

WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PRESENTS

A MOTOWN CHRISTMAS

Created and Adapted by
Nate Jacobs

Set Designer
Michael Newton-Brown

Production Manager
James "Jay" Dodge II

Choreographer
Donald Frison

Properties Designer
Annette Breazeale

Production Stage Manager/
Projection Designer
Juanita Munford*

Lighting Designer
Michael Pasquini

Costume Designer
Adrienne Pitts

Assistant Stage Manager
Travis Ray*

Wig Designer
Travis McCue

Music Director
James "Jay" Dodge II

Director
Nate Jacobs

December 4-6 and 18-20, 2019



** 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

Ruthgena Augustin
Ariel Blue
Brian L. Boyd
Tarra Conner Jones*
Donald Frison
Derric Gobourne Jr.
Brentney J
Nate Jacobs*
Michael Mejia-Mendez*
Raleigh Mosely II
Chakara Rosa
Jai Shanae
Joshua Thompson
Samuel Waite
Henry Washington
Stephanie Zandra

MUSICIANS

Music Director/Bass **James “Jay” Dodge II**
Piano **Todd Bellamy**
Auxiliary Keys **Brennan Stylez**
Guitar **Jordan Love**
Drums **Michael Andrews**

SPECIAL THANKS

**Opening Night Cast Party
sponsored by**



- Jay Dodge and JD Productions
- Sarasota Opera House
- Lowe’s Home Improvement
- Heritage Cleaners
- The Exchange
- Pines of Sarasota
- Fabulous Finds Thrift Shop

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

THE VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PERFORMANCE
BY ANY MEANS WHATSOEVER IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

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
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
Media Relations.....	Sharon Kunkel, Wordslinger Marketing & PR
Music Consultant.....	Tony Moon
Graphic Design.....	Paula Murray, Artefact Design
Grants Consultant.....	Denise Roberts
Videographer.....	Bill Wagyu Productions

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our musical celebration of the holiday season! This year we're also marking the 60th anniversary of Motown, the iconic Detroit record company launched by Berry Gordy in 1959. What better way to close out this milestone year than with Motown music?

Throughout 2018–2019, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe paid homage to Motown with *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*; this summer's Stage of Discovery student presentation, *A Journey to Motown*; and now with our biennial presentation of *A Motown Christmas*, which we traditionally alternate with *Black Nativity* as our special holiday shows.

I'm sometimes called the Berry Gordy of Sarasota because WBTT is known for discovering and nurturing young local talent, as Gordy did in Detroit. Many of the performers you'll see and hear tonight got their start with us and appear regularly in our shows. There are a few new faces in this show whose performances I'm sure you'll enjoy as well. I'm pleased that this year, young Sammy Waite is joining our *Motown Christmas* cast. This talented 11-year-old, already a veteran of our Stage of Discovery program, is fast becoming a WBTT favorite, having appeared in *Raisin* and *A Journey to Motown*.

It is with great joy that we present this show, in hopes that it will usher in the spirit of the season for you and your loved ones. It's designed to be enjoyed by the whole family, with traditional Christmas classics, Motown hits and a few lesser-known gems you may be hearing for the first time tonight.

So sit back as we unwrap our holiday gift to you — *A Motown Christmas*. Enjoy!

We wish you a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a joyful Kwanzaa!

—Nate Jacobs

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- Deck the Halls** (*T. Oliphant-N. McKinnon-D. Pitts*)Company
- This Christmas** (*A. Storey-A. Gaye-G. Gordy*).....Company
- That's What Christmas Means to Me**Company
(*A. Gaye-H. Gordy-A. Story*)
- I Can Tell When Christmas is Near** (*S. Wonder-S. Wright*)Company
- Come See About Me** Stephanie, Ruthgena, Jai
(*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)
- Stop! In The Name Of Love** Jai, Stephanie, Ruthgena
(*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)
- Just My Imagination**.....Michael with Derric, Raleigh, Brian, Josh, Sammy
(*N. Whitefield-B. Strong*)
- My Girl** (*S. Robinson-R. White*)Brian with Derric, Michael, Raleigh, Josh
- Jimmy Mack**.....Ariel with Tarra, Ruthgena, Stephanie, Jai
(*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)
- Heatwave** Jai with Ruthgena, Ariel, Stephanie
(*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)
- I Heard it Through the Grapevine**Tarra with Michael, Raleigh, Derric
(*N. Whitfield-B. Strong*)
- I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)**..... Brian and Men
(*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)
- The Tears of a Clown** Michael and Company
(*S. Wonder-S. Robinson-H. Cosby*)
- Can I Get a Witness** (*B. Holland-L. Dozier-E. Holland*)... Brian and Women
- I Want You Back**..... Sammy with Josh, Derric, Brian, Michael
(*B. Gordy-F. Perren-A. Mizell-D. Richards*)
- Yester-Me, Yester-You, Yesterday** (*R. Miller-B. Wells*).... Nate and Company
- Twinkle Twinkle Little Me** (*R. Miller-W. O'Malley*)... Stephanie and Women
- My Christmas Tree** (*J. Webb*)..... Ruthgena and Women
- My Favorite Things**..... Stephanie, Ruthgena, Ariel
(*O. Hammerstein-R. Rodgers*)
- I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus** (*T. Connor*) Sammy and Men
- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer** (*J. Marks*) Men
- Jingle Bells** (*J. Pierpont*)..... Nate and Men
- Jingle Bell Rock** (*J. Boothe-J. Beal*)Ariel and Women

