

# WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS  
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

# ONCE ON THIS ISLAND

BOOK AND LYRICS BY LYNN AHRENS

MUSIC BY STEPHEN FLAHERTY

Costume Designer  
**Suwatana Rockland**

Wig Designer  
**Dominique Freeman**

Properties Designer  
**Annette Breazeale**

Scenic Designer  
**Harlan Penn\*\***

Production Manager  
**Kevin White**

Production Stage Manager  
**Jynelly Rosario\***

Assistant Stage Managers  
**Tianna Harris & KaCie Ley\***

Lighting Designer  
**Michael Pasquini**

Sound Designer  
**Patrick Russini**

Projections Designer  
**Michelle Harvey\*\***

Projection Technician  
**Thom Korp**

Music Director  
**Dan Sander-Wells**  
Director/Choreographer  
**Jim Weaver<sup>+</sup>**

## October 11–November 19, 2023

Based Upon The Novel "My Love, My Love" by Rosa Guy

Originally Directed and Choreographed on Broadway by Graciela Daniele  
Playwrights Horizons, Inc. Produced ONCE ON THIS ISLAND Off-Broadway In 1990

Originally Produced On Broadway By The Shubert Organization, Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.  
Suntory International Corporation and James Walsh, In Association With Playwrights Horizons

*Once on This Island* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.MTishows.com](http://www.MTishows.com)



## SDC

<sup>+</sup> *The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.*

Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues. This project is sponsored in part by the Department of State, Division of Arts & Culture, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture, and the State of Florida. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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

*\*\*Member of USA (United Scenic Artists), a national labor union of designers, artists, and craftspeople in the entertainment industry.*

## CAST

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Riley Aparicio-Jerro</b> ..... | Little TiMoune ( <i>some performances</i> ) |
| <b>Kyla Bolling</b> .....         | Storyteller/ Mama Euralie & Andrea u/s      |
| <b>Lee Hollis Bussie*</b> .....   | Papa Ge                                     |
| <b>Toddra Brunson</b> .....       | Mama Euralie                                |
| <b>Jalayah Campbell</b> .....     | Little TiMoune ( <i>some performances</i> ) |
| <b>Jazzmin Carson</b> .....       | Erzulie                                     |
| <b>Moriah Cary</b> .....          | Storyteller/ Erzulie & Asaka u/s            |
| <b>Tarra Conner Jones*</b> .....  | Asaka                                       |
| <b>Ilexis Holmes</b> .....        | TiMoune                                     |
| <b>Charlie “CJ” Melton</b> .....  | Storyteller/ Papa Ge & Agwe u/s             |
| <b>Leon Pitts II*</b> .....       | Tonton Julian                               |
| <b>Maicy Powell</b> .....         | Andrea/Storyteller                          |
| <b>Jermarcus Riggins</b> .....    | Daniel Beauxhomme                           |
| <b>Jacob Smith</b> .....          | Armand/ Storyteller                         |
| <b>Nate Summers*</b> .....        | Agwe  |
| <b>Canela Vasquez</b> .....       | Storyteller/ TiMoune u/s                    |
| <b>Donovan Whitney*</b> .....     | Storyteller/ Daniel & Tonton Julian u/s     |

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

## MUSICIANS

Our live band plays backstage!

|                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Music Director/ Main Keys ..... | <b>Dan Sander-Wells</b> |
| Guitar .....                    | <b>Dan Haedicke</b>     |
| Bass .....                      | <b>Joe Bruno</b>        |
| Reeds .....                     | <b>Richard Philbin</b>  |
| Keys 2 .....                    | <b>Christine Bruno</b>  |
| Drums .....                     | <b>John Walker</b>      |

