

ELVIS
PRESLEY

JERRY LEE
LEWIS

CARL
PERKINS

JOHNNY
CASH



**MILLION
DOLLAR
QUARTET
CHRISTMAS**

BY COLIN ESCOTT | DIRECTED BY PEPPY BIDDY | MUSICAL DIRECTOR CHRIS BLISSET
DECEMBER 4 – DECEMBER 22, 2024

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ELVIS | JERRY LEE | CARL | JOHNNY
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MILLION
DOLLAR
QUARTET
CHRISTMAS

BY COLIN ESCOTT

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Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Warning: the use of theatrical haze will be used in this production.

FROM SUN RECORDS

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET – DEC. 4 1956



The Million Dollar Quartet is the name given to recordings made on Tuesday December 4, 1956 in the Sun Record Studios in Memphis, Tennessee. The recordings were of an impromptu jam session between Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash. The jam session seems to have happened by pure chance. Perkins, who by this time had already met success with “Blue Suede Shoes,” had come into the studios that day, accompanied by his brothers Clayton and Jay and by drummer W.S. Holland, their aim being to cut some new material, including a revamped version of an old blues song, “Matchbox.” Sam Phillips, the owner of Sun Records, who wished to try to fatten this sparse rockabilly instrumentation, had brought in his latest acquisition, singer and piano man extraordinaire, Jerry Lee Lewis, still unknown outside Memphis, to play the piano on the Perkins session.

Sometime in the early afternoon, Elvis Presley, a former Sun artist himself, but now at RCA, dropped in to pay a casual visit accompanied by a girlfriend, Marilyn Evans. He was, at the time, the biggest name in show business, having hit the top of the singles charts five times, and topping the album charts twice in the preceding 12 month period. Less than four months earlier, he had appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show, pulling an unheard-of 83% of the television audience, which was estimated at 55 million, the largest in history, up to that time. After chatting with Phillips in the control room, Presley listened to the playback of the Perkins’ session, which he pronounced to be good. Then he went into the studio and sometime later the jam session began. Phillips left the tapes running in order to “capture the moment” as a souvenir and for posterity. At some point during the session, Sun artist Johnny Cash, who had also enjoyed a few hits on the country charts, popped in (Cash noted in his autobiography *Cash* that it was he who was the first to arrive at Sun Studio that day). As Jerry Lee pounded away on the piano, Elvis and his girlfriend at some point slipped out. Cash claims in *Cash* that “no one wanted to follow Jerry Lee, not even Elvis”

The following day, an article, written by Memphis newspaperman Bob Johnson about the session, was published in the Memphis Press-Scimitar under the title, “Million Dollar Quartet.” The article contained the now well-known photograph of Elvis Presley seated at the piano surrounded by Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

"Home for the Holidays"	Company
"Santa Claus is Back in Town"	Company
"O, Christmas Tree"	Dyanne & Carl Perkins
"Don't be Cruel"	Elvis Presley
"Blue Christmas"	Company
"Cotton Top"	Carl Perkins
"Go Tell it on the Mountain" / "I Shall not be Moved"	Company
"Chantilly Lace"	Jerry Lee Lewis
"Santa Baby"	Dyanne
"Que Sera, Sera" / "Let the Good Times Roll" / "Hot Diggity" / "Tutti Frutti" ...	Company
"Ring of Fire"	Johnny Cash
"Boogie Woggie Santa Claus"	Company
"Bad Kid"	Jerry Lee Lewis
"Silent Night"	Company
"Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" / "Jingle Bell Rock"	Company
"I'll be Home for Christmas"	Company
"I'll be Home for Christmas" (Reprise)	Elvis Presley
"Santa Claus is Comin' to Town"	Elvis & Company
"Mele Kalikimaka"	Dyanne & Company
"God Rest Ye Marry Gentlemen"	Johnny Cash & Company
"Jingle Bells"	Jerry Lee Lewis & Company
"Run, Rudolph, Run"	Carl Perkins & Company

