

NEW STAGE THEATRE
PRESENTS

SWEAT

BY LYNN NOTTAGE

DIRECTED BY FRANCINE THOMAS REYNOLDS

APRIL 23-MAY 5, 2019

AMERICAN MADE...
IT'S MORE THAN JUST A JOB.

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Theatre

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SWEAT

Co-commissioned by
Oregon Shakespeare Festival's
American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle
And Arena Stage
World premiere produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival
This production of SWEAT was first presented in New York by
The Public Theatre
(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)
Originally produced on Broadway by Stuart Thompson and Louise L. Gund.
"SWEAT is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York."

There will be one 10-minute intermission

THE SETTING

Reading, Pennsylvania 2000/2008

THE CAST

EVAN Herman "J.R." Johnson
JASON David Lind*
CHRIS Jordan Williams
STAN Ward Emling
OSCAR David Alexander Worley-Criado
TRACEY Jo Ann Robinson*
CYNTHIA Sharon Miles
JESSIE Malaika Quartermann
BRUCIE Prince Duren

*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. For Jason: Hayden Schubert; For Chris: Cecil Hill, Jr.; For Oscar: Alberto Meza; For Cynthia: Cherry Rendel; For Jessie: Sarah Coleman; For Brucie: Hosea Griffith.

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I find myself filled with pride and excitement about New Stage Theatre's production of *Sweat*. I am so proud that New Stage is supported by patrons and audiences that are eager to see new plays and I am excited that we are finally presenting a play written by the great Lynn Nottage.

About Lynn Nottage, actress Martha Plimpton just wrote for *Time* magazine's coverage of 100 influential people, "Lynn Nottage is dedicated to opening up stories that we're not used to hearing. She brings a sense of curiosity to all sorts of subjects and a clear eye to notoriously difficult parts of American culture and society. She's the only writer I can think of working now, in any medium, who so understands poor white Americans, with compassion for their terror but no pity for the racial attitudes people end up getting stuck in."

I grew up in an area of the country that was near to, and very much like, the communities in Rust Belt towns like Reading, Pennsylvania. Iron ore was first discovered, in 1844, in my home town of Negaunee, Michigan; where - to paraphrase Vince Lombardi - mining was not everything - it was the only thing. By 1905, a mining boom would define the character of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (UP) for decades. Those decades were marked by strikes, slowdowns, mine closings, the boom and bust cycle - and environmental costs - that are the devil's bargain in an industry that excavates the land. The region's dependence on mining is connected to steel production and mirrors the Rust Belt's dependence on manufacturing and the steel industry.

I agree with Martha Plimpton; I know Lynn Nottage understands. When I first discovered *Sweat*, I was struck by the sense of familiarity its characters created for me. I know these people; I recognize their struggles as the ones I witnessed growing up in the UP. I observed people grappling with disillusionment as the mines closed and they watched their chance at the American dream vanish.

Sweat asks if the "American Dream" is still alive, and if so, who gets to pursue it? Nottage's look at America not only evokes a sense of nostalgia, it asserts that it is only through empathy we can discover answers filled with hope.

Lynn Nottage prefaced the publication of *Sweat* with *Let America Be America Again* by Langston Hughes. Written in 1935, the poem still resonates today.

Let America be America again.

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!
Of work the men! Of take the pay!
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.
I am the worker sold to the machine.
I am the Negro, servant to you all.
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—
Hungry yet today despite the dream.
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!
I am the man who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,
That even yet its mighty daring sings
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned
That's made America the land it has become.
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas
In search of what I meant to be my home—
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?
The millions shot down when we strike?
The millions who have nothing for our pay?
For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung
And all the hopes we've held
And all the flags we've hung,
The millions who have nothing for our pay—
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,

Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—
The steel of freedom does not stain.
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,
We must take back our land again,
America!

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain—
All, all the stretch of these great green states—
And make America again!

EXTRACTING ART FROM A DOWNFALL

A broken city gets a turn onstage in the play “Sweat.”

