

A TIMELESS TALE OF A SPECIAL PLACE WHERE MAGIC, HOPE, AND LOVE GROW.

THE SECRET GARDEN: SPRING VERSION

By **MARSHA NORMAN**
and **LUCY SIMON**

Directed by Francine Thomas Reynolds
Music Director Jim Moak
Choreographer Drew Stark

February 6 — 18, 2024

Sponsored by
**SAM E. AND BURNICE C.
WITTEL FOUNDATION**

NEW STAGE
Theatre

Costume Designer
Caleb Blackwell

Lighting Designer
Annalise Caudle

Technical Director
Richard Lawrence

Production
Stage Manager
Mattea Pierce

Properties Designer
Jenna Kahley

Scenic/Projections Designer
Samuel Sparks

Sound Designer/Engineer
Alberto Meza

THE SECRET GARDEN: SPRING VERSION

By Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon

The Secret Garden: Spring Version is presented
by arrangement with Concord Theatricals. www.concordtheatricals.com

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

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

There will be use of theatrical fog and strobe lights during this production.

SETTING

1911-1912

India and Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire, England

The History of Frances Hodgson Burnett's **The Secret Garden**

It is fascinating to go back and see the modest beginning of a book that is repeatedly cited as one of the most influential and beloved children's books of all time. Yet Frances Hodgson Burnett would be astonished today to learn that she is known primarily as a writer for children, when the majority of her fifty-three novels and thirteen produced plays were for adults. Then came *The Secret Garden*.

Two life-changing events contributed to the genesis of *The Secret Garden*, which was written late in Burnett's life. The first was the death of her sixteen-year-old son Lionel, who became increasingly ill in Washington while she was living away. Her husband, Dr. Swan Burnett, wrote her urgent letters about their son's failing health, but it was not until the diagnosis turned out to be tuberculosis that she rushed home to take Lionel on a desperate circuit of European spas. When he died in her arms in Paris at the end of 1890, she was completely devastated.

The second loss was that of her beloved home Maytham Hall in Kent, in southern England, which she had leased for ten years. In 1908 the leaseholder decided to sell the grand house, and Burnett was forced to leave the home where she had spent the happiest months of each year. There she cultivated extensive gardens, held parties, and tamed a robin as she wrote outdoors at a table in a sheltered garden. Both the robin and the gardens made their way into *The Secret Garden*.

Burnett loved the combination of the gothic and the natural worlds, and the ability of children to understand and appreciate them in everyday life. In *The Secret Garden*, she was able, whether she recognized it or not, to recover from her two enormous losses. Unlike her son Lionel, Colin Craven is restored to health at the end of the novel. And unlike Maytham Hall, the gardens at Misselthwaite Manor continually bloomed.

As we celebrate 113 years of *The Secret Garden*, the book has never been more popular or influential. Whole shelves in bookstores carry its many editions, and it has been translated into nearly every known language. Children around the world continue to love the story of the children who, with the help of nature and positive thinking, bring the world back to life. As Burnett said to a friend, "I know quite well that it is one of my best finds." Children and adults one hundred years later, still agree.

- By Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina

Source: <https://publicdomainreview.org/essay/100-years-of-the-secret-garden/>

MUSICAL NUMBERS

There's a Girl	Rose/Albert/Ensemble
The House Upon the Hill	Rose/Albert/Ensemble
It's A Maze	Ben/Ensemble
The Girl in the Valley	Archibald/Lily/Ensemble
Show Me The Key	Mary/Dickon
The Girl I Mean to BeMary
I Heard Someone Crying	Lily/Mary/Martha/Archibald/Ensemble
Act One FinaleLily
Lily's Eyes	Dr. Craven/Archibald
Wick	Dickon/Mary
Come to My GardenLily/Colin/Ensemble
Come Spirit Come CharmMary/Dickon/Martha/Ensemble
Hold On	Martha
Letter Song	Martha/Mary/Archibald
How Could I Ever Know?	Lily/Archibald
In the Garden	Dickon/Mary/Colin
Finale	Lily/Albert/Ensemble

THE CAST

Archibald Craven	Nicholas Perna
Dr. Neville Craven	Hosea Griffith
Lily Craven	Sarah Wade
Mary Lennox	Lucy Ledford (**)
Mary Lennox	Amani Palmer (*)
Colin Craven	Ethan Hartfield (**)
Colin Craven	Jeremiah Hardin (*)
Martha	Jamie Shannon Ferguson
Albert Lennox/Ensemble	Cameron Pitre
Rose Lennox/Ensemble.	Lauren Parkinson (**)
Rose Lennox/Ensemble.	Jade Krystal Dyer (*) +
Mrs. Medlock	Mandy Kate Myers
Ben Weatherstaff	Ward Emling
Dickon	Lawson Marchetti
Mrs. Winthrop/Ensemble.	Raven McGowan
Robin/Ensemble.	Morgan McKay +
Ensemble	Zack MacDonald, Michaela Lin, Paul Pelletier Jr.+, Drew Stark, Erick Weeks
Youth Ensemble	Brooklyn Bailey(**), Mattie Ellis(*), Gigi Fitzsimmons(**), Twyneseia Graise(*), Amos Hardin(*), Brooklynn Jefferson(*), Greenlea Pace(**), Natalie Pace(**), Charlie Perna(**), Olivia Perna(**), Bailey Roberson(*), Maggie Kate Roberson(*), Oliver Roberson(*), Austin Sampson(**), Rhen Tanaka(*), and Dylan Thomas(**)