SETTING

Sun Records Studio, Memphis, Tennessee Dec. 4, 1956

THE CAST

JERRY LEE LEWIS	Alex Burnette
CARL PERKINS	Sam C. Jones*
JOHNNY CASH	Trevor Lindley Craft
ELVIS PRESLEY	Colton Sims
SAM PHILLIPS	Chris Blisset*
DYANNE	Kasie Buono
FLUKE	Paul Heindl
BROTHER JAY	Andrew Dillon

*AEA Member

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. Swing For Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Carl Perkins: Zachary Tate; Also For Johnny Cash: Jacob Heuer[†]; For Dyanne: Cameron Vipperman[†]; For Sam Phillips: Keith Allen Davis, Jr.[†]

[†]Member of the Associate Artist Companys

About the Author

COLIN ESCOTT was born in England and now lives near Nashville, Tennessee. He is the author of *Good Rockin' Tonight: Sun Records and the Birth of Rock 'n' Roll*, the first in-depth account of the Sun Records story. His book *Hank Williams – The Biography* has been adapted into the movie *I Saw the Light*, starring Tom Hiddleston and Elizabeth Olsen. His multi-CD box set, *The Complete Hank Williams*, won a Grammy, and another of his productions, *B.B. King – King of the Blues*, was nominated for a Grammy. *Million Dollar Quartet* received three Tony nominations, including Best Book and Best Musical. Escott was part of the writing/producing team adapting the show for CMT/Viacom. The first season aired in 2016.

THE CAST



ALEX BURNETTE (Jerry Lee Lewis) returns to Sun Studios for the fifth time, previously seen as Jerry Lee at The Alhambra, Surfflight Theatre, Saugatuck Center for the Arts, and Arrow Rock Lyceum. National Tour: *Madagascar the Musical* (1st Nat'l), *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. NY Off-Broadway: *Rescue Rue*, *The Young Girl* *The Devil & The Mill*. Select Regional: *Tesla VS. Edison* (Center for Puppetry Arts). Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre. Holland America Cruise Line (Piano Bar), Cedar Fair Parks' *Haunt* writer/director. Marymount Manhattan College BFA. Thanks to Red,

Peppy, and my management. Merry Christmas, Killer. IG: @AlexBBurnette



CHRIS BLISSETT* (Music Director/Sam Phillips) is thrilled to return to New Stage. Previously here: *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues* and *Ring of Fire*. TV: *Bull* (CBS – Guest Star), *Killer Couples* (Oxygen – Lead Killer). Tours: Both national tours of *Stand by Your Man*, (music director, actor/musician). Off-Broadway: *RockShow* (actor/composer), Joe Iconis' *Bloodsong of Love* (on-stage orchestra). Regional favorites: *Natasha Pierre and The Great Comet*, *Once*, *Twelfth Night*, *Pump Boys*, *Full Monty*, *Great American Trailer Park*, *Unnecessary Farce*,

Almost Heaven (actor/musician, director, music director, combat choreographer). As a composer, “Red” works in New York; where Lena Hall, Brenda Braxton, and Chris Jackson have sung his songs. His new musical *The Caldera* is in process. Awards: “Best Musical Score” (The Creative International Film Festival: short film *Life is Funny*) – “Best Music Direction” (Wilde Award: *Once*). Special thanks to: Francine, Peppy, and this entire company.



KASIE BUONO (Dyanne) is thrilled to return to the role of Dyanne for the seventh time! BFA Musical Theatre - University of Tampa. Recent: Walt Disney World Entertainment, Capital Repertory Theatre (*Million Dollar Quartet Christmas*). Favorite Credits: *Young Frankenstein* (Inga) *Marvelous Wonderettes* (Cindy Lou) *Gilligan's Island* (Mary-Ann) *Heartbreak Hotel* (Swing: Ann-Margret/Priscilla). Special thanks to her family, Natty, PJ, Nathan, & the team at Resolute Artists Agency. www.kasiebuono.com



TREVOR LINDLEY CRAFT (Johnny Cash) is back, baby! Recent credits include *Ring of Fire* (New Stage), *Million Dollar Quartet* (NCL, Shadowland Stages), and *Once* (Casa Manana, The Fulton, Hangar). All the gratitude and love to everyone at New Stage and to the Man in Black.