## WBTT TEAM

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Founder & Artistic Director.....                               | <b>Nate Jacobs</b>                                   |
| Executive Director.....  | <b>Julie Leach</b>                                   |
| Education and Outreach Associate.....                          | <b>Peterly Jean Baptiste</b>                         |
| Development Associate.....                                     | <b>Regina Belvin</b>                                 |
| Shop Foreman.....  | <b>Roland Black</b>                                  |
| Artist Relations Associate & Assistant Box Office Manager..... | <b>Ariel Blue</b>                                    |
| Resident Properties Artisan Manager.....                       | <b>Annette Breazeale</b>                             |
| Stage Hands.....   | <b>Kiamani Canady, Amber Myers</b>                   |
| Resident Seamstress.....                                       | <b>Darci Collins</b>                                 |
| Properties Intern.....   | <b>Jayde Dauley</b>                                  |
| Development Director.....                                      | <b>Debra Flynt-Garrett</b>                           |
| Resident Choreographer.....                                    | <b>Donald Frison</b>                                 |
| Receptionist & Box Office Associate.....                       | <b>Annette German</b>                                |
| Finance Manager.....   | <b>Robert Grant</b>                                  |
| Marketing And Communications Director.....                     | <b>Beth Graves</b>                                   |
| Production Assistant.....                                      | <b>Tianna Harris</b>                                 |
| Sound Assistant.....   | <b>Austin Jacobs</b>                                 |
| Resident Sound Engineer.....                                   | <b>Alexander Judd</b>                                |
| Custodian.....   | <b>Gerald Law</b>                                    |
| Box Office Associate.....                                      | <b>Margaret Lindsey</b>                              |
| House Associates.....  | <b>Stefan Abner, Marta McKinnon, Zion Thompson</b>   |
| Resident Music Director.....                                   | <b>Matthew McKinnon</b>                              |
| House Associate/Stage Hand.....                                | <b>Mydra McKinnon</b>                                |
| House Manager.....   | <b>Myllanna McKinnon</b>                             |
| Box Office Manager.....  | <b>Eleanor Miller</b>                                |
| Resident Stage Manager.....                                    | <b>Juanita Munford</b>                               |
| Resident Lighting Designer.....                                | <b>Michael Pasquini</b>                              |
| Wardrobe Manager.....  | <b>Adrienne Pitts</b>                                |
| Marketing Associate.....                                       | <b>Maicy Powell</b>                                  |
| Assistant to Seamstress.....                                   | <b>Pat Primavera</b>                                 |
| Resident Sound Designer.....                                   | <b>Patrick Russini</b>                               |
| Resident Guest Director.....                                   | <b>Chuck Smith</b>                                   |
| Education Director & Artistic Associate.....                   | <b>Jim Weaver</b>                                    |
| Production Manager.....  | <b>Kevin White</b>                                   |
| Assistant to the Artistic Director &.....                      | <b>Donovan Whitney</b>                               |
| Casting Coordinator  |  |
| Photography.....   | <b>Sorcha Augustine</b>                              |
| Media Relations.....   | <b>Sharon Kunkel, Wordslinger Marketing &amp; PR</b> |
| Graphic Design.....  | <b>Paula Murray, Artefact Design</b>                 |
| Videography.....   | <b>Bill Wagy/Bill Wagy Productions</b>               |

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

*Once on This Island*, based on the novel *My Love, My Love* by Rosa Guy, is a jewel of a musical with so much to say. Subtly revealed in its layers of rhythms and lyrics are enduring messages that everyone can relate to. That's a major part of its universal appeal—what it says about the human spirit. I was lucky enough to see it on Broadway many years ago with the original cast. It was a very different kind of show compared to what was being presented on Broadway at the time. I love that the writing team of Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty aren't afraid to explore and offer up for examination the inner workings of our many varied human cultures and societies; some areas of which are not often addressed as they are in this particular piece. And, without shying away from its ultimate message ... love wins. That's why it stays with you.

I have to thank, firstly, Nate Jacobs and Julie Leach for the support and faith they show in me unendingly. I also want to thank everyone on the board and staff of WBTT for welcoming me so warmly and consistently as my role with the company evolved. And of course, the cast, designers, crew, and musicians for being part of this journey. It takes a village, and everyone got on board the collaboration train with so many smiles, enthusiasm, and dedication toward seeing this production come to life that it made my heart sing. I thank you a thousand-fold. It would not have been possible without you. I truly appreciate your talents, artistry, and openness as we traveled together. I also thank you, the person reading this note right now, your support makes all of this possible. Believe me, we recognize and appreciate it more than you know. I hope you enjoy!

—Jim Weaver

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

**Lynn Ahrens** (b. October 1, 1948-) is a singer, songwriter, and lyricist best known for her work in musical theatre. She is an Academy Award and Golden Globe nominee and a council member of the Dramatists Guild of America, a co-founder of the Dramatists Guild Fellows Program, and a Lilly Award winner for lyrics. A longtime collaborator with Stephen Flaherty, she has written many musicals including *Once on This Island*, *Ragtime*, and *Anastasia*. She is the recipient of a Tony Award, Drama Desk Award, and Outer Critics Circle Award for the Broadway musical *Ragtime*. She also received the Oscar Hammerstein Award for Lifetime Achievement, and in 2015 she was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

## ABOUT THE COMPOSER

**Stephen Flaherty** (b. September 18th, 1960–) is a composer for theatre and film. He is a longtime collaborator of Lynn Ahrens. He composed the music for the Broadway musicals *Ragtime* (Tony, Drama Desk, OCC Awards, two Grammy nominations), *Seussical* (Grammy, Drama Desk nominations), *Once on This Island* (Tony nomination, Olivier Award, Best Musical) and *Rocky*. He is the recipient of a Tony Award and a Drama Desk Award and has been nominated for an Oscar, and multiple Grammy Awards.

