

New Stage Theatre presents



# HELL IN HIGH WATER

A Play with Music by **Marcus Gardley**

Music by **Vasti Jackson** Directed by **Francine Thomas Reynolds**

Music Directed by **Vasti Jackson** Choreographed by **Tiffany Jefferson**

**January 29-February 10, 2019**

**Sponsored by**



**NEW STAGE**  
*Theatre*

Costume Designer  
**Lesley Raybon**

Lighting Designer/Production Manager  
**Bronwyn Teague**

Scenic Designer  
**Gody Stockstill**

Stage Manager  
**Elise McDonald**

Technical Director  
**Richard Lawrence**

Sound Design  
**Kurt Davis**

Properties Design  
**Marie Venters**

# HELL IN HIGH WATER

New Stage Theatre's production of *Hell in High Water*, by Marcus Gardley,  
is supported, in part, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts

## Community Partners

Mississippi Humanities Council  
Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University  
The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

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There will be one 15-minute intermission

## THE SETTING

Greenville, Mississippi

Part I – April 15, 1927

Part II – April 23, 1927

Part III – June 6, 1927

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

## THE CAST

OLD LUCAS/THE MISSISSIPPI . . . . .	Vasti Jackson
FOREMAN . . . . .	Joseph Frost
HEATHCLIFF . . . . .	Hosea Griffith
BUFORD WASHINGTON. . . . .	Will Lindsey
CEPHUS. . . . .	Xerron X. Mingo
FLORENCE “THE CHANTUESE” . . . . .	Sarah Wade
QUEEN BLACK . . . . .	Kimberly Morgan Myles*
LEROY PERCY . . . . .	John Maxwell
PETULIA CROSERIE . . . . .	Sarah Coleman
WILL PERCY. . . . .	Cliff Miller*
L’AMOUR MASON. . . . .	Hayden Schubert
CHASITY BANKS . . . . .	Michaela Lin
JOE GOODIN. . . . .	Beethovan Oden*
RENA “THE JUKE JOINT SINGER” . . . . .	Sharon Miles
JAMES GOODIN. . . . .	Jordan Williams
NANA PEARSON . . . . .	Jasmine Rivera
PUDDIN’ BIRDSONG . . . . .	Cherry Rendel
REVEREND BOOKER. . . . .	Rev. Charlton L. Johnson

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

## UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. Understudies for ***Hell in High Water*** are: Sarah Coleman; Cherry Rendel; Hosea Griffith; Xerron X. Mingo; Hayden Schubert; and Jordan Williams

## DIRECTORS NOTE

ONE MISSISSIPPI, MANY STORIES is a phrase on the Museum of Mississippi History website. The description of the museum reads that it “encourages people to explore and appreciate our state’s history. We present rich and complex stories that illustrate how our shared past influences our future together.”

Marcus Gardley’s *Hell in High Water* does the same. While working on the play, the company discovered that the often-forgot Great Flood of 1927 revealed the true character of the citizens impacted by the disaster.

Although it fascinated me, the 1927 Flood is something I knew little about. I discovered I was not alone in this when New Stage Theatre first presented a public reading of *Hell in High Water* last season in the Mississippi Plays initiative. Since then, the Mississippi Museum of History has opened. I encourage everyone to visit the museum to see the excellent anchor exhibit about the flood and its impact on Mississippians.

Gardley’s *Hell in High Water* gives us the opportunity to explore, as the Mississippi History Museum suggests, and appreciate our state’s history.

“I am obsessed with these stories that evolve over time and how we need them in order to understand our humanity, says Gardley. “I am also really obsessed with histories that are no longer in the popular consciousness”

The story in our play highlights a history that seems to be no longer in our consciousness. At the heart of the story are two fathers and sons. The real characters of LeRoy and Will Percy and the fictionalized Joe and James Goodin. There was an actual James Gooden who experienced the same ending as depicted in the play. Unfortunately, we do not know much more about James Gooden. It is evident that Marcus Gardley was influenced by a variety of accounts of the flood including parts of *The Rising Tide* by John M. Barry.

In a New York Times review By T. H. WATKINS of John M. Barry’s *The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*, Watkins wrote:

*Near the end of John M. Barry’s extraordinary history there is a kind of epiphany that is as dark as the gelatinous, stinking muck the Mississippi*

*left behind after one of the most devastating floods in American history. For weeks, Will Percy of Greenville, Miss., the son of the Delta plantation owner and Southern entrepreneur-aristocrat LeRoy Percy and the future adoptive father of the writer Walker Percy, had floundered, frustrated by circumstances and his own incompetence as head of the Washington County Red Cross and chairman of a special flood relief committee. Black work gangs and their refugee families resented being held as virtual prisoners in dreadfully squalid "concentration camps" set up along miles of the Greenville levee. Water, food and medical supplies were inadequate. Percy's subordinates held him in contempt, and his equals, including his own father, undercut his authority and ignored his decisions.*