By Lynn Nottage, *The New York Times*, July 30, 2015

In 2011, the United States Census Bureau singled out Reading, Pa., as the poorest city in the nation. Soon after, the city was overwhelmed by a wave of negative publicity and set about a campaign to resurrect its image. In January 2012, I began traveling to Reading with an eye toward collecting the stories of people battling to survive in a city crippled by economic stagnation. What I found was a racially diverse and fractured city that had once been a steel and manufacturing powerhouse but had since become plagued by rising crime and unemployment.

I spent considerable time interviewing and collecting compelling stories from local historians, community organizers, business owners, artists, politicians, educators, parole officers, police officers, students, homeless men and women, drug addicts, social workers, gardeners and the community at large. The interviews and images that I collected over several years became the foundation for my play “Sweat,” which has its premiere starting Sunday at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as part of the “American Revolutions” program.

The play revolves around a close-knit group of friends whose lives are tragically altered by upheaval at the steel factory where they’ve worked for years. The following photographs are just a few of the images that inspired me as I was conjuring its characters.

The Right Setting

From the ambient lighting to eclectic art hanging on the walls, I immediately loved the warmth and comfort of this bar in Reading. It had once been a popular watering hole for workers at Dana, before that auto parts manufacturing plant shut down in 2010. The intimacy of the bar definitely spoke to me and seemed a natural place for my characters to inhabit. For many workers, it was their town hall, their *Zócalo*, the place where they could laugh, tell stories and air their grievances. It’s now a trendy meeting place drawing an interesting cross-section of workers, artists and students, but its charm remains. “Sweat” is set in a bar very much like this one.

A Living Room in the Woods

I made a number of visits to a homeless enclave in a wooded area on the outskirts of Reading and was struck by how protective and supportive the men were of one another. They had established a communal space, an informal living room, where they drank, talked and often argued. It was filthy and disorganized, but inconceivably the men managed to hold onto a tiny bit of optimism. In the midst of the squalor, they sought to establish a modicum of normalcy. I was moved by their determination. A noose hung over their space, and when asked about its ominous presence, one man said, “It lets us know that there’s always something better, and no matter what, we will never use that noose and we will never let anyone else use that noose.” As I was writing the ending of “Sweat,” I reflected back on that noose, and the community’s collective decision to protect and empower each other rather than succumb to hopelessness.

The Optimist

I met Vaughn Spencer at a moment of great optimism — he was the first African-American mayor of Reading. He was youthful and exuberant and had bold plans to heal the racially and economically stratified city; my inquiry began with him. His office was eager for me to see Reading as more than a problematic city and really urged me to get out into the community.

Union Work

I spoke with a group of frustrated and bitter steel workers who had been locked out of Hofmann Industries for 93 weeks. The company had pitted worker against worker, replacing them with temps in an attempt to break the union. Many of the workers had invested over 30 years at the plant and were unwilling to take the deep concessions that the company demanded. They felt abandoned and betrayed, and they feared they would never be permitted to return to their livelihood. I was inspired by their fortitude, yet bristled at the insidious way deindustrialization was radically reshaping the narrative of these middle-class workers in America. Their struggle became the seed for my play.

Resurrection and Rage

Steve was one of the first people I met in Reading. At the time, he was living at the Hope Mission, a shelter for homeless men. He was frank and open about his predicament, and seemed determined to resurrect his life. His rage was always close to the surface, and he carried an edge that made me a little nervous. I was empathetic to his predicament until I discovered that his dark past was illustrated in his questionable tattoos. I was forced to re-examine my investment in him; I found this tension worth mining. His tumultuous spirit lead me to write the character of Jason in “Sweat”: a disaffected steelworker whose life is upended when he’s locked out of his plant. His misplaced anger leads him to commit an act of racial violence.

