



AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

AUGUST WILSON'S
MA RAINEY'S
BLACK BOTTOM

DIRECTED BY
GREGG T. DANIEL



Amber Liekhus by Daniel Reichert.

performances
MAGAZINE

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026



August 23–September 20, 2026
Opening Night: August 29

August Wilson's
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom
Directed by Gregg T. Daniel§

This production is dedicated to the memory of Maritri Garrett, our beloved composer and collaborator on many of A Noise Within's August Wilson productions, whose legacy lives on through her remarkable artistry.

Presenting Sponsors: Richard & Sally Roberts

Producing Sponsors: Sheila & Alan Lamson

Sponsors: William & Priscilla Kennedy

Student Matinee Sponsors: Nancy & Keith Price

Student Matinee Sponsors: Suzanne & Lawrence Hess

CAST

Ma Rainey	Amber Liekhus*
Levee	Jamar Gilbert*
Cutler	Kai A. Ealy*
Toledo	Gerald C. Rivers*
Slow Drag	Alex Morris*
Irvin	Bert Emmett*
Sturdyvant	Matt Foyer*
Dussie Mae	CJ Obilom*
Sylvester	Francis C. Edemobi
Policeman	James Nardini*

STAGE MANAGEMENT

Stage Manager	Sami Hansen*
Assistant Stage Manager	Bryan Tiglio*

**AUGUST WILSON'S MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM is presented by
arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.**

www.concordtheatricals.com



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

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

The taking of pictures or recording of any kind is strictly prohibited during the performance.

PRODUCTION

Assistant DirectorMelissa Coleman-Reed
Stage Manager..... Sami Hansen*
Assistant Stage Manager..... Bryan Tiglio*
Music DirectorByron Smith
Scenic Designer..... Tesshi Nakagawa†
Assistant Scenic Designer/Charge Artist..... Angelene Storey
Costume Designer..... Christine Cover Ferro
Lighting Designer Ken Booth
Sound Designer Jeff Gardner†
Wig & Make-up Designer.....Shelia Dorn
Dialect Coach..... Andrea Odinov
Choreographer.....Joyce Guy
Fight Choreographer Ken Merckx Jr.
Dramaturg.....Miranda Johnson-Haddad
Master Carpenter..... Rochelle Concepcion
Master ElectricianGeorgia Shupper
Light Board Operator..... Sam Campbell
Audio Engineer (A1)John Conant
Backstage Audio Assistant (A2) Chloe Pate
Properties Designer/Technical Director..... Stephen Taylor
Costume Shop Manager..... Courtney Park
Costume Shop Stitcher/Wardrobe Ashley Marshall
Studio Musician - PianoByron Smith
Studio Musician - Trumpet Matt Rubin
Studio Musician - Trombone.....Vikram Devesthali
Studio Musician - Upright Bass Michael Saucier
Studio Recording Engineer.....Mark Holden, The Invisible Studios

UNDERSTUDIES

Ma Rainey: Gwendolyn McCann-Mulamba*, Levee: Kameron J. Brown,
Cutler: Khalif J. Gillett*, Rosney Mauger*: Toledo, Brian Robinson*: Slow Drag,
Irvin: John Shartz*, Sturdyvant & Policeman: Ken Merckx Jr.*,
Dussie Mae: Sierra Nicolette Smith*, Sylvester: KJ Powell

SETTING: A Chicago recording studio in 1927.

There will be one 15 minute intermission.

Special thanks to the Pasadena Conservatory of Music, Los Angeles Harbor College, and Center Theatre Group.

Originally produced by Yale Repertory Theatre (Lloyd Richards, Artistic Director; Benjamin Mordecai, Managing Director). Initially presented at the 1982 National Playwrights' Conference by The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center.

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† Designer is represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

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

MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM Acting Company



Amber Liekhus
Ma Rainey



Jamar Gilbert
Levee



Kai A. Ealy
Cutler



Gerald C. Rivers
Toledo



Alex Morris
Slow Drag



Bert Emmett
Irvin



Matt Foyer
Sturdyvant



CJ Obilom
Dussie Mae



Francis C. Edemobi
Sylvester



James Nardini
Policeman



Interesting Fact

The recording session depicted in August Wilson's play is based on historical fact—Ma Rainey did record many songs for Paramount Studios, which rented recording spaces in Chicago largely to record blues artists—but aside from Ma herself, most of the characters and events in the play are fictitious.

Gertrude Pridgett "Ma" Rainey. 1920s.

Character Map

Ma Rainey

A famous blues singer. She is known as the “Mother of the Blues.”