## WISH LIST

Used car in good condition for visiting actors

## SPECIAL THANKS

Ralph Nurmela & Alex Pinchon—For your hard work on the tree!  
Fabulous Finds benefitting The Pines of Sarasota

## THANK YOU TO OUR PRODUCTION SPONSORS!

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Scene Magazine  
Bob & Teresa Simmons  
Hillary Steele  
Susan K. Straus  
Janis & Skip Swan  
Dr. Ray & Fran Taylor

*Setting: The action takes place in the French Antilles in the Carribean Sea and tells the story of a peasant girl named Ti Moune who is sent on a journey by the Gods to prove love can conquer death.*

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT ONE

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Prologue/We Dance.....               | <b>Storytellers</b>                            |
| One Small Girl.....                  | <b>Tonton, Mama, Erzulie, Storytellers</b>     |
| Waiting For Life.....                | <b>Ti Moune</b>                                |
| And The Gods Heard Her Prayer.....   | <b>Asaka, Erzulie, Pape Ge, Agwe</b>           |
| Rain.....                            | <b>Agwe, Storytellers</b>                      |
| Discovering Daniel.....              | <b>Ti Moune, Storytellers</b>                  |
| Pray.....                            | <b>Ti Moune, Mama, Tonton, Storytellers</b>    |
| Forever Yours.....                   | <b>Ti Moune, Daniel, Pape Ge, Storytellers</b> |
| The Sad Tale of The Beauxhommes..... | <b>Armand, Storytellers</b>                    |
| Ti Moune.....                        | <b>Mama, Tonton, Ti Moune</b>                  |

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

### ACT TWO

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Mama Will Provide.....          | <b>Asaka, Storytellers</b>                              |
| Waiting for Life (reprise)..... | <b>Ti Moune</b>   |
| Some Say.....                   | <b>Storytellers, Little Ti Moune</b>                    |
| The Human Heart.....            | <b>Erzulie, Storytellers</b>                            |
| Pray (Reprise).....             | <b>Storytellers</b>                                     |
| Some Girls.....                 | <b>Daniel</b>   |
| The Ball.....                   | <b>Andrea, Daniel, Ti Moune, Storytellers</b>           |
| TiMoune's Dance.....            | <b>Ti Moune, Storytellers</b>                           |
| Andrea Sequence.....            | <b>Andrea, Ti Moune</b>                                 |
| Forever Yours (reprise).....    | <b>Ti Moune, Daniel, Papa Ge, Erzulie, Storytellers</b> |
| A Part of Us.....               | <b>Mama, Little Ti Moune, Storytellers</b>              |
| Why We Tell The Story.....      | <b>Company</b>  |

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

## CAST AND CREATIVE



### **RILEY APARICIO-JERRO**

(Little Ti Moune) is thrilled to be making her debut on the Westcoast stage in her first professional production. Riley is a 7th grader at The Out Of Door Academy and an active

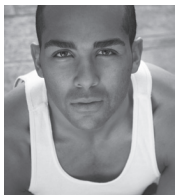
member of their theater program. Past productions include, *She Kills Monsters*, *Shrek The Musical*, and *Finding Nemo* at the Sarasota Players. Riley was the recipient of the Best Newcomer award at the Out Of Door Academy in 2023 and has won multiple awards for gymnastics before moving to Sarasota last year. She continues to study voice, acting, and dance at the Sarasota Players and Out Of Door Academy. Riley would like to thank her family, friends, and mentors for their support and encouragement.



### **KYLA BOLLING**

(Storyteller, Andrea & Mama Euralie u/s) Previously seen in WBTT's *Dreamgirls* earlier this year, Kyla is so excited to be returning for her second production! Some of

her recent credits include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *35MM: A Musical Exhibition* and *Into the Woods*. She'd like to thank her ever supporting family and friends and the incredible cast and crew.



### **LEE HOLLIS BUSSIE\***

(Papa Ge) is thrilled to be back at WBTT after appearing last fall in *Guys and Dolls* as Benny Southstreet. Off Broadway credits include: *Soul Doctor* (Actor Temples Theatre)

*Whoopee!*, *Little Mary Sunshine* (Theatre Row). Other selected credits include: Papermill Theatre, Phoenix Theatre, Greenbrier Valley Theatre, Creede Repertory Theatre, The Barnstormers Theatre, Tibbits Opera House, Black Hills Playhouse, West Central Illinois Arts Center, Second Avenue Theatre & Charleston Stage. Some of his favorite roles include: Fred - *A Christmas Carol*, Tom Collins- *Rent*, Professor Plum-

*Clue* & Jamie - *The Last 5 Years*. Much love & thanks to family/friends. Contact: leehollisbussie.com; IG: @leehollisbussie