*And now a black man had been killed by a white policeman for refusing to go back to work on levee repairs after having labored all night. The black community seemed certain to explode. To prevent this, Percy, whose family prided itself on its amicable, if typically patrician, relations with black people, addressed a mass meeting of blacks and launched into a diatribe that could have spewed from the likes of Theodore Bilbo. He had "struggled and worried and done without sleep in order to help you Negroes," Percy whined. In return, he said, they had demonstrated a "sinful, shameful laziness," and because of that, "one of your race has been killed. You sit before me sour and full of hatred as if you had the right to blame anybody or judge anybody. . . I am not the murderer. That foolish young policeman is not the murderer. The murderer is you! Your hands are dripping with blood. Look into each other's face and see the shame and the fear God set on them. Down on your knees, murderers, and beg your God not to punish you as you deserve.*

*Greenville's black people -- perhaps too numb with disbelief to react -- did not rebel, but, Mr. Barry writes, "the bond between the Percys and the blacks was broken. The Delta, the land that had once promised so much to blacks, had become, entirely and finally, the land where the blues began."*

*It has been a pleasure to work with Mississippi Blues artist Vasti Jackson. His music for the production harkens back to the time around the flood.*

It was not unusual for multiple issues to appear in a single song such as in “High Water Everywhere” by Mississippi bluesman Charley Patton. Written two years after the flood, Patton sings

Well, backwater done rose all around Sumner now, drove me  
down the line. Backwater done rose at Sumner, drove poor  
Charley down the line.

As he tries to move south to Leland, Greenville, and Vicksburg to escape the flood waters he continues

You know I can’t stay here, I’ll go where it’s high, boy. I would go  
to the hilly country, but they got me barred.

This last line is a reference to the politicians and armed guards who kept African American laborers from leaving the flooded Delta. Lonnie Johnson of New Orleans repeated Patton’s sentiments in “The Broken Levee Blues” of 1928 singing,

They want me to work on the levee, I have to leave my home.  
They want to work me on the levee, that I have to leave my home.  
I was so scared the levee might break out and I may drown.  
The police say work, fight or go to jail, I say I ain’t totin’ no sack.  
Police say work, fight, or go to jail, I say I ain’t totin’ no sack. And  
I ain’t building no levee, the planks is on the ground and I ain’t  
driving no nails.

Apart from what it revealed of human depravity, Mr. Barry says, in *Rising Tide*, the flood of 1927 changed America. It put Herbert Hoover in the White House, even while his duplicity in dealing with blacks helped begin the shift of black voters from the Republicans to the Democrats. It inspired Congress to pass a law putting responsibility for the Mississippi in Federal hands, making it easier for both Congress and the public to accept an even larger Federal presence during the New Deal years. And the pressures the flood brought to bear on the delicate racial fabric of the Deep South caused tears that are difficult to mend.

I would like to thank the staff of the many organizations that have supported the *Hell in High Water* production and ancillary events including the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University and the William Winter Institute of Racial Reconciliation. Their time and knowledge have been invaluable.

I know from our rehearsal experience, that *Hell in High Water* not only examines our past, it also encourages conversations about our future together.

*Oh mean old levee taught me to weep and moan  
Yeah the mean old levee taught me to weep and moan  
Told me leave my baby and my happy home  
From Memphis Minnie's "When the Levee Breaks"*

Francine Reynolds

*Some information from the Mississippi Department of  
Archives and History*

## HISTORY OF THE FLOOD

The 1927 flooding of the Mississippi River was one of the greatest national disasters of the 20th century. A combination of heavy rainfall and failed levees sent a volume of water approximately 1.7 million cubic feet per second rushing downstream from Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico, flooding 27,000 square miles of land, displacing 700,000 people, and causing over \$400 million in damage.

When a levee crevassed at Mounds Landing, Mississippi, around 8 a.m. on Thursday, April 21, it put Greenville, just 12 miles downstream, into the path of the river. By the next day, the Mississippi Delta's largest town was flooded. What happened to the town's 15,000 residents? Who left? Who stayed? Who never returned?

In the days before the Mound Landing levee broke, Mississippians prepared for the river's eventual flooding. Many people fled the city of Greenville. Special trains ran until their tracks became impassable and steamboats and barges brought refugees to Vicksburg and Memphis. Many of these refugees were white women and children. The white families who remained in Greenville were generally long-term residents, ones who were sure the levees would hold and who were determined to do whatever they could to save their homes and belongings.

Another group of people remained in Greenville, although not by choice. African Americans, who made their living on the cotton plantations of the Delta, were oftentimes forced into remaining in Mississippi. At this time,

many African Americans and poor white families worked as sharecroppers in the Delta. The sharecropping system had developed after the Civil War and consisted of plantation landowners renting a smaller section of land to a tenant in return for a share of the crops produced.

