

HIS MUSIC. HIS LIFE. A TRIBUTE TO THE MAN IN BLACK.

RING OF FIRE

THE MUSIC OF JOHNNY CASH

CREATED BY RICHARD MALTBY, JR.

CONCEIVED BY WILLIAM MEADE

DIRECTED BY CHRIS BLISSET

Adapted from the Broadway Production by
Richard Maltby, Jr. and Jason Edwards

May 30-June 11, 2023



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Sound Designer/Audio and
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Alberto Meza

RING OF FIRE

THE MUSIC OF JOHNNY CASH

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1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036.

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Ring of Fire was originally produced on Broadway by William Meade, CTM Productions, Bob Cuillo, GFour Productions, and James B. Freydborg.

THE CAST

Rheanna Atendido*

Ryan Bergman

Chris Blisset*

Ben Clark*

Trevor Lindley Craft

Andrew Dillon

Jayla Lomax

Jennifer Smith

Claire-Frances Sullivan

*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.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

All music and lyrics by John R. Cash except where otherwise indicated.

Dates indicate year of Johnny Cash recording or release.

ACT I

Opening

Country Boy (1957)

Straight A's In Love (1959)

While I've Got It On My Mind (1974)

Five Feet High and Rising (1959)

The Far Side Banks of Jordan (1977)

By Terry Smith

Daddy Sang Bass (1969)

By John R. Cash & Carl L. Perkins

Flesh and Blood (1970)

Cry, Cry, Cry (1957)

Big River (1957)

I Still Miss Someone (1959)

By John R. Cash & Roy Cash, Jr.

Get Rhythm (1956)

Dirty Old Egg Suckin' Dog (1966)

**Flushed from the Bathroom
of Your Heart** (1968)

By Jack H. Clement

Oh Come, Angel Band (1979)

By William Bradbury & Jefferson Hascall

If I Were a Carpenter (1970)

By James Timothy Hardin

Ring of Fire (1963)

By June Carter & Merle Kilgore

Jackson (1967)

By Jerry Leiber & Billy Edd Wheeler

ACT II

I've Been Everywhere (1996)

By Geoff Mack

Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down (1970)

By Kris Kristofferson

Cocaine Blues (1968)

By T.J. Red Arnell

Delia's Gone (1962)

*By John R. Cash, Karl M. Silbersdorf
& Richard Toops*

Folsom Prison Blues (1955)

Man in Black (1971)

Ragged Old Flag (1974)

I Walk The Line (1956)

All Over Again (1968)

Why Me, Lord (1972)

By Kris Kristofferson

Hey, Porter (1955)

A Boy Named Sue (1969)

By Shel Silverstein

Daddy Sang Bass (Reprise) (1969)

By John R. Cash & Carl L. Perkins

WARNING: Theatrical haze and strobe lights are used during this performance.

There will be one 15-minute intermission

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

I always say the same thing to the cast on the first day. (This is my fifteenth production of *Ring of Fire*, my eighth as director and music director). As rehearsals begin, I always tell them that the key to this show is the music. If we treat the music with respect, the rest will fall into place. The key to the music lies in authority and authenticity. Johnny Cash wielded authority and authenticity with the ease of someone born to it.

Tom Petty once said of Cash, “He recorded ‘I Won’t Back Down’, which almost made me wish I’d never sung it, it was so good. He sang it with such an authority, it sounded like it was written for him.” Therein lies the essence of the man.

Johnny is a singular character in Americana. He is the only country artist to be esteemed by the punk-rock crowd. He is one of few folk artists to grace country radio; a protest singer who was regarded as a patriot; the only rock star who never sang rock music. Beat that. Johnny Cash is one of the most austere figures in American music.

He exists as a Paul Bunyon-esque figure in American mythology. That’s why I have never been too critical of the *Walk the Line* film. The movie is filled with many untruths, exaggerations, and liberties – but each of those is true to the myth of Johnny as an American, a singer, and a highwayman. And I confess, I enjoy him being larger than life; in the case of an intimidating figure like Johnny, the myth is often as true as the tale.

Ring of Fire was developed at several theatres, including for Broadway, and it comes from the opposite perspective (from the film), in that: 1) It does not pretend to be a full biography of the man, and 2) Nearly all the words come from Johnny himself.

I believe in the universality of this show; particularly for Americans. One does not have to be a country or folk music fan to like his music, his narrative, or his story. His life took him from working his family’s farm, to the Air Force, to music stardom, to performing acts of service for prisons and churches. He lived as one of us and as something many of us hope to be.