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE (continued)

- Christmas Everyday** (*S. Robinson*) Tarra and Company
- It's Christmas Time** (*S. Wonder-S. Wright*) Ariel, Brian and Company
- I Believe in Christmas Eve** (*S. Robinson*) Nate and Company
- Joy to the World** (*G. Handel-I. Watts*) Tarra and Company

ACT TWO

- We Rejoice** (*N. Jacobs*) Company
- Little Bright Star** Stephanie with Ruthgena, Ariel, Tarra, Jai
(*A. Capps-M. Dean*)
- Little Drummer Boy** (*K. Davis-H. Simeon-H. Onorati*) Men
- Silent Night** (*F. Gruber-J. Mohr*) Men
- Santa Claus is Coming to Town** (*J. Coots-H. Gillespie*) Sammy and Men
- O Holy Night** (*A. Adam-P. Cappeau*) Tarra
- Mary Did You Know** (*B. Greene-M. Lowry*) Jai, Raleigh
- Christmas Medley** Nate and Brian
- What's Up Under the Christmas Tree** (*N. Jacobs*) Nate and Company
- I Want to Come Home For Christmas** (*M. Gaye-F. Hairstrom*) Raleigh
- Bless This House** (*H. Taylor-M. Brahe*) Nate and Company
- Give Love on Christmas Day** Michael, Ariel and Company
(*B. Gordy-A. Mizell-F. Perren-C. Perren*)
- Someday at Christmas/
Someday We'll Be Together** Women
(*R. Miller-B. Wells/J. Bristol-J Beavers-H. Fuqua*)
- The Christmas Song** (*M. Torme-R. Wells*) Nate and Company
- Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas** Nate and Company
(*H. Martin-R. Blane*)
- Go Tell It on the Mountain/
Ain't No Mountain High Enough** Brian, Tarra and Company
(*Traditional/N. Ashford-V. Simpson*)

CAST AND CREATIVE



RUTHGENA AUGUSTIN

is very excited to perform in her debut with WBTT. After graduating from Florida Southwestern State College, Ruthgena competed in the Turn it Around Tour, placing

first for Acting & Singing. Some of her recent roles include Lorraine in *All Shook Up*, Mary Warren in *The Crucible* and Molly Cunningham in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Ruthgena would like to thank her family for the continued love and support provided, and the *Motown Christmas* cast and crew for an amazing experience!



ARIEL BLUE is a well-known troupe member who was recently seen in *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'*. Other 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.

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



BRIAN L. BOYD 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. You may

remember Brian from 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.



TARRA CONNER JONES*

is best known for her powerhouse voice and captivating presence. Her most notable works: *Chicago: The Musical* (Matron Morton), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Nell), *Ma*

Rainey's Black Bottom (Ma Rainey), *The Color Purple* (Sofia/Church Lady Darlene), *Hairspray* (Motormouth Maybelle), *Buddy Holly* (Apollo Performer), *Shrek: The Musical* (Dragon, Mama Ogre/Bear), and *Here Is Love* (an original work showcased in WBTT's Young Artist Program). Tarra played the Archangel Gabriel in WBTT's *Black Nativity* at the Sarasota Opera House in 2018, and in previous productions of the show. She dedicates every performance to the memory of her mother, Ms. Chonita G. Conner, who cheers for her girl from the wings of heaven. "Thank you to Mr. Nate Jacobs and the entire WBTT family for what I consider a Christmas gift to me!" Follow Tarra on [facebook.com/tarra.c.jones](https://www.facebook.com/tarra.c.jones), [Instagram: tarraconnerjones](https://www.instagram.com/tarraconnerjones), [tarraconnerjones.com](https://www.tarraconnerjones.com)

CAST AND CREATIVE



DONALD FRISON

(Choreographer)
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* 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!"