KEITH ALLEN DAVIS, JR.[†] (Sam Phillips U.S.) is an actor, writer, musician, and director from Meridian, Miss. He recently received his Bachelor of Arts in theatre arts at Alabama State University. During his time at ASU, he has been cast in and worked on productions such as *Dreamgirls*, *The Wiz*, *Tracks*, *Slammin II*, and *Blues for An Alabama Sky*. He has also written for and co-directed Montgomery, Alabama's performance for the worldwide festival of *The Walk* (Little Amal) in 2023. Since graduating, he was cast as Tim Allgood in *Noises Off* at New Stage Theatre. He hopes

to continue to use all the tools he has acquired from Alabama State to propel him successfully into his professional career.



ANDREW DILLON (Brother Jay) was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. He received a B.A. in music education with a concentration in strings K-12 from Jackson State University. A few summers ago, Dillon received a M.A. in teaching from Longy School of Music at Bard College. He believes all children should have access to a robust, active music life and he strives to ensure all children have access to classical music education. When Dillon is not teaching music, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Chelsea and their two children, Mendelssohn & Lazarus.



PAUL HEINDL (Fluke) received B.M. and M.M. performance degrees from The University of Mississippi where he was active in many of the university instrumental ensembles. He is an active clinician, adjudicator, and performer and has played with the Corinth, Meridian, and Mississippi Symphony Orchestras as well as the Mississippi Wind Symphony. Heindl performs regularly with jazz, country, and rock acts locally and regionally and has recorded with Tom Edwards, Katie Heckle, Beth Stapleton, Jason Turner, and many others. He also performs musicals regularly at

high schools, colleges and at New Stage Theatre. He has performed at several area churches and currently plays drum set for Countrywoods Baptist Church in Byram. Heindl is a full-time instructor of percussion at Hinds Community College, is an adjunct professor at Mississippi College, and teaches privately in the Jackson area. He lives in Clinton with his wife, Adriana, and he is the proud father of Annelise, Kali, Haddie, Esli, and Ashlyn.

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Million Dollar Quartet Christmas* following the show on Thursday, December 5 and Thursday, December 12, after the evening performance. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



JACOB HEUER[†] (Johnny Cash U.S) graduated from the University of Mississippi with a BFA in acting for the stage and screen. In college, he starred in several UM Theatre productions, including performing as Mr. Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*, G/Zeus in *Polaroid Stories*, Mr. Callahan in *Legally Blonde*, Robert in *Boeing Boeing*, and Mr. Laurence in *Little Women the Musical*. In the summer seasons of 2023 and 2024, he performed professionally as Ali Hakim in *Oklahoma!* and as Oliver Hix in *The Music Man* at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts. Heuer has spent the last year working as an acting intern at the Florida Repertory Theatre in Fort Myers, Florida, and is looking forward to working with a new group of artists at New Stage Theatre.



SAM C. JONES^{*} (Carl Perkins) New Stage Theatre debut! REGIONAL THEATRE: Many, many productions of *Million Dollar Quartet* and *Million Dollar Quartet Christmas* (as Johnny, Carl, & Elvis) including Ogunquit Playhouse, Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre, Axelrod PAC, Bucks County Playhouse, the Hippodrome Theatre, RMRT, Theatre Zone and San Luis Obispo Rep. The Sacramento Theatre Company: *Pump Boys & Dinettes* (Jim), *Disaster* (Chad), *Man of La Mancha* (Pedro/the Guitarist), *The Tempest* (Ferdinand), *A Christmas Carol* (Topper), *The Donner Party* (Charlie) [World Premiere]. Totem Pole Playhouse: *Pump Boys & Dinettes* (Jackson), Phoenix Theatre Indianapolis: *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Casey). Opera House Arts: *Much Ado About Nothing* (Borachio). CRUISE SHIPS: Norwegian Getaway: *Million Dollar Quartet* (Swing), *Broadway Unplugged* (Ensemble). Sam also leads a rockabilly tribute show, *Rockabilly Rumble*, which tours all over the country. EDUCATION: BA Musical Theatre & Dance from Christopher Newport University. Thank you for supporting live theatre and Happy Holidays! @thesamcjones and @rockabillyrumblesua



COLTON SIMS (Elvis Presley) is so very excited to make his New Stage debut as Elvis in *Million Dollar Quartet Christmas*. This is Colton's third time playing Elvis among other roles such as Joe Cable in *South Pacific* and Paul in *Barefoot in the Park*. He's very grateful to be a part of such a wonderful cast, and thanks his family for all the support. If you'd like to hear more, follow @colt8n and stream his music on all platforms. Enjoy the show!



