

WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS  
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
PRESENTS

VINETTE CARROLL'S

# YOUR ARMS TOO SHORT TO BOX WITH GOD

Conceived from the  
Book of St. Matthew by  
**Vinnette Carroll**

Book by  
**Vinnette Carroll**

Music and Lyrics by  
**Alex Bradford  
& Micki Grant**

Costume Designer  
**Adrienne Pitts**

Production Manager  
**James "Jay" Dodge II**

Set Designer  
**Michael Newton-Brown**

Properties and  
Headdress Designer  
**Annette Breazeale**

Production Stage Manager  
**Juanita Munford\***

Lighting Designer  
**Nick Jones**

Assistant Stage Manager  
**Michael Mejia-Mendez\***

Music Director  
**James "Jay" Dodge II**

Choreographer  
**Donald Frison**

Director  
**Harry Bryce**

**February 26–March 17, 2020**  
*(Originally scheduled to run until April 5,  
the show closed early due to COVID-19)*

*Your Arms Too Short to Box with God* is presented by  
special arrangement with Irving Street Rep, Inc.

Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist  
Development Tax Revenues. This project is  
sponsored in part by the Department of State,  
Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of  
Arts and Culture, and the State of Florida.

\* Member of Actors' Equity  
Association (AEA), the Union of  
Professional Actors and Stage  
Managers in the United States.



## CAST

<b>Phyllis Banks</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Syreeta S. Banks*</b> .....	Pilate’s Wife/Ensemble
<b>Donald Frison</b> .....	Judas/Ensemble
<b>Dai’sean Garrett</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Derric Gobourne Jr.</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Samone Hicks</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Charles Wesley Lattimore Jr.*</b> .....	Jesus
<b>Charlie “CJ” Melton</b> .....	Barabbas/Ensemble
<b>Cequita Monique</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Raleigh Mosely II</b> .....	Pilate/Ensemble
<b>Amber Myers</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Annaya Osborne</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Carvas Pickens</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Chakara Rosa</b> .....	Mary/Ensemble
<b>Teresa Stanley*</b> .....	Ensemble
<b>Joshua Thompson</b> .....	Ensemble

**Joshua Thompson** is the understudy for the role of Judas.

## MUSICIANS

Music Director/Bass .....	<b>James “Jay” Dodge II</b>
Piano .....	<b>Courtland Green</b>
Auxiliary Keys .....	<b>Jeff Cash Jr.</b>
Drums .....	<b>Mike Andrews</b>
Percussion.....	<b>Benny Maldonado</b>

**John Walker** and **Scott Blum** will play percussion  
at some performances.

## WBTT TEAM

Founder and Artistic Director .....	<b>Nate Jacobs</b>
Executive Director .....	<b>Julie Leach</b>
Development and Artist Relations Associate .....	<b>Ariel Blue</b>
Stage Hands.....	<b>Ariel Blue, Jannah Gregory, Trinity Pitts, Aleah Williams</b>
Resident Property Master .....	<b>Annette Breazeale</b>
Master Seamstress.....	<b>Darci Collins</b>
Production Manager/ Resident Music Director .....	<b>James “Jay” Dodge II</b>
Marketing and Communications Director.....	<b>Scott Ferguson</b>
Development Director.....	<b>Debra Flynt-Garrett</b>
Resident Choreographer .....	<b>Donald Frison</b>
Finance Manager .....	<b>Robert Grant</b>
Box Office Associates .....	<b>Naquila Gregory, Margaret Lindsey</b>
Custodian .....	<b>Gerald Law</b>
House Manager .....	<b>Myllanna McKinnon</b>
Production Assistant/ Assistant to the Artistic Director .....	<b>Michael Mejia-Mendez</b>
Box Office Manager.....	<b>Eleanor Miller</b>
Production Stage Manager .....	<b>Juanita Munford *</b>
Wardrobe Manager.....	<b>Adrienne Pitts</b>
Assistant Costumer .....	<b>Trinity Pitts</b>
Associate Managing Director .....	<b>Travis Ray</b>
Resident Sound Engineer .....	<b>Patrick Russini</b>
Technical Director .....	<b>Shane Streight</b>
Resident Assistant Music Director.....	<b>Brennan Stylez</b>
Photographer.....	<b>Sorcha Augustine</b>
Media Relations.....	<b>Sharon Kunkel, Wordslinger Marketing &amp; PR</b>
Graphic Design.....	<b>Paula Murray, Artefact Design</b>
Grants Consultant.....	<b>Denise Roberts</b>
Videographer .....	<b>Bill Wagyu Productions</b>