There are many artists out there who do an act based on an impression of Johnny (I know several of them, and some are excellent.) For this show, I tend to think of it as disrespectful: I’m not Johnny Cash, nor are any of us June. When I assemble a team for *Ring of Fire* I search for a bunch of rock stars who will offer reverence to the music and the man. I invite them to give you their best, and we hope y’all will see what we do: an attempt to honor this catalogue with our voices. Afterward, if you need to hear Johnny, go home and spin some records (and I sincerely hope that you will).

With respect,
Chris Blisset

The Man in Black

From releasing his first hit record in 1955 ("Hey Porter") to winning an MTV Video Music Award in 2003 ("Hurt") just 15 days before his death, Johnny Cash distinguished himself as one of the giant figures in American music. An artist who transcended genre, he wrote and recorded rock-and-roll, blues, rockabilly, country folk, and gospel. He was the only living artist to be inducted into all three major music halls of fame – Rock and Roll, Country Music, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Born in 1932 in Kingsland, Arkansas, and raised on a cotton farm, J.R. Cash was one of six children, and the music of his early life- folk songs, church hymns, work songs from the cotton fields and railroad songs – greatly influenced his work, appearing in songs like "Daddy Sang Bass," "Five Feet High and Rising," and "Flesh and Blood." He recorded more than 1,500 songs and was the recipient of 15 Grammy Awards, including the Living Legend Award in 1991, the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999 and a final Best Country Male Vocal in 2003. He is one of the very few people in history to sell more than 50 million records. The great love story of Cash and soulmate June Carter was celebrated in the 2005 film *Walk the Line*, and Cash and Carter were married for more than 30 years, performing and recording together until June's death in May 2003. Four months later, John passed away of complications from diabetes. In addition to Johnny Cash's immense influence on generations of musicians in almost every genre, he supported many causes: mental health associations, a home for children with autism, refuges for victims of domestic violence, the American Cancer Society, YWCA, SOS Children's Villages, Campus Life, and a burn research center, and he was a champion of Native Americans.

Courtesy of the 2006 Broadway Production of *Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash* at Ethel Barrymore Theatre. 243 W. 47th St., New York, New York.

THE CAST



RHEANNA ATENDIDO* (Featured Performer) is a Filipino-American singer-songwriter from Seattle, now based out of NYC. Acting credits include: *Monstress*, *Teenage Dick*, *We've Battled Monsters Before*, *Wonder Boy*, *Daddy Long Legs*, *Head Over Heels*, *Dance Nation*, *Yoko's Husband's Killer's Japanese Wife Gloria*, and *The Last Five Years*. Playwright/composing credits include: *Breakup Bench*, *Cultural Essay*, *Unstable Connection*, *Inside Out and Back Again*, and *Pabitin* (co-commissioned by The 5th Avenue & Village Theatre). With love, for Mama &

Papa. rheannaatendido.com @rheannaatendido



RYAN BERGMAN (Ensemble/Swing) is excited to be performing for the first time at New Stage Theatre in *Ring of Fire*. Bergman is a junior from Gulfport at Mississippi State University majoring in communications with a concentration in theatre. With focuses in theatre, music, and improvisation, Bergman has been featured in many MSU and Starkville performances, several short films, and recently released his debut album, *Stationary Traveler*. Bergman is also a member of Lab Rats Improv Comedy, performing in shows every other week, and currently leads workshops for students of MSU.



CHRIS BLISSET* (Director/Musical Director/Featured Performer) is excited to return to New Stage Theatre. Previously here: *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues*. TV: *Bull* (CBS – Guest Star), *Killer Couples* (Oxygen – Lead Killer.) Tour: 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, Blisset 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.



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Twitter, and Instagram!



BEN CLARK* (Featured Performer) is a singer/songwriter, composer, actor based in New York City. His debut musical, *The Circus in Winter*, was produced at Goodspeed Musicals in 2014. He received the Kennedy Center Award for Outstanding Musical Composition, and an entrance into the NAMT Festival in New York City, wherein 2-time Tony Award Winner Sutton Foster featured in a leading role. Clark recently had 2 songs featured in the motion picture *A Score to Settle* starring Nicolas Cage. Additionally, he is composer/lyricist of *Skin & Bones*, a commission from University of Nebraska, and *Bruno and the Gospel of Infinity*. Clark was recently seen acting in *Almost Heaven: The Songs of John Denver* at The Rev Theatre Company in Auburn, NY, and has additionally been featured in *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, and *America's Got Talent*. Spending time in Mississippi has been a pleasure, but he misses his partner Dee, who is the June to his Johnny. (@bensingthings)



TREVOR LINDLEY CRAFT (Associate Music Director/Featured Performer) Selected credits include *Once* (2019 Nat'l Tour, Fulton Theater, Hangar Theater, Coachella Valley Rep, Va Rep),*Great Comet of 1812* (Hangar Theater), and *Constellations* (TheaterLab). Find him on SoundCloud under TrevorLindleyCraft or on Instagram @craft.trevor. Big thanks to the Red Menace and to everyone at New Stage Theater!