### **TODDRA BRUNSON**

(Mama Euralie) has been blessed to grace many stages in various capacities. No stranger to acting, her credits include her portrayal of Aida at the Seminole Theatre, for which she

won Best Actress in a Musical in the 2019 BroadwayWorld Miami Awards. She was also a winner as Kunto in *The Dahomey Warriors*; *Simply Simone: The Musical*, which was nominated for a Carbonell Award; *Little Shop of Horrors* (Urchin); Annie (Miss Hannigan); *Hairspray: The Musical*, in which she displayed her powerful vocals as the show stopping character Motormouth Maybelle. Recent credits include her portrayal as Cedella Marley in City Theater's production of Bob Marley's *Three Little Birds*. Toddra also fully explored her part of *Milma's Tale*, as an understudy with Zoetic Theater. Toddra's character as the Director in the debut musical *One More Yesterday* with The Foundry Theater and *Summer Shorts Homegrown Edition* can be added to her many current projects. Toddra's talents go well beyond stage; she has also performed in films, trailers, videos; has directed and choreographed productions, and has had the privilege of singing background vocals for many different artists. Toddra was featured in the five-time award-winning short film *Black and Blue*, directed and produced by Taylor Gunn; acted in *Zoe 911: The Movie* with Paul Antoine; and is currently tearing up the role of Levelle in the web series *To Each His Own*, which is currently in its second season. Toddra is currently filming for *Single, Taken, Other*, an up-and-coming web series set to release this year.



### **JALIYAH CAMPBELL**

(Little Ti Moune) Jaliyah's on-stage performances started as early as 3 years old. She is motivated by her mentor and acting coach, Nate Jacobs, Founder and Artistic

Director of WBTT. Jaliyah has a natural talent for acting, singing and dancing. Her

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

## CAST AND CREATIVE

professional debut was in a production of the Sarasota Youth Opera at the age of 7. Jaliyah has performed with Stage of Discovery, WBTT's summer musical theatre intensive program. In June 2021, Jaliyah landed her first movie role in *Playing Through*, portraying the young Ann Gregory, a pioneering African American golfer. Jaliyah was a student representative in a commercial for the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, which aired in September 2021 on television and social media. She also appears in the M.A.D. Music Acting Dance video production, *Holidays in Harmony*, available on YouTube, as well as *The Growing Garden* pilot written and directed by Nate Jacobs. Jaliyah is also a competitive gymnast and is currently preparing for upcoming competitions. At 12 years old, this dynamic performer always strives to give 100 percent; with the talent, dedication and charisma that captivates audiences every time.



**JAZZMIN CARSON** (Erzulie) is delighted to be in her third production at Westcoast Black Theater Troupe! Her credits include performances such as *Dreamgirls*, portraying the role of Deena

Jones, and WBTT's premiere of *Big Sexy: A Fats Waller Revue*, portraying the role of Henrietta Hash! A graduate of Alabama State University's Bachelor of Arts program, Jazzmin's collegiate show credits include August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* and Dominique Morriseau's *Paradise Blue*, where her love for theatre bloomed into what is now her dream and passion. She is a recipient of the Irene Ryan National Acting Scholarship and The College of Fellows Jane Alexander Acting Award, presented by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Jazzmin is thrilled to share the stage with WBTT legends and be a part of this phenomenal production!



**MORIAH CARY** (Storyteller, Erzulie & Asaka u/s) is a rising senior, musical theatre major at Kent State University. She was born and raised in Aliquippa, PA. She grew

up singing in the church, which is where she found her love for performing. She has performed in *BKLYN* at Porthouse Theater (*Miss Paradise*), *The Color Purple* (Celie), and *SpongeBob the Musical* as Pearl. This is her first production with WBTT and she's glad to be a part of this amazing story.



**TARRA CONNER-JONES\*** (Asaka) Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe has become a beloved home for Tarra, and she is happy to be returning for the season opener, *Once On This Island!* Tarra is a NYC

based singer/actor/writer originally from Jacksonville, FL. She recently made her Off Broadway debut in *White Girl In Danger* (Drama League Nominee and Drama Desk Nominee) for her role as Nell Gibbs. Past credits include: *The Color Purple*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Shrek*, *Hairspray*, *Chicago The Musical*, *Dreamgirls*, and *From Birmingham To Broadway* (A one act play with music about Nell Carter, written by Tarra). Tarra forever performs in memory of her mother, Chonita Conner who cheers from heaven. Much appreciation to her agent, Dave Secor (Daniel Hoff Agency).



**ILEXIS HOLMES** (Ti Moune) is super excited to be playing Ti Moune in *Once On This Island*. This is her first time ever working with WBTT and she is so thrilled to be doing one of her favorite shows here!

Ilexis is a graduate from Southeastern University with a bachelors in Vocal performance. She has been performing her entire life and can't wait to share the gift that God has given her! One of Ilexis' most special jobs was working at Disney world where she played Squirt in *Animal Kingdom's Finding Nemo The Musical*. She is thankful to her friends for their endless prayers and encouragement. She thanks her family for always believing in her and loving her unconditionally! But most importantly she gives thanks to her Heavenly Father for putting this opportunity along her path and trusting her to complete the assignment he has called her to do. All she does is to glorify God!