## MUSICAL NUMBERS

Beatitudes .....	<b>Company</b>
We're Gonna Have a Good Time.....	<b>Charles Lattimore Jr. and Company</b>
The Sermon .....	<b>Raleigh Mosely II</b>
There's a Stranger in Town (Jesus the Stranger).....	<b>Raleigh Mosely II and Company</b>
Do You Know Jesus/He's a Wonder .....	<b>Company</b>
Just a Little Bit of Jesus Goes a Long Way .....	<b>Teresa Stanley and Company</b>
We are the Priests and We are the Elders .....	<b>Dai'sean Garrett, Carvas Pickens, Charlie "CJ" Melton, Raleigh Mosely II</b>
Something is Wrong in Jerusalem .....	<b>Cequita Monique and Company</b>
It Was Alone .....	<b>Teresa Stanley</b>
I Know I've Got to Leave Here .....	<b>Charles Lattimore Jr. and Company</b>
Be Careful Whom You Kiss .....	<b>Phyllis Banks</b>
The Trial .....	<b>Company</b>
It's Too Late Judas .....	<b>Donald Frison and Women of the Company</b>
Judas' Dance .....	<b>Donald Frison</b>
Your Arms Too Short to Box With God .....	<b>Syreeta Banks and Company</b>
Give Us Barabbas .....	<b>Company</b>
See How They Done My Lord .....	<b>Cequita Monique</b>
Come On Down .....	<b>Company</b>
Veil of the Temple .....	<b>Chakara Rosa</b>
Can't No Grave Hold My Body Down .....	<b>Charles Lattimore Jr., Charlie "CJ" Melton, Dai'sean Garrett and Company</b>
Beatitudes II .....	<b>Company</b>
Didn't I Tell You? .....	<b>Carvas Pickens and Company</b>
As Long as I Live .....	<b>Company</b>
Everybody Has His Own Way .....	<b>Charles Lattimore Jr., Dai'sean Garrett, Raleigh Mosely II</b>
I Love You So Much Jesus .....	<b>Teresa Stanley</b>
We're Gonna Have a Good Time.....	<b>Charles Lattimore Jr. and Company</b>
Your Arms Too Short to Box with God .....	<b>Company</b>

**The show runs approximately one hour with no intermission.**

**The story depicts violent events described in the Gospel According to St. Matthew that may be disturbing for some audience members.**



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PLEASE TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES SUCH AS CELLULAR PHONES, BEEPERS, AND WATCHES. THE VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PERFORMANCE BY ANY MEANS WHATSOEVER IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

## CAST AND CREATIVE



### PHYLLIS BANKS

(Ensemble) is a Sarasota native and has been acting for well over 25 years! She has performed in numerous productions with the Players of Sarasota,

Manatee Players, and Venice Theatre. She performed with Nate Jacobs for years before the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was born. Phyllis recently retired from the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office after 34 years of service and is thrilled to be back on the WBTT stage!



### SYREETA S. BANKS\*

(Pilate's Wife/Ensemble) is an accomplished singer/actress from Sarasota who developed her love of performing as a small child singing in her great grandparents'

church choir and watching her mother perform in many local theatre productions. She appeared with WBTT last season in *Love Sung in the Key of Aretha* and *The Amen Corner*. Her other WBTT credits include *Black Nativity*, *Broadway in Black* and *Girl Groups: The '60s Explosion*. Although she earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Florida A&M University, Syreeta chose to pursue her dream of becoming a professional singer/actress. She has been seen performing in area theatres and singing as Zawadi in the *Festival of the Lion King* show at Disney's Animal Kingdom. "To God be the glory for all the things He has done!"



