

WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PRESENTS

Caroline, or Change

Book and Lyrics by
Tony Kushner

Music by
Jeanine Tesori

Costume Designer
Patricia Vandenberg

Production Manager
James “Jay” Dodge II

Set Designer
Michael Newton-Brown

Assistant Costume
Designer
Adrienne Pitts

Production Stage Manager
Juanita Munford*

Properties Designer
Annette Breazeale

Wig Designer
Travis McCue

Assistant Stage Manager
Ariel Blue*

Lighting Designer
Michael Pasquini

Music Director
Nikki Ervin

Director and Choreographer
Jim Weaver[†]

January 8–February 16, 2020



[†]The Director is a member of
the STAGE DIRECTORS AND
CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a
national theatrical labor union.

Caroline, or Change is presented
through special arrangement with
Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance
materials are also supplied by MTI.
www.MTIShows.com



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



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.



CAST

(in order of appearance)

Caroline Thibodeaux.....	Jannie Jones*
The Washing Machine	Vallea E. Woodbury
The Radio.....	Toddra Brunson, Annaya Osborn, Stephanie Zandra
Noah Gellman	Tommy Lelyo, Charles Shoemaker (alternating)
The Dryer.....	Brian L. Boyd
Grandma Gellman	Linda Roeming
Grandpa Gellman	Fred Frabotta
Rose Stopnick Gellman.....	Eliza Engle
Stuart Gellman	Courtney Dease
Dotty Moffett.....	Candy McLellan
The Moon	Teresa Stanley*
The Bus	Brian L. Boyd
Emmie Thibodeaux	Alexis Ijeoma Nwokoji
Jackie Thibodeaux.....	Samuel Waite
Joe Thibodeaux	Kenyon Edwards
Mr. Stopnick.....	John Lombardi*

London Upshaw is the understudy for the roles of Jackie and Joe Thibodeaux.

MUSICIANS

Music Director/Piano	Nikki Ervin
Auxiliary Keys	Brennan Stylez
Bass Guitar.....	Joe Bruno
Drums	John Walker
Percussion.....	Scott Blum

Greg Germany will play bass guitar at some performances.

Caroline, or Change was Originally Directed on Broadway by George C. Wolfe and Originally Produced on Broadway by Carole Shorenstein Hays, HBO Films, Jujamcyn Theatre, Freddy DeMann, Scott Rudin, Hendel/Morten/Wiesenfeld, Fox Theatricals/Manocherian/Bergere, Roger Berlind, Clear Channel Entertainment, Joan Cullman, Greg Holland/Scott Nederlander, Margo Lion, Daryl Roth, Zollo/Sine in association with the Public Theatre.

Originally Developed and Produced in October 2003 by the Public Theatre; George C. Wolfe, Producer; Mara Manus, Executive Producer.

A Broadway revival of *Caroline, or Change* is scheduled to open in March 2020.

WBTT TEAM

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

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Caroline, or Change is not your typical musical theatre composition. In fact, I have often heard it referred to as an opera. This is because, as you would find in that genre, the lyrics in the songs are where the true story is told. It's also a celebration of the diversity of the African American musical legacy. However, it challenges us by presenting circumstances not often seen or addressed in your everyday musical. It is textured and layered with very thoughtful commentary as it reveals the stories of complicated characters trying to find their way.

Juxtaposed against a background of turbulence and upheaval in American society, the overall theme is reflected all around us: Change is inevitable. This is a musical that requires attentive ears ready to soak up all that the story seeks to have us understand. Namely, we must all accept change or get lost in the tide that will continue to flow despite our best efforts.

I must thank WBTT, Nate Jacobs, Julie Leach and the Board of Trustees for the support and faith shown to me. It has not escaped me that this production launches the newly renovated theatre and that I was asked to be involved in that great celebration. Thank you! Also, thank you to the entire creative team and Stage Manager Juanita Munford (my rock) for all your hard work and talent. It takes a village!

And thank you to the faithful audience members for your continued support. You are the reason we do what we do, and it would not be possible without you.

