

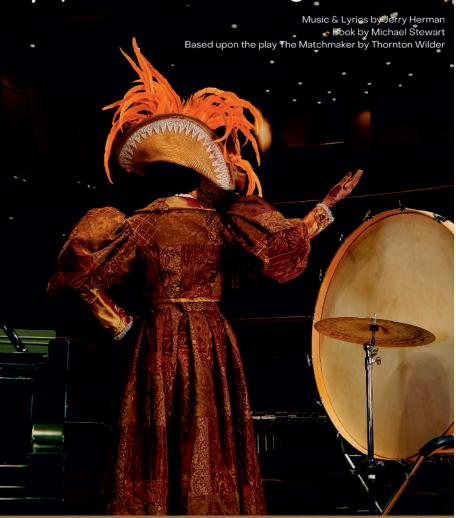
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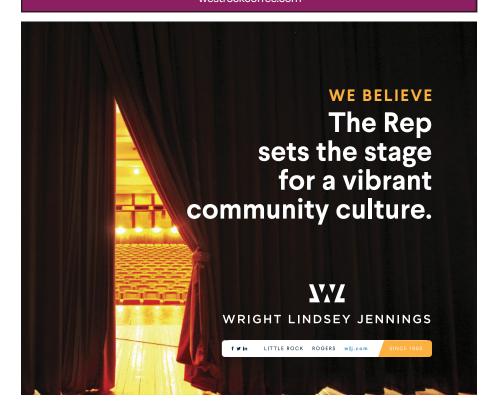


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## ARKANSAS REPERTORY THEATRE

The Arkansas Repertory Theatre creates vibrant, engaging, and accessible theatrical experiences to make the lives of all Central Arkansans more full, more connected, and more joyful. The Rep embraces the myriad, multi-faceted backgrounds of our community, and prioritizes inclusion on and off our stages. We seek to represent diverse perspectives, using art to explore our world through the lens of others' experiences. We want our work to be enjoyed by all, regardless of one's familiarity with the art form, and regardless of one's ability to pay.

Our core programming includes a season of freshly created productions, performed at our downtown Little Rock facilities — including a 340-seat auditorium and 100-seat black box space — or around our broader community. We tell stories that provide entertainment and escape, that help us process the world around us, and that foster a sense of mutual understanding. The live experiences of The Rep are distinctly theatrical — immersive and shared, in real time, by the community in a public space.

In conjunction with our summer season of productions, The Rep aspires to capture the collective imagination and build community by embracing the art of theatre in all its forms. We recognize the unique ability of theatrical activities to improve mental well-being and emotional development. We strive to celebrate and develop the artistry of community members regardless of their age or experience. We provide a platform for the sharing of varied human experiences to drive community conversations. And we seek out collaborations with, and make our resources accessible to, like-minded community organizations.



# **Arkansas Repertory Theatre**

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# **Arkansas Repertory Theatre**

PRESENTS

# JITNEY

# By AUGUST WILSON

# Director **KEN MATT MARTIN**†^

Scenic Designer **SYDNFY LYNNF** 

Costume Designer

CELESTE JENNINGS\*^

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer
JEREMIAH DAVISON

Wig Designer
JENEA JORDAN^

Production Stage Manager KAILA MADISON\*

Artistic Fellow CAELON COLBERT^

August Wilson's *Jitney* is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com

# **CAST** in order of appearance

Young blood.																	V	ic	to	r N	Лu	so	ni	*
Turnbo																	A	nt	ho	on	y I	roi	ns	*
Fielding																		A	ar	on	Sı	ni	th	l
Doub												K	St	ev	e	Н	[.	Bı	o	ad	na	x I	H	^
Shealy																		V	Vi	11 .	Ad	an	ns	*
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Becker															R	lo	b	er	t (	Co	rne	eli	us	*
Rena																		I	re	on	R	oae	ch	*
Booster																R	y	an	В	ro	us	saı	rd	*
Understudy																					Т	aij	ee	^

#### **SETTING**

A gypsy cab station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Early Fall, 1977.