### DONALD FRISON

(Choreographer/Judas/Ensemble) An accomplished choreographer, dancer and singer for over 30 years, Donald has enjoyed great success.

He was a dancer for the NBA Memphis Grizzlies Dance Team and a five-time champion on the syndicated talent competition television show *Star Search*

*\*Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States*

with Ed McMahon. His theatre credits as a performer include *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Cats*, *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* and *The Music Man*. "As WBTT's Resident Choreographer I strive to keep the vision growing," Donald says. "I've been fortunate to have had my work showcased at the National Black Theatre Festival with two shows, *How I Got Over* and *Soul Man*. I am so proud and honored to be part of such an amazing company with a wonderful vision. Thank you, Nate and Julie, for trusting me and my gift. Thank you to the staff and trustees for all your love and support. I thank God for blessing me with a gift to give to the world. May God bless all of you!"



### DAI'SEAN L. GARRETT

(Ensemble) is elated to be making his debut at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he received

a Bachelor of Arts in theatre, and a graduate of the Aurora Theatre's 2017-2018 Apprentice Company. Dai'sean has performed for Horizon Theatre Company, Kenny Leon's True Colors, Birmingham Black Repertory Theatre Company, Red Mountain Theatre Company, Birmingham Children's Theatre, Theatrical Outfit and Aurora Theatre. Favorite roles include Bobby Marrow in *Choir Boy* and Corky Baker in *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*. He sends thanks to his loving support system, especially his mom! Dai'sean can be contacted at [daiseangarrett@gmail.com](mailto:daiseangarrett@gmail.com) IG: DaiseanGarrett



### DERRIC GOBOURNE JR.

(Ensemble) has appeared in WBTT's productions of *Black Nativity*, *Raisin*, *A Motown Christmas*, *In the Heights*, *Soul Man* and *Rockin' Down Fairytale Lane*, among others. This summer he

appeared in WBTT's production of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. He made his debut appearance with WBTT as the talented Little Stevie Wonder in *Best of Stevie Wonder* in the

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summer of 2014. A graduate of Manatee High School and a self-taught musician, Derric has set his sights on becoming the greatest entertainer of all time. So it's no coincidence that the title of his WBTT Young Artist Program, set for March 15 and 16, is *The Greatest Entertainer*. In June 2018, Derric released his debut album, *Supremacy*, which was rereleased in Japan in November under the P-Vine Record Label. The album is available on every digital platform, including iTunes, YouTube, Spotify and Google Play Music.



### **SAMONE HICKS**

(Ensemble) is a native of Sarasota. She earned her Associate of Arts degree at State College of Florida, and then transferred to Stetson University to receive

her Bachelor of Music degree. In 2016, she graduated with her Master of Music degree from the University of Florida. Although she is a classically trained soprano, Samone has a deep appreciation for other styles of singing, such as jazz, musical theatre and Gospel. She performs locally and was recently seen in the Asolo's production of *The Sound of Music* and WBTT's *Salute to the Queen: A Tribute to Aretha Franklin*. Samone is excited to sing in this show!



### **CHARLES WESLEY LATTIMORE JR.\***

(Jesus) is a native of Orlando. From time to time he teaches in Orange County Public Schools and is active in community and church

activities. As a theatre major/music minor he received a B.A. degree from Florida A&M University. While attending college in 2000 he was elected by popular vote to be the first "Mr. FAMU" in the University's existence. This talented and extraordinarily gifted actor, singer, dancer and recording artist has been seen and heard on stages across the country. Some of his credits include *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, *The Jackie Robinson Story*, *No Easy Walk: The Rosa Parks Story*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Five Guys Named Moe*,

*Dreamgirls*, *The Wiz*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Fences*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *All Night Strut*, *Good God Al'mighty*, *One Mo' Time*, *Satchel Paige* and the *Kansas City Swing*, to name a few. He's also performed with the Pops Orchestra, been on stage with Patti Labelle, and been spotted in Walmart commercials and Nickelodeon television shows. He has also taken his act internationally, performing in Switzerland and neighboring countries. This jack of all trades and master of most is truly "WALKING IN HIS CALLING."