Ma Rainey's band members:

Cutler

The band leader. He plays guitar and trombone.

Levee

The youngest and most ambitious member of the band. He plays the trumpet.

Toledo

The piano player. He is the only band member who can read.

Slow Drag

The bass player.

Sylvester

Ma Rainey's nephew.

Dussie Mae

A young woman who travels with Ma Rainey.

Mr. Sturdyvant

A music producer and the owner of the recording studio.

Mr. Irvin

Ma Rainey's manager.

Policeman

Interesting Fact

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, which takes place in Chicago, is the only play in August Wilson's ten-play American Century Cycle that is not set in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, PA, where Wilson himself was born and raised.

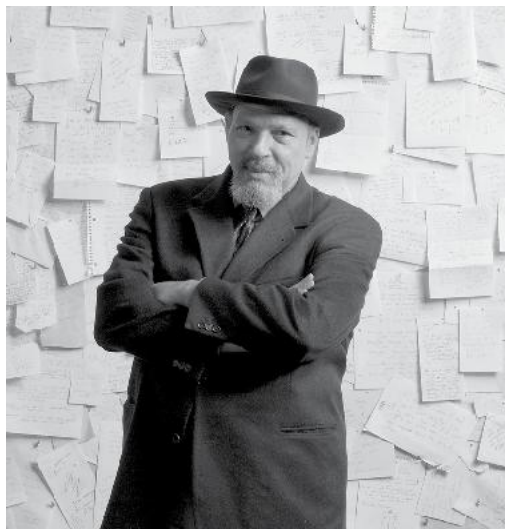
Jamar Gilbert by Daniel Reichert.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

August Wilson

August Wilson (1945-2005) was born Frederick August Kittel, Jr., in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, PA. He was the fourth of six children born to Daisy Wilson, a Black woman who cleaned houses for a living, and Frederick August Kittel, Sr., a German immigrant who was a baker and pastry chef. Wilson's parents divorced when he was young, and his father was almost entirely absent during Wilson's childhood. Wilson was raised by his mother, and he changed his name to August Wilson to honor her after his father died in 1965. Wilson and his mother remained very close until her death in 1983.



August Wilson, Playwright. 2011. Flickr.com.

Wilson attended three separate high schools, experiencing racism from his teachers and his fellow students at all three. He finally dropped out in 10th grade, after a teacher wrongly accused him of having plagiarized a paper that he had written on Napoleon I of France. Afraid of disappointing his mother, Wilson did not tell her that he had dropped out of school. Instead, he spent his days reading in various Pittsburgh public libraries, so he was essentially self-taught. He was influenced by the writings of many African American authors, including Malcolm X. In the 1960's Wilson became active in the arts community in Pittsburgh, and he began writing poetry and plays. Wilson said that **his greatest influences were “the four B’s”: poet Amiri Baraka; artist Romare Bearden; author Jorge Luis Borges; and Blues music.**

August Wilson is best known for his American Century Cycle, a collection of ten plays, each set during a different decade of the twentieth century, and all but one set in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Together the plays chronicle the Black experience in twentieth-century America and they form, in the words of drama critic John Lahr, “a kind of fever chart of the unmooring trauma of slavery.” Wilson received numerous awards for his work, including two Pulitzer Prizes (for *The Piano Lesson* and *Fences*) and two Tony Awards.

Wilson died of liver cancer at the age of sixty, in 2005, shortly before the Broadway opening of *Radio Golf* (the final play in the cycle and the last play that Wilson wrote). After his death, the Virginia Theatre in New York City was renamed the August Wilson Theatre. **It was the first Broadway theatre to be named after a Black American.**

Wilson's widow, Constanza Romero, has said that “August, while seeking out all the beauty, the struggle, the truths and wisdoms in African American Culture, mined the larger themes that make us all human.” Wilson's ability to combine the specific with the universal has led many scholars, readers, and theatre professionals to compare him favorably to Shakespeare, whom Wilson greatly admired. Like Shakespeare, Wilson did not avoid tackling uncomfortable topics, nor was he afraid to confront himself and his own anxieties. Wilson's advice to rising artists echoes a line spoken by Shakespeare's Prospero, who says, in *The Tempest*, “This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.” Similarly, Wilson urged young artists to “Confront the dark parts of yourself, and work to banish them with illumination and forgiveness. Your willingness to wrestle with your demons will cause your angels to sing.” August Wilson's plays are a testament to his genius and his bravery, and they continue to sing to us today.