UNDERSTUDIES

Understudies never substitute for listed performers unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance. For Martha: Morgan McKay+; For Dr. Craven: Drew Stark; For Mary: Gigi Fitzsimmons and Bailey Roberson; For Colin: Austin Sampson and Oliver Roberson; For Lily: Mahri McLean; For Dickon: Paul Pelletier Jr.+; For Archibald: Erick Weeks; For Ben: Zachary McDonald; For Mrs. Medlock: Michaela Lin; For Mrs. Winthrop: Jade Krystal Dyer+; Swings: Baxter Evans III, Hannah Fields, and Zane Hartfield

+*Member of the Associate Artist Company*

(*)Rose:
February 6, 9, 15, and 17 at 7:00 p.m.
February 11 and 25 at 2:00 p.m.

(**) Garden:
February 7-8, 10, 13, 16, and 18 at 7:00 p.m.
February 18 and 24 at 2:00 p.m.

THE CAST



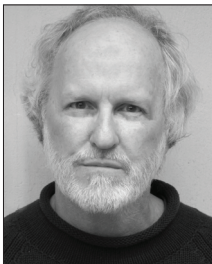
BROOKLYN BAILEY (Youth Ensemble) (**) has been in theatre programs for seven years! She has performed in *Mean Girls, Jr.*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Willy Wonka KIDS*, *The Sound of Music*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *Children of Eden, Jr.* She has also worked on *The Wiz*, where she trained as stage crew with hair and makeup. Bailey is from Jackson, and she loves to sing, act, listen to music, bake, and crochet. Her goal for the next year is to travel the world doing what she loves. In the span of 20 years, she wants to be a professional singer and actress.



JADE KRYSTAL DYER (Rose Lennox/Ensemble/Mrs. Winthrop U.S./Acting Associate) (*) is a 2023 graduate of Florida State University with a bachelor of arts in theatre on a performance track. Some of her performance experience includes *Hair the Musical*, *Julius Caesar*, *Sweet Charity*, and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. When not on stage, Dyer also enjoys taking on other roles in entertainment, such as writing, producing, and directing an original Choreopoem titled *Dear, [BLANK]; Love, Anonymous* as well as acting as an associate producer and production coordinator on an indie television series called *Tri-County*. As an actor and a person, Dyer prioritizes kindness, respect, and enjoyment for all! She is ecstatic to be a part of the New Stage team, and all of the wonderful things that are yet to come! You can find her on Instagram @jade.krystalll



MATTIE ELLIS (Youth Ensemble) (*) is thrilled to be back at New Stage for *The Secret Garden: Spring Version!* Ellis is 16 years old and a junior at St. Andrew's Episcopal School. Some of her favorite shows she's performed in include *Murder on the Orient Express* (Helen Hubbard), *Mean Girls, Jr.* (Cady Heron), *Little Women* (Amy March), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Helena), and *Matilda* (Hortensia). This spring you can see her as Morticia in *The Addams Family* at St. Andrew's! Ellis wants to thank her teachers, friends, and family for their continued support!



WARD EMLING (Ben Weatherstaff) is a 1976 graduate of Millsaps College and trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Little Theatre of Jackson: *Jimmy Shine*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. The Millsaps Players (under the direction of Lance Goss): *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hamlet*, *Robert and Elizabeth*, *Hotel Universe*, *The Lady's Not for Burning*. New Stage: *Peg O My Heart*, *The Little Foxes*, *As You Like It*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, the folk opera *The Ponder Heart*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sweat*, *Murder on the Orient Express*, *A Christmas Carol*, *9 to 5*, and *The Sound of Music*. Last year he was seen as Lear in *King Lear* with the Mississippi Shakespeare Festival and in John Maxwell's *A Christmas Tale*.



BAXTER EVANS III (Male Swing/Acting Associate) is an actor and combatant from Clinton, Miss where he went to Hinds Community College, and performed in shows called *Water Engine* and *Bus Stop*. Evans then moved to Hattiesburg, Miss to study theatre at the University of Southern Mississippi, performing in the shows *Once in a Lifetime*, *She Kills Monsters*, *The Addams Family*, and *Macbeth*. While at USM, Evans received a KCATCF nomination, allowing him to travel to the KCATCF Region IV back in February 2023. He also served in

Alpha Psi Omega, Harlem (a BIPOC theatre club), and Skip the Script (an improv club). Evans was recently seen in *Elf The Musical* at New Stage Theatre.