While the sharecropping system kept African Americans and poor whites at an economic disadvantage, it made landowners very prosperous. They became concerned that if the African American population were allowed to evacuate the flood zone, they would never return, leaving no labor force to work on the plantations when the flood waters receded. Thus an official government decision was made that these individuals were necessary to help repair damaged levees and reinforce existing ones, as well as assist in recovery and clean-up activities. African Americans were paid as little as 75 cents a day, if at all, for their labor and were living in “tent cities” on the remaining levees. These tent cities were crowded and unclean, despite the efforts of Red Cross workers who constructed kitchens, hospitals, and schools to serve the refugees. Armed guards prevented African Americans from leaving the tent cities and those working on the levees.

Despite this, many African Americans escaped the flood zone and Mississippi. They followed the “river road” north (Highway 61) to cities such as St. Louis, Detroit, and Chicago in search of better jobs, pay, and living conditions. Chicago would go on to become a second home for the blues and helped bring this music from the plantations of the Delta to a national audience. The blues allowed its singers and musicians to express their feelings about a host of issues including segregation, sharecropping, relationships, and events such as the Great Flood.

The Great Migration of African Americans and the blues from the South would continue through the 1960s as people continued to not only search for better jobs, pay, and living conditions but also escape from increasingly violent civil rights confrontations.

The Great Flood of 1927 has had a lasting impact on Mississippi. In 1928 the Flood Control Act was passed giving the federal government control over the lower Mississippi River. Thus, towns along the river such as Greenville and its citizens were no longer responsible for building and maintaining their local levees. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was placed in charge and is still responsible for this today.

*Courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History*

## THE CAST



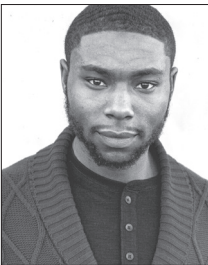
**SARAH COLEMAN** (Petulia Croserie) is a recent graduate from Radford University where she received a B.S in theatre performance. She is currently on tour playing Pinocchio in *Pinocchio* and she was last seen playing Belle/Fred's Wife in *A Christmas Carol: A Ghost Story of Christmas* and Margot Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank* here at New Stage. Favorite past performances include: *Heathers: The Musical* (Heather Duke/Dance Captain), *Oklahoma!* (Laurey Williams), *Anything Goes* (Reno Sweeney), and *Crimes of the Heart* (Meg Magrath). She'd

like to thank her family for the endless support, Megan Ward, Marley Neville, and Dana Grindstaff for being the bomb, and her dog Jax for supplying endless happiness.



**JOSEPH FROST** (Foreman) lives in Jackson, with his wife Shannon, and their children Nina, Darby, Emory, Beau, and Violet. He has previously appeared at New Stage Theatre in *Million Dollar Quartet*, *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Peter Pan*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *All My Sons*, 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*, *Mayfair Ma Chère* and soon *The Heir of Mayfair* to complete the trilogy.

He is the chair of the board of directors of Christians in Theatre Arts and serves on the Playwriting Committee of the Southeastern Theatre Conference. Frost teaches theatre at Belhaven University.



**HOSEA GRIFFITH** (Heathcliff) is a graduate of Mississippi College with a B.A. in vocal performance. He made his debut at New Stage Theatre in *Beauty and the Beast*. Since, he's played the roles of Pablo in *Sister Act* and was also seen in *A Christmas Carol*. At Mississippi College Griffith had the joy of portraying Joe from *Showboat*, Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the Wolf in *Into the Woods*. Griffith is the son of Virginia Riptoe.



**VASTI JACKSON** (Old Lucas/The Mississippi/Musical Director/Composer/Arranger) is a multiple Grammy nominated world renowned guitarist and vocalist, 2017 Arts Ambassador, 2016 Grammy nominee (*The Soul of Jimmie Rogers*), received the 2015 Albert King Lifetime Guitar Award, 2014 Cultural ambassador, 2012 Mississippi Musicians Hall of Fame inductee, and the 2011 Mississippi Living Blues Legend Award recipient. From his early beginnings performing in churches, and juke

joints in McComb, Miss., to festivals, concerts, and theatres around the world. Jackson moves effortlessly from blues, to soul, to jazz, to gospel, to world music, and beyond. As an actor Jackson plays Ike Turner in the international musical tour ***Simply the Best: The Tina Turner Story***. Jackson currently performs as Robert Johnson in the theatrical presentation ***Robert Johnson: The Man, The Myth, The Music***, and as Hobo Bill in the stage play ***Jimmie Rodgers: Americas' Blue Yodeler***. He is a guest artist and composer with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra presentation of Stravinsky's ***A Soldier's Tale***. With the Playing For Change Foundation *Creating Positive Change Through Music and Arts Education*, Jackson has helped develop fifteen music schools in twelve countries with more than two thousand students. He has been featured in magazines such as *Guitar Player*, *Living Blues*, *Back to the Roots*, *Nothing But the Blues*, *Juke Blues* (England), *Blues Revue*, *The 'Sip*, *Blues Matters*, and many other publications. He has performed on Dan Akroyd's ***House of Blues Radio Hour***, Starz Encore Network, WGN-TV in Chicago, and PBS. He has performed, written, produced, and recorded music for HBO, VH1, Mississippi Educational Television, the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC), and radio and television programs in Australia, Uruguay, Finland, and Canada. Jackson is the only Mississippian to have two recordings nominated for the Grammy in the same category, with one win in the same year.