BIOS

Amber Liekhus (Ma Rainey) **With ANW:** (Resident Artist) Mrs. Cratchit, *A Christmas Carol*; Mrs. Curtin, *A Man of No Importance*; Ensemble, *The Skin of Our Teeth*; Beggar Woman, *Sweeney Todd*; u/s Ruby, *King Hedley II*. **Other Theatres:** Described as a “versatile singer, whose voice is at once regal and affectionate” (LA Times), Amber has had a thrilling career in the US and abroad. Favorites include: *Jelly’s Last Jam* at Pasadena Playhouse, *Ain’t Misbehavin’* at Musical Theatre West, *We Can Do It* at Wilshire Ebell Theatre, *La Cage!* at The Hollywood Roosevelt, *Annie* at The Hollywood Bowl, *Sweet Charity* with Reprise 2.0, *Blues in the Night* at The Wallis, Ovation Award winning *Ain’t Misbehavin’* with McCoy Rigby, and *Rent*, also with McCoy Rigby. Accomplished operatic soprano, Amber appeared as Queen of El Dorado in *Candide* at LA Opera, the title role in *Suor Angelica* with Opera di Roma, and Lily in *Porgy and Bess* at San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Opera. Amber’s favorite role is mommy to Julien and Jasper alongside her supportive husband, Justin. @Amberliekhusvocalstudio

Jamar Gilbert (Levee) **Other Theatres:** Geffen Playhouse (*The First Deep Breath*), Studio Theatre (*Pass Over*), TimeLine Theatre (*Too Heavy for Your Pocket*), Writers Theatre (*Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* – Sylvester), Victory Gardens Theater (*Miss Julie*), Theatre 68 (*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*). **Film/TV:** *Perimeter* (series regular), *Justified: City Primeval*, *61st Street*, *Chicago Med*, *CSI: Vegas*, *Work in Progress*, *Shameless*. **Other:** Writer and performer of the award-winning solo show *Black and Blue* at the Hollywood Fringe Festival. **Education/Training:** BFA Acting, The Theatre School at DePaul University. Representation: Rebel Creative Group (management).

Kai A. Ealy (Cutler) **With ANW:** Herald Loomis, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*; Boy Willie, *The Piano Lesson*. **Other Theatres:** He recently moved to LA from Chicago, where he worked at The Court Theatre (*The Island*, *Oedipus Rex*, Pulitzer Prizewinning playwright David Auburn’s *The Adventures of Augie March*, and *Gospel at Colonus*, which toured to The Getty Center LA), The Goodman Theatre (*Toni Stone*), Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (Schiller’s *Mary Stuart*), TimeLine Theatre (*Kill Move Paradise*, *Cardboard Piano*), eta Creative Arts (*Migration*), Steppenwolf Theatre (*True West*), Pegasus Theatre Chicago’s 30th Annual Young Playwrights Festival, and UCCS TheatreWorks (*A Raisin in the Sun*). **Film/TV:** *Chicago P.D.*, *Chicago Fire*, *61st Street*, *The 4400*, *Ordinary Joe*. Represented by DPN Talent (Commercial), DDO LA (TV/Film), and WE GROUP Talent NY (Management) @kaiealy. www.kaiealy.com

Gerald C. Rivers (Toledo) **With ANW:** Bynum, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*; Wining Boy, *The Piano Lesson*; Stool Pigeon, *King Hedley II*.

Other Theatres: Gerald is a classically trained Shakespearean actor with a decades-long history at the Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum. He has worked with the Georgia Shakespeare Festival, The Academy Theatre, Jomandi, The Hippodrome, Tony Plana’s East LA Classic Theatre, Gary Marshall’s Falcon Theatre, and he was recently invited to perform at the International Black Theatre festival in Winston Salem. He is also an incredible Voice Over Artist voicing popular classic video games like M. Bison in *Street Fighter*, Jax in *Mortal Kombat*, EXdeath in *Final Fantasy* and dozens more. He is best known as the Voice of MLK. Gerald is a master West African drummer who loves working with kids. He is grateful for this opportunity. Peace.

Alex Morris (Slow Drag) **With ANW** (Resident Artist): Seth, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*; Duncan, *Macbeth*; Doaker, *The Piano Lesson*; Peter Quince, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Soaphead Church/Daddy, *The Bluest Eye*; Ben Jonson/Barman, *The Book of Will*; Joseph Barlow, *Radio Golf*; Eli, *Gem of the Ocean*.