—Jim Weaver

SPECIAL THANKS

Caroline, or Change
Opening Night Cast Party
sponsored by



- We are grateful to our friends at:
- The Exchange
- Heritage Cleaners
- Pines of Sarasota
- Fabulous Finds Thrift Shop
- The Players Centre
- For Performing Arts
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ACT ONE

Scene 1: Washer/Dryer

Scene 2: Cabbage

Scene 3: Long Distance

Scene 4: Moon Change

Scene 5: Duets

Scene 6: The Bleach Cup

ACT TWO

Scene 7: Ironing

Scene 8: The Chanukah Party

Scene 9: The Twenty-Dollar Bill

Scene 10: Aftermath

Scene 11: Lot's Wife

Scene 12: How Long Has This Been Going On?

Epilogue

*The play takes place in Lake Charles, Louisiana,
November-December 1963.*

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

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



BRIAN L. BOYD (The Dryer/The Bus) was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. He studied the art of Theatre Performance at Florida A&M University. This is his fourth season with the troupe. He appeared in *A Motown Christmas* at the Sarasota Opera House in December and in his WBTT Young Artist Program, *A Rhapsody Revelation*, this past April. His WBTT appearances also include *The Amen Corner*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*, *Raisin*, *The Mountaintop*, *A Motown Christmas*, *In the Heights*, *Broadway In Black*, *Dearly Departed*, *Black Nativity* and *How I Got Over: A Tribute to Mahalia Jackson*. Boyd performed with the troupe at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. in 2017. His other regional theatre credits include *Ragtime* (Coalhouse Walker Jr.) in Ft. Collins, Colo., *Smokey Joe's Cafe* (Ken) in Tyrone, Ga., and an original show *Motones Vs. Jerseys* in Washington, D.C. Boyd is also the Co-Director of Music Acting Dance, LLC, with fellow artist Brentney J. He recently launched his own company, The Enigma Artistic Experience LLC.



TODDRA BRUNSON (The Radio) 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 is nominated as Best Actress in a Musical in the 2019 BroadwayWorld Miami Awards; *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 showstopping character Motormouth Maybelle; *The Old Settler with The M Ensemble* (Elizabeth Borny) and a host of other plays. In addition to theatre, Toddra 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 other up-and-coming web series set to release next year.



COURTNEY DEASE (Stuart Gellman) Courtney is excited to be appearing for the first time with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe! He made his national tour debut

in Stephen Schwartz's *Pippin*, traveling the country in the role of Lewis and tackling the title role of Pippin at select performances. Courtney calls New York City home; most recently he was seen Off-Broadway originating a role in a new musical comedy. Throughout his career, Courtney has traveled to almost 40 different countries and four continents performing with popular cruise lines such as Princess, Holland America and Celebrity. He is a graduate of Coker University with a BA degree in Vocal Performance. Other favorite past roles include Seymour Krelborn in *Little Shop of Horrors*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*, Huck Finn in *Big River* and Link Larkin in *Hairspray*. For more about Courtney, visit courtneydease.com or follow him on Instagram: @courtneydease



KENYON EDWARDS (Joe Thibodeaux) has been selected to be a member of the Principal's Cabinet at his school. He aspires to be a veterinarian when he grows up, as his love for animals is huge. He also has an interest in paleontology, fulfilling his inquisitive side with his research of fossils. Kenyon loves singing, dancing and acting. He has participated in drama at his previous

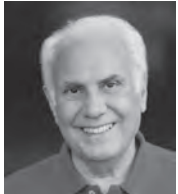
CAST AND CREATIVE

school where he was a dancer in a flash mobs and held several lead roles in skits at his school. At WBTT last season, Kenyon was an understudy for the role of Travis in *Raisin* and participated in Stage of Discovery, performing in *Folktale Follies*. When Kenyon is not acting he is busy participating in community work. He is a youth speaker for his church, plays piano, loves reading, and enjoys being a little boy and hanging out with his big brothers. Kenyon's favorite quote is "We grow, and as we grow we must learn new and better ways to express ourselves."



ELIZA ENGLE (Rose Gellman) Is thrilled to make her debut with WBTT! Some of her favorite credits include: *West Side Story* (Maria), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Annie Oakley), Little

Women (Jo March), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Marcy Park), *A Chorus Line* (Bebe), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Rosa Bud), *Into The Woods* (Rapunzel), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Esther), *Spamalot* (Laker Girl), *Kiss Me Kate* (Ensemble) and *The Merry Widow* (Margo the Grisette). Eliza has studied ballroom and Latin dancing as well as jazz, tap and musical theatre dance. She received her BFA in Theater from Stephens College and was blessed to study voice with mentors from all over the country. She is also an avid animal lover and baker. Thank you to her family, friends and mentors for their support but most of all her husband, who always believes in her and supports her every endeavor: elizaengle14@wixsite.com



FRED FRABOTTA (Grampa Gellman) has appeared in numerous plays and musicals, including: *Cabaret* (Herr Schultz), *The Producers* (Franz Liebkind), *My Fair Lady* (Alfred P.