## CAST AND CREATIVE



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

(Storyteller, Agwe & Papa Ge u/s) is a 2020 graduate of Manatee High School. He first appeared on WBTT's stage in Sheldon Rhoden's 2014 Young Artist Program. He has

also appeared in *Black Nativity*, *Joyful!*, *Joyful!*, and *Your Arms Too Short to Box with God*. Charlie was the 2013 winner of the Singers & Musicians Arts Conference (SMAC) in Tampa, sponsored by the recording artist Dorinda Clark Cole. Publicly ministering in song since the age of 10, Charlie has traveled throughout Florida singing with various church and nonsectarian groups. He has also won many first-place awards from the 2015 Tampa Bay Gospel Awards and the Greatness Beyond Measure Idol Talent Showcase. He released his first single "All to You" in 2018 and one day hopes to accomplish his dreams of continuing his acting career and becoming a national gospel music recording artist.



**LEON PITTS\*** (Tonton Julian) is a longtime WBTT troupe member. He has performed in several of its productions, including *Big Sexy*, *The Fats Waller Revue*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Joyful! Joyful!*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of*

*Soul*, *Soul Man*, *The Wiz* (Tin Man), *Hot Mikado*, *Soul Crooners*, *Love Sung in the Key of Aretha* and *The Fabulous 5*. In August 2022 he appeared in WBTT's production of *Soul Crooners*, *Featuring Sistas in the Name of Soul* at the National Black Theatre Festival. Leon has danced in and choreographed many local shows and concerts, and spent the summer of 2005 in Tucson, Ariz., and Coral Springs, Fla., where he appeared in *Five Guys Named Moe* (as No Moe).



### **MAICY POWELL**

(Andrea/Storyteller) is a singer/actress born and raised in Sarasota, FL. She has been a member of the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe since 2016, where she began as a student in their

Stage of Discovery Program til 2018.

She appeared in her own Young Artist Showcase at WBTT in 2019, *The Kid is Alright*. She has performed in a number of productions and events, and was recently seen in *Dreamgirls* and as Mary in WBTT's holiday show *Black Nativity*. Maicy attended Booker High School where she studied theatre and music in their Visual Performing Arts program. She is trained in a variety of musical genres including opera and classical. Maicy is a recent graduate from Howard University with a Business in Administration Degree in Management and a minor in Film and Television. Her dream is to pursue a career as a producer to make films that celebrate and uplift the culture of African Americans.



### **JERMARCUS RIGGINS**

(Daniel) is a recording/performing artist who graduated from South Plantation High School located in Plantation, Florida and went to the University of Oklahoma for Musical Theatre.

Jermarcus is from Fort Lauderdale, Florida and developed a strong passion for music at the age of 7. He grew up singing in the church, which is where he found his calling. He believes that God has called him to bless and inspire his people through the gift of music. Some of his favorite roles include Lola, from *Kinky Boots*, Donkey, from *Shrek the Musical* and Don Lockwood, from *Singin' in the Rain*. Jermarcus is a risk taker/hard worker who believes that your comfort zone is a happy place but nothing grows there so why not take the opportunity to grow?



### **JACOB SMITH** (Armand/

Storyteller) was born in Philadelphia, PA, and raised in Tampa, Florida. Jacob is a Marine Corps veteran and has a degree in Secondary Education. He worked for Frontier Communications for 26

years and has recently retired. He realized his passion for singing and performing and began his journey later in life. Jacob is a baritone/bass vocalist and debuted with WBTT last season in *Guys and Dolls* as Arvide Abernathy. Jacob has studied and performed with Opera Tampa in various productions, including this year's

## CAST AND CREATIVE

*Sweeney Todd*. He is motivated and eager to immerse himself in future opportunities to grow and evolve as an artist.



**NATE SUMMERS\*** (Agwe) from Cleveland, Ohio, earned his degree at Bowling Green State University and specialized in Acting and Directing on stage. He was last seen at WBTT in 2023's *Dreamgirls* and

is most known for his work in *Motown: The Musical* National Tour (Swing) and on the Norwegian Cruise Line (Lead Soloist). Other theatre credits include *Aida* (Radames), *Dreamgirls* (Curtis), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymour), *Pippin* (Pippin), *Songs for a New World* (Man 1), *Choir Boy* (Junior), *Radio Golf* (Roosevelt Hicks) and *The Boys in the Band* (Bernard). His film credit includes *Finding Fish*, directed by Denzel Washington. Nate is beyond grateful to be joining the WBTT family for the second time and thoroughly hopes you enjoy the wonderful production of *Once On This Island*.