Other Theatres: Theatricum Botanicum: *Wine in the Wilderness*; Ensemble Theatre in Houston: *Coconut Cake*; Matrix Theater: *Two Trains Running* and *All My Sons*. Other roles: Entire August Wilson canon; Hoke, *Driving Miss Daisy*; Enobarbus, *Antony and Cleopatra*; T-Bone, *T-Bone and Weasel*; Lucien P. Smith, *Boys Next Door*; and many others. Next spring returning to the Tony Award Winning Alley Theatre as Bono in *Fences*. **Film/TV:** *Malcolm in the Middle Reboot*, *The Family Business: New Orleans*, Carl Webber’s *The Family Business*, *Abbott Elementary*, *Baskets*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, *Magnum P.I.*, *Wishbone*, *Powder*, *Blind Fury*, *Sunrise in Heaven*, and many more. **Awards:** 5-time NAACP Theater Award winner as an actor, producer, and director. Ovation Award winner. Special thanks to my extraordinary wife and partner of 28 years, Vanessa, and to Kamilah Alex Jr. and Alex III for their love and support.

Bert Emmett (Irvin) **With ANW:** Charley, *Death of a Salesman*; Rutherford Selig, *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*; Priest/John/Doctor, *Jane Eyre*; Bob Cratchit/Ensemble, *A Christmas Carol*; Bottom u/s, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Mr. Jones/Sheep, *Animal Farm*; Dodo/Mock Turtle/White Knight/Ensemble, *Alice in Wonderland*; Antigonus/Shepherd u/s, *The Winter’s Tale*; Father Dewis u/s, *Buried Child*; Rutherford Selig, *Gem of the Ocean*; Karl Lindner, *A Raisin in the Sun*. **Other Theatres:** Howard Beale, *Network*; Colonel Armadillo, *The Armadillo Necktie*;

Lombardi, *Lombardi*; Edward, *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*; Watson, *Sherlock's Last Case*; Ty, *Cobb*; Dodgson, *Sherlock Through the Looking Glass*; Old Gobbo, *Merchant of Venice*; Dr. Mortimer et al., *Baskerville*; Prospero, *The Tempest*; Kanute, *Don't Hug Me I'm Pregnant*. **Film/TV:** *The Forsaken*, *Alien Hunter*, *Outside Ozona*. **Education/Training:** B.S. in Theatre Education, Northern Arizona University.

Matt Foyer (Sturdyvant) **With ANW:** Ensemble, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Howie Newsome, *Our Town*, Duval, *Man and Superman*. **Other Theatres:** The Rubicon Theatre (Ventura), Ensemble Theatre Company (Santa Barbara), The Magic Theatre (San Francisco), The Geffen Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Portland), Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Mainstreet Theater Company, Theatre Banshee (member), The Theatre at Boston Court, The Kennedy Center (Washington D.C.), Theatre 150, ICT (Long Beach), Hillside Repertory Theatre. **Film/TV:** *Days of Our Lives*, *Guilty or Innocent*, *LA Forensics*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *Something Strange*, *The Call of Cthulhu*, *Ambushed*, and *Mistake*. **Audiobooks:** *The Show Must Go On* by Jonathon Kelly, and *The Vendetta Code: Justice is Vengeance* by M.A. Gulick. **Education/Training:** California Institute of the Arts. Member of AEA and SAG/AFTRA.

CJ Obilom (Dussie Mae): A 1st generation Nigerian-American, Obilom started acting at 11 years old, and is thankful for the ability to continue sharing stories with audiences to this day. **With ANW:** Obilom is honored to make both her ANW Theatre and AEA debut in this production of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. **Other Theatres:** Tres Stage Theater: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin In The Sun*; The Robey Theatre: Richard Wesley's *The Talented Tenth*, and Alexandre Dumas' *The Great Lover*, for which she received a 2026 NAACP Theatre Award nomination for *Best Lead Actress*. **Film/TV:** *Grand Crew*, *Conspirators*, *The Black Hamptons*, *Trafficked*. **Education/Training:** University of Texas at Austin (B.A. in Theatre and Dance), Will Wallace Acting Company, Berg Studios.

Francis C. Edemobi (Sylvester) **With ANW:** *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *One Man, Two Guvnors* (u/s). **Other Theatres:** *Remember '92* (Hollywood Fringe Festival), *Rotterdam* (The Wayward Artist), *Sense & Sensibility*, *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Kimball Theatre), *The Pilot Who Crashed the Party* (Broadwater Theatre), *Save the Pier!* **Film/TV:** *Voices* (ABFF, TIFF), *Sweet Water*, *The Secret Weapon*, *Babylon*, *Socrates*. **Honors:** First Place, Grown Folks August Wilson Monologue Competition: Cory, *Fences* (awarded by Dominique Morisseau). **Education/Training:** London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), Identity School of Acting, Berg

Studios, Hillman Grad Mentorship Lab (Lena Waithe). This is his **Equity stage debut**. He thanks his family, friends, and everyone who keeps supporting him along the way.