**REV. CHARLTON L. JOHNSON** (Reverend Booker) is a native of Greenville, Miss. and is making his debut performance with New Stage Theatre. He has previously performed with the Hattiloo Theatre of Memphis in ***The Wiz*** (Lion), ***If Scrooge Was a Brother*** (Scroo), and ***Blueprints to Freedom: An Ode to Bayard Ruston*** (Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.). He also serves as the pastor of Washington Temple CME Church and the choral director for Murrah High School in Jackson.

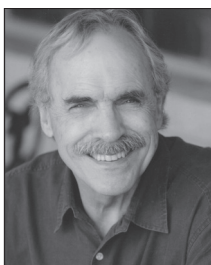


**MICHAELA LIN** (Chastity Banks) graduated from Belhaven University with a BFA in musical theatre. She is currently an adjunct professor in the theatre department and is one of the founding members of local theatre group Hearth & Mantel Theatre. Some of her favorite theatrical roles include: Hermia in ***Midsummer Night's Dream***, The Baker's Wife in ***Into the Woods***, Audrey in ***Little Shop of Horrors***, and Marian in ***The Music Man***. She is thrilled to be joining this cast in her second production at New Stage. Her first show at New Stage was ***A Christmas Story the Musical***. She was also a part of ***A Simply Sondheim*** cabaret

that performed at Duling Hall. She would like to thank her husband, family, and theatre family and friends for their constant support and encouragement.



**WILL LINDSEY** (Buford Washington) is incredibly ecstatic to be making his New Stage Theater debut, accompanying this wonderful cast. Lindsey recently graduated with his M.S. in nuclear medicine from the University of Mississippi Medical Center and enjoys displaying his passion in roles when the opportunity arises. With some film experience, Lindsey has appeared in three local commercials and one web series, *The Secret Smoker*. His most notable plays include *And Then There Were None* and *The Music Man*. Special thanks to the New Stage family for this opportunity and hopeful for many more!



**JOHN MAXWELL** (LeRoy Percy) started touring *Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?* after its premiere here at New Stage in 1981. Since that time he has toured the show all over the world to twelve different countries and most of the continental United States. Maxwell, the winner of the prestigious Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in the state of Mississippi, holds a M.A. Degree in theatre from the University of Mississippi. He has been the recipient of a Tennessee Williams Scholarship to study playwriting at The Sewanee's Writer's Conference, and is the 1992 recipient of the Susan B. Herron Playwriting Fellowship of the Mississippi Arts Commission. Most recently Maxwell was rewarded with two separate fellowships both in performance and playwriting from the Mississippi Arts Commission. He is the founder of Fish Tale Group, a non-profit organization dedicated to revitalizing interest in the Bible through original drama. His last appearance at New Stage was as Joe Keller in *All My Sons*. He recently directed *And Then There Were None* and *Crimes of the Heart* at New Stage. Most recently he received The Best Actor Award for the screen version of *Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?* at The 2011 Twain Harte Film Festival in Los Angeles. He also received Best Actor Award for the role at The 2006 Atlanta Film Festival.



**SHARON MILES** (Rena) received her theatre training from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Miss. Some of her favorite theatrical roles include: Gwen in *A Time to Kill*, Fannie Lou Hamer in *All The Way*, Motormouth Maybelle in *Hairspray*, Miss Nelson in the children's musical *Miss Nelson is Missing*, Winnifred in *Once Upon a Mattress*, and Nella in Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder's play *Gee's Bend*. Other professional theatre credits include: *The Robber Bridegroom*, *It Ain't Nothing but the Blues*, *The Ponder Heart*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *The Miracle Worker*. She would like to thank her family and friends for their endless support and encouragement.



**CLIFF MILLER\*** (Will Percy) is delighted to return to New Stage. Previous productions include *Our Town* and *Red*. Other favorite regional credits include *Hamlet* (Hartford Stage); *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Greenbrier Valley Theatre); *39 Steps* (Mount Gretna Theatre); *Death of a Salesman* with Jeffrey Demunn, *Henry IV*, *The Tempest* (Dallas Theater Center); *Henry IV, Part 1 and Part 2* (Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey); *Play by Play: Unchained* (Stageworks/Hudson); *Blues for Mr. Charlie* (directed by Patricia

McGregor); *House and Garden*, *A Texas Romance* (Austin Playhouse); NYC credits include: *Injunction Granted* (Metropolitan Playhouse); *Our God's Brother* (The Storm Theatre); *The Last Seder* by Allan Knee (WorkShop Theatre Company). Education: MFA from Meadows School of the Arts at SMU.