JAMIE SHANNON FERGUSON (Martha) is thankful to return to New Stage and work with this incredible team. She teaches voice and theatre in Tuscaloosa, AL, and at Mississippi College, where she also directs the musicals. Favorite roles include: Donna in *Mamma Mia*, Diana in *Next to Normal*, and Dorothy in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. She holds a B.M. from Mississippi College and an MFA from The Boston Conservatory. jamieshannonferguson.com @beltertrash



HANNAH FIELDS (Swing) is a recent Belhaven University Graduate with a B.A. in theatre performance from Crofton, Maryland. Her previous Belhaven experience includes Queen Constantina in *Cinderella*, Maid in *The Imaginary Cuckhold*, Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz*, Truvy Jones in *Steel Magnolias*, and Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. This is her second show at New Stage Theatre, with her first role being Nun/Ensemble/Maria Understudy in *The Sound of Music*. Though Fields works often in the box office, she would like to thank

New Stage for welcoming her back for another performance. Welcome to the Garden!



GIGI FITZSIMMONS (Youth Ensemble) (**) is an eighth grade student at Brookhaven Academy. She is excited to return to New Stage this season. She performed with NST last season in *The Sound of Music* as Brigitta von Trapp. She has performed with a variety of theatres since the age of six and has been in over twenty live theatre productions. Favorite roles include: Dorothy Gale in *The Wizard of Oz*, Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde Jr.*, Rusty in *Footloose Youth Edition*, Evie in *Disney's Descendants*, Annie in *Annie Jr.*, Matilda in *Matilda the Musical* and Michael Darling

in *Peter Pan*. She is an Alumni of Broadway Artists Alliance in New York and excited to join them again this summer!



TWYNESEIA GRAISE (Youth Ensemble) (*) is 16 years old and from Port Gibson, Miss. Graise is currently in eleventh grade. She is absolutely thrilled to be a part of *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*. Previous performances include: *Mean Girls, Jr.* and *Chaos Before Christmas*.



HOSEA GRIFFITH (Dr. Neville Craven) is a graduate of the University of Mobile (M.M.) and Mississippi College (B.M.). Griffith has had the pleasure of portraying many roles in Jackson and the surrounding areas including roles in *Sister Act*, *Bright Star*, and *A Christmas Carol* (New Stage Theatre). Recently, Hosea was seen in *Songs of a New World* (Uproar Theatre) and *9 to 5* (New Stage Theatre) as well as various workshops and concert readings of the musical play *Slippin' Through the Cracks in Jackson* (New Stage Theatre), New York, and Chicago

(Goodman Theatre).



AMOS HARDIN (Youth Ensemble) (*) is an 8-year-old Jackson native who attends McWillie Elementary. He has been singing and dancing since he could first walk. His first time in the stage lights came during New Stage's production of *Seussical KIDS* in the summer of 2023. Hardin loves to express himself through the arts. He also enjoys creating with his brothers and designing cool outfits. Hardin has a heart of gold and is very excited to be in the *The Secret Garden: Spring Version* with his brother, Jeremiah, and his friends.



JEREMIAH HARDIN (Colin Craven) (*) is 11 years old and is in the sixth grade at Bailey APAC. Since he was young, he has enjoyed the arts and specializes in impersonating voices. As an excited member of the APAC Theatre Department, he will soon be inducted into Junior Thespian Troupe 88317. This past fall, Hardin enjoyed performing in the 2023 Broadway Revue of *Newsies* at Wells APAC. He has written a historical comedy play and is in the middle of writing a second play with his younger brother, Amos. He is ecstatic to perform in his first New Stage production!



ETHAN HARTFIELD (Colin Craven) (**) is excited to be returning to New Stage for his seventh show. He goes to Northwest Rankin Middle and is currently in the eighth grade. Hartfield has appeared in *The Sound of Music* (Kurt), *Andrea and the Lion* (Leo), *Matilda the Musical* (Nigel), and three different versions of *A Christmas Carol*. Hartfield has even written his own show called *The Chaos Before Christmas* that was performed by New Stage's Youth Acting Troupe. He would like to thank his mother, father, step-father, step-brother, and sister for all of the support in

the world. He would also like to thank Francine for this wonderful opportunity!



BOOKLYNN JEFFERSON (Youth Ensemble) (*) is an eighth grade theatre and performing arts student at Bailey APAC Middle School. She has enjoyed performing in various shows at New Stage Theatre and is very excited to be in her first main stage show. Jefferson's recent credits are *Newsies* (Wells APAC Broadway Review), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Amiable Arts), *Aladdin Kids* (New Stage Theatre), and *Anxiety in Orange* (Wells APAC). Brooklynn was featured in lead roles as Gretchen in New Stage Theatre's Broadway Jr. Summer Camp production of

Mean Girls, Jr., Evilene in Amiable Arts production of *The WIZ*, middle Eve in New Stage Theatre's *Children of Eden, Jr.*, young Fiona in New Stage Theatre's *Shrek, Jr.*, and Jordan in the Wells APAC's production of *The Happiness Shop*. When not on stage, Jefferson enjoys singing, playing her trombone in band, spending time with family and friends, and playing with the family pet dog, Donnie.