Doolittle), *The Addams Family* (Uncle Fester), *The Polar Express* (Santa Claus), *The Most Happy Fella* (Tony) and *West Side Story* (Doc). The producing theatres include: Ogunquit Playhouse (Maine), Cabaret (National Tour), Barnstormers

(N.H.), Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre (Fla.), Foothills Theatre (Mass.), Worcester Foothills Theatre (Mass), Winnepesaukee Playhouse (N.H.), St. Petersburg Opera Company (Fla.), Interlakes Summer Theatre (N.H.) and MacHaydn Theatre (N.Y.). He earned his Bachelor and Master of Music (Vocal Performance) degrees at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. Fun Fact: Fred studied piano with Johnny Costa, music director of the PBS show, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Visit fredfrabottaactor.com



JANNIE JONES*

(Caroline Thibodeaux) was last seen in a one-woman show at Florida Studio Theatre, *Ethel Waters: His Eye is on the Sparrow*. She appeared at WBTT last season

as Mama Lena in *Raisin*. The 2019 Handy Awards (Jay Handelman, Sarasota Herald-Tribune) recognized Jannie in the Best Actress category for her performances in both shows. She created the role of Annabella in *Gathering Blue* (World Premiere) at the Mt. Gretna Theatre. She played Aretha Franklin and Nina Simone in *A Night with Janis Joplin* at Capital Rep and The Barter Theatre, and performed in *The Black Stars of the Great White Way* with Tony Award-winners Norm Lewis and Andre DeShields and Emmy Award-winner Obba Babatundé at the National Black Theatre Festival. Catch her episode of *The Get Down* (Cool Herc's Mom) on Netflix and *Power* on Starz. Jannie has appeared on Broadway in *The Full Monty* (Joanie Lish; understudy Georgie), Off-Broadway in *Mama, I Want to Sing* (Sister Carrie) and *Faith Journey* (Traci), and in the first national Broadway tour of *All Shook Up* (Sylvia). She won an Audelco Award for August Wilson's *Fences* (Rose) and a Bay Area Critics Award for *Black Pearl Sings* (Pearl). She received critical acclaim for two one-woman shows, *My Castle's Rockin'* (Alberta Hunter) and *Ethel Waters: His Eye is on the Sparrow*, written by Larry Parr and premiering at Florida Studio Theatre. She can be heard on Barry White's CD *Practice What You Preach* and has performed at Carnegie Hall.

CAST AND CREATIVE



TOMMY LELOYO

(Alternating as Noah Gellman) Is thrilled to make his WBTT debut in *Caroline, or Change*. His past performances include young Abel in *Children of Eden*. He

is an active member of the Spotlight Kids theatre group. You may see Tommy around town performing at local events with the Music Compound. Special thanks to Ms. Cynthia Ashford, Ms. Denise Verheul and Mom and Dad!



JOHN LOMBARDI* (Mr. Stopnick) John was last seen as Rothko in *Red* at The Studio Theatre (Broadway World nominee). Tampa Bay area performances include Herr Shultz in *Cabaret* and

Gaston in *An Empty Plate* at freeFall Theatre (both Theatre Tampa Bay nominations). In addition to many other freeFall productions, John has performed at Asolo Rep, American Stage, Florida Rep and The Jaeb Theatre. In addition to many regional and Off-Broadway credits, John is a member of the New Jersey Repertory Company. He received his BA in Theatre from Roger Williams University and his MA in Theatre from Montclair State University. John is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. This show marks his debut with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. John is delighted to be part of *Caroline, or Change*.