**XERRON X. MINGO** (Cephus) is a graduate of Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Fla. He was born in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Mingo is so excited to be returning to New Stage after completing the apprenticeship program last year. He has worked professionally at a plethora of regional theaters and was most recently seen in New Stage Theatre's *Sister Act* (TJ). He also appeared in *Shakespeare in Love* (Wabash/Frees), *Disney's Beauty and The Beast* (Monsieur Dar'que), *The Wiz* (The Lion), and *The Hot Mikado* (Pooh-Bah) at the GLOW Lyric Theatre in Greenville, S.C. He was in *Black Nativity* (Narrator) at Westcoast

Black Theatre Troupe. Mingo was a part of *The Great Society* at Asolo Rep and *Hairspray* (Gilbert) at American Stage. IG: @xerron\_m



**KIMBERLY MORGAN MYLES\*** (Queen Black) is proud to perform her third production at New Stage Theatre. She has performed in *Sister Act* as Deloris and *It Ain't Nothing But the Blues* as Greta. Myles is former Miss Mississippi 2007 and a semi-finalist in 2008 Miss America Pageant. She's worked professionally in film and regional theatres across the US and has performed in London, Scotland, and France. Myles has performed in numerous shows such as *Oliver*, *Ragtime*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *The Learned Ladies*, *Fences*, *Hairspray*, and more. She also loves directing plays and musicals as well. Myles has an MFA in

acting from the University of Southern Mississippi and a B.A. in vocal music from Alcorn State University. She currently is an assistant professor of theatre and creative writing at Tougaloo College. Myles is the proud wife of Yohance Myles and mother of Bella Grace and Jackson.



**BEETHOVAN ODEN\*** (Joe Goodin) is a native of Oakland, Calif. who now resides in New York City. Recently, he was cast as Hambone in August Wilson's *Two Trains Running*. Off-Broadway credits: Gafney in *The Fabulous Miss Marie* and Willie in *Master Harold and the Boys*. Regional Theatre credits: Bill Riddick in *Best of Enemies*, Cholly in *The Bluest Eye*, The Stage Manager in *Our Town*, Solinus in *The Comedy of Errors*, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, and Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. He is a graduate of both Cornish College of the Arts and

Southern Methodist University. A winner of the Black Theatre Alliance-Ossie Davis award-Best Featured Actor.



**CHERRY RENDEL** (Puddin' Birdsong) is a recent graduate from the University of West Florida where she received her B.A. in theatre. She is originally from Orlando, Fla. and is very excited to start learning and creating at New Stage Theatre. Some of her favorite shows she has been a part of include *Our Town*, *Once on this Island*, *The Music Man*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and New Stage Theatre's production of *A Christmas Carol*. She would also like to thank her family and friends for their endless love and support.



**JASMINE RIVERA** (Nana Pearson) is a graduate of Jackson State University where she earned a B.A. degree in speech communication and theatre. Rivera's performance credits include shows such as *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, *Sisters Circle*, *Steal Away*, *As Much as I Can*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *The Color Purple*. She is also a former intern at New Stage Theatre. She recently was a swing actor in New Stage's production of *A Christmas Carol*. Rivera is excited to make a return to New Stage Theatre's main

stage and be a part of such a talented cast. She's excited to help bring this historical, beautiful script to life.



**HAYDEN SCHUBERT** (Lamour Mason) is a recent graduate from Southern Illinois University with a BFA in musical theatre. He is currently touring with New Stage's Educational Production of *Pinocchio* as Painter #1. Past Credits include Tarzan in *Tarzan: The Musical* (Grandstreet Theatre), Willard Hewitt in *Footloose: The Musical* (Jenny Wiley Theatre), Peter in *The Diary of Anne Frank* (New Stage Theatre), and Melchior Gabor in *Spring Awakening* (Southern Illinois University). [www.haydenschubert.com](http://www.haydenschubert.com) IG: @haydenschubertactor

## actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after ***Hell in High Water*** following the show on Wednesday, January 30 and Wednesday, February, 6. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



**SARAH WADE** (Chantuese) is excited to be making her New Stage debut with the cast of ***Hell in High Water***. Previous roles include M'Lynn in ***Steel Magnolias***, Lala in ***The Last Night of Ballyhoo***, Rosie DeLeon in ***Bye Bye Birdie***, Mayzie in ***Seussical***, Dolly Tate in ***Annie Get Your Gun***, as well as ensemble in ***West Side Story***, ***The Sound of Music***, and ***Hello Dolly***. Special thanks to supportive and loving family and friends!



**JORDAN WILLIAMS** (James Goodin) feels especially honored to have the opportunity to participate in this year's apprentice company. Williams is currently a student at Tougaloo College pursuing a B.A. in mass communications. Williams has played Al in the critically acclaimed play ***Pill Hill*** by Sam Kelley and Cory Maxson in August Wilson's ***Fences***. He has performed stand-up comedy in the Los Angeles area at several social events and comedy clubs, including the Comedy Store, Comedy Union, The J-Spot, and ***Way too Funny Wednesday*** in Atlanta, Georgia.