LUCY LEDFORD (Mary Lennox) (**) is very excited to be returning to work with both old and new friends at New Stage. Ledford previously appeared as Matilda in *Matilda, the Musical* in 2020. She is a 10th grader at Madison Central High School where she is active in her school and local community theatre. Ledford is currently in Reveille Show Choir and a member of the Mississippi Angels Dance Team. Some of her favorite roles include Nancy in *Oliver!, Jr.* at Madison Middle School and Beth in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* at Center Players

Community Theatre. She also enjoys singing and playing the violin in her father's band, The Accumulators, alongside her sisters. They have appeared on many stages over the years, including several performances on Thacker Mountain Radio Hour. Ledford is grateful to her family and the New Stage community for this opportunity!

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after *The Secret Garden: Spring Version* following the show on Wednesday, February 7 after the evening performance. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



MICHAELA LIN (Ensemble/Mrs. Medlock U.S.) is excited to be returning to New Stage! Previous New Stage credits: *Hell and High Water* and *A Christmas Story: The Musical*. She has recently been seen at Laurel Little Theatre as Abby in *Ripcord*, Portia in *Something Rotten*. She has her BFA in musical theatre from Belhaven University. Some past favorite roles include: Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods*, and Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*. She also directs and choreographs in the greater Jackson area and serves on the board at Laurel Little Theatre.



ZACK MACDONALD (Ensemble/Ben U.S.) is excited to be part of his first professional theatre production. His past roles have included Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* and Rocky in *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He graduated from the University of Missouri Kansas City in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in political science and moved to Jackson later that year to take a job with APAC Mississippi Inc., where he currently works as the Materials Manager.



LAWSON MARCHETTI (Dickon) is an actor, director, writer, producer, stage manager, and educator from Jackson, Mississippi. He has his bachelors in English from the University of Mississippi. He is currently a managing producer of Snakebird Productions, as well as a math and theatre instructor at Jackson Preparatory School, where he most recently directed the competition piece *Sunday in the Park with George*. He has appeared in several New Stage productions over the past few seasons, and he is delighted to return for *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*.



RAVEN MCGOWAN (Mrs. Winthrop/Ensemble) is a Jackson native and graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, where she holds a BFA in theatre performance. She is excited to join the cast of *The Secret Garden: Spring Version* in her first production at New Stage. Prior performance credits include Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mary in *A Christmas Tale*, Columbia in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and Cordelia in *King Lear*.



MORGAN MCKAY (Robin/Ensemble/Martha U.S./Acting Associate) was most recently seen at New Stage Theatre as Debater in **What the Constitution Means to Me**. She is a recent graduate from Liberty University with a BFA in musical theatre, where some of her roles included Harriet Smith in the musical **Emma**, Charlotte in **Oliver!**, and Rebecca Gibbs in **Our Town**. She would like to thank God, her parents, and everyone at New Stage for their love and support.



MAHRI MCLEAN (Lily Craven U.S.) is excited to join the cast of **The Secret Garden: Spring Version!** A recent theatre graduate of Belhaven University, this production will be her first at New Stage Theatre. Recent credits include: Fairy Godmother in **Cinderella**, Rapunzel in **Into the Woods**, and Shelby Thorpe in **The Spitfire Grill**.



MANDY KATE MYERS (Mrs. Medlock) is excited to be back with New Stage Theatre! She was most recently seen as Mother Abbess in New Stage's 2022 production of **The Sound of Music**. Additional New Stage credits include Mrs. Peacock in **Clue**, Roz in **9 To 5: The Musical**, Babette in **Disney's Beauty and the Beast**, Ghost of Christmas Past in **A Christmas Carol**, Mrs. Darling in **Peter Pan**, Mama Bear in **Shrek the Musical**, Cindy Lou in **The Marvelous Wonderettes**, Audrey II Puppeteer in **Little Shop of Horrors**, and **It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues**. Other favorite performances are **54/54/54** at Feinstein's/54 Below in New York, Kate Monster in **Avenue Q**, Kate Keller (Mother) in **All My Sons**, Latrelle in **Sordid Lives**, CB's Sister in **Dog Sees God**, Amy in **Company**, and Mrs. Lovett in **Sweeney Todd**. Myers has acted as New Stage's musical director and instructor for the First Stages and Broadway, Jr. Summer Camps for several years. A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi, Myers serves on the Board of Directors for both Fondren Theatre Workshop and Cheshire Abbey canine rescue. She also works as talent coordinator and workshops coordinator for BroadwayCon in New York.



GREENLEA PACE (Youth Ensemble) (**) is a ten year old student at Sylva Bay Academy in Bay Springs, Miss. She is excited to be cast in her first New Stage Theatre production! She has previously portrayed Matilda Wormwood in the 2022 Laurel Little Theatre production of **Matilda The Musical, Jr.** She was also a member of the cast in the 2023 Laurel Little Theatre production of **Mary Poppins, Jr.** Pace enjoys being a member of the competitive gymnastics team at Miller Gymnastics where she is currently a level 4 gymnast.



