U.S.) is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi where he received his bachelors of fine arts in theatre performance in 2016. Pitre is very excited to be returning home to the main stage of New Stage Theatre for this production, and hopes you enjoy the show! Previous New Stage credits include: *Madagascar the Musical* (Skipper), *Disney's Beauty & The Beast* (Lefou/Beast U.S.), *Sister Act, the Musical* (Joey), *A Christmas Carol* (Christmas Future), and most recently, *Clue* (Professor Plum).



CLAIRE JUSTICE PORTER (Jo U.S.) is so excited to be a part of the *Lend Me a Soprano* cast! Porter just finished her time as a member of the New Stage Associate Artist team as the Acting/Directing Associate. This summer, she music directed for this summer's First Stages Camp and assisted with the Broadway Jr. Camp. She has appeared at New Stage Theatre previously in *The Sound of Music*, *9 to 5*, *Clue*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. With Unframed at New Stage Theatre, she appeared in *What Every Girl Should Know* and *Small Mouth Sounds*. She is a graduate with a BFA in acting for the stage and screen from the University of Mississippi, where some of her favorite roles included #25 in *The Wolves* and Paulette in *Legally Blonde*. Much love to her family and friends who endlessly support her! @clairejusticeporter



JO ANN ROBINSON* (Mrs. Wylie) has worked professionally for more than 40 years in television, film, and regional theatres across the U.S. From 1978-1989, she was based out of Los Angeles where credits included co-starring roles in *The New Love American Style* and the nationally syndicated *Comedy of Comedies*. She appeared as a stand-up comedienne at Hollywood's Laugh Factory and The Ice House. She was also a founding member of the comedy group Half-A-Deck, named as 'Best Bet' by the *LA Times*. Robinson has been a regular at New Stage since 1990. Some New Stage credits include *Sweat*, *Morningside*, *Silent Sky*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Lombardi*, *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Idols of the King*, *Marvin's Room*, *Grace & Glorie*, *Misery*, and *Rumors*. Other regional theatre credits include *Angels in America I and II*, *Lips Together*, *Teeth Apart*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which earned her a Best Actress nomination by the Austin, TX. Cities Circle. Since Covid, Robinson has worked mostly in film and television. She worked on two TV series, co-starred in a Lifetime movie, and did four feature films including *We Have a Ghost*, which upon release, was the #1 movie worldwide on Netflix, and the soon to be released *Hitman* directed by Oscar nominee Richard Linklater.



SARAH BETH SOLOP (Jo) is thrilled to be back at New Stage with this amazing cast and crew. A Jackson native, Solop received her BFA in acting from the University of Cincinnati, CCM Drama Conservatory program, as well as graduated from AADA in Los Angeles. Her favorite professional theater credits include: Essie Carmichael in *You Can't Take It With You*, June Carter in *Ring of Fire the Musical*, Audrey in *As You Like It*, Rory in *Bare: A Pop Opera*, and June in New Stage's *Into the Breaches*. You can currently catch Solop on her comedy page on Instagram @theeveryromcomgirl. Solop would like to thank her family for supporting her in doing this show, despite being in the middle of a year long deployment as a military spouse with three small children. To Ava, Wilder, and Sterling, I love you!



SARAH WADE (Elena Firenzi U.S.) is excited to be returning to New Stage theatre! A native of Jackson. Wade graduated from Millsaps College in 2017 with a B.S. in anthropology and the University of Edinburgh in 2018 with an MSc in medical anthropology. Favorite roles include Ida in *Die Fledermaus*, Frau Zeller/Nun in *The Sound of Music*, the Chanteuse in *Hell in High Water*, M'Lynn in *Steel Magnolias*, Lala in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, Rosie DeLeon in *Bye Bye Birdie*, Mayzie in *Seussical*, and Dolly Tate in *Annie Get Your Gun*. Special thanks to her supportive and loving family and friends!

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS (Director/Artistic Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 36 years. She recently directed *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Sound of Music*, *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) and is on the Mississippi Theatre Association Board of Directors. Reynolds has served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Mississippi Arts Commission and has enjoyed adjudicating

for Poetry Out Loud and the Southeastern Theatre Conference. She was a speaker for the 2021 Story State, 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.

MATTEA PIERCE (Production Stage Manager) is a recent graduate from Belhaven University with a BFA in acting and a B.A. in graphic design. Some past Belhaven production credits include: *The Spitfire Grill* (Stage Manager), *The Wizard of Oz* (Projections Design), and *Steel Magnolias* (Hair and Makeup Design).

CLARA SEITZ (Production Manager/Covid Safety 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. Here for a good time. Not a long time.

RICHARD LAWRENCE (Technical Director/Scenic 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.

ANNA DUNBAR (Lighting Designer) is a filmmaker, writer, sketch comedian, performer, and theatre technician originally from Madison, Miss. She's grateful for every opportunity she has gotten over the years to work with New Stage and The Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre! She has studied and worked at theatres and studios including The Second City, The Annoyance Theatre, Acting Studio Chicago, iO Chicago, Broadway in Chicago, Blue Man Group, and the Neo-Futurists in Chicago, IL. She's also written, produced, designed, and directed multiple film projects including two of her very own web series "Scratch That!" (YouTube) and "Bottled Up" (winner of two film festival awards and participant in 5 film festivals). You are enough. You are loved. Just keep swimming! :)

CALEB BLACKWELL (Costume Designer) 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 58 will mark the twelfth 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 (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.

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.

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*.

NINA FROST (Assistant Costumer) 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 (Assistant Technical Director) 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*.

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

MANDY SPIVAK (Vocal Coach) is a singer and teacher originally from Miami, FL. She has performed in multiple venues across the country including many in the Jackson area. Dr. Spivak received a bachelor of music degree from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, a master of music degree from the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston and holds a doctor of musical arts degree in vocal performance from the Frost School of Music. She currently teaches at Hinds Community College in Raymond, MS where she is on the voice and theory faculty and is the Assistant Director of Choral Activities. Dr. Spivak resides in Clinton with her husband and two children, where she is an active contributor to the artistic community.

CREW

Lead Electrician	Matthew McMurtry
Vernell Allen	Assistant Director
Assistant Technical Director	Antonio Juarez
Assistant Costumer	Nina Frost
Vocal Coach	Mandy Spivak
Production Assistant	Darby Frost
Carpenters	Dave Ellis, Jimmy 'JR' Robertson
Running Crew	Morgan McKay, Jade Krystal Dyer
Board Operators	Baxter Evans III, Paul Pelletier Jr.
Painters	Michael Montgomery
Wigs Designer	Lynn Evans
Sticher	Deonica Davis
Millsaps College Intern	Lizzy Pelto

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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 eighteenth 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 second 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!

XERRON MINGO (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. Most recently, Mingo played the role of Gabriel in *Fences* at New Stage Theatre. 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.

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 twentieth season. Marsh is employed full time with the Hinds County Sheriff's office.

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Box Office: ext. 222

Artistic Director: ext. 224

Managing Director: ext. 246

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Education Director: ext. 232

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