### **CHARLIE "CJ" MELTON**

(Barabbas/Ensemble) is a 12th-grade student at Manatee High School. He first appeared on WBTT's stage in Sheldon Rhoden's 2014 Young Artist Program

and has been featured in *Black Nativity* numerous times. Charlie was the 2013 winner of the Singers & Musicians Arts Conference (SMAC) in Tampa, sponsored by the recording artist Dorinda Clark Cole. Ministering in song since the age of 3, Charlie has traveled throughout Florida singing with various church and nonsectarian groups. He has also won many first-place awards, including in the 2015 Tampa Bay Gospel Awards and the Greatness Beyond Measure showcase. Charlie is excited to be working with WBTT in this production of *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*.



### **CEQUITA MONIQUE**

(Ensemble) hails from Memphis, Tenn. where she has been a performing artist and arts educator for over 25 years. She has performed locally and abroad. She is excited to return to the stage full time after a 15-year career in the airline industry. Cequita Monique was an exchange artist for the Memphis in May International Music Festival saluting Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). She received the Memphis Theatre Award for Excellence as a lead actress in a musical and drama for *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Spunk*. She was a chorus member in the original

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live recording of "March On!" at the dedication of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis. She performed as lead vocalist in the adaptation of Virginia Hamilton's *The People Could Fly* for the National Black Theatre Festival. Some of her performances include roles in *Black Nativity*, *The Soul of a People*, *Shakin' the Mess Outta Misery* and *Sing for King*, a production marking the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She is currently an ensemble member for Playback Memphis, the local branch of the International Improvisational Drama Therapy Company. Cequita Monique was most recently featured in her own one-woman production, *Come Sunday*. She is also very grateful to be making her debut on this stage as WBTT celebrates 20 years and new beginnings.



### **RALEIGH MOSELY II**

(Pilate/Ensemble) appeared this season in Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's production of *A Motown Christmas* at the Sarasota Opera House and in WBTT's staging

of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. Last season he appeared at WBTT in *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*, and previously in *In the Heights*, among other shows. Raleigh made his WBTT debut in the summer 2017 production of Broadway in *Black*. Born and raised in Miami, he earned his BFA in musical theatre from the University of Central Florida. His other theatre credits include *In the Heights* (Orlando Shakes), *Violet* (Garden Theatre), *Ragtime* (Titusville Playhouse), *Hair*, *Oklahoma*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Raleigh's single, "Why'd You Have to Go?" is available on all streaming platforms. "You can win as long as your keep your head to the sky." Peace and Light.



### **AMBER MYERS**

(Ensemble) has performed in WBTT's stagings of *Black Nativity* during the past six years, under the direction of Nate Jacobs. She played Mary in the 2018 and

2014 productions. At WBTT, Amber also performed as an ensemble member in Purlie, and was a dresser for *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul* and *The Sam Cooke Story*. Amber often works backstage. For nine years she studied drama, voice, dance, music and improvisation at Florida Studio Theatre School. Amber aspires to be a professional actor/singer/dancer and to teach fine arts.



### **ANNAYA OSBORNE**

(Ensemble) is thrilled to perform in Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's production of *Your Arms Too Short to Box With God*. Annaya is a graduate of

Maltz Jupiter Theatre Conservatory of Performing Arts Professional Training Program. Her credits include *Caroline, or Change* (Radio 2) *Hair* (Mary), *Ragtime* (Sarah's friend), *A Little Night Music* (Petra), *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Ronnette), *Shout: The Mod Musical* (Yellow Girl), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Phantom), *Godspell* (Joanne), *West Side Story* (Anita), *Anything Goes* (Captain) and many more.