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

### **RUN CREW**

Board Operators Faith Spencer, Travis Cope,
Eli Stroud, Tate Mikles
Wardrobe Supervisor
Production Assistants Anaya Joplin, Kylie Belverstone
Dressers Brianna East, Natalie Gray,
Adrian Hinjosa, Lovey Krone
Audio Engineer Jessi Perren

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

My life in the theatre began when I was seated in seat J-11 here at The Rep, during a school field trip to see August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*. That was the day I discovered not only my favorite playwright, but what was possible through the medium of live professional theatre. The specificity and poetry of the way Black people use language has never been better captured than by Wilson's pen. *Jitney* revels in both humor and tragedy through its exploration of the bonds these men share. Their hunger for a better life, for love, for stability, and the ability to raise a family, speak to universal themes we all understand. Their insistence on being treated with respect and dignity, and on self-determination, will resonate with Black people today, just as it did in 1977 when the play is set. I am hopeful that as you watch this production, you will be reminded of the importance of family, love, and legacy. And if you're seeing yourself represented for the first time onstage, I hope you realize that this is your home and you belong here. Enjoy the show!

-Ken-Matt Martin, Director

## SPECIAL THANKS

THE SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY OF THESE BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS HELPED MAKE THIS PRODUCTION POSSIBLE.

Bryan Butler Downtown Rob Haynie Amanda Strack
Laura Cabrera Laura Martin Paul Strack
Mia Foreman Laura Martin Paul Strack

Chandler Carter Arleth Rivera
De Los Santos

# **CAST** in alphabetical order



Will Addams\* (Shealy). National Tour: A Soldier's Play. Film: A Holiday in Harlem (Hallmark). TV: The Oval (BET). Regional: Skeleton Crew, Death of a Salesman (Trinity Rep); Curse of the Starving Class, Blue Ridge (Williamstown Theatre Festival), Pride & Prejudice (Arkansas Repertory Theatre). MFA: Brown/Trinity Rep. He is honored to be doing his first August Wilson production. @willadamsiii



Steve H. Broadnax III^ (Doub) was last seen on stage at The Rep in Dreamgirls (Director). Regional/NYC: Thoughts of a Colored Man (Broadway); Suzan-Lori Parks' Sally and Tom at the Guthrie Theatre and The Public in New York (world premiere New York Times Critic Pick); Katori Hall's 2021 Pulitzer Prize premiere The Hot Wing King at The Signature Theatre; Lee Edward Colston's The First Deep Breath at Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles and Chicago's Victory Garden Theatre (premiere and winner of Jeff Awards Best New Work); Dominique Morisseau's Sunset Baby at The Signature Theatre (NYC New York Times Critic Pick); Blood at the Root at the National Black Theatre (winner of Kennedy Center's Hip Hop Theater Creator Award); and William Jackson Harper's premiere *Travisville* at NYC Ensemble Studio. Ensemble Studio Theatre member and serves as the associate artistic director at People's Light Theatre and a professor of theatre at Penn State University; co-head of MFA Directing. Writing credits include Me and the Devil (Lantern Theatre), 2020 Vision, Bayard Rustin Inside Ashland, Bonez (People's Light Theatre), and Camouflage (St. Louis Black Rep.)



Ryan Broussard\* (Booster) was born September 14, 1989 in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana. He has a BFA from The University of Louisiana at Lafayette and received his MFA from Brown/Trinity Rep. He was also a professional athlete with the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim from 2010-2012. He plays the series regular role of Mike Sherman in Fox's Alert: Missing Persons Unit. He also recurs as Will in Only Murders in the Building on Hulu. He has also been seen in the films Jack Reacher: Never Go Back and The Big Short. Ryan has appeared on Broadway in Take Me Out, and off-Broadway in The Rolling Stone at Lincoln Center. Ryan is represented by CGF Talent in New York, and Atlas Artist in Los Angeles.