Haunted

I was drawn to this abandoned Turner Textiles mill in downtown Reading because it felt haunted. Evidence of workers was everywhere: paper with scribbles rested on the desk in the office, mesh bags streamed from the stilled machines. It was as if one day everyone had left for the evening, never to return. It was a reminder of how quickly financial hardship drains the life out of once vibrant spaces.

The Power of Silence

Empty safe deposit boxes at a bank on Penn Street graphically illustrate the loss of an economic base in Reading. It is an arresting image, and made me very curious about the owners and the contents of the now abandoned boxes. Each box represented a story and an unanswered question. As I roamed the city’s boarded-up homes and barren streets, I became aware of how absence and silence can be powerful storytelling tools.

THE STORY OF THE WRITING OF THE PLAY

Oregon Shakespeare Festival (in partnership with Arena Stage in Washington D.C.) commissioned Lynn Nottage to write a play as part of its American Revolutions series (the same series that was influential in developing Robert Schenkkan's *All The Way* and Paula Vogel's *Indecent*).

In 2011, one of Nottage's neighbors – a single mom – sent her an email confessing that she was broke. Nottage was struck by this information, especially since the neighbor seemed “bubbly” and “outgoing.” Nottage says, “It made me think a lot about how close we live to poverty.” She wanted to know “how did we arrive at this point?”

She read in The New York Times that Reading, Pa. was the poorest American city of its size, with a poverty rate of more than 40%. Reading had once been a thriving industrial city.

Nottage now knew which “revolution” she wanted to write about. She calls it the “de-industrial revolution.”

She spent two and a half years interviewing residents of Reading, including folks who lived in makeshift shantytowns in the woods. She spoke with union reps, unemployed workers, politicians, educators, you name it. She set the play in a bar modeled after Mike's Tavern, a bar frequented by employees of a local auto parts manufacturing plant. According to theatre scholar Christina McMahon (herself a Reading native), the characters in *Sweat* were “inspired by workers that Nottage met who had been long locked out of Hofmann Industries, a steel tubing manufacturer that began hiring temps after the union rejected the drastic pay cuts and long hours the company proposed.”

The play premiered at Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2015, and then moved to Arena Stage. It later moved to the Public Theatre in New York and then launched its run on Broadway at Studio 54. *Sweat* marked Nottage's Broadway debut.

Lynn Nottage and *Sweat* received the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and was a 2017 Tony Award Nominee.

~Compiled by Dr. Elissa Sartwell, Dramaturg

Sources:

McMahon, Christina. “Three Readings of Reading, Pennsylvania: Approaching Lynn Nottage's *Sweat* and Douglas Carter Beane's *Shows for Days*.” *Theatre Journal*, volume 68 number 1, March 2016.

Schulman, Michael. “The Listener.” *The New Yorker*. March 25, 2017.

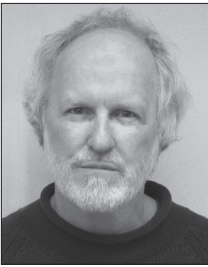
“Sweat.” The Internet Broadway Database. <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/sweat-512126>.

THE CAST



PRINCE DUREN (Brucie) is humbled to be a part of a talented cast and working with New Stage Theatre. Duren was first introduced to the New Stage family as part of its Unframed Series with his role in *Stick Fly* as Flip. He went on to play Sheriff Ozzie Walls in *A Time to Kill*. His acting credits included: Douglass in *Before it Hits Home*, DJ in *Mama I Want to Sing*, Skip in *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, Junie Robinson in *The Colored Museum*, Gabe in *Dinner with Friends*, George in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*,

Pascal in *Anonymous*, and Palmaroy Bateman in *Waiting to be Invited*. He has an MFA in playwriting from the University of Arkansas. Duren is currently the director of theatre at Jackson State University. He dedicates his performance to his wife Alicia for her support during this production. Prince's motto "in a world where you can be anything...why not be yourself."