### **CARVAS PICKENS**

(Ensemble) is a native of St. Louis. He now resides in Las Vegas, where he is pursuing his artistic dreams of acting and singing. He is ecstatic to be back with Westcoast

Black Theatre Troupe for the third time. You may have seen him in WBTT's *The Amen Corner* or in Joel P.E. King's *Real Life* (Tez/Raheem/Detective 1) when WBTT presented the play in 2018 as part of its New Playwrights Series. Carvas has studied theatre performance since 6th grade. He attended visual and performing arts schools through 12th grade, then took his skills to Southeast Missouri State University. He has earned rave reviews for his role as John the Baptist/Judas in the production of *Something Like...Godspell*. Some of his theatrical credits include *The Wiz*, *Tangled*, *Chasing Waterfalls*, *Dreamgirls*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Music Man*, *High School Musical*, *Issues of*



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*Love, Of His & Hers* and *Voices: Sounds of America*. He would like to leave you with these encouraging words: "Life is about Place and Position; God will always Position you to be in the right Place to be successful."



### **CHAKARA ROSA**

(Mary/Ensemble) has been educated in several dance styles, including hip hop, jazz, modern, ballet, tap, contemporary and ballroom dance. Since

the age of 3, Chakara has been seen on various stages, beginning her journey of showbiz in the state of Colorado. At the age of 9, Chakara moved to Florida and since has performed and traveled all over its west coast, including at Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in *Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now!*: WBTT's 20th Anniversary Celebration and The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee's *Voices of the Holocaust*, The Players Centre for Performing Arts, Sarasota Contemporary Dance and Moving Ethos Dance Company. Chakara has created and freelanced her own works of dance and performed them at local events throughout Sarasota. She recently took up modeling and other styles of dance, such as flamenco. Chakara continues to stay ambitious and hone her craft and skills. "ALL I'VE DONE SINCE I WAS YOUNG WAS HONE MY CRAFT" (Logic).



### **TERESA STANLEY\***

(Ensemble) Being a part of WBTT's 20th Anniversary season gives me so much joy! I've been on countless stages all over the world — performing on Broadway

in *The Color Purple* and *Rock of Ages*, at the Oscars, the Met, and as a featured vocalist in the Golden Globe- and Grammy Award-winning motion picture *The Greatest Showman*. No matter where life takes me, WBTT makes my heart beat like no other. We do Divine works of art here. I'm standing here because my mom taught me how to have a connection with the Divine. I pray your hearts open

to Divine Love like never before. To my mother Rosa, Brother Michael, Pops, and Amani, May the Divine's love always keep you covered and show you the way.



### **JOSHUA THOMPSON**

(Ensemble/Judas Understudy) is a recent graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. He made his debut with

WBTT in *Harry & Lena* and was last seen in *A Motown Christmas* and *Othello in the Park* (New York). Other memorable performances include *Rockin' Down Fairytale Lane*, *How I Got Over*, *The Wiz* and *American Roots: The Gospel Experience*. He is working on honing his skills as a "triple threat" — dancer, actor and singer.

### **VINETTE CARROLL** (Concept and Book)

(1922-2002) is celebrated as an artistic trailblazer in American theatre. She was the first African-American woman to direct on Broadway (*Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*, 1972) and was Founding Director of the Urban Arts Corps, an organization dedicated to launching and nurturing the careers of Black and Hispanic actors and other minority theatre artists, including Cicely Tyson and Sherman Hemsley. She was also the Director of the New York State Ghetto Arts Project, bringing theatre and dance to underserved communities, and presented theatre classics and modern plays at the Inner City Repertory in the Watts district of Los Angeles. As an actor, Carroll won an Obie (off-Broadway) Award in 1962 for her role in *Moon Over a Rainbow Shawl*, which also starred James Earl Jones. In 1964 she won TV's Emmy Award for her work in *Beyond the Blues*. As a film actor she appeared in *Up the Down Staircase* (1967) and *Alice's Restaurant* (1969). In the 1970s she had her two biggest successes as a creator, producer and director. *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*, a Gospel revue with songs by Micki Grant, was originally staged by the Urban Arts Corps. It then moved to Broadway, establishing Carroll as the first Black female Broadway director. The show ran for more than 1,000 performances. In 1976, *Your Arms Too Short*

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to *Box with God* debuted on Broadway, with revivals in 1980 (featuring Jennifer Holliday) and 1982 (starring Al Green and Patti Labelle). In the late 1980s Carroll founded the Vinnette Carroll Repertory Theatre in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She died in 2002, but her groundbreaking work lives on in her creations and her influence on countless other theatre artists, particularly African-American playwrights, producers and directors.