Williams ultimately plans to attain a MFA and become an acting professor. He hopes to help make more people smile as he continues to pursue his career.

## THE PRODUCTION STAFF

**MARCUS GARDLEY** (Playwright) is a poet-playwright who was awarded the 2011 PEN/Laura Pels award for Mid-Career Playwright. His most recent play, ***Every Tongue Confess***, premiered at Arena Stage starring Phylicia Rashad and directed by Kenny Leon. It was nominated for the Steinberg New Play Award, the Charles MacArthur Award and was a recipient of the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. His musical, ***On the Levee*** (now ***Hell in High Water***), premiered last summer at LCT3/Lincoln Center Theater and was nominated for 11 Audelco Awards including outstanding playwright. Last spring, his play, ***And Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi***, was produced at The Cutting Ball Theater and received the SF Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award nomination for outstanding new play and was extended twice. He has had six plays produced including ***dance of the holy ghost*** at Yale Repertory Theatre (now under a Broadway option,) ***(L)imitations of***

*Life*, at the Empty Space in Seattle, and *like sun fallin' in the mouth* at the National Black Theatre Festival. He is the recipient of a Helen Merrill Award, a Kesselring Honor, the Gerbode Emerging Playwright Award, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre Award, the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Scholarship, and the ASCAP Cole Porter Award. He holds an MFA in playwriting from the Yale Drama School and is a member of New Dramatists, The Dramatists Guild, and The Lark Play Development Center. He is a professor of playwriting at Brown University.

**FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS** (Artistic Director/Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 30 years. She recently directed *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Silent Sky*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Best of Enemies*, *Our Town*, *Red*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, and *A Time To Kill*. Recent portrayals 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*, *Hairspray*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Lombardi*, *Boeing, Boeing*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Gee's Bend*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Annie*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *A Soldier's Play*, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Reynolds is serving her third term on the Board of Directors for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for American theatre and is on the Board of Directors for the Mississippi Theatre Association. She was a session leader for the 2018 and 2017 TCG National Conventions and panelist for the 2016 TCG National Conference *Theatre Nation*, and the 2016 Mississippi Community College Creative Writing Association Contest. Other associations include Leadership Mississippi Class of 2014; 2017 and 2014 National Endowment for the Arts grants panel, Mississippi Arts Commission grants panel, Poetry Outloud adjudicator, Southeastern Theatre Conference adjudicator, Mississippi High School Drama Festival adjudicator, South Atlantic Modern Language Association national conference presenter, and Mississippi's English Speaking Union Shakespeare Competition judge. Reynolds worked as a locations casting director in film and television for several years. Originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Reynolds enjoys living in Jackson with her husband, Chuck.

**ELISE MCDONALD** (Stage Manager) has lived several places in Mississippi but calls Jackson home. She is a graduate of The University of Southern Mississippi with a B.A. in theatre. She began stage management while at Southern and was able to work on shows such as *Light Up the Sky*, *A Lesson From Aloes*, *Fallen Angels*, *The Good Doctor*, *Big Love*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Electra*. She worked as a production assistant in stage management at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and was backstage for several shows including *Les Miserable*, *The Foreigner*, *The Elephant Man*, and *The Who's Tommy*. McDonald begins her eighth season at New Stage. Some of her favorite past productions include: *Dracula*, *The Foreigner*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Hairspray*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Whipping Man*, *All The Way*, *Peter Pan*, *One Man Two Guvnors*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Million Dollar Quartet*, *And Then There Were None*, and *Shakespeare in Love*. She is excited to be working with New Stage and would like to thank her family and friends for their unending support!

**TIFFANY JEFFERSON** (Choreographer) is the director of the Hinds Community College Dance Department in Raymond where she was the 2018 Hinds Hero, 2013 Humanities Teacher of Year Recipient, and the 2009 Life Star Award Recipient. Jefferson is the artistic director and founder of Montage Theatre of Dance and one of the lead instructors of Dance Works Studio in Byram. She obtained her M.A. in dance education from Wichita State University, and received her undergraduate degree from Oklahoma State University where she was the 1996 Miss Black Oklahoma and an All-American collegiate cheerleader. She has won several choreography awards, and she has choreographed for numerous New Stage productions including *It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues*; *Shrek The Musical*; *I Love You, Your Perfect, Now Change*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *A Christmas Story*; *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; *Willy Wonka, Jr.*; *Pirates of Penzance, Jr.*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie, Jr.*; *Beauty and the Beast, Jr.*; *Music Man, Jr.*; and *Legally Blonde, Jr.* Jefferson has performed at Carnegie Hall, The Lincoln Center, The Kennedy Center, Bridgewater College, The Shanghai Acrobats, The Historic Little Rock Central High School, the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, the Scottish Fringe Festival, Verona and Milan Italy, and in Honolulu, Hawaii. Jefferson is happily married to her husband Joe and is also the proud mother of three, Jordan, Jones, and Kennedy who dance with her as well.