WARD EMLING (Stan) was last seen at New Stage as Mr. Dussel in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. A 1976 graduate of Millsaps College, he trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Emling made his debut appearance on this stage in 1973 in *Jimmy Shine*, followed by *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. With the Millsaps Players under the direction of Lance Goss, he appeared in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Vivat! Vivat Regina!*, *Conduct Unbecoming*, *Hamlet*,

Robert and Elizabeth, *Hotel Universe*, and others. In Los Angeles, he appeared in *Sand Mountain* at the Back Alley Theatre, and in several series from the ancient age of television: *Beulah Land*, *The Mississippi*, *Matt Houston*, *St. Elsewhere*, *Knot's Landing*, *Our House*, and *Matlock*. Previous New Stage productions include *Peg O My Heart*, *The Little Foxes*, *What The Butler Saw*, *The Diviners*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, the folk opera *The Ponder Heart*, and last season's *Shakespeare in Love*.



HERMAN "J.R." JOHNSON (Evan) is excited about the opportunity to return to New Stage and work with their awesome team. He appeared as BoBo in *A Raisin in the Sun*, Chester in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*, Robert Earl Hayes in *The Exonerated*, and as a cast member in the ensemble of *A Christmas Carol*.



DAVID LIND* (Jason) is excited to be returning to New Stage in this wonderful play. He is a graduate of Circle in the Square Theatre School and Millsaps College, and was previously seen at New Stage in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Miss Firecracker Contest*, *The Foreigner*, and *Dividing the Estate*.

Other credits include: *You Got Older* (Steppenwolf), *New Country* (Rattlestick), *The History Boys*, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, *The Pride, Pericles*, and *Tender Napalm*. TV/Film credits include: *NCIS: New Orleans*, *Chicago Fire*, *Billboard*, and others. Big thanks and love to Annie, Mom and Dad, and the Clevelands.



SHARON MILES (Cynthia) 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.



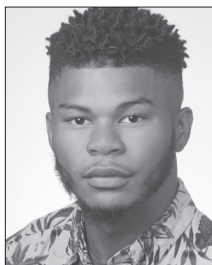
MALAIKA QUARTERMAN (Jessie) was last seen at New Stage in the productions of *A Christmas Carol*, *Sister Act*, *Our Town*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Annie*. She resides in Jackson with her family and enjoys serving on the board of Fondren Theatre Workshop. She is currently the Lead Arts Teacher and Chair of the Theatre Department at Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex. Quarterman was recently named the 2018 JPS Teacher of the Year and the 2018 Alternate State Teacher of the Year for Mississippi. She is thankful for how supportive her family is as she pursues her interests and dreams.

actor chat

Stay and meet the cast after ***Sweat*** following the show on Wednesday, April 24 and Wednesday, May 1. Audience members may ask questions of the actors, director and designers in an informal setting.



JO ANN ROBINSON* (Tracey) has worked professionally for more than 30 years in television, film and regional theatres across the U.S. From 1978-1989, she was based out of Los Angeles where credits included co-starring roles in ***The New Love American Style*** and the nationally syndicated ***Comedy of Comedies***. She appeared as a stand-up comedienne at Hollywood's Laugh Factory and The Ice House, famous for featuring headliners such as Jay Leno and Joan Rivers. She was also a founding member of the comedy group Half-A-Deck, named as 'Best Bet' by the *LA Times*. Robinson has been a regular at New Stage since 1990. Some show credits include ***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?***, ***A Time to Kill***, ***The Grapes of Wrath***, ***Lombardi***, ***First Baptist of Ivy Gap***, ***The Trip to Bountiful***, ***The Skin of Our Teeth***, ***Idols of the King***, ***Don't Dress for Dinner***, ***Broadway Bound***, ***Marvin's Room***, ***Proof***, ***Grace & Glorie***, ***Misery*** and ***Rumors***. Other regional theatre credits include ***A Streetcar Named Desire***, ***Angels in America I and II*** and ***Lips Together, Teeth Apart***, and ***Always Patsy Cline***. Robinson's film credits include the Arliss Howard/Debra Winger film ***Big Bad Love***, ***Worry Dolls*** released in 2015, she played Aaron Treit's mother in the film ***Created Equal***, and will appear in the recently released film, ***Darlin'***. She has also recently been seen in ***NCIS New Orleans***. Robinson was nominated for Best Actress for the prestigious B. Iden Award given by the Austin, Texas Critics Circle.