NATALIE PACE (Youth Ensemble) (**) is 17 years old and is from Clinton, Miss. She has been in Broadway Jr. shows at New Stage since 2016, such as *Shrek, Jr.* and *Frozen, Jr.* most recently appearing as Yonah in *Children of Eden, Jr.* She has also participated in main stage shows such as *Beauty and the Beast*. Pace is a member of New Stage's Youth Acting Troupe and served as a counselor for the First Stages Camp. She is grateful for the opportunity to be part of this cast during her senior year of high school. Pace plans to attend college in the fall to study musical theatre.



AMANI PALMER (Mary Lennox) (*) is 12 years old and in seventh grade at Shirley Simmons Middle School. She is the daughter of T'Ondrea and Jonathan Robinson and Jermaine Kelly. Palmer enjoys making food, drawing, and acting. She has been in *Children of Eden, Jr.*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Fences*. Palmer would like to thank her family for making her dreams come true.



LAUREN PARKINSON (Rose Lennox/Ensemble) is thrilled to be joining her fourth production with New Stage after previously appearing in *9 to 5: The Musical*, *Clue*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Elf The Musical*. Although she usually works behind the scenes in film production, Parkinson has been involved in theatre since her undergraduate days at Georgetown College in Kentucky, where she played roles such as Caroline in *I and You*, Major John Wesley Powell in *Men on Boats*, and Catherine Donahue in *These Shining Lives*. She would like to thank her dad for always

encouraging her.



PAUL PELLETIER JR (Ensemble/Dickon U.S./Acting Associate) is an actor, singer, playwright, and combatant. Pelletier is also a graduate of The University of Central Florida, having graduated with a BFA in acting in 2023. Over the course of his 7+ year career in the theater, Pelletier has been a part of several fantastic productions. Ranging from spectacular musicals like *RENT*, *Little Women the Musical*, and *Into The Woods*, to classic pieces such as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *Indecent*. Pelletier is also a huge advocate for new voices and pieces in the

theater, having been both a playwright and actor for companies such as Project Spotlight and The Orlando Fringe Festival, organizations that help produce first time playwrights and independent company's works. Paul seeks to bring laughter to those he meets, both on stage and off it, with a quick joke and chipper outlook on life. When not on the stage,

Pelletier is an avid Dungeons & Dragons player, having been in games lasting over 4 years. He also enjoys drawing, video games, swimming, and cooking. Paul is incredibly grateful to be a part of the New Stage Artist Associate program, and can't wait to make new and exciting art with such amazing individuals! www.paulpelletierjr.com



NICHOLAS PERNA (Archibald Craven) is excited to be returning to New Stage for the first time since *Rising Towards a New Day* and is thrilled to be able to tell this beautiful story with both of his children in the youth ensemble. He has been hoping to perform Archie since he was a teenager. A regular performing artist with Opera Mississippi, he recently was announced as their new Executive Director. Dr. Perna is Associate Professor of voice and producer of Lyric Stage @ MC at Mississippi College. One of the most in-demand voice teachers in the United States, his students perform all over the globe in opera and musical theatre. Perna is also National Vice President for Outreach for the National Association of Teachers of Singing.



OLIVIA PERNA (Youth Ensemble) (**) is excited to be in New Stage Theatre's production of *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*. She is in sixth grade at Lovett Elementary, and she loves dancing, cheering, and singing. Perna has been in various shows at New Stage including *Suessical KIDS* where she played Jojo. She has also been in *A Year with Frog and Toad* and *Pirates Past Noon*. Olivia also recently performed in the opera *Carmen* with Lyric Stage @ MC. Perna would like to thank her friends for motivating her, her voice teacher Mrs. Sarah Pigott, New Stage for letting her be in this amazing show, and especially her family for always being there for her.



CHARLIE PERNA (Youth Ensemble) (**) cannot describe how exciting it is to be in this production. Perna is in eighth grade at Clinton Junior High School. He has been in *The Sound of Music* (Friedrich von Trapp), *Mean Girls, Jr.* (Damien), and an adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing* (Benedick) as well as many other shows through New Stage Theatre's education programs and Clinton Arrow Theatre. He enjoys reading, listening to music, playing piano, and running the lightboard for productions for Lyric Stage @ MC. He would like to thank God and his family, especially his sister and father who he is so excited to perform with for the first time.



Buddy U.S.)

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



competing in soccer and archery for St. Augustine.

BAILEY ROBERSON (Youth Ensemble/Mary Lennox U.S.) (*) is honored to be back at New Stage in *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*. She has previously appeared under the New Stage spotlights as Amanda Thripp in *Matilda the Musical* in 2020 and Brigitta von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* in 2022. This year she is a seventh grade student at St. Augustine School, where she loves to grow her mind and spend time with her many friends. Roberson has five siblings that she adores. When not practicing or performing, Roberson enjoys playing piano, adventuring, and



and being a sixth grade student and soccer player at St. Augustine School.

MAGGIE KATE ROBERSON (Youth Ensemble) (*) is delighted to be returning to the stage as part of the Youth Ensemble for *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*. You may have seen her previously at New Stage Theatre as Marta Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, or several of New Stage's Summer Theatre Student performances. She has loved playing everything from a singing pirate to a suitcase-carrying bird. When not on stage, Roberson enjoys playing with her five siblings, making friends everywhere she goes, planning parties, science experiments, participating in piano competition,



in *A Year with Frog and Toad*. In addition to loving theatre, Roberson is a talented piano player, loyal friend and brother, soccer club member, and honor roll student.