DERRIC GOBOURNE JR.

He 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 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. In June 2018, Derric released his debut album, *Supremacy*, which was re-released 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.



BRENTNEY J is a native of Atlanta and an alumna of Bethune-Cookman University. Although she received her BS in Chemistry and MPH Certification from Georgia State University,

she finds her best chemistry has always been on the stage. Her training and talents have allowed her to be featured in television and film projects, but her love for performing thrives on the stage. Her niche for musical theatre has allowed her to perform at WBTT for four consecutive seasons in shows including *The Amen Corner*, *Raisin*, *Black Nativity* and *In the Heights*. She has been seen elsewhere in the production of Chicago: The Musical (Columbus, Ga.) as a Cell Block Girl, and in *Show-N-Tell* (Decatur, Ga.) as Natasha Nicely. She recently launched her business Music Acting Dance, LLC (aka M.A.D.) with fellow artist Brian L. Boyd to share her gifts through educating, inspiring and creating art, as well as training talent for musical theatre. Her hope is to create triple-threat performers who can take their talents anywhere!



NATE JACOBS* (WBTT Founder & Artistic Director) is a driving force in Florida's theater 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 Guía* magazines' Unity Awards Luncheon, and was honored with the prestigious Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award during the

CAST AND CREATIVE

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.



MICHAEL MEJIA-MENDEZ*

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, Michael serves as 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 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.”



RALEIGH MOSELY II

appeared this summer in WBTT’s production of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. Last season he appeared at WBTT in *Marvin Gaye: Prince of*

Soul, and previously in *Soul Man* and *In the Heights*. Raleigh made his WBTT debut in

the summer 2017 production of *Broadway in Black*. Originally from Miami, he currently lives in Orlando, where he earned his BFA in musical theatre from the University of Central Florida. His other theatre credits include *In the Heights* (Orlando Shakes), *Jesus for the People: Our Passover Lamb*, *Spunk and the Harlem Literati*, *Hair*, *Ragtime*, *Oklahoma* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Raleigh thanks everyone for their continued love, support and guidance. “You can win as long as you keep your head to the sky.” Peace and Light.



CHAKARA ROSA has been educated in several dance styles including hip hop, jazz, modern, ballet, tap and contemporary dance. Since the age of 3, Chakara has been seen in dance competitions and

on various stages including the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, The Players Centre for Performing Arts and at WBTT, to name a few. She appeared in WBTT’s production of *In the Heights* in 2017 and was a featured dancer this fall in *American Roots: The Gospel Experience*, a collaboration of Key Chorale and WBTT. Chakara loves spending her time volunteering for local events in the Sarasota area. She looks forward to creating dances to showcase in the near future.



JAI SHANAE is a multitalented artist with a love of theater, music, and various forms of art. She appeared in WBTT’s *Love Sung in the Key of Aretha*, *The Amen Corner* and *Marvin*

Gaye: Prince of Soul last season, in *Rockin’ Down Fairytale Lane* in the summer of 2018, and in the 2014 production of *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*. This fall she was a featured singer in the Key Chorale-WBTT collaboration, *American Roots: The Gospel Experience*. Other performances include *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Jesus), *Voodoo Macbeth* (Witch) and the world premiere of *Keesha/Carpenter*. Born and raised in Tampa, Jai has had a passion for singing, dancing and creative design

CAST AND CREATIVE

since her early childhood. She has been fortunate to share her gifts on local and state venues through church, film, music production, modeling, and engaging poetic performances. She studied music production at Full Sail University in Orlando.



JOSHUA THOMPSON is a graduate of Sarasota High School and the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. He is working on honing his skills as a “triple threat” —

dancer, singer and actor. He debuted with WBTT in *Harry & Lena* and has appeared in *Rockin’ Down Fairytale Lane*, *How I Got Over* and in numerous other shows as a dancer since then. This fall he was a featured dancer in the Key Chorale-WBTT collaboration, *American Roots: The Gospel Experience*.



SAMUEL WAITE is 11 years old. He has been following his dream and using his gifts since he was 3. Last season he wowed audiences as Travis in *Raisin*.

This summer he was featured in WBTT’s Stage of Discovery student production, *A Journey to Motown*, 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 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 & Performing Arts program. He previously appeared in *Beauty and the Beast* at Woodland Fine Arts Academy. At Rowlett Academy for Arts and Communication he was in *Madagascar* and was the lead in *Aladdin*. He has performed solos and duets over the last few years. Samuel is excited to be performing in *A Motown Christmas* alongside his favorite performers!