JORDAN WILLIAMS (Chris) 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 Masters of Fine Arts and become an acting professor. He hopes to help make more people smile as he continues to pursue his career.



DAVID ALEXANDER WORLEY-CRIADO (Oscar) is honored and eager to be making his New Stage Theatre debut among the talented cast of *Sweat!* Worley-Criado has been involved in the Mississippi theatrical world since early childhood, primarily performing at the Vicksburg Theatre Guild and Westside Theatre Foundation's Strand Theatre, playing lead roles in productions such as *Cats!*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, and *Heathers*. He also recently transitioned to film playing a major supporting role in Travis Mill's Mississippi film, *Son of a Gun*.

UNDERSTUDIES

SARAH COLEMAN (U/S Jessie) 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.

HOSEA GRIFFITH (U/S Brucie) is a graduate of Mississippi College with a Bachelor's 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.

CECIL HILL, JR. (U/S Chris) is a graduating senior from Jackson State University is elated to be a part of the *SWEAT* Company. Hill was last seen as Miles/Shawn/Rashaad in *Gloria* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. Other theatrical credits include William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tempest*. He is grateful to be a part of the New Stage family and thankful to the friends and family for their endless support.

ALBERTO MEZA (U/S Oscar) is a recent graduate from Belhaven University with a BFA in acting and is from Brandon. He had many wonderful opportunities at Belhaven such as in *The White Snake*, Sandy in *Mayfair Ma Chère*, Samson/Ensemble in *Don Quixote*, Snout/Wall in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Grossman/Ensemble in *These Shining Lives*, and Ensemble *The Skin of Our*

Teeth. He was also assistant stage manager in *The Music Man*, lighting designer for *Don Quixote*, and *The Secret Garden the Musical*, and sound designer for *Little Women the Musical* and *Ezekiel*. He is very grateful for the opportunity to understudy the role of Oscar at New Stage Theatre.

CHERRY RENDEL (U/S Cynthia) 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.

HAYDEN SCHUBERT (U/S Jason) is a graduate from Southern Illinois University with a BFA in musical theatre. A current acting apprentice, he has been seen at New Stage as Peter vanDaan in *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Fred/ Young Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*, and Lamour in *Hell in High Water*. Other credits include *Tarzan in Tarzan: The Musical* (Grandstreet Theatre), Willard Hewitt in *Footloose: The Musical* (Jenny Wiley Theatre) and Melchior Gabor in *Spring Awakening* (Southern Illinois University). He would like to thank his amazing friends and family for their constant support! www.haydenschubert.com

THE PRODUCTION STAFF

LYNN NOTTAGE (Playwright) Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Ruined* has received an Obie, the Lucille Lortel Award, New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, Drama Desk Award, and Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Play (Manhattan Theatre Club, Goodman Theatre). Other plays include *Intimate Apparel* (New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play; Roundabout Theatre, CENTERSTAGE, South Coast Repertory); *Fabulation, or the Re-Education of Undine* (Obie Award; Playwrights Horizons, London's Tricycle Theatre); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*; *Las Meninas*; *Mud, River, Stone*; *Por'knockers*, and *Poof!* Nottage is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2007 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant," the National Black Theatre Festival's August Wilson Playwriting Award, the 2004 PEN/Laura Pels Award for Drama, and the 2005 Guggenheim Grant for Playwriting, as well as fellowships from the Lucille Lortel Foundation, Manhattan Theatre Club, New Dramatists, and New York Foundation for the Arts. She is a member of The Dramatists Guild, an alumna of New Dramatists and a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama, where she is a visiting lecturer. www.lynnnottage.net

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 *Hell in High Water*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Sister Act*, *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!