**CODY STOCKSTILL** (Scenic Designer) is a theatre designer and director based out of Starkville. He is currently assistant professor and coordinator of theatre in the department of communication at Mississippi State University. He has an MFA in scenic and costume design from the University of Southern Mississippi. In addition to serving as resident scenic and lighting designer at MSU, Stockstill has designed scenery for *Shakespeare in Love*, *Madagascar: A Musical Adventure*, *Peter Pan*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Dracula* at New Stage Theatre, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Kentucky Shakespeare Festival.

**BRONWYN TEAGUE** (Production Manager/Lighting Designer) has recently completed her MFA in lighting design at the University of Southern Mississippi. While at Southern, she designed lights for several productions including *Peer Gynt*, *The Seagull*, *The Matchmaker*, and *Machinal*. Prior to Southern she earned a B.A. in theatre from Mississippi University for Women. Credits from the W include lighting design for *Stuart Little*, *When Night Falls*, and special effects design for *Blythe Spirit*. Teague has worked on numerous productions with Tupelo Community Theatre as lighting designer, scenic artist or technical advisor. Immediately prior to New Stage, she was technical director for Carey Dinner Theatre in Hattiesburg. Teague also spent several years working for different theaters in the Salt Lake City area including Desert Star Playhouse, Hale Center Theatre, and Utah Contemporary Theatre.

**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 two Best Set awards at Mississippi Theatre Association conferences.

**LESLEY RAYBON** (Resident Costume Designer) joined New Stage in 2004 as an acting intern and since then has worked both onstage and off. She has found her place as the Resident Costume Designer and has enjoyed designing shows, and working with guest designers and costume shop assistants. Some of her favorite shows include: *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *A Wrinkle in Time*. When not at New Stage, she is a barista at Starbucks, a puppeteer with Puppet Arts Theatre, wife to her wonderful husband Lawrence, and mother to her daughter EV.

**KURT DAVIS** (Sound Designer/Audio Engineer) is a Jackson area native and graduate of the University of Mississippi, where he earned his BFA in theatre design and technology. While there, he designed and engineered multiple Ole Miss Theatre productions, including *The Crucible* and *The Laramie Project*, and was awarded 2nd place for sound design for *Marisol* and *Oedipus Rex* at SETC. After graduation, he moved to Washington, D.C. and worked as a sound operator at The Shakespeare Theatre Company for two-and-a-half years. While there, he got the opportunity to work directly with Broadway-based sound designers on multiple STC productions. Davis is excited to further his knowledge and experience in his first season at New Stage Theatre.

**MARIE VENTERS** (Production Associate/Properties) is a recent graduate of Belhaven University where she received her B.A. in theatre with an emphasis in dramatic writing. During her time at Belhaven, Venters worked backstage on several shows, such as *Godspell*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Big Fish: The Musical*, and *The Music Man*. Her stage managing credits include: *Night Mother* and *Into the Woods*. Venters also worked as a scenic painter on most shows during her time in Belhaven's theatre department, including: *Doubt*, *Shrek: The Musical*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Big Fish: The Musical*, *Mayfair Ma Chere*, *The Music Man*, *The Glass Menagerie*, and others. She was nominated for Best Sound Design by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in 2017 for *Big Fish: The Musical*. This is Venters' first season at New Stage Theatre. She is very thankful for the opportunity, and would like to thank everyone in her life for their ongoing love and support.

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Assistant Director .....	Hayden Schubert
Dance Captain .....	Xerron X. Mingo
Audio Engineer .....	Kurt Davis
Light Board Operator .....	Jeffrey Cornelius
Running Crew .....	Marie Venters, Elizabeth Thiel, Wendie Shepherd, Cecil Hill, Skyla Luckey
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## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> grade across the state. In 1990, she served as vice president of administration and finance for Imageworks - Films for Business. She helped produce commercials, documentaries and training videos. Buck resides in the Heatherwood neighborhood in Jackson with her husband David, who retired in 2009 after a 26 year military career with the U. S. Air Force and the Mississippi Air National Guard. He has recently initiated beekeeping as a new hobby.

**BILL MCCARTY III** (General Manager) is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and has extensive background in wholesale and retail sales and real estate property management with the Jitney Jungle stores. McCarty has volunteered with New Stage for more than 40 years in all areas including production, running crews, lighting and sound design and 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 Directors. His favorite design credits are *Greater Tuna* 1986 production, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Gin Game* and *A Christmas Carol* 1984 production.

**MELISSA TILLMAN** (Marketing Director) is a graduate of Belhaven University where she received a B.A. in technical theatre. She served as the audience services 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*. Her most recent work includes *Noye's Fludd* and *La Boheme* with the Mississippi Opera. This is Tillman's thirteenth season with New Stage. She currently resides in Madison with her husband, Kyle; son, River; and their dog, Vash.