OLIVER ROBERSON (Youth Ensemble/Colin Craven U.S.) (*) is joining the cast as a Youth Ensemble member and Colin's understudy for *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*. Roberson is a fourth grade student at St. Augustine School. He loves riding his bike, playing with his friends and siblings, and building projects. Roberson has always been a bit theatrical and made his debut last year in a play-reading for *Chickens in Texas* here at New Stage. He's also enjoyed several years of the First Stages Camp at New Stage Theatre as Yertle the Turtle in *Suessical KIDS* and as Squirrel



AUSTIN SAMPSON (Youth Ensemble) (**) is 16 years old and in eleventh grade at Clinton High School. He is the child of Amber McMillian, Anthony Evans, Brandon McMillian, and Angelia Sampson! Sampson is excited to be in *The Secret Garden: Spring Version!* He enjoys listening to music, singing, and talking to close friends. This is Sampson's debut performance on the main stage at New Stage Theatre! Sampson would like to thank his mother, grandmother, and therapist for their love and support!



DREW STARK (Choreographer/Ensemble/Dr. Neville U.S.) is thrilled to return to New Stage after receiving his MFA in theatre at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Fla. Drew recently completed his teaching residency at Orlando Shakes with performances in *Kinky Boots*, *Henry V*, *Christmas Carol*, *Charlotte's Web*, and the world premiere of *A Big Day for Baseball: A Magic Treehouse Adventure*. Stark holds a B.A. from the College of William and Mary. Previous New Stage performance credits include *Elf The Musical* (Ensemble) *Bright Star* (Daryl Ames), *Sweet Potato Queens* (George), *Murder in the Orient Express* (Michel), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Mr. van Daan), *Shakespeare in Love* (Marlowe), and *33 Variations* (Mike). Drew is a theatre educator and professional fight director/choreographer. Instagram: @drewstarkactor Website: drewstarkactor.com



RHEN TANAKA (Youth Ensemble) (*) is ecstatic to be returning to the main stage! They are 16 years old and a junior at St. Andrew's. Recently, they have been in *What the Constitution Means to Me* (Debater), *Mean Girls, Jr.* (Cady Heron), *The Sound of Music* (Young Nun), and *A Christmas Carol* (Suzanne Cratchit) at New Stage, and *The Wizard of Oz* (Scarecrow) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Anne) at St. Andrew's. Tanaka has attended New Stage camps and classes since 2012 and is excited to reunite with familiar faces and meet fantastic new ones! Thank you to my friends for always being there for me! All my love to my family!



DYLAN THOMAS (Youth Ensemble) (**) is 17 years old and goes to Madison Central High School. Thomas is from Madison, Miss and started participating in Broadway Jr. Summer Camp in 2021 as Mama Bear in *Shrek, Jr.* She has since performed as Mama Noah in *Children of Eden, Jr.* and Janice in *Mean Girls, Jr.* She was seen on stage as Jetsam in her school's production of *The Little Mermaid*. She is incredibly excited and grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with this wonderful group of people on this enchanting show.



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

supportive and loving family and friends!



ERICK J. WEEKS (Ensemble/Archibald U.S.) is a native of Pearl, Miss, and is currently working with the LGBTQ Fund of MS. Prior to his work with the Fund, he served as the Theatre Director at Pearl High School for 10 years where he was the proud sponsor of Thespian Troupe 4537 and was recognized as a national EdTA Volunteer of the year in 2018. Erick was last seen on stage in Fondren Theatre Workshop's production *Sordid Wedding* as well as Pearl Community Theatre's Production *The Drowsy Chaperone* as Aldopho. Other credits include *Second, Samuel*, *A*

Charlie Brown Christmas, and New Stage's productions of *Elf The Musical* and *Bright Star*. His favorite directing credits include *The Addam's Family*, *Rumors*, *39 Steps*, *Grease*, *High School Musical, Jr.*, and *Seussical Jr.* He would like to thank his parents, twin brother, and sister for their continued support and send his well wishes to the incredible cast and crew of *The Secret Garden: Spring Version*.

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS (Artistic Director) has been the artistic director at New Stage since 2006 and has worked as a theatre artist for 36 years. She recently directed *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Lend Me a Soprano*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *I Just Stopped By to See the Man*, *The Debate for Democracy*, *Pipeline*, *Bright Star*, *Hell in High Water*, *Sweat*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Silent Sky*, and *Best of Enemies*. Favorite acting roles include Dr. Katherine Brandt in *33 Variations*, Polly in *Other Desert Cities*, Lucille in *Dividing the Estate*, and Edna Earle in Eudora Welty's *The Ponder Heart*. She has directed a variety of shows including *All The Way*, *The Whipping Man*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Our Town*, *Red*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Hairspray*, *Mahalia: A Gospel Musical*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Lombardi*, *Boeing, Boeing*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Gee's Bend*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Annie*, *A Soldier's Play*, and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*. Reynolds is a 2022 recipient of a Directing Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission. She served three terms on the board of directors for the Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and is on the Mississippi Theatre Association Board of Directors. Reynolds has

served on grant panels for the National Endowment of the Arts and the Mississippi Arts Commission and has enjoyed adjudicating for Poetry Out Loud and the Southeastern Theatre Conference. She was a speaker for the 2021 Story State, www.storystate.msstate.edu, produced by Mississippi State University. Originally, from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Reynolds enjoys living in Jackson with her husband, Chuck.