**CANELA VASQUEZ** (Storyteller, Ti Moune u/s) was born in Sarasota, Florida, and is currently enrolled at the University of South Florida pursuing a degree in Digital Communications and

Journalism. Canela made her WBTT debut seven years ago through the Stage of Discovery summer program and continues to perform at the theatre as an alumna. Some of her WBTT credits are the Stage of Discovery productions *Fame Jr.* and *Broadway in Black Jr.*, and main stage show *Joyful! Joyful!*. Canela has also been seen in productions at FST, Urbanite Theatre, and The Hermitage.



**DONOVAN WHITNEY\*** (Ensemble, Daniel & Tonton Julian u/s) is so happy to be returning to the WBTT stage! At WBTT he serves as the assistant to the artistic director, and he is the WBTT

Casting Coordinator. In addition to being on staff at WBTT, he LOVES to teach—

having served as an acting instructor for WBTT's Stage of Discovery for the past three years! Past WBTT credits include: *Flyin' West* (Frank Charles), *Black Nativity* (Narrator), *Pipeline* (Omari), and *Joyful! Joyful!* (Narrator). Other Florida theater credits include: *Alice, Picasso at the Lapine Agile, A Clockwork Orange* (Jobsite Theater); *Footloose, Between Riverside and Crazy* (American Stage); *Evil Dead the Musical* (Stageworks Theatre). Other regional credits include: *Prowess* (Storefront Theater of Indianapolis); *Taming of the Shrew* (Catalyst Repertory Theatre); *Jubilee in the Rearview Mirror* (Indianapolis Fringe). Film credits include: *Paper Line* (Wats Tower Films). He would like to thank his family for their unconditional love and support. He is a proud member of Actor's Equity Association. Instagram: @donoacts93

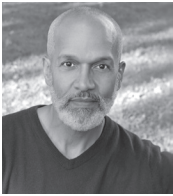


**NATE JACOBS\*** (Founder/Artistic Director) is Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's Founder & Artistic Director. He is a driving force in Florida's theatre scene. A

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 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 August

## CAST AND CREATIVE

2022 he brought *Soul Crooners, Featuring Sistas in the Name of Soul* to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. — WBTT's fifth appearance there. In 2021 Nate received the Perfect Pitch Award from Key Chorale, which recognized him as a driving force in the arts and for his collaborations with other arts organizations, including *American Roots: The Gospel Experience*, a series of concert performances with WBTT performers and Key Chorale presented in three area churches in the fall of 2019. He was recently featured in *The New York Times*, highlighting his mentorship and leadership, as well as WBTT's community outreach.



**JIM WEAVER\*** (Director/Choreographer) is thrilled to be WBTT's Education Director and Artistic Associate. A longtime WBTT guest director, Jim helped celebrate the opening of the Donnelly Theatre in

2020 as the director and choreographer of *Caroline, or Change*. Jim's previous work for WBTT includes productions of *Eubie!*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Raisin*, *In the Heights*, *Spunk*, *Purlie*, *Jitney*, and the award-winning *A Raisin in the Sun*, among others. A critically acclaimed mounting of *Next to Normal* won Jim the 2018 Cleveland Critics Circle Award as Best Director of a Musical. Other regional productions include *Ragtime*, *Working*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Guys And Dolls*, *Once On This Island*, *Saturday Night*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and several others; including award-winning productions of *Floyd Collins* and *Legally Blonde*. Jim holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in acting; before joining the WBTT staff he was the theatre department director for Kent State University at Stark in Ohio. His work has been seen at New York's Lincoln Center, The American Stage Company, Bay Street Theatre and many others. Internationally, his work has been presented in The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and Austria. In addition to his work as a director and choreographer, Jim is an actor and singer who has performed

on Broadway, off-Broadway, regionally, and across Europe. He has been seen on television and in films. He can also be heard on several cast recordings and voiceovers. Jim is a proud member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers



Society. More information is available at [Jimweaver.biz](http://Jimweaver.biz).

**DAN SANDER-WELLS** (Music Director) is a freelance music director, educator, arranger, and author based in NYC. A

graduate of Westminster Choir College, Dan holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the institution. Previous posts include Director of Choral Activities at Delaware Valley Regional High School where he served as Music Director for their Winter Musicals earning accolades from Paper Mill Playhouse, Bucks County Playhouse, and NJ State Thespian Festival for his music direction. Presently, his music direction experience ranges from high school to professional performers in theaters along the East Coast and around the Midwest. Previous collaborations include music directing the 50th anniversary revival of *Raisin* with Freddi Walker-Browne and Phylicia Rashad as well as conducting for Kate Baldwin's *Live Out Loud* cabaret at the Laurie Beechman Theater. Past collaborators also include LaChanze, Matt Sklar, and Andrew Lipka. As an author, he has collaborated with James Jordan on multiple publications (*Conductor as Prism*, 2017, *The Moral Acoustic of Sound*, 2018, *Intonational Solfege*, 2022) and with Frank Abrahams and Ryan John on *Becoming Musical* (2017, all published by GIA Publications). @dwellsmusic

**ANNETTE BREAZEALE** (Resident Property Artisan Manager) 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.

\* The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

## CAST AND CREATIVE

**DOMINIQUE FREEMAN** (Wig Designer) Creative, versatile, and passionate about her craft, Dominique Freeman has been able to establish herself as a successful stylist over the past 14 years. She received her education from the world-renowned Aveda Institute. Her passion for her craft and clients is what separates her from others. After spending years perfecting her craft, Dominique is now branching into the entertainment world.