**DREW STARK** (Education Assistant) was last seen onstage in *A Christmas Carol*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sister Act*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *A Time to Kill*, *33 Variations*, the Eudora Welty New Play Series premiere staged reading of *Glory! Glory!* and Mississippi Play Series *Perfect Arrangement*. A Mississippi native, B.A. College of William and Mary. Prather Production Tours: *CATS*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Anything Goes*, *Legally Blonde*, *Funny Girl*, *Evita*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Phantom*, *42nd Street*, *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Swing!*, *Brigadoon*, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *A Wonderful Life*, and *White Christmas*. This past summer, Stark returned to The Little Theatre on the Square in Sullivan, Ill. to perform Applegate in *Damn Yankees* and Young Frankenstein in *Young Frankenstein*.

**ALISA PRICE** (Box Office Manager) begins her third season at New Stage. She is a former intern of New Stage Theatre, and performed in *Death of Salesman*, *Charlotte's Webb*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Most recently, she appeared in New Stage's Unframed production of *Steal Away*. Price has performed with several theatre companies in Virginia, including Swift Creek Mill Playhouse, Theatre IV, and Richmond Theatre Company for Children, where she later became the Marketing and Sales Director. She is an active member of the theatre ministry at Jackson Revival Center. Price resides in Ridgeland with her husband, Hillery; and their children, Darryn, Gabriel, and Elijah.

**BETTY WONG** (Box Office Assistant/Education Assistant) begins her 14th season at New Stage. She enjoys traveling to schools throughout the state with the Professional Intern Company to provide live theatre experiences for students 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 has contributed to the growth and expansion of New Stage's Educational 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, and a M.Ed. from Delta State University.

**BARBARA MARTIN** (Box Office/Business Office Assistant) is in her 23rd season at New Stage. First joining the staff in 1997, she has served as box office assistant for 19 years and as box office manager for the two years before and during the Intermission Season. She also assists with development, reviews and maintains theater insurance coverages, and performs other business office functions.

**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 15th season. Marsh is employed full time with the Hinds County Sheriff's office.

# HELL IN HIGH WATER

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Based on the wildly-successful books by Jill Conner Browne, *The Sweet Potato Queens* is a high-powered musical that tells the story of Jill and her closest friends and how they learn to grab life by the horns and live it on their terms. *Appropriate for ages 18+*

**Tickets On Sale Now!**

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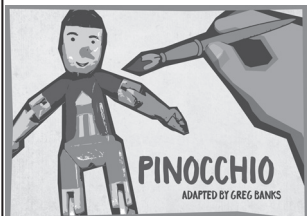


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## New Stage Theatre Arts-in-Education

### PINOCCHIO

Adapted by Greg Banks



Adapted by Greg Banks, this captivating and unique 50-minute retelling of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* will ignite the imagination of young audiences everywhere! This updated, fast-paced version of the classic tale follows the little puppet Pinocchio on his quest to become a real boy. Will the all-too-tempting delights of puppet shows and alluring adventures be too much? Children are invited to interact with the cast throughout Pinocchio's many adventures. Follow Pinocchio as he discovers that only by being truthful, selfless, and kind will his dream of becoming a real boy become a reality.

*\*Best suited for elementary school audiences.*

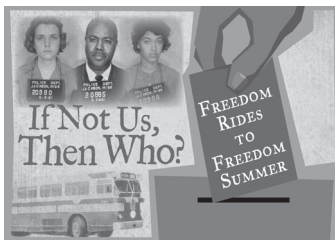
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Music chronicles two historic events that made an unforgettable impact on American history....and Mississippi. In 1961 thirteen "Freedom Riders" began a journey to fight racial segregation. In 1964, Mississippians and out-of-state volunteers alike organized

"Freedom Summer", a massive voter registration drive to give African Americans a voice in politics. Interspersed with freedom songs from the movement, this production encourages us to remember that America is at her best when we are working for the common good of all of its citizens. Featuring stories from famous participants like Fannie Lou Hamer and Senator John Lewis, as well as lesser-known heroes like James Zwerg, and Diane Nash, this play recounts the lives of these brave heroes whose bold actions continue to inspire us all.



*\*Best suited for middle and high school audiences.*

*\*Available for performance beginning January 7, 2019 through May 10, 2019.*

*For more information on educational programs at New Stage Theatre, contact Sharon Miles, Education Director, 601.948.3533 ext. 232.*

## **New Stage depends on the support of volunteers to keep the curtain rising.**

You can make a difference by giving a few hours of your time. Some jobs require a regular commitment throughout the season, say once or twice per show; others are assigned “as needed.” If you have a little free time and want to get involved, there are many opportunities available from ushering to scenic painting, poster hanging to ticket taking.

## **There is bound to be a job for YOU!**

Check out our website at [www.newstagetheatre.com/about/volunteers](http://www.newstagetheatre.com/about/volunteers)



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