CANDY MCLELLAN

(Dotty Moffett) graduated from the University of West Georgia and is a graduate of the 2016-2017 acting apprentice company at Aurora

Theatre. Her professional credits include *In The Heights*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Aurora Theatre and Theatrical Outfit co-production) *Christmas Canteen*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *Sweep*, *Cinderella: The Remix*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Beat Bugs* and *Men With Money* (Aurora Theatre), *110 in the Shade* (Theatrical Outfit), *Black Nerd*

(Dad's Garage) *Aida* and *Oliver!* (Atlanta Lyric) *An Octoroon* and *Head Over Heels* (Actor's Express) and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Horizon Theatre). After *Caroline, or Change*, Candy will appear in *Cotton Patch Gospel* at Theatrical Outfit. Follow her on Instagram: @candymac_24



ALEXIS IJEOMA NWOKOJI

(Emmie Thibodeaux) Alexis is so happy to be making her WBTT debut! A native of Nashville, she now lives in New York City. Alexis recently

performed in the *Paw Patrol Live!* national tour (Rocky, Mayor Goodway), *Hairspray* (Dynamite), and *Spring Awakening* (Thea). Regional credits include *Sister Act: The Musical* (Deloris Van Cartier). Big thanks to Lynda Arnold, her agent at Seven Stars Talent Inc., and her alum, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Alexis also thanks WBTT's *Caroline, or Change* creative team for making her feel right at home, and her friends and family for their endless support. Follow her on Instagram: @anwokoji



ANNAYA OSBORN

(The Radio) Annaya Osborne is thrilled to perform in Westcoast Black Theatre troupe's production of *Caroline, or Change*. Annaya is a graduate of Maltz Jupiter

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



LINDA ROEMING

(Grandma Gellman) is thrilled to be making her WBTT debut with *Caroline, or Change*. Some of Linda's favorite roles were performed in Colorado from a

CAST AND CREATIVE

truck that toured parks performing children's theatre. Other memorable roles include *West Side Story* (Rosalia), *Pippin* (Berthe), *Follies* (Emily Whitman), *Carmen* (Cigarette Girl), *Nunsense* (Sister Robert Anne), *42nd Street* (hooper), *Talk Radio* (seven character callers), *Deathtrap* (Myra), and *Peter Pan* (Indian). Favorite dancer and ensemble roles include *Catch Me If You Can*, *The Producers*, *Mary Poppins*, *Three Penny Opera*, and *Side Show*. Special thanks to her husband and daughters for their love and support.



CHARLES SHOEMAKER

(Alternating as Noah Gellman) is honored to be making his WBTT debut! He was recently seen at Asolo Rep in *The Music Man* (Winthrop) as well as local community

theaters in Sarasota and Venice. His credits include *Stuart Little: The Musical* (Stuart); *A Christmas Carol* (Tiny Tim); *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (Randy); and *Peter Pan* (Michael Darling). He is 10 years old and attends Southside Elementary School; he swims for the Sarasota Tsunami Swim Team. He would like to thank Teresa O'Connell for all her help and WBTT for this wonderful opportunity.



TERESA STANLEY* (The Moon)

As a founding member of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, I'm honored to be a part of the 20th Anniversary season. I've been on countless national

and international stages, performing on Broadway in *The Color Purple* and *Rock of Ages*, at the Oscars and the Met; and I was a featured vocalist in the Grammy Award-winning motion picture *The Greatest Showman*, to name a few. My heart has always pulled me back to WBTT. This is Sacred Ground! Thank you to everyone that helped make this dream come to life and flourish. Thank you, Nate, for letting me be a part of the ground roots of this vision. To my mother Rosa, Brother Michael, Pops, and Amani, The Divine gave me the best family. I love you to the Moon and back.



SAMUEL WAITE (Jackie Thibodeaux) is 11 years old; he has been following his dream and using his gifts since he was 3. In December, Samuel appeared in this season's production of

A Motown Christmas. This past summer he was featured in WBTT's Stage of Discovery student production, *A Journey to Motown*. Last season Samuel wowed audiences as Travis in *Raisin* and last summer he began his climb to stardom as Jack (of Beanstalk fame) in the WBTT musical *Rockin' Down Fairytale Lane*. He had his first Broadway audition this past summer and is grateful for all the wonderful opportunities he has had, especially with Nate Jacobs and the WBTT theatre family. Samuel is a sixth-grade student at Booker Middle School in the Visual and Performing Arts program. He previously appeared in *Beauty and the Beast* at Woodland Fine Arts Academy and at Rowlett Academy of the Arts and Communication, he was in *Madagascar* and was the lead in *Aladdin*. Samuel has performed solos and duets over the last few years. He is excited to be performing in *Caroline, or Change* alongside his favorite performers!