**TIANNA HARRIS** (Assistant Stage Manager) A Sarasota native, Tianna made her theatrical debut in 2016 when she performed as one of the Dynamites in *Hairspray* (Sarasota School of Arts and Sciences). She then began working with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe when they launched their summer camp intensive program, Stage of Discovery, in 2016. As an alumna of Stage of Discovery, she is no stranger to the stage. She last appeared in WBTT's 2022 holiday show, *Black Nativity*. She has worked as a stagehand on countless productions and through her work backstage she gained a greater appreciation for all parts of theatre. Tianna stepped into the role of Assistant Stage Manager for Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe's production of *Flyin' West* in their 2022/2023 season and discovered that she loved that position. She continued to be the Assistant Stage Manager for the next show, *Dreamgirls*. Tianna was then given the opportunity to become the Production Assistant at WBTT. Her fast track in these leadership roles helped her to discover a passion she didn't realize she had for backstage work. Tianna is enjoying her new position and looking forward to more growth in the near future.

**MICHELLE HARVEY\*\*** (Projections Designer) is an Assistant Professor with the Missouri State University Department of Theatre and Dance. She is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829, a union and professional association for designers, artists, and craftspeople in the entertainment and decorative arts industries. Recent design credits for MSU include scenic and projection design for the world premiere production of *In Vain*, scenic and projection design for *She Kills Monsters*, and co-projection design for

*Working*. For MSU's professional summer theatre (Tent Theatre), Michelle designed the sets and video for *Xanadu*, *Grease* and *The 39 Steps*. Michelle has designed regionally in the DFW area at Stage West, The Dallas Children's Theater (including 3 national tours), Uptown Players, and Theatre Three among others as well as creating concert events for the Turtle Creek Chorale and Spectacular Senior Follies. Elsewhere, she has designed in Florida (Florida State University), Arizona (Arizona Repertory Theatre, Borderlands Theatre, Desert Voices), Ohio (Kent State University Trumbull Campus, Youngstown Playhouse), and Pennsylvania (Kennedy Catholic High School). Michelle earned her bachelor's degree in theatre at The Ohio State University and her MFA degree at the University of Arizona in Tucson. She has been a member and held various leadership positions with the United States Institute of Theatre Technology (USITT) since 2001.

**KACIE LEY\*** (Assistant Stage Manager) is delighted to return to Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. Originally from Green Bay Wisconsin, she moved to the Sarasota area last year after graduating from St. Norbert College in Wisconsin. Her first show with WBTT was *Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue*. She would like to thank her mother Karleen for everything she has done to help her get where she is today. She would also like to thank the WBTT team for giving her the opportunity to join them again this year!

**MICHAEL PASQUINI** (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be returning to *Once on this Island* as it is the first show he lit for Westcoast in 2007. Recent WBTT designs include *Fame*; *Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue*; *Flyin' West*; *Black Nativity*; as well as *Guys and Dolls*. Other recent designs are *A Comedy of Tenors* (FST); *Ruthless! The Musical*; *The Graduate*; *Lateral Moves*; *8-Track: The Sound of the 70s in Concert*; and *Proof* (The Players Centre); *Next to Normal*; and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (Manatee Players); *Expressions*; and *Tribute to Balanchine* (Sarasota Ballet). Michael is Head Electrician and Assistant Lighting Designer for Sarasota Opera and Treasurer for IATSE Local 412.

\*\*Member of USA (United Scenic Artists), a national labor union of designers, artists, and craftspeople in the entertainment industry.