TIM MOAK (Music Director) lives in Madison, and greatly enjoys being part of New Stage productions, musicals, and other special events. Moak received both bachelor and master of music degrees from Mississippi College. He has served as a public school music educator, piano teacher, church music minister, accompanist, choral clinician and adjudicator. Moak is Vice President of Operations at TempStaff. He is thrilled to be working with this very talented cast.

SAMUEL SPARKS (Scenic Designer) is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Millsaps College. Some of the shows he's designed for New Stage include *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *A Soldier's Play*, *Annie*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Day*, *Moonlight and Magnolias*, and *Crowns*. He has a B.A. in theatre from Millsaps College and an M.F.A. in theatre with an emphasis in directing from the University of Houston.

MATTEA PIERCE (Production Stage Manager) is excited to be a part of her first season here at New Stage Theatre. Past New Stage credits include: *Mean Girls Jr.*, *Lend Me a Soprano*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Elf The Musical*, and *Ring of Fire* (Assistant Stage Manager).

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.

CALEB BLACKWELL (Costume Designer) is native of Magee and is excited to return to the New Stage family! Blackwell holds a B.A. in theatre from the University of Southern Mississippi and has worked all over the South and Mid-South, including Wayside Theatre (resident designer) and Playhouse on the Square (designer for the second stage). Season 58 will mark the twelfth season he has teamed up with New Stage. Past favorite credits include *The Sound of Music*, *Hairspray*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Bright Star*. Much love to his family and friends for the love they've shown at the start of this new adventure.

ALBERTO MEZA (Sound Designer/Audio Engineer/Covid Safety Manage) is a graduate of Belhaven University 19' with a BFA in Theatre. He is from Brandon, Miss. and is excited to work in the only regional theatre near his hometown. He began working with New Stage Theatre since January 2020 and has continued to work here for over the past 3 years. Some of his regional design credits for both sound and projections include: *Pipeline*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *A Christmas Carol*, *I Just Stopped by to See the Man*, *A Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *9 to 5*, *Clue*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Every Brilliant Thing*. He has also worked with Belhaven University Theatre as their professional guest artist as the sound engineer/designer for their main stage productions of *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Spitfire Grill*. Meza was also the streamer and editor behind the **Thursday Night Virtual Plays, Conversations, & Cocktails** that was presented over the virtual season at New Stage Theatre.

JENNA KAHLEY (Properties Designer) is from Rockford, Ill. She has a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing from Belhaven University. She's previously worked for Gateway Playhouse in Bellport, NY.

ANNALISE 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

MATTHEW MCMURTRY (Lead Electrician) is a recent graduate of Belhaven University. His recent work with New Stage includes *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Clue*, and *9 to 5: The Musical*. He served as the lighting designer for New Stage's summer camp productions of *Frog and Toad*, *Kids* and *Children of Eden, Jr.* McMurtry has also served as lighting designer for Belhaven University's productions of *Steel Magnolias* and *The Burial at Thebes*.

NINA FROST (Assistant Costumer) is from Jackson and is a recent graduate of Belhaven University with a B.A. in theatre. She has constructed many costumes over the past three years, but her favorite was Dorothy's blue dress in *The Wizard of Oz* at Belhaven. Recently, she spent her summer at the New London Barn Playhouse in New London, N.H. as a stitcher and wardrobe crew. Frost's most recent credit was costume designer for the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre's production of *What Every Girl Should Know*. Frost is excited to be at New Stage Theatre this season!

ANTONIO JUAREZ (Assistant Technical Director) is very excited to be taking his first few steps in the world of theatre. He is a recent graduate of Hinds Community College where he studied simulation and animation. He was raised in the Brandon area and first became involved with theatre at Northwest Rankin High School where he created costumes and set design for a production of *The Zombie Prom*. He found working in the theatre environment fulfilling and when he was offered an opportunity to work with New Stage Theatre in November 2021 making the phantom cloaks and working as the

sound board operator for *A Christmas Carol*, he didn't hesitate to accept the offer. Juarez most recently designed the set for the New Stage touring production of *Junie B. Jones, The Musical* and the Unframed Series at New Stage Theatre's productions of *Blues for an Alabama Sky* and *Sunset Baby*.