James Nardini (Policeman) This is Jim's first onstage role at ANW after understudying in *Death of A Salesman*. You have seen him over the years in various roles in Theatre, TV and Film: *Ratched*, *Criminal Minds*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Star Trek Voyager* (Wixiban) and many more. Theaters include: South Coast Rep, Onstage Co, NY Drama League, CMTC. Nathan Detroit (*Guys & Dolls*), Philinte (*The Misanthrope*), Phil (*Hurlyburly*), Lady Diana Trappe (*Beggars' Opera*), Cardinal Azzolino (*The Abdication*), Angelo (*A Comedy of Errors*).

AUGUST WILSON (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards, including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987) and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, and *Radio Golf*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming* and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*.

Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, and the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award. He was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and he received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street The

August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007.

Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

Gregg T. Daniel (Director) **With ANW:** Director, August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *King Hedley II*, *Radio Golf*, *Seven Guitars*, and *Gem of the Ocean*. Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. **Other Theatres:** West Coast revivals of Suzan-Lori Park's *Topdog, Underdog*, Pasadena Playhouse; West Coast revival of Anna Deavere Smith's *TWILIGHT: Los Angeles, 1992* at The Mark Taper Forum. Denver Center for the Performing Arts, world premiere of Beaufield Berry's *In The Upper Room*. Lanie Robertson's *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* and Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* at Garry Marshall Theatre. West Coast premieres of Mfoniso Udofia's *Her Portmanteau* at Boston Court Performing Arts Center. Tarrance Arvelle Chisolm's *Br'er Cotton* for Lower Depth Theatre. Rogue Machine Theatre, Francisca da Silveira's *Can I Touch It*, Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs*, and L.A. premiere of Greg Kalleres' *Honky*. Revival of Alice Childress' *Wedding Band*, *A Love/Hate Story* for Antaeus Theatre Company. Gregg is a Founding Member/Artistic Director of LowerDepth Theatre. (Lower-Depth.com)

Julia Rodriguez-Elliott (Director/Producing Artistic Director) **With ANW:** Under her leadership, ANW has produced more than 175 works, and she has directed over 50 productions, including *Death of a Salesman*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Animal Farm*, *Sweeney Todd*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Book of Will*, *An Iliad*, *Metamorphoses*, *Argonautika*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Noises Off*, *Henry V*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *King Lear*, *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Tempest*, *The Dance of Death*, *Come Back, Little Sheba*, *Tartuffe*, and *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*. **Education/Training:** MFA, American Conservatory Theatre. In 2012, Ms. Rodriguez-Elliott (along with her husband, Geoff) received ACT's inaugural "Contributions to the Field" Award. Ms. Rodriguez-Elliott is the winner of multiple LADCC Awards including the "Milton Katselas Award for Career and Special Achievement in Direction."

Geoff Elliott (Producing Artistic Director) **With ANW:** Old Major and Boxer, *Animal Farm*; Director, *Jane Eyre*; Director/ Ebenezer Scrooge, *A Christmas Carol*; Director/John Heminges, *The Book of Will*. Director: *The Winter's Tale*, *A*

Christmas Carol, *Noises Off*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Arcadia*, *All My Sons*, *Endgame*, *Eurydice*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *The Tempest*, *The Taming of the Shrew*. Actor: *The Poet*, *An Iliad*; Dodge, *Buried Child*; Ebenezer Scrooge, *A Christmas Carol*; Don Quixote, *Man of La Mancha*; Midas and others, *Metamorphoses*; King Lear, *King Lear*. **Other Theatres:** South Coast Repertory, Arizona Theatre Company, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Shakespeare Festival, California Repertory. **Education/Training:** MFA, American Conservatory Theatre. Mr. Elliott is a recipient of multiple LADCC, BackStage, Garland, Robby, Drama-Logue, and LA Weekly awards, as well as the "Margaret Hartford Award for Distinguished Achievement" for ANW.