Robert Cornelius\* (Becker) is making his Arkansas Rep debut with this production of Jitney. Robert was most recently seen in Where the Mountain Meets the Sea at Signature Theatre, Dreamgirls at Goodspeed Opera House and McCarter Theatre Center (co-production), Chicken and Biscuits at Front Porch Arts Collective, Joe Turner's Come and Gone at Huntington Theatre, Her Honor Jane Byrne at Lookingglass Theatre, Lottery Day at The Goodman Theatre, Total Bent at Haven Theatre/About Face, Rightlynd at Victory Gardens Theater, Hamlet at the Gift Theatre, Wit with the Hypocrites, and Picnic at American Theatre Company. On the small screen, Robert, a proud member of SAG/AFTRA, can be seen in all three seasons of South Side, as well as Shameless, The Chi, and Chicago PD. Robert is also a vocalist with the band Poi Dog Pondering as well as his own band RC7.



Keith Harper^ (Philmore/US Booster) is very excited to return to the Arkansas Repertory Theatre! Last summer, he was cast as US Montrellous in Lynn Nottages' Clyde's. He recently worked with the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts on The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show, Dragon Love Tacos and Breaking the Box. Breaking the Box is a part of the Sparking Dialogue series thru drama using the performing arts to start family conversations about socially relevant topics. His new film The Company You Keep is available on Tubi Tv and Amazon Prime. Keith studied Theatre at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where he received a BA. He serves as the Artistic Director of the Ozark Living Newspaper Theater Company and has worked as a professional actor at Shake on the Lake Theater Company in Western New York. He wants to thank his family and friends for always supporting his passions. "It's important to stop waiting for opportunities and CREATE THEM." For fun, Keith enjoys traveling and trying different foods.



Anthony Irons\* (Turnbo) is delighted to make his debut at Arkansas Repertory Theatre. He is an ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre, where he has performed in or directed over 20 productions. Other credits include Goodman Theatre, Shattered Globe Theatre, The Second City, North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, Penumbra Theatre, Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Alliance Theatre, and Court Theatre, where he recently performed as Stokely, in the world premiere of Stokely: the Unfinished Revolution. Film and television credits include Ghostlight, Chicago Med, South Side, Empire, Chicago Fire, and Let's Go to Prison. Anthony is the creator and showrunner of The BLACKSiDE, Congo Square Theatre's YouTube comedy series. Anthony is represented by Stewart Talent.



Victor Musoni\* (Youngblood), an actor, writer, and dancer from Chicago, is excited to make his Arkansas Rep debut. Regional: Long Way Down (Olney Theatre Center); Toni Stone (Goodman); The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington, Columbinus (Steppenwolf); Q Brothers Christmas Carol (St. Louis Shakespeare); Into the Side of a Hill (Flint Rep); What to Send Up When it Goes Down (Congo Square); Queen of the Night (Victory Gardens); America V2.1, are you ready to smash white things?, No Child (Definition Theatre Company); La Havana Madrid (The Den Theater); TV & Film: Me, We; The Tensile Strength of Air; 61st Street; WHOLE; Chicago Med, and 6X9. Choreography: Long Way Down (Olney Theatre Center); Alaiyo (Definition), Into The Side of a Hill (Flint Rep). Musoni is an ensemble member of Definition Theatre and Congo Square Theatre Company and is represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.



Aaron Smith (Fielding) is the father of five children, has ten grandchildren, and has been married to his lovely wife, Jennifer, for 28 years. He is a graduate of Grand View University, with a BA in creative and performing arts. Over the years, Aaron has participated in several productions with Grandview, the Des Moines Playhouse, Stage West, Iowa Stage, Pyramid Theatre Company, and more. Some notable roles: Little Shop of Horrors (The Voice of the Plant); A Raisin in the Sun (Walter Lee Younger); The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Aslan); and Ragtime (Coalhouse Walker). He received a Cloris Award nomination for Mountain Top (Martin Luther King, Jr.), and was recipient of the BroadwayWorld Award Best Actor for Fences (Troy Maxon), and recipient of the Cloris Award Best Actor for A Soldiers Play (Sgt. Vernon Waters), and The Piano Lesson (Whining Boy). Aaron is very proud to be the associate artist of Pyramid Theatre Company, the first and only black theatre company in the state of Iowa. He is also lead singer in the 8-piece, all educator band, Faculty Lounge.



