Welcome to the final production of American Blues Theater’s 32nd season “The Beat Goes On”. We proudly present a revival of Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story for Chicago audiences.

Charles Hardin Holley (nicknamed “Buddy” in childhood) was born in Lubbock, Texas during the Great Depression. His early music was influenced by the gospel, country, and rhythm & blues genres. After opening for Elvis Presley at the age of nineteen, Buddy shifted his aesthetic to rock & roll. Due to a simple typo on his record contract – a missing “e” in his surname – the name “Buddy Holly” stuck, as did his infectious tunes.

In his too-short life, he wrote, recorded, and produced his own material. He’s regarded as one of the most significant figures in the birth of rock music. He’s often cited as the innovator of the traditional rock lineup of instruments – two guitars, bass, and drums.

Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Elton John all name Buddy Holly as a major inspiration in their respective careers. John Lennon and Paul McCartney paid homage to Buddy Holly & The Crickets by naming their band after another insect. McCartney even owns the publishing rights to the entire Holly song catalogue.

Buddy Holly is an American music icon. Lost too soon, we’re fortunate to have his vast songbook and recordings. American Blues is thrilled to share his legacy with the next generation. It’s our mission to partner each production with great causes. For Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story, we offer complimentary tickets to students of Chicago Public Schools and Guitars Over Guns. In addition, our extraordinarily talented artists will visit assisted-living facilities and hospitals to give mini-concerts.

From the young to old, Buddy Holly’s music appeals to all ages. His songs will fill your heart with a hopeful spirit. Who couldn’t use that?

- Gwendolyn Whiteside
MUSIC CREDITS

The use of the songs in this production is by arrangement with:

“Flower of My Heart” – Holly House Inc.
“Ready Teddy” – Unichappell Music Inc.
“Blue Days Black Nights” – Unichappell Music Inc.
“That’s All Right” – Unichappell Music Inc.
“A Teenager in Love” – Unichappell Music Inc.
“That’ll Be the Day” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Peggy Sue” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Maybe Baby” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Not Fade Away” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“True Love Ways” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Looking for Someone to Love” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Listen to Me” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“It’s So Easy to Fall in Love” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“Well Alright” – MPL Comm. Inc. MPL/Wren
“When You Ask About Love” – Acuff Rose Music Inc.
“Words of Love” – MPL Comm. Inc.
“Oh Boy” – Wren Music Co. c/o MPL
“Rave On” – Wren Music Co. c/o MPL
“Heartbeat” – Wren Music Co. c/o MPL
“Changing All Those Changes” – Cedarwood Publishing Co.
“Think It Over” – Cedarwood Publishing Co. / Southern Music Publishing Co.
“Mailman Bring Me No More” – Southern Music Publishing Co. / Beinstock Publishing
“Peggy Sue Got Married” – Southern Music Publishing Co.
“Shout” – Sony/ATV
“Why Do Fools” – Windswept Pacific Ent.
“Chantilly Lace” – Donald Daily, Glad Music Co. / Fort Knox Music Inc. / Trio Music Co. Inc.
“Raining in my Heart” – House of Bryant Pubs. Inc.
“It Doesn’t Matter Anymore” – Management Agency
“Johnny B Goode” – Isalee Music Co.
“Rock Around with Ollie Vee” – Hill and Range Songs Inc.

All other songs and incidental music by Paul Jury.
in arrangement with Alan Janes
presents

written by Alan Janes
directed by Lili-Anne Brown+
music directed by Michael Mahler*

Scenic Design...........................................................................................................Sarah E. Ross*, U.S.A.
Lighting Design............................................................................................................Jared Gooding*
Costume Design ..........................................................Samantha C. Jones*, U.S.A.
Sound Design ...............................................................................................................Rick Sims*, U.S.A.
Properties Design.....................................................................................................Kevin Rolfs
Choreographer............................................................................................................Jon Martinez
Production Stage Manager........................................................................................Cara Parrish*^

+ Member of Stage Directors & Choreographers Society
* Ensemble member and Artistic Affiliates of American Blues Theater
^ Member of Actors’ Equity Association – the union of professional actors and stage managers

APRIL 27 – MAY 26, 2018 (previews Apr 27 – May 2)

American Blues Theater
4809 N. Ravenswood Ave., Suite 221, Chicago, IL 60640
Phone: (773) 654-3103 AmericanBluesTheater.com

American Blues Theater is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, Inc –
the national organization for nonprofit professional theaters, the League of Chicago Theaters,Arts Alliance Illinois, and Lakeview Chamber of Commerce.