Sami Hansen (Stage Manager) **With ANW:** *Richard III*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Macbeth*, *A Christmas Carol*, Cover Stage Manager, *Sweeney Todd*. **Other Theatres:** McCoy Rigby Entertainment: *Legally Blonde*. Ohio Light Opera: *The Sound of Music*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *How to Succeed...*, *Camelot*. CalArts: *Othello*, *Seven Deadly Sins*, *Island of Servants*, *The Water Station*. Other stage management credits include various concerts with CalArts' School of Dance and the spring 2024 senior showcase with USC's Gloria Kaufman School of Dance, as well as various CalArts live events. **Education/Training:** MFA in Stage Management, California Institute of the Arts; BFA in Theater Directing, Belmont University.

Bryan Tiglio (Assistant Stage Manager) **With ANW:** Assistant Stage Manager, *The Piano Lesson*. Carpentry: *Sweeney Todd*, *King Hedley II*, *Skin of our Teeth*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Man of No Importance*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Richard III*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Exit the King*. Stage Crew: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Book of Will*. Production Assistant: *Animal Farm*, *Radio Golf*, *A Christmas Carol*. **Education:** California State University, Long Beach. BA Technical Theater. Pasadena City College, AA Theater Arts.

Byron J. Smith (Music Director) is a Professor of Music at LA Harbor College. His over 40 years in Music Direction includes a wide variety of artists and musical theater productions ranging from Barbra Streisand and Akon to *Man of La Mancha* and *The Wiz*. He is the composer of many original musicals. Byron is most proud of the recent London debut of his musical *Shades*, a high drama view of the fashion industry; *One* (ONE Man-Twelve Followers-ONE Faith), a gospel musical starring gospel legend Daryl Coley; and *Children of the Night* for which he won the NAACP Theatre Award for best Musical Direction. He is excited to return to ANW after serving as Vocal Arranger for their production of *The Bluest Eye*.

Tesshi Nakagawa (Scenic Designer) **With ANW:** Set Design, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. **Other Theatres:** Hailing from Tokyo, Japan, Tesshi Nakagawa has established a distinguished career as a Scenic Designer/Art Director in the Theater, Film, and Commercial industries. His theatrical designs have been featured at numerous prestigious venues across the Los Angeles area, including Pasadena Playhouse, Boston Court Performing Arts Center, South Coast Repertory, Lewis Family Playhouse, Sierra Madre Playhouse, East West Players, Antaeus Theatre Company, Los Angeles Theater Center, and International City Theater. He is currently an adjunct professor at East Los Angeles College. Graduate of UCLA. For more information, visit www.tesshi.com.

Angelene Storey (Assistant Scenic Designer/Charge Artist) is a Los Angeles-based scenic artist and designer. Her credits include serving as Assistant Scenic Designer for *Topdog/Underdog* at Pasadena Playhouse and Prop Coordinator for Center Theatre Group. She has worked throughout Southern California's vibrant theatre community, with credits at A Noise Within, Boston Court, La Mirada Theatre, Rubicon Theatre Company, Antaeus Theatre Company, East West Players, IAMA Theatre Company, Laguna Playhouse, and Geffen Playhouse. In addition to her design work, she is a Scenic Art and Props mentor at CSULB.

Christine Cover Ferro (Costume Designer) **With ANW:** *Richard III*, *Misalliance*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (LADCC Awards Nominee). **Other Theatres:** *Adolescent Salvation*, *Nice Girl*, *Bacon*, *Evanston Salt Costs Climbing* (LADCC Awards Nominee), *Human Error*, *Monsters of the American Cinema*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Rogue Machine); *Ironbound* (Ojai Theatre Festival); *Rhinoceros* (PRT, Stage Raw Awards nominee); *Between Riverside and Crazy* (The Fountain, LASA Ovation nominee); *Wicked Lit* (Unbound Productions, LASA Ovation winner), *Carmen* (ACD, Houston Grand Opera), *Ann* (ACD, World Premiere, Grand 1894 Opera House). **Film/TV:** *Linked by Love* (webseries); *Promised Land* (ACD, ABC Signature); *Cosmos: Possible Worlds* (ACD, NatGeo); *Encore!* (ACD, Disney +). **Education/Training:** BA, Macalester College; MFA, Brandeis University.

Ken Booth (Lighting Designer) **With ANW:** (Resident Artist) Since 1998, Ken has worked on at least 80 productions at A Noise Within. Included in these are: *Death of a Salesman*, *Richard III*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Misalliance*, *Sweeney Todd*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Book of Will*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Animal Farm*, *Metamorphoses*, *An Iliad*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Winter's Tale*,

Argonautika, *Henry V*, *Pericles*, *Julius Caesar*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Great Expectations*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *The Dance of Death*, *Buried Child*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Noises Off*, *Ubu Roi*, *The Tragedy of Richard III*, and the holiday annual *A Christmas Carol*. **Other Theatres:** *Heisenberg*, Skylight Theatre. **Education/Training:** He graduated from UCLA (English Literature).