ZACHARY TATE (Swing For Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, and Carl Perkins) is proud to be making his New Stage Theatre debut! A native of Savannah Georgia, Zachary is a graduate of the University of Georgia, where he received degrees in theatre and journalism. Recent: *Million Dollar Quartet* (Temple Theatre, Rhinoleap Theatre, ECTC, MOMO, Apex Touring), *Million Dollar Quartet Christmas* (Timber Lake Playhouse), *Ring of Fire*, *Little House on the Prairie: The Musical*, *Big Fish*, *The Spongebob Musical*, *Bright Star*, *Pump Boys & Dinettes* (MOMO), Featured Actor with Royal

Caribbean. Special thank you to his parents, Bill & Christine Tate, and his team at Resolute Artists Agency. zacharyjosephate.com



CAMERON VIPPERMAN[†] (Dyanne U.S.) is excited to continue her journey of lifelong learning, creativity, and empathy-building with New Stage Theatre. Originally from Columbia, S.C., she is a graduate of Winthrop University's honors program with a Bachelor of Arts in theatre, concentrating in musical theatre and minoring in education. Some of her favorite performances include *Pippin* (Catherine), *The Wizard of Oz* (Dorothy), *Sweeney Todd* (Johanna), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Montague).

Past New Stage credits include *Noises Off* (Brooke) and *Gaslight* (Nancy U.S.). She has performed professionally as a resident chorus member in three seasons with Opera Carolina. Some of her long-time passions are choral music, piano, musical theatre, history, songwriting, playwriting, summer camp, reading, and drinking coffee on porches. Some of her newer interests are Shakespeare, theatre for youth, vocal pedagogy, and weightlifting. She is so grateful to get to do what she loves as a profession.
Micah 6:8

PRODUCTION TEAM

PEPPY BIDDY (Director) returns to New Stage Theatre having directed last season's *ELF*. He is a professor emeritus of Mississippi University for Women where he served 31 years and directed over 40 productions. During his tenure at "The W", Biddy received the Kossen Award for Faculty Excellence, the Lowndes County Educator of the Year Award, IHL's HEADWAE award, and The Cowboy Maloney Award by the Mississippi Theatre Association, its highest honor, for outstanding contribution to theatre arts in the state. Biddy earned his MFA in theatre at Trinity University (San Antonio, TX) and has worked as either actor, director, or stage manager at such companies as Dallas Theatre Center, Dallas Summer Musicals, Casa Manana (Ft. Worth, TX), Dallas Children's Theatre, and Mill Mountain Theatre (Roanoke, VA). Biddy is a member of Actors Equity Association. He served as the production manager for Sundance Institute's Theatre Lab 2001-2017. New Stage audiences may have seen Biddy in the roles of Robert in *Boeing-Boeing* and Wilber in *Hairspray*, where he has also directed a number of plays and musicals including: *CLUE*, *Murder of the Orient Express*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Christmas*

Carol, The 39 Steps, Smokey Joe's Café, Ain't Misbehavin', The Marvelous Wonderettes, The Foreigner, Shrek: The Musical, The Robber Bridegroom, Vanya, Sonia, Masha, and Spike, and *Sister Act*.

MATTEA PIERCE (Production Stage Manager) is a graduate of Belhaven University with degrees in both theatre and graphic design. Past New Stage credits for Stage Management include: *Noises Off, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, Lend Me a Soprano, What the Constitution Means to Me, Elf The Musical, The Secret Garden, Chicken & Biscuits,* and *Ring of Fire* (ASM). She is excited to be a part of New Stage's 59th Season – Your Place for Broadway Shows.