ANDREW DILLON (Featured Performer) is a Jackson, Miss. native. He is an alumni of Jackson State University with a degree in K-12 music education and has a Master's in teaching from Longy at Bard College. Dillon is in his fifth year of teaching elementary music and also teaches violin, ukelele, and guitar privately. Dillon plays violin, fiddle, and bass around Jackson under the moniker The Amazin' Lazy Boi. He is blessed to be a featured performer at New Stage Theatre and has been a part of many shows such as *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Shrek: The Musical*, *Hairspray*, and more.



JAYLA M. LOMAX (Ensemble/Swing) is a native of Jackson, Miss. 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' Thru The Cracks* (*Blues Journey of Bobby Rush*) and *The Sound of Music*. She recently had the opportunity to tour with Bright Star Children's Theatre. She is very appreciative of her family, friends and anyone who supports the fine arts. Instagram: @__jayymonique

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *Ring of Fire: The Music of Johnny Cash* following the show on Wednesday, May 31 and Wednesday, June 7 after the evening performances. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



JENNIFER SMITH (Featured Performer) is excited to be working with New Stage Theatre, where she has enjoyed roles such as Grace Farrell (*Annie*), Raven/Ensemble (*The Robber Bridegroom*), Abby (*Musical of Musicals: The Musical*, Unframed) and Creda in Leslie Jordan's *Glory! Glory!* She was most recently seen in *Songs for A New World* (Uproar Theatre Company) and has enjoyed working with The Center Players (*Once Upon a Mattress*, *Rex's Exes*, and *Oklahoma!*). Smith has appeared in Dollywood's *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* as Nancy Baxter for five Christmas seasons and toured Asia and Europe with the cast of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (Mrs. Potts). She is a singer, songwriter, and worship leader. Her EP, *Inside Out*, takes an intimate look at loss and grief. Special thanks to her husband, Chris, for his continued love and support!



CLAIRE-FRANCES SULLIVAN (Featured Performer) is a New York City-based and Michigan-bred actor, singer, musician, and writer. Most recently, she was seen in California playing "Girl" in *Once* and headlining several cabaret venues in New York. Sullivan is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Advanced BMI Workshop, Maestra, and the Ring of Keys. She gives all her love to her family and friends. www.clairefrancesullivan.com

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

CODY STOCKSTILL (Scenic Designer) is a freelance scenic and projection designer. Recent design credits include *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Elf: The Musical*, and *Ragtime* at Nashville Rep; *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Into the Woods*, and *Romeo and Juliet* at the University of Mississippi. Stockstill has designed scenery and/or projections for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Hell in High Water*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*, *Peter Pan*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Dracula* at New Stage Theatre. He has an MFA in theatre design and technology from the University of Southern Mississippi.

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 (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.

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 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.

PEPPY BIDDY* (Production Stage Manager) is a professor emeritus of Mississippi University for Women where he served 31 years and directed over 40 productions. 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). 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: *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Clue*, *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 *Spide*, and *Sister Act*. www.peppybiddy.com

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 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.

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.

MATTEA PIERCE (Assistant Stage Manager/Sound Board Operator) 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). She looks forward to working with New Stage Theatre more over the summer.

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 (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 Stage Manager/Sound Board Operator Mattea Pierce
Covid Safety Manager/Running Crew Clara Seitz
Associate Music Director Trevor Lindley Craft
Production Associate/Running Crew Antonio Juarez
Properties Designer/Running Crew Jenna Kahley
Audio Engineer Alberto Meza
Lead Electrician Matthew McMurtry
Scenic Artist Michael Montgomery
Carpenters Darby Frost, Dave Ellis

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 *Every Brilliant Thing, The Sound of Music, The Glass Menagerie, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, 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, 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, backstage, 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!

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 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.

Destin Benford
Belhaven University
Greg Campbell
Davaine Lighting

Jackson State University
Madison Central High School
Band
Slyvia Kasoff

Chuck Reynolds
Amy Robertson
Ron Rodenmeyer

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Check out our website at www.newstagetheatre.com/about/volunteers



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