Jeff Gardner (Sound Designer) **With ANW:** (Resident Artist) Sound Design: *Exit the King*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Macbeth*, *The Piano Lesson*, *King Hedley II*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Radio Golf*, *Anna in The Tropics*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Buried Child*, *Noises Off*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*; Ensemble in *The Tempest* '93. **Other Theatres:** *Topdog/Underdog*, *Inherit The Wind* (Pasadena Playhouse); *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Mark Taper Forum). He has designed and performed throughout the country including at Williamstown Theatre Festival, The Old Globe, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Baltimore Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Playhouse, The Shakespeare Theatre Company, DC, The Studio Theatre, Arena Stage, The Kennedy Center, Geffen Playhouse, The Kirk Douglas Theatre, Antaeus Theatre Company, as well as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. jeffthomasgardner.net

Shelia Dorn (Wig and Makeup Designer) **With ANW:** *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *King Hedley II*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Radio Golf*, *The Book of Will*, *Anna in the Tropics*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Seven Guitars*, and *Gem of the Ocean*. **Other Theatres:** *Top Gun*, *Don't Touch My Hair*, *Furlough's Paradise*, *American Idiot*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Twelfth Night*, *Three Sisters*, *Fat Ham*, *Black Cypress Bayou*, *Mountain Top*, *The Great Jheri Curl Debate*, *Mommie & Clyde*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Lion King*, *The Direction Home*, *The Producers*, *Lady Day*, *Our West Side Story*, *Shooting Star*, *Two Trains Running*, *Drama Queens*, *Letters from Zora*, *I Go Somewhere*, *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Siamese Sex Show*, *The Story of Alice*, *Hattie*, *Painting in Red*, *Dunbar Hotel*, and *Girl Most Likely*. Shelia also serves as the Resident Hair/Wig & Makeup Designer at Amazing Grace Conservatory, where she donates her artistry to support and inspire aspiring young performers ages 7-18.

Joyce Guy (Choreographer) **With ANW:** Choreography: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *King Hedley II*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *A Raisin in*

the Sun. Won the 2023 LA Drama Critics Circle and LA Theatre Bite Awards for ANW's *Much Ado About Nothing*. **Other Theatres:** Movement Consultant: *Topdog/Underdog* at the Pasadena Playhouse. **Film/TV:** *Big Bold Beautiful Journey, Moneyball, The Santa Clause, General Hospital, Clickbait, S.W.A.T., Bosch: Legacy*, to name a few. Choreographed Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs* at Rogue Machine Theatre. Was nominated for an Ovation, Stage Raw, and NAACP Award. She won the NAACP Award for Best Choreography Local for *Les Blancs*. Joyce has studied West African dance for over 30 years. She is the director/producer of *Dancing Like Home*, a documentary film about dance from Casamance, Senegal, West Africa. **Education/Training:** B.S. from Hampton University.

Kenneth R. Merckx Jr. (Fight Choreographer, Sturdyvant u/s) **With ANW:** (Resident Artist) Rutherford Selig u/s, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Fight Choreographer: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone, One Man, Two Guvnors, A Man of No Importance, The Piano Lesson, Anna in the Tropics, Seven Guitars, Metamorphoses, The Winter's Tale, Frankenstein, Argonautika, Othello, Man of La Mancha*; Fight Consultant, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*. **Other Theatres:** Ken has choreographed fights and taught actors combat for film and television, theatres and universities all across the country. He is presently a faculty member at UC Santa Barbara and Cal State Fullerton. Ken is the resident fight choreographer for the Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Great Lakes Theater Festival (Cleveland) and A Noise Within (Los Angeles). **Education:** MFA (acting), University of Illinois. BA (theatre studies), University of Washington.

Andrea Odinov (Dialect Coach) **With ANW:** Dialect Coach: *Richard III, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, One Man, Two Guvnors, A Man of No Importance, Jane Eyre, The Piano Lesson, Misalliance, King Hedley II, Sweeney Todd, A Christmas Carol, Radio Golf, The Book of Will, Gem of the Ocean, Animal Farm, Seven Guitars*. **Other Theatres:** The Geffen Playhouse, The Odyssey Theatre, Rogue Machine Theatre, Ghost Road Theatre Company, Antaeus Theatre Company, The Road Theatre Company, Lower Depth Theatre Ensemble, The Group Rep, 24th St. Theatre, Sea Glass Theatre Company, and Long Beach Playhouse. Andrea is a Clinical Asst. Professor of Voice and Speech at Loyola Marymount University, a Lead Trainer of Fitzmaurice Voicework®, and member of VASTA, SAG-AFTRA, and AEA. **Education/Training:** MFA, University of CA at Irvine.