CASEY NELMS (Production Manager) is a proud Mississippian born and raised in Pearl, Miss. She received her Bachelor of social work from Belhaven University followed by her master's of social work from the University of Southern California. While living in Los Angeles, she transitioned from a robust therapy career to producing and supervising productions in the film industry. Nelms has been fortunate enough to work with companies such as Lionsgate, Patriot Pictures, and Convoke Media, as well as many others, and now happily serves as production manager at New Stage Theatre. She lives on the Ross Barnett Reservoir with her husband and their two droopy-faced beagles, Olive and Mabel.

RICHARD LAWRENCE (Technical Director) serves as the parliamentarian 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.

BRADEN GRAVES (Scenic Designer) is a scenic and lighting designer and technical director. He teaches theatre design at Belhaven University and has previously collaborated with New Stage Theatre on *Elf the Musical* and *Beautiful, the Carole King Musical*. Braden earned his BA in theatre from George Fox University and his MFA from The Ohio State University. His past work includes designing and constructing productions for Broadway Rose Theatre Company, Actors Theatre Columbus, and The Contemporary Theatre Co., as well as serving as a designer and fabricator for Curtis Elliott Design Ltd. His designs have been recognized by the Kennedy Center, USITT, and SETC, and he was featured in the 2023 USITT Emerging Artist Showcase.

ANNALISE V. CAUDLE (Lighting Designer) is a lighting designer based in Oxford, Miss. but originally from DeSoto, Texas. Some of her regional design credits include: *Every Brilliant Thing* (Florida Rep), *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, *Bye Bye Birdie* (Maine State Music Theatre), *Rep Lab* (Milwaukee Rep), and *Elephant and Piggie* (ZACH Theatre). Some of her regional assistant lighting design credits include: *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Paramount Theatre), *Winter's Tale* (The Goodman Theatre), *Things I Know to be True*, *The Chinese Lady*, *In the Heights* (Milwaukee Rep). Caudle recently moved to join the University of Mississippi's department of theatre and film faculty as an instructional assistant professor of lighting design. annalisecaudle.com

ALBERTO MEZA (Sound Designer/Engineer) is a graduate of Belhaven University with a BFA in Theatre. He is from Brandon, MS and is grateful to work in the only professional regional theatre in Mississippi. He began working with New Stage Theatre in 2020 and has continued to work in multiple positions over the recent years. Some of his regional design credits for both Sound and Projections include: *Pipeline*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *Clue*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Ring of Fire*, *Elf The Musical*, *Chicken and Biscuits*, *Beautiful*, and *Gaslight*. He worked with Belhaven University Theatre as their professional guest artist as the Sound Engineer/Designer for their main stage productions, *Wizard of Oz*, *The Spitfire Grill*, and *Cinderella*. He recently had the opportunity to be the Lighting Designer in New Stage Theatre's recent production of *Gaslight* and he was able to Light Design with Hinds CC on their show *Radium Girls* and was able to work as a guest Technical Director at Wells APAC for their recent dance program, *Rodeo*. Meza was the streamer and editor behind the **Thursday Night Virtual Plays, Conversations, & Cocktails** that was presented over the virtual season at New Stage Theatre.

RUTH DENTEL (Costume Designer) is thrilled to be designing her first show at New Stage Theatre. She teaches courses in costume design and construction at Belhaven University and serves as the costume shop manager. Designs for Belhaven include *The Spoon River Project*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Burial at Thebes*, *Suite Surrender*, and *Cinderella*. Her scope of work includes several shows designed in the Houston area. She has served as a technician for various theatres including shakespeare festivals, opera companies, musical theatre companies, and dance. Of note, she traveled 3 years with the National Broadway tour of *Phantom of the Opera* and spent several years with Houston Ballet. When not working on theatrical productions, Dentel is an avid traveler. To date, she has traveled to 6 of 7 continents and all 50 US states, visiting ethnographic museums and learning the nuances of varying cultures. She always takes her camera with her to capture the moments. If she has any time left over, she enjoys singing, baking cookies, drawing and painting.