**ALEX BRADFORD** (Music & Lyrics) (1927-1978) was known professionally as “Professor Alex Bradford.” A composer, arranger, choir director and singer, he influenced the movement toward large Gospel choirs in performing and recording. He sang Gospel music as a child growing up in Bessemer, Alabama, studied in New York, and moved to Chicago in 1947. He toured with Mahalia Jackson and other Gospel artists and had a hit record with “Too Close to Heaven” in 1954. His singing style influenced early Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues artists such as Ray Charles and Little Richard. In the early 1960s he appeared in an off-Broadway and touring production of the Langston Hughes musical *Black Nativity*, for which he also contributed music. He won an Obie Award in 1972 for his acting in Vinnette Carroll’s *Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope*, with music by Micki Grant. A few years later, he worked with Carroll and with co-composer Micki Grant on the music and lyrics for *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*.

**MICKI GRANT** (Music & Lyrics) is a composer, singer, actor and writer. In the early 1960s she appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet’s *The Blacks* with James Earl Jones and Cicely Tyson. In 1964 she was cast in Mark Blitzstein’s song-play *The Cradle Will Rock* and in the musical Brecht on Brecht. She landed some of the first recurring roles for African-American actors in the daytime soap operas *Another World* and *The Edge of Night*. In the 1970s she began a successful collaboration with Vinnette Carroll when she wrote the songs for *Don’t Bother Me, I Can’t Cope*, and later, with Alex Bradford, the music and lyrics for Carroll’s *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*.



### **HARRY BRYCE**

(Director) has developed visionary works as a director, choreographer, writer, and arts educator for more than 33 years. Harry has led dance companies in Richmond, Va., and Atlanta, Ga., where his original concert ballet, *Beyond the Canebreaks: Moments in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, performed to sold-out crowds and received national and critical acclaim at the National Black Arts Festival. In 1997 Harry founded the Memphis Black Repertory Theatre and served as producing artistic director for five seasons, during which he garnered 17 theatre awards. Harry has directed for professional theatre companies throughout the U.S. and was the recipient of the 2000 Carter G. Woodson Award of Merit for Lifetime Achievements in Performing Arts. Currently, Harry serves as an Artistic Associate for the Cumberland County Playhouse (the largest and oldest professional regional theatre in Tennessee), where he has directed numerous productions over the past 14 years. At Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, Harry’s directing credits include *Dearly Departed*, *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *It Ain’t Nothin’ But the Blues*. He is thrilled to be back with WBTT to direct his 10th show.



### **NATE JACOBS** (WBTT

Founder & Artistic Director) is a driving force in Florida’s theatre scene. A graduate of Florida A&M University, Nate founded Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in 1999. He has written, composed, directed and performed in many shows, as an actor, singer, dancer and comedian. He works extensively in the community training and mentoring youth in the performing arts. As a result of his outstanding contributions to young people, the Sarasota County Branch NAACP Youth Council recognized Nate as one of its 2012 Men of Valor. In the spring of 2013, he was inducted into the Community Video Archives Hall of Fame for his significant contributions to

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the arts and education. In 2015, Nate was recognized as a Champion of Diversity for the arts during the Biz(941) and La Guia magazines' Unity Awards Luncheon, and was honored with the prestigious Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award during the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C., "for his contributions to Black theatre specifically and American theatre in general." In 2017, Goodwill Manasota named him a Community Ambassador of the Year. In 2018, the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County honored Nate with the Arts Leadership Award for Artistic Achievement. In 2019 he brought *Soul Man* to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. — WBTT's fourth appearance there.