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

CREW

Lead Electrician Matthew McMurtry
 Assistant Director for Youth Vern Allen+
 Assistant Technical Director Antonio Juarez
 Costume Assistant Nina Frost
 Assistant Lighting Designers. Maddi Gunderson, Ashton Necaise
 Stitcher Deonica Davis
 Wigmaker Lynn Evans
 Carpenters Dave Ellis, Jimmy 'JR' Robertson, Darby Frost
 Running Crew Darby Frost, Nina Frost, Antonio Juarez, Oliver Morgan
 Dialect Coach Jamie Shannon Ferguson
 Sound Board Operator Mallory Koegel
 Properties Designer/Light Board Operator Jenna Kahley
 Scenic Charge Artist Michael Montgomery
 Covid Safety Manager Alberto Meza

+Member of the Associate Artist Company

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

DAWN BUCK (Managing Director) has worked on staff at New Stage for more than 20 years. She began her career at New Stage in the fall of 1981 as a box office assistant. Since that time, she has worked as box office manager, audience services director, house manager, bookkeeper, business manager and marketing director. Buck's other professional artistic credits include the USA International Ballet Competition, the Thalia Mara Arts International Foundation – World Performance Series presenting a series of performing artists including American Ballet Theatre, Aquila Theatre of London, Joshua Bell, Alvin Ailey, Cirque Eloize, Wynton Marsalis, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. She attended Belhaven University and is an alumnus of Leadership Jackson and a graduate of Dale Carnegie. Buck also completed a residency on theatre management at the Eugene O'Neill Center through a grant from the Foundation for the Extension and Development of Professional American Theatre

(FEDAPT). Prior to serving on the staff of the USA International Ballet Competition, she worked with America Reads - Mississippi overseeing and training 270 AmeriCorps members who provided one-on-one tutoring in reading for students in primary K through the 3rd grade across the state. Buck also worked with Imageworks - Films for Business, assisting with the production of commercials, documentaries and training videos. She resides in the Heatherwood neighborhood with her husband David and has two sons who live in the big "N" cities of New York and Nashville.

BILL MCCARTY III (General Manager), a graduate of the University of Mississippi, has extensive background in wholesale and retail sales and real estate property management with the Jitney Jungle supermarket chain. The company was founded by his Grandfather Will McCarty and two Holman cousins in 1919. The families grew the business into a profitable billion dollar Mississippi-based company led by Bill McCarty Jr, his father, Henry Holman and many talented associates which sold in 1996. During his grocery career, Jack Stevens and Ivan Rider recruited Bill in 1973 to run a follow-spotlight for *The Gershwin Show* at the theatre's original Gallatin Street location. He has continued to volunteer with New Stage for more than 50 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 eighteenth season with New Stage. She currently resides in Madison with her husband, Kyle, their son, River, and their dog Vash.

JERIANNA SHAW (Marketing Director) is a graduate of Mississippi State University where she received a B.A. in communication studies. This is her second season with New Stage Theatre. She currently resides in Jackson with her partner, Gray, their daughter Poppy, and their cats 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!

BETTY WONG (Box Office Assistant/Education Assistant) begins her 18th season at New Stage. She continues to enjoy traveling to schools and towns throughout the state with the Professional Apprentice Company to provide live theatre experiences for students and adults of all ages. When not on the road, you can find her in the box office. She has also served for many years as a volunteer in other areas of the theatre. Her professional work experiences in education and her passion for live theatre have contributed to the growth and expansion of New Stage's Education Department. She has served as a consultant to school districts throughout the state of Mississippi. Wong has a B.S. in educational psychology from Mississippi State University, a M.Ed. from Delta State University, and recently won the 2019 Exemplary Arts Service Award from the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education.

CARLA MARSH (House Manager) received her B.A. in criminal justice with an emphasis in juvenile justice from Jackson State University. She is pleased to be returning to New Stage for her twentieth season. Marsh is employed full time with the Hinds County Sheriff's office.

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 58th season.

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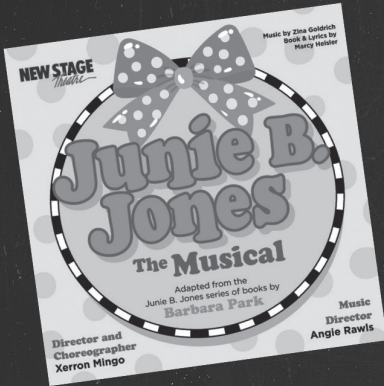
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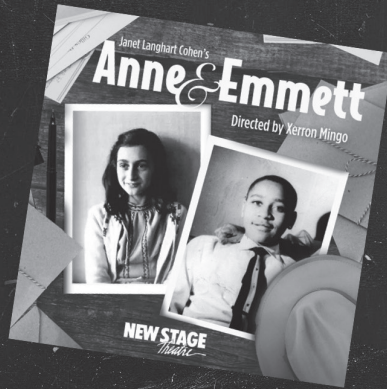
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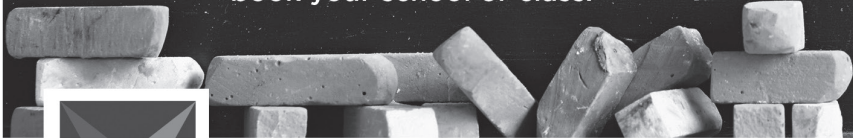
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