Ireon Roach\* (Rena) (she/her) is a Chicago native actor and writer. She was last seen in the regional premiere of *cullud wattah* at Victory Gardens Theater. Other credits include SpeakEasy Stage Company's *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Norton Award nominated), Jackalope Theater's *Blood at the Root* and Haven Theater's *How We Got On* (Jeff Award nominated). Film and TV credits include Jordan Peele's *Candyman* and the CW's *4400*. Ireon earned her BFA from Boston University and is represented by Paonessa Talent.



Taijee^ (Understudy) (he/him/accepts any) is a native of Lonoke, Arkansas, and currently resides in Little Rock. He is a performer and director and dedicates his work to creating for marginalized groups. Taijee received his Bachelor of Fine Arts with honors and Master of Arts in Teaching from Southern Arkansas University in 2019 and 2023, respectively. He is currently enrolled at The University of Louisville in Kentucky where he is finishing a certificate in African American Theatre. His recent credits include Asaka in *Once on this Island* (The Studio Theatre), Eli in August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* (University of Louisville), Director of *The Little Mermaid* (The Royal Theatre), and Harpo/Assistant Director in *The Color Purple* (The Studio Theatre).

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

August Wilson (Playwright) (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored Gem of the Ocean, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson, Seven Guitars, Fences, Two Trains Running, Jitney, King Hedley II, and Radio Golf. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, How I Learned What I Learned. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for Fences (1987); and for The Piano Lesson (1990); a Tony Award for Fences; Great Britain's Olivier Award for Jitney, as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Fences, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, The Piano Lesson, Two Trains Running, Seven Guitars, Jitney, and Radio Golf. Additionally, the cast recording of Ma Rainey's Black Bottom received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of The Piano Lesson. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays The Janitor, Recycle, The Coldest Day of the Year, Malcolm X, The Homecoming and the musical satire Black Bart and the Sacred Hills. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwrighting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

**Ken-Matt Martin** (Director) has established himself as a preeminent theatre director, cultural worker, and collaborator who has worked with some of industry's most formidable artists, including S. Epatha Merkerson, Nathan Lane, Uma Thurman, Stevie Walker-Webb, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Whitney White, and Audra McDonald, amongst dozens of others. Notable directing credits include productions of August Wilson's Fences and The Piano Lesson (Pyramid Theatre Company), Jonathan Larson's tick...tick...Boom (Brown/Trinity Rep), A Son Comes Home and Brotherhood at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Nia Vardalos' adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's Tiny Beautiful Things (Baltimore Center Stage), the world premiere of NANCY (Mosaic Theatre Company), Hello, Dolly! (Arkansas Repertory Theatre), and the forthcoming musical Long Way Down, which will play engagements at Olney Theatre Center and New York's Apollo Theatre. Martin's directorial work has been honored with a Cloris Leachman Excellence in Theatre Award, a BroadwayWorld Regional Award, and the Bravo Greater Des Moines Standing Ovation Award, amongst others. In addition, Ken-Matt has been praised as an innovator in the modern American theatre; he created the 20/50 New Play Festival, the Ignite Chicago Festival, Goodman Theatre's Live @Five Show, and was the co-founder of the Pyramid Theatre Company. A highly sought after thought leader, he has served key positions at Baltimore Center Stage, Victory Gardens Theatre, Goodman Theatre, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. As a collaborator, he was part of the team to help orchestrate the Broadway transfers of The Sound Inside, Grand Horizons, Rose Tattoo, and Lempicka, and the Off-Broadway transfers of Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Seared, Selling Kabul, and Unknown Soldier. He's also brokered partnerships with Chicago State University, The Black List, Des Moines Performing Arts, EquiTrust Life Insurance, and others, to bring unique theatrical experiences to the general public. Martin holds an MFA in directing from Brown University/Trinity Repertory Company. He has served on the selection committees for the Venturous Theatre Fund, the Princess Grace Awards, and the Jonathan Larson Awards. He's the recipient of a New Harmony Project Artist in Resident Fellowship, a "Keep Going" Commission by Baltimore Center Stage, a Drake University Guest Artist in Residence Fellowship, and the Bill Foeller Directing Fellowship. www.kenmatt.com

Sydney Lynne (Scenic Designer) (she/her) is a Chicago-based scenic designer and civic artist, specializing in the craft of world-building experiences. Her recently recognized productions include Twelfth Night (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (Baltimore Center Stage), What to Send up When It Goes Down (Congo Square Theater), and cullud watah (Victory Gardens). Other collaborators include: Pyramid Theater, Barrington Stage Company, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Phoenix Theater Company, Longwharf Theatre, Jupiter Maltz Theater, and Geva Theater Center. She was nominated for a 2020 Jeff Award in Scenic Design, and won a 2020 3Arts Award in Theatre and 2022 BTAA Award for Best Scenic Design. To those who got me here, thank you!