**JAMES "JAY" DODGE II** (Production Manager/Music Director) recently celebrated his 10th anniversary as WBTT's Production Manager and Resident Music Director. A producer,

composer, arranger and songwriter, Jay oversaw the production and music for three of WBTT's four appearances at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. He began playing the bass at age 13 and, through the years, has directed several band ensembles and accompanied many singers with his smooth melodic bass playing. He has traveled with the renowned Westcoast Gospel Chorus of Florida and The HLP Love Campaign, touring the U.S., Europe, Africa and the Caribbean, and performing a holiday show at the White House. His local and national TV appearances include Fox, NBC, BET and the CW Network. Jay has accompanied many artists, including recording sensation Terrell Carter, Kermit Quinn of the vocal group Blackstreet, Broadway stars Melba Moore and Chester Gregory, international recording artist Frank McComb, and Gospel greats Hezekiah Walker, Kim Burrell, Shirley Caesar, Albertina Walker, Dorothy Norwood, Kurt Carr, Byron Cage, Richard Smallwood and Bishop Walter Hawkins. Jay holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Performance from Florida International University. He is a loving

husband to his wife Renae and father to his two boys, Jay and Kai.

**JUANITA MUNFORD\*** (Production Stage Manager) has extensive experience as a stage manager. This Manchester, N.H. native attended St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vt. After working in St. Michael's Playhouse, she moved to Sarasota in 1983 and became the stage manager for more than 90 shows at the Asolo Repertory Theatre. Juanita's first WBTT show as stage manager was *Marvin Gaye: The Man & His Music* in 2011 and she has served in that role ever since. She is very proud to be working with Nate Jacobs and the amazing people at WBTT. Juanita lives in Sarasota with her menagerie of pets.

**MICHAEL MEJIA-MENDEZ\*** (Assistant Stage Manager) A native of the Dominican Republic, this talented actor and singer is in his 10th season with WBTT. He received stellar reviews and a Handy Award (Jay Handelman, Sarasota Herald-Tribune) for his performance as Usnavi in WBTT's 2017 production of *In the Heights*. In addition to acting with the troupe and sometimes serving as Assistant Stage Manager, Michael is WBTT's Production Assistant and Assistant to the Artistic Director. He earned rave reviews for his impressive work in *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*, *Soul Man* and *Soul Crooners*. He starred as Harry Belafonte in the Troupe's 2014 hit, *Harry and Lena*, was Seymour in the 2015 blockbuster *Little Shop of Horrors* and played the title role in 2016's *The Wiz*. This season he was seen in *A Motown Christmas* at the Sarasota Opera House, and last summer he appeared in WBTT's production of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. In 2014, Michael was awarded a prestigious John Ringling Towers Fund grant in the performing arts category by the Arts & Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County. In January 2019 he was honored with an Impact Award from Visible Men Academy in the Arts category. The awards "shine a light on visible men...who mentor, educate and inspire underserved boys in our community."

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**ANNETTE BREAZEALE** (Headdress and Properties Designer) is WBTT's Resident Property Master. She has designed props for area stages including Banyan Theatre Company and the FSU Conservatory at the Asolo Theatre. In addition, she has worked as art director and production designer for national and international feature films and music videos. She would like to thank Nate Jacobs for the opportunity to work with such a talented and inspirational group of theatre artists.

**MICHAEL NEWTON-BROWN** (Set Designer) is a director as well as a scenic and lighting designer. He has designed for Bette Midler, Barry Manilow, Joan Rivers, Jerry Herman, Carole Channing, Leslie Uggams, Disney On Ice, Busch Gardens, NBC News Affiliate stations, SAKS 5th Avenue, The NFL, the national tour of *Jerry's Girls* prior to Broadway, cruise ships, opera companies, dance companies and professional theatres across the country. Locally, Michael has designed or directed for The Players, MPAC, The Venice Theatre and the Golden Apple. He has been designing for WBTT for six years and is excited to be a part of the first productions in the new theatre.