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.

CREW

Lead Electrician	Matthew McMurtry
Assistant Director	Ashlyn Pinkerton†
Assistant Technical Director	Joey Ford
Production Assistant	Darby Frost
Construction	Ness Keogel
Costume Shop Supervisor	Nina Frost
Stitcher	Jillian Shephard
Carpenters	Dave Ellis, Jimmy ‘JR’ Robertson
Running Crew	Keith Allen Davis Jr.†, Joey Ford, Tatiana Grace†, Jacob Heuer†, Ashlyn Pinkerton†, Cameron Vipperman†
Assistant Sound Engineer/Soundboard Operator	Callie Jackson
Light Board Operator	Michael McMurtry
Lighting Assistant	Isabel Faulkner
Painter	Ashleigh Duncan
Scenic Charge Artist	Michael Montgomery
Company Liaison	Alberto Meza

† Indicates Associate Artist

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 37 years. She recently directed *Noises Off*, *Gaslight*, *Beautiful*, *The Carole King Musical*, *The Secret Garden*, *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 several terms 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.

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 51 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).

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.

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 ninetieth season with New Stage. She currently resides in Madison with her husband, Kyle, their son, River, and their dog Vash.

MIA MCELROY (Marketing Director) is from Jackson, Mississippi. She has a BFA in acting and a certification in film & TV production management. Past experience include working as the events coordinator for Highball Lanes & Capri Theater and serving as the casting director for a number of indie short films. Although this is her first year working at New Stage as an adult, she has many fond memories of being in different Christmas shows and summer productions as a child. She is elated to be joining the New Stage family once again and is excited for this season!

XERRON MINGO (Education Director) is a graduate of Florida A&M University. Born and raised in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. While living in New York City, he worked as a health & safety manager for Apple TV and HGTV productions. He also worked as a testing secretary and production coordinator for television shows with LIONSGATE and AppleMusic Reviews. For the past ten summers, Mingo has worked at Raquette Lake Camps teaching musical theatre to students from all across the world. Mingo could not be more blessed to continue teaching, coaching, and mentoring in his third season as Education Director at New Stage Theatre. During New Stage's 58th season on our mainstage, he directed *Chicken & Biscuits* and *Sister Act, Jr.* Mingo also directed the touring productions of *Junie B. Jones*, *The Musical*, *Anne & Emmett*, and *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Unframed). Mingo played the Macy's Store Manager in *Elf*, *The Musical* and served as the choreographer for the production. He also directed *Mean Girls, Jr.* and played the role of Gabriel in *Fences*. Mingo also played the role of Fezziwig in *A Christmas Carol* at New Stage in 2021. He has worked professionally at a plethora of regional theaters in a handful of states. Mingo continues to live in the light and encourages everyone else to do the same.

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 Associate Artists 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.

MAHRI MCLEAN (Box Office Manager) graduated in 2023 from Belhaven University with a BA in Theatre Performance. This is her third season working with New Stage in various capacities, and she is so grateful for the opportunity to work in live theatre every day. Previous acting and production credits include *The Secret Garden* (Lily u/s), *A Lovely Sunday For Creve Coeur* (Costume Designer), *The Spitfire Grill* (Shelby Thorpe), *The Burial at Thebes* (House Manager), and most recently, *When We Were Young and Unafraid* (Mary Anne, Costume Designer). Mahri is originally from the outskirts of Denver, Colorado, and loves to brag about her five siblings back home, and her wonderful partner Corey.

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 twenty-first 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 59th season.

Greg Campbell
Hannah Fields
Lynn Evans
Walt Grayson

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THE MOUNTAINTOP

By Katori Hall

February 4–16, 2025

The night before his untimely death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. returns to his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis after delivering a speech to local sanitation workers. While waiting for room service, he is visited by a mysterious and beautiful maid, Camae, with whom he begins a humorous and flirtatious conversation that progresses into a soul-searching discussion about their mutual hopes and fears. When Camae reveals her true identity, Dr. King must reflect on his legacy and the challenges facing the civil rights movement.

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*During performances, will remain
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