Celeste Jennings^ (Costume Designer) is a passionate playwright and costume designer from Little Rock, Arkansas. She's based in NYC and is so excited to be collaborating at the Arkansas Rep this summer! Most recently, she designed Dangerous Days at Miami New Drama, Blues in The Night at Alabama Shakespeare Theatre, and Fat Ham at the Huntington Theatre and Alliance Theatre. Upcoming, she's designing Pride and Prejudice, Footloose, Jitney, and Hello Dolly! at Arkansas Reperatory Theatre; Memnon with the Classical Theatre of Harlem; and Rough Crossing with the Ensemble Players at the University of Delaware. Her play, 'Bov Water,' was successfully produced at Northern Stage in 2023. Additionally, she developed her play, Contentious Woman, with Play Company in NYC and WJLB at New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW) during her tenure as a 2050 artistic fellow. Jennings holds an MFA in costume design from NYU Tish School of the Arts. Currently, she's a proud member of the Emerging Writer's Group at the Public Theatre. www.celestejenndesigns.com | @celestejenn\_

Levi J. Wilkins (Lighting Designer) (he/him/his). Born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago, Levi has been a member of the Chicago Theater community since age six and is currently the lighting director at The Faith Community of St. Sabina. Theater credits include Exit Strategy at Northwestern University Theater; What to Send Up When it Goes Down with Congo Square Theater and Lookingglass Theater Company; Brother Sister Cyborg Space at Raven Theater; Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf with Invictus Theater; The Mountaintop at Constellation Stage & Screen; Into The Side of A Hill with Flint Rep; Is God Is with A Red Orchid Theater; Once on this Island at Pulse Theater; A Raisin in The Sun with Indiana University NW; and Stew, London Road, and Jump with Shattered Globe Theater. www.fresherlight.com

Jeremiah Davison (Sound Designer) is a Flint, MI, native based in Atlanta, GA. Select sound design credits: Clyde's (Theatrical Outfit); Into The Side Of A Hill (Flint Repertory Theatre); National Tour of Drumfolk 20'-23' (Step Afrikal); The Incredible Book Eating Boy, Do You Love The Dark, Hands Up (Alliance Theatre); Summer The Musical, Cinderella: The Musical, Song & Dance (Aurora Theatre - All Suzie Award Nominated); That Serious He-Man Ball (K.L. True Colors Theatre); The Light (Horizon Theatre); Urinetown The Musical, Bootycandy, Home Town Boy, Heather's: The Musical (Actors Express). Jeremiah is the co-founder and C.O.O of Multiband Studios LLC. Education: BA, Theatre-University of West Georgia; AA, Theatre-Georgia State Perimeter College. He would like to thank God, his wife, family, friends, and mentors for all their support.

Kaila Madison\* (Production Stage Manager) is excited to be debuting at Arkansas Rep. Their credits include Off-Broadway: Let It Shine at Joe's Pub. TPT: The Play That Goes Wrong; The Baxter Sisters; The Mountaintop; A Wonderful Life: A Radio Play. DPT: Mud Row; Tulsa Opera: Aida in concert; Into The Woods. Flint Rep: Rain on Fire; Little Shop of Horrors: In Concert; and Into the Side of a Hill. They are a proud AEA member and alumni of Mosaic Youth Theater of Detroit and Eastern Michigan University. They are also the production manager of Obsidian Theater Festival. They would also like to thank Mom, Dad, Chris, Aristotle, Buka, and Yaz for being there through it all: "Your love and support is worth everything and has shaped me into who I am today."

# ARKANSAS REPERTORY THEATRE STAFF

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