**NICK JONES** (Lighting Designer) is excited to be back at WBTT. He continues to design for professional and community theatre in the greater Florida area, as well as being an adjunct faculty member at the Booker High School Visual and Performing

Arts Theatre Department. Some recent designs include *The Amen Corner* and *A Motown Christmas* at WBTT, *Shrek*, *Ghostlight*, *West Side Story*, and *You Can't Take it With You*. View his work on Instagram @perpetual.standby

**ADRIENNE PITTS** (Costume Designer) has worked with WBTT as an actress and stagehand for over 16 years. She started out on stage but soon realized she loved working backstage even more. Adrienne has been the Wardrobe Manager and Lead Stagehand for WBTT since 2017. Last season she was the Assistant Costume Designer for *Raisin*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul* and *Black Nativity*. Adrienne has costumed *A Motown Christmas*, *The Mountaintop* and *Soul Man* and was the Assistant Costume Designer for *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*. Adrienne has also been writing for over 15 years and has been blessed to work with her mentor, Nate Jacobs. She was given an opportunity to write a play for her church youth group. Since the moment the play was performed, Adrienne knew she wanted to be a creative writer and eventually see her plays come to life on stage. She wrote the script for WBTT's 2019 Stage of Discovery summer show, *A Journey to Motown*. She is also interested in writing television series. Adrienne is grateful for Nate Jacobs and the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe for allowing her to learn and grow in this amazing company.

## ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION



Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards.

Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production.

AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit [actorsequity.org](http://actorsequity.org).

## HEART & SOUL CAMPAIGN DONORS

Thanks to everyone who made our Heart & Soul Campaign a success!

Because of your generosity, we exceeded our \$8 million goal and raised over \$8.7 million! Your dollars have allowed us to transform our campus into a cutting-edge theatre arts center and to begin to build an endowment that will ensure the long-term funding of our facilities, programs and mission.

We're thrilled to welcome you to *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*, the second show in our newly renovated building — the Gerri Aaron and the Aaron Family Foundation Theatre Building! Selected naming opportunities remain. You may also contribute to the funding of our endowment. Please contact Debra Flynt-Garrett, Development Director, at 941-366-1505, ext. 106, if you would like to know more or contribute.

Commitments received through October 31, 2019 are included in this season's playbill; commitments received between November 1, 2019 and February 21, 2020, are gratefully acknowledged below.

### **\$500,000-\$999,999**

State of Florida Division of Cultural Affairs

### **\$250,000-\$499,999**

Edward D. & Anna Mitchell Family Foundation

### **\$100,000-\$249,000**

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### **\$25,000-\$49,999**

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Dr. Hugh S. Smith & Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith

**Up to \$2,499**

Thomas E. Chenault & Douglas J. Smith

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Judy & Jon Savage in Honor of  
Brock & Julie Leach and Family

Jeffrey Smith & Deborah Mix

## SEASON SPONSORS

Donations received between November 1, 2019 and February 21, 2020

\*Denotes 5 years or more of continuous support

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS | \$10,000-\$24,999**

Robert Blattberg & Rebecca Donelson

### **PLAYWRIGHTS | \$5,000-\$9,999**

Scott B. & Annie P. Appleby Charitable Trust

David & Suzanne Arch

James & Debra Diggs

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### **DIRECTORS | \$2,500-\$4,999**

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In Memory of Audrey Coleman	Arnold & Dolores Kropf*
Michael & Suzanne Berndt	Luann Lamp
Patricia Bourke	Joan Lovell
Carol Butera in Honor of the WBTT Staff	Ben Luczak
Luke Cranor	Susan D. Murphy
Raymond Davies	Bertha Person
Paula Fishman & Jeff Sindelar	Frank & Marian Setzman in Honor of Meredith Setzman
Julia Fosson	Ronald & Mary Shapiro
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**MARCH 15 & 16, 2020**

**7:30 PM**



## OUR MISSION

The Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was founded in December 1999, as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Our mission has always been to produce professional theatre that promotes and celebrates the African American experience, attracts diverse audiences, supports and develops African American artists, and builds the self-esteem of African American youth.

Tax-deductible gifts from generous individuals, businesses, and foundations underwrite WBTT's annual operating budget. Your support helps to keep tickets affordable and provides funds to mentor new local talent and to develop high-quality productions. In addition, your gifts allow us to offer theatre experiences to an underserved population.

Thank you!

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**WESTCOAST  
BLACK  
THEATRE  
TROUPE**

**WBTT THEATRE**

1012 N. Orange Ave.  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Visit us online at:  
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