VALLEE E. WOODBURY

(The Washing Machine) "Vuh LAY uh" is delighted to make her WBTT debut! Regional credits include (Florida:) *Company* (Sarah); (Atlanta:) *Ain't*

Misbehavin' (Armelia), *La Cage aux Folles* (Jacqueline), *Bob's Marley's Three Little Birds* (Tacomah), *The Crucible* (Tituba), *Simply Simone* (US Nina 3 & 4), *Singles in Agriculture* (Lois), *Tell Me My Dream* at Alliance Theatre; (Milwaukee:) *The Color Purple*, *The Musical* (Doris), *A Christmas Carol* (Ensemble). (Chicago:) *Ragtime* (Ensemble, US Sarah's Friend), The Second City. Vallee has an MFA from the University of Georgia, is a Northwestern University graduate and trained at the School at Steppenwolf and at The Second City Chicago Improv

CAST AND CREATIVE

Conservatory. Thanks to God, her family, and YOU for supporting live theatre. www.vallea.com



STEPHANIE ZANDRA

(The Radio) Atlanta: *The Wiz*, *The Nativity: A Gospel Explosion* (True Color Theatre Company), *Soweto*, *Jekonni's Song*, *Times*, *B.L.A.C.K.* (Freddie Hendricks'

Youth Ensemble of Atlanta), *A Midsummer Nights Dream*, *Alice in Wonderland: A Most Curious Dream*, *Hair* (Serenbe Playhouse), *Black Nativity* (Dominion Entertainment), *The Color Purple* (Actor's Express), *9 to 5 the Musical* (Georgia Ensemble Theatre). Film: *Selma*, *Lord, Selma* (Wonderful World of Disney). Stephanie is a singer and songwriter. You can find her single, *Fallin'*, wherever music is streamed under the name AlexZandra. To my dad: Thank you for loving me most. To my mom and brother, Tommy: I pray you love what you see. Keep resting and watching.

TONY KUSHNER (Book and Lyrics) is a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, author and screenwriter whose plays include *A Bright Room Called Day*; *Angels in America*, *Parts One and Two*; *Slavs!*; *Homebody/Kabul*; and *Caroline, or Change*, a musical with composer Jeanine Tesori. He has written adaptations of Corneille's *The Illusion*, S.Y. Anderson's *The Dybbuk*, and Brecht's *The Good Person of Sezuwan* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*; as well as the English-language libretto for the opera *Brundibar* by Hans Krása. He wrote the screenplay for the Mike Nichols' film of *Angels in America* and for Steven Spielberg's films *Munich* and *Lincoln*. His books include *Brundibar*, with illustrations by Maurice Sendak; *The Art of Maurice Sendak, 1980 to the Present*; and *Wrestling With Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict*, co-edited with Alisa Solomon. He received the National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama in 2013. He

is writing the screenplay for a new film adaptation of *West Side Story*, directed by Spielberg and scheduled to be released in December 2020.

JEANINE TESORI (Music) won the Tony Award for Best Original Score with Lisa Kron for the musical *Fun Home*. She has also written Tony-nominated scores for *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (lyrics, Dick Scanlan); *Caroline, or Change* (lyrics, Tony Kushner); and *Shrek The Musical* (lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). The production of *Caroline, or Change* at the National Theatre in London received the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Her 1997 Off-Broadway musical *Violet* (lyrics, Brian Crawley) opened on Broadway in 2014 and garnered four Tony nominations, including Best Musical Revival. Opera: *A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck* (libretto, Tony Kushner; Glimmerglass) and *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* (libretto, J. D. McClatchy, Kennedy Center). Music for plays: *Mother Courage* (dir. George C. Wolfe, with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline), John Guare's *A Free Man of Color* (Lincoln Center Theater, dir. George C. Wolfe), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Delacorte Gala). Film scores: *Nights in Rodanthe*, *Every Day*, and *You're Not You*. Ms. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was cited by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) as the first female composer to have two new musicals running concurrently on Broadway. She was the founding artistic director of Encores! Off-Center at New York City Center, and a lecturer in music at Yale University. Most of all, she is the proud parent of Siena Rafter.



JIM WEAVER⁺ (Director/Choreographer) is thrilled to be back at WBTT, after last season's production of *Raisin*, to acknowledge and celebrate the opening of this magnificent new performance space. What an honor. The choice of *Caroline, or Change* as the first production to christen this stage is apropos as well; a story reflecting change

⁺The Director is a member of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

CAST AND CREATIVE

and growth. Mr. Weaver's previous works for WBTT includes productions of *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* recently won Mr. Weaver 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 Show* and several others; including award-winning productions of *Floyd Collins* and *Legally Blonde*. Mr. Weaver holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in acting and is the theatre 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, Mr. Weaver 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. Mr. Weaver is a proud member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society. More information is available at jimweaver.biz.