## CAST AND CREATIVE

**HARLAN D. PENN\*\*** (Scenic Designer) is a proud graduate of Florida A&M University and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. The South Florida native has designed for off-Broadway, Off Off Broadway, cable television, regional theatre, and educational theatre. In addition, Penn has served as an Art Director and Assistant Art Director for film & television productions for Netflix, Hulu, ABC/DISNEY, NBC, Hallmark Movie Channel, CBS and Turner Broadcasting. Theatre design credits include: *For Colored Girls, Blues for an Alabama Sky, On Striver's Row, Flyin' West, Dreamgirls, Seven Guitars, Gem of the Ocean, Jitney, Radio Golf, King Hedley II, Chained Dog, Drumline Live* (International tour), *The Mighty Gents, Camp Logan, Buried Child, Looking, Catch Me if You Can, and The Life and Adventures Of Nicholas Nickleby* to name a few. Film/TV productions include *God Friended Me, For Life, Girls 5Eva, The Last O.G., Saturday Night Live, Raising Kanan, FBI Most Wanted, Fire Island, The Noel Diary, Rise, Madame Secretary, Katy Keene* and *Roland Martin Unfiltered*. Mr. Penn has served as assistant scenic designer to Scenic Designer Felix E. Cochren on productions at The McCarter Theatre, Geva Theatre, Syracuse Stage, The Goodman Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, and The Cleveland Playhouse. Mr. Penn is also a proud member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and IASTE/United Scenic Artist Local 829 in the scenic design and Scenic Art category. In addition, Harlan made his operatic design debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago's world premiere production of *Factotum* (hip-hop opera) in January 2023. Mr. Penn is currently an assistant professor of Scenic Design at York College in Jamaica, Queens, NY.

**SUWATANA "PLA" ROCKLAND** (Costume Designer) is excited to collaborate with director Jim Weaver and the creative cast and crew for *Once On This Island* at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in Sarasota, Florida. This is her first time designing for Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. She is currently a resident costume designer, professor, and costume shop supervisor at The College of Wooster, Ohio. Suwatana is originally from Thailand. She is a former professional dancer, actor, director, choreographer, and designer. Suwatana has worked on industrials, commercials, television shows

and stage productions. Before moving to Ohio, she worked in Thailand, Colorado, and Arizona. In addition to her full-time employment, she finds time to freelance as a costume designer and guest lecturer for universities and theatres in the US and Thailand. She holds a Master of Fine Art Degree focusing on Costume Design and Technician from Kent State University and is member of USITT. Her professional credits in Ohio have included Kent State, The Players Guild Theatre, Porthouse Theatre, Beck Center for The Arts, The Ohio Light Opera, Case Western Reserve University, MFA professional Acting program, Dobama Theatre, and the Cleveland Playhouse. [www.Plarocklanddesign.com](http://www.Plarocklanddesign.com)

**JYNELLY ROSARIO\*** (Production Stage Manager) Tours: *Moulin Rouge!* (1st National Tour), *Hamilton* (Angelica/ And Peggy/Philip), *Oklahoma!* Off Broadway: *Square Go, Posting Letters to the Moon, Killing Time*. Regional: *A Funny Thing...Forum, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre); *Mala* (The Old Globe); *In The Heights, Shrek, Tarzan, Recomposed* (Puerto Rico); *Kunstler* (Regional Premiere). Other credits include: MCC Theater, Celebrity Cruises, Martha's Vineyard Playhouse, Broadway Illusions, Inc., Teatro CeDIn, and The Black Box Theatre Workshop. BFA, University of Puerto Rico. To my parents, Puerto Rico, and everyone who has ever believed in my dreams. @jynellyrosario

**PATRICK RUSSINI** (Sound Designer) has worked as a professional sound designer, audio technician and sound engineer since 2012. His audio artistry has showcased the signature sound of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe shows since he joined the staff in 2016 as Sound Engineer; he was recently named Resident Sound Designer for the company. Patrick has traveled three times with WBTT Founder and Artistic Director Nate Jacobs, other troupe performers and production staff to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C., ran sound for WBTT's *70's Soul Party* at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota, and worked with rock legend Alice Cooper, blues/gospel/rock singer/songwriter guitarist Jonny Lang, and many other artists. Patrick is happy to be part of the WBTT team.



## CAST AND CREATIVE

**KEVIN WHITE** (Production Manager) After a decade of working in the Philadelphia theatre community, Kevin moved to Sarasota in May of 2021. This is his second season with WBTT! A graduate of DeSales University (2015) and the Arden Professional Apprenticeship Program (2016), he has worked on production, education, and artistic projects with a wide range of theatres throughout the

country. In addition to arts administration and theatrical production experience, Kevin is an actor, director, producer, and comedian and has produced a number of his own small shows & productions! Outside of his life in the theatre you can find Kevin on the beach, watching Eagles football, playing video games, or running the occasional 5k. Much love to Tori, Chloe, and family!



### **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).



## THE FRIENDSHIP TRAIN

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe is pleased to recognize our legacy donors as our "Friendship Train." These donors have indicated in writing that WBTT is included in their estate plans. We are so grateful to them for ensuring that WBTT will touch the lives of young artists, students and patrons long into the future.

If you would like to consider jumping on board, contact Debra Flynt-Garrett, Development Director, at 941-404-7755.

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## OUR MISSION

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was founded in December 1999 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to produce professional theatre that promotes and celebrates African American history and experience, engages a broad base of patrons and audiences, supports the development of a dynamic group of aspiring artists and builds self-esteem in youth of color.

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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