HENRY WASHINGTON, known as “Nugget,” was drawn to the entertainment world the moment he witnessed an electrifying performance by Michael Jackson. At that instant, he knew

what he wanted to be when he got older: a “superstar.” Musically inclined since the age of 3, he performed his own concerts in the family room with only Ninja Turtle action figures as his audience, beating on his mothers’ pots and pans with kitchen utensils until she was forced to buy him his first drum set. Though Washington is only 5’3”, his gigantic stage presence makes up for his small stature. He debuted in Nate Jacobs’ *’50s Jukebox Revue*, followed by a handful of exciting shows including *Best of Stevie Wonder*, *Purlie*, *Real Life*, *Rockin’ Down Fairytale Lane* and *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul*. This summer he appeared in WBTT’s production of *Soul Man* at the National Black Theatre Festival. Henry has enjoyed every second of being part of the WBTT family and wishes to continue to share his talents and warm smile on stage.



STEPHANIE ZANDRA

This is Stephanie’s debut with WBTT. Her Atlanta theatre credits include *The Wiz*, *The Nativity: A Gospel Explosion* (True Colors 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), and *9 to 5: The Musical* (Georgia Ensemble Theatre). Her film acting credits include *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.”

CAST AND CREATIVE



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/Projection Designer) 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.

TRAVIS RAY* (Assistant Stage Manager) Travis earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Performance from Alabama State University. He continued his professional actor training at the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film/Nebraska Repertory Theatre at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Travis also holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Management/Arts Administration from The University of Alabama. He has worked with the Alliance Theatre, Atlanta Coalition of Performing Arts, the King Tut Exhibit, Children's Theatre of Charlotte, the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Tyler Perry Studios. Travis is a member of Actors' Equity Association, Theatre Communications Group, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. When he's not working in the position of Associate Managing Director at the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, he enjoys traveling with his husband Jonah, playing fetch with their dog Chance and taking time to meditate, practice yoga and explore his African roots. In addition to his many other activities, Travis recently started his own handmade bow tie and accessories brand called The Asè (ah-SHAY) Collection. Follow his brand on Facebook and Instagram by searching @theasecollection or visit his website at asecollection.com.

MICHAEL NEWTON-BROWN (Set Designer) has designed for Florida Studio Theatre, American Stage, WBTT, Venice Theatre Stage, Manatee Players, The Players Centre for Performing Arts, and many more around the country. He has been a designer for Barry Manilow, Bette Midler, the NFL, Saks Fifth Avenue, Disney on Ice, Busch Gardens, Jerry's Girls (with Carol Channing, Leslie Uggams and Andrea McArdle), a Japanese cruise ship, and many professional regional theatre, opera and dance companies. He is also a Reiki Healer and Tarot card reader. Visit michaelstarot.com.

MICHAEL PASQUINI (Lighting Designer) Michael's 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

CAST AND CREATIVE

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 (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.

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 *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."

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 \$8.3 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.

Our renovated theatre building will open in January as 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 November 22, 2019 are gratefully acknowledged below.

\$2,500-\$9,999

Tom & Barbara Gardner
Ted & Jean Ingersoll
Antoinette Sijatz

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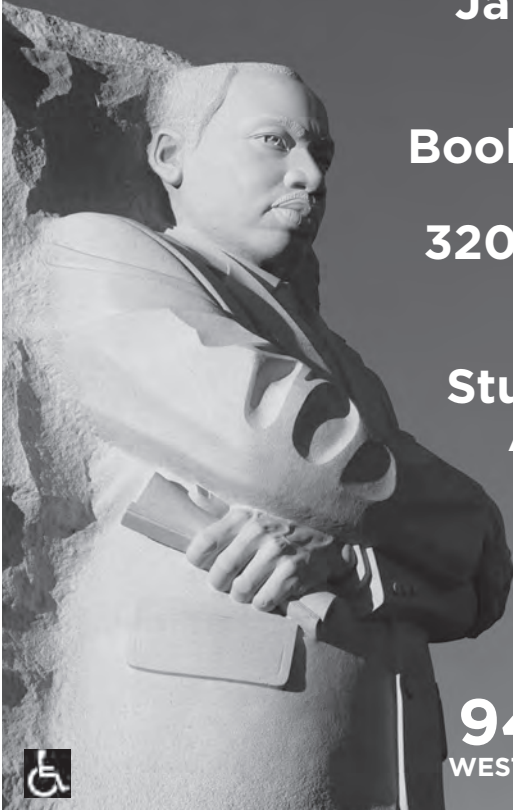
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OUR MISSION

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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1012 N. Orange Ave.
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Visit us online at:
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