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

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.



NIKKI ERVIN (Music Director) is an American musician, songwriter, record producer and music director. She has toured the U.S. and Europe with various artists and most recently became an adjunct instructor for the Soul Bird Music School in Osaka, Japan. *Caroline*, or *Change* is her first theatrical production as Music Director.



JAMES "JAY" DODGE II (Production Manager/ Resident 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

CAST AND CREATIVE

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 Winoski, 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.

ARIEL BLUE* (Assistant Stage Manager) is a well-known troupe member who was recently seen in *A Motown Christmas*, *The Amen Corner*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*, *Rockin' Down Fairytale Lane*, *Dreamgirls* and *Soul Man*. She has starred in her one-woman show, *The Power of the Voice*. Ariel has worked consistently with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe since her breakout role in *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Additional memorable shows at WBTT and on other stages include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Avenue Q*, *The Wiz*, *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues*, *All Shook Up*, *Disenchanted*, *Love Sung in the Key of Aretha*, and *Beehive: The Musical*. This summer she appeared in WBTT's production of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. She has performed as a vocalist in the Connelli Circus in Switzerland and with the Florida Studio Theatre Improv. Ariel is also a contributing performer for the Sarasota-Manatee community's Suffragist Project.

Spearheaded by Florida Studio Theatre, the local initiative is part of a nationwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. Ariel is a graduate of Stetson University with a major in communications and a minor in theatre. In addition to performing, she is WBTT's Development and Artist Relations Associate.

ANNETTE BREAZEALE (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.

TRAVIS MCCUE (Wig Designer) was born and raised in Sarasota. He graduated from Booker High School and attended State College of Florida Manatee-Sarasota. At WBTT he created wigs for *A Motown Christmas*, *Rockin' Down Fairytale Lane*, *Soul Man*, *The Mountaintop*, *Raisin*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*, *Black Nativity*, *The Amen Corner* and *Love Sung in the Key of Aretha*. "I love what I do — creating one-of-a-kind looks that help make the characters in plays come to life for the audience."

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.

CAST AND CREATIVE

MICHAEL PASQUINI (Lighting Designer) Michael designed the lighting for WBTT's *A Motown Christmas* in December. His designs for WBTT last season included *Black Nativity*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul* and *Raisin*. This summer he designed *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and Lauren Gunderson's *The Book of Will* for the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He also designed Dog Days Theatre's productions of *Theophilus North* and *Harbor*. He remounted *The Amish Project* with Katherine Michelle Tanner at the School House Theatre in Croton Falls, NY. Other recent designs include *The Fantasticks* and *Hello, Dolly!*, as well as last season's *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Hairspray* for the Players Centre. For Manatee Players, he lit *Pirates of Penzance* and *Barnum* (Handy Award Recognition). He also designed *The Barber of Seville* for Gulf Coast Symphony. Michael is the Assistant Lighting Designer and Head Electrician for the Sarasota Opera.

ADRIENNE PITTS (Assistant 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.

PATRICIA VANDENBERG, PH.D. (Costume Designer) has had a long career as a top-rated professor in the areas of theatre, communications, and business management. She is also an expert in marketing higher education and owns a communication consulting practice. She earned her Ph.D. With Distinction in History and Criticism of the Theater from the University of Michigan, where she also received an M.A. in Communications and did the work for an M.F.A. in costume design. As a professor of theatre, Patricia chaired theatre departments, designed for theatre and dance companies, served on the Governing Council of the Association for Theater in Higher Education, and was an adjudicator for the American College Theater Festival. As a communications expert her professional positions included serving as the Chief Communications and Marketing Officer at the University of Massachusetts and at Mount Holyoke College, the oldest women's college in the world. As a consultant Patricia has coached CEOs, managers, and entrepreneurs — working with organizations ranging from Fortune 500 companies to non-profits. Her business, PowerUP with Patricia, helps go-getters get farther faster (PowerUpWithPatricia.com). She was married to the late, distinguished professor of theatre, Julian Olf.

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 \$8.5 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 *Caroline, or Change*, the first 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 January 1, 2020, are gratefully acknowledged below.

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in Honor of Brock Leach

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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