Stephen Taylor (Properties Designer / Technical Director) **With ANW:** *One Man, Two Guvnors, Much Ado About Nothing, Kiss of the Spider Woman, The Book of Will, The Bluest Eye, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Sweeney Todd, King Hedley II, Misalliance, The Skin Of Our Teeth, The Piano Lesson, Macbeth, Jane Eyre*. **Other Theatres:** Stephen is a member of the House Theatre of Chicago, where he has been both an actor and a playwright. He has also worked at Steppenwolf, the Goodman, and the Neo Futurarium. **Education/Training:** BFA in Theatre from Southern Methodist University. Love to Lauren and Oliver.

Dr. Miranda Johnson-Haddad (Resident Dramaturg) **With ANW:** Dramaturg: *Exit the King, Death of a Salesman, Richard III, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, One Man Two Guvnors, A Man of No Importance, Jane Eyre, Macbeth, The Piano Lesson, The Skin of Our Teeth, Misalliance, King Hedley II, Sweeney Todd, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Bluest Eye, The Book of Will, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Much Ado About Nothing, Radio Golf, Animal Farm, Metamorphoses, All's Well That Ends Well, Argonautika, Othello*; Educator and Consultant since 2011. **Other Theatres:** Dramaturg: *The Visit, Amadeus, Inherit the Wind*, Pasadena Playhouse State Theater; Dramaturg, *Measure Still for Measure*, Boston Court Theater; Consultant, The Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington, D.C. Dr. Johnson-Haddad has taught Shakespeare, Drama, and Literature at Howard University, UCLA, Vassar College, and Yale University. She is a frequent speaker at Los Angeles Opera, the Shakespeare Club of Pomona Valley, and elsewhere. **Education/Training:** Ph.D. Renaissance Studies, Yale University; B.A. Comparative Literature, Princeton University. mirandadramaqueen.com

Conner Criswell (Managing Director) Conner Criswell holds an M.A. in Art and Culture Management from the University of Denver and a B.A. in Theater Arts from the University of Oregon. He served as General Manager of A Noise Within beginning in 2023 before stepping into the role of Interim Managing Director. Prior to joining A Noise Within, he worked as Executive Associate and Rental Manager at Orlando Shakespeare Theater. His professional background includes producing and managing live events, as well as sales and fundraising. He also brings extensive guest service experience from several roles at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida.

ABOUT A NOISE WITHIN

ANW THEATRE

A Noise Within has been called “an oasis for those who love classic stories” by the Los Angeles Times and is a leading regional producer based in Pasadena, California. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Directors Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliott, the award-winning resident theater company is honored to represent the entire community at its state-of-the-art, 324-seat performance space. In addition to producing world class performances of classic theater, the organization runs robust education programs with the goal of inspiring diverse audiences of all ages.

COURTESY

As a courtesy for artists and audience members, all cell phones and electronic devices must be silenced during the performances. Late seating is at the House Manager’s discretion. A Noise Within may refuse service to anyone.

ACCESSIBILITY

All areas of A Noise Within are accessible by wheelchair. Assisted Listening Devices are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Select performances provide GalaPro closed caption service. Relaxed Performances are provided for members of our neurodiverse community for *A Christmas Carol*.

LOBBY BAR

A variety of refreshments are available from our Lobby Bar and may be taken into the theatre. No outside food or drink is permitted in the building.

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Hours: Tue-Sat 2-6 pm
and 2 hours before performances begin.

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INVITATION TO COMMUNITY

ANW extends an invitation to join our community with a set of principles that emphasize respect, empathy, clear communication, deep listening, openness to learning, and the recognition of multiple truths and experiences. By adhering to these principles, individuals contribute to the creation of a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and understood.

Learn More:

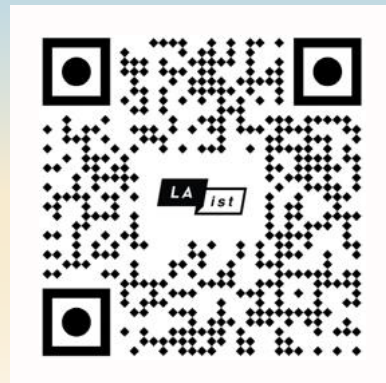


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