MICHAEL J. RIHA (Scenic Designer) is a professor of theatre and has taught at the University of Arkansas since 1992 where he served as the Head of Design from 1996 – 2013 and as Chair of the Department for the past six years. Riha's Broadway credits include, Assistant Designer to Christine Jones on the musical, *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, and the Metropolitan Opera's 2013 production of *Rigoletto*. He has worked as an Assistant Designer to John Iacovelli on productions at the Southcoast Rep, The Mark Taper Forum, Syracuse Stage, and the Princess Cruise Line. He's also worked at the Muny in St. Louis, Mo., TheatreSquared, Fayetteville, Ark., and on the national tour of *Fiddler on the Roof*. This is Riha's first design at New Stage Theatre and is delighted to be working with such talented theatre artists. He has designed sets and lighting for over one hundred productions and is the author of *Starting Your Career as a Theatrical Designer: Insights and Advice from Leading Broadway Designers* published by Allworth Press. Riha is a proud member of USA-829.

ELISSA SARTWELL (Dramaturg) a theatre historian, dramaturg, and director. She was dramaturg for New Stage's production of *Silent Sky* last season and is thrilled to continue her involvement with dramaturgy at New Stage. Favorite directing credits include *The Glass Menagerie*, *Down the Ladder*, and Mary Zimmerman's *The White Snake*. Her research explores the ways in which history is written and codified through performance, with an emphasis on the performance of ethnicity on the 19th-century American stage. She is an associate professor of theatre at Belhaven University where she is the head of the university's BFA acting program.

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 and Projection Designer) 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 (Properties/Production Associate) 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.

LAZERRICK "Z" TRAVIS (Production Assistant) is a native of Canton and graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2016 with a B.A. in scenic design. After graduation he went on to Florida Studio Theatre in Sarasota for a production internship. Travis came back to Mississippi in 2017 and had been employed by Nissan in Canton, before coming to work at New Stage. His other interests are acting within the film industry.

CAITLYN HERZLINGER (Fight Choreographer) is making her debut at New Stage Theatre. She is a certified stage combat teacher with The Society of American Fight Directors and Dueling Arts International. Herzlinger is an Assistant Professor of movement and acting at USM. Her work has most recently been seen at People's Light Theatre in Pennsylvania and The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival in New York. This summer she will be working at Utah Shakespeare Festival.

Light Board Operator	Connor Bingham
Sound Board Operator	Sarah Coleman
Running Crew	Nina Frost, Cherry Rendel, Hayden Schubert, Jory Tanaka
Master Carpenter	Jimmy "JR" Robertson
Costume Assistant	Lydia Lippincott
Fight Captain	Hayden Schubert
Box Office Associates	Kerri Puckett, Amy Smith

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. 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.

SHANNON FROST (Marketing Associate) received a B.A. in Communication/Theatre from Malone University and a M.A. in Theatre from Regent University. Previous experience includes: theatre manager at Regent University's Theatre Department, managing director for The A.C.T.S. Series at Regent University, marketing director at Red Clay Theatre, marketing director at New Stage Theatre, and theatre teacher at Christ Covenant School. Frost is currently an adjunct professor of Arts Administration at Belhaven University, and is the financial and membership director of the Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education. She resides in Jackson with her husband, Joe and kiddos, Nina, Darby, Emory, Beau, and Violet.

DREW STARK (Education Assistant) was last seen onstage in *Sweet Potato Queens*, *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.



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BOX OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*During performances, the box office
will remain open until 7:30 p.m.*

Saturday: 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sunday: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

*Saturday and Sunday hours only apply
during the run of a show.*

TELEPHONE/WEBSITE

Main Number: (601) 948-3533

Box Office: ext. 222

Artistic Director: ext. 224

Managing Director: ext. 246

Marketing Director: ext. 226

Education Director: ext. 232

Website: www.newstagetheatre.com

Email: mail@newstagetheatre.com

New Stage Theatre is a Constituent of Theatre Communication Group (TCG),
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