American Blues Theater operates under agreements between Producers’ Association of Chicago Area Theatres,Actors’ Equity Association – the union of professional actors and stage managers,
Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists of America, Local 829 – AFL-CIO.
CAST (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Apollo performer.......................................................... Angela Alise
Apollo performer.......................................................... Chuckie Benson
Vi Petty........................................................................... Liz Chidester
Hi Pockets....................................................................... Ian Paul Custer*^
Company........................................................................ Ann Delaney
Big Bopper...................................................................... Vasily Deris
Clearlake Announcer..................................................... Alex Goodrich^
Norman Petty.................................................................. Derek Hasenstab^
Maria Elena...................................................................... Molly Hernández
Ritchie Valens.................................................................. Cisco Lopez
Tommy / Cricket.............................................................. Michael Mahler*^
Jerry / Cricket.................................................................. Kieran McCabe
Apollo performer.......................................................... Daniel Riley
Buddy Holly...................................................................... Zachary Stevenson^
Company......................................................................... Lauren Vogel
Joe / Cricket..................................................................... Shaun Whitley^

* Ensemble member or Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater
^ Member of Actors’ Equity Association – the union of professional actors and stage managers

As a courtesy to the actors and your fellow patrons, please turn off your phone before the performance. The taking of photographs and the use of any type of recording device are not allowed in the theater during the performance and is a violation of state and federal copyright laws. Digital media will be deleted and tape or film will be confiscated.

TIME AND PLACE

The action takes place in Lubbock, Texas / Clovis, New Mexico / New York / and Clear Lake, Iowa between January 1956 and February 1959.

The performance runs 2 hours with an intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Associate Stage Manager..................................................... Kate Ocker
Assistant Stage Manager.................................................. Shandee Vaughan*
Assistant Stage Manager.................................................. Breana Young
Production Manager....................................................... Aaron Shapiro
Music Consultant............................................................ Malcolm Ruhl
Assistant Director / Choreographer................................. Jon Martinez
Assistant Scenic Designer.................................................. Rebekah Clark
Assistant Sound Designer............................................... Morgan Lake
Associate Costume Designer.......................................... Lily Grace Walls
Assistant Costume Designer........................................... Shelby Brand
Wardrobe Supervisor....................................................... Travis Bihl
Master Electrician........................................................... Rachel West
Scenic Painter.................................................................... Eileen Rozycki
COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY

American Blues Theater believes it is an honor and duty to serve our community. We raise awareness of other non-profit organizations’ great causes through creative collaborations. We offer complimentary tickets to students of Chicago Public Schools and Guitars Over Guns. We proudly collaborate with The Family Institute of Northwestern University. We continue our “Pink Previews” to donate proceeds to The Lynn Sage Foundation for breast cancer research. To enrich your experience, visit AmericanBluesTheater.com.

SEASON SUPPORTERS


SPECIAL THANKS


Video production services provided by The Stage Channel. Our ushers are provided by the Saints—Volunteers for the Performing Arts. For more information visit Saintschicago.org or call 773-529-5510.

BIOGRAPHIES

ANGELA ALISE (Apollo Performer) is very excited to be working with American Blues Theater again, where she was last seen in Little Shop of Horrors.

Some of her favorite Chicago credits include The Wolves (Goodman Theatre), The House That Will Not Stand (Victory Gardens Theater), Saturday Night/Sunday Morning (Prologue Theatre at Steppenwolf Garage Rep), Hairspray (Drury Lane Oakbrook), How We Got On (Haven Theatre), The Wiz (Kokandy Productions), Parade (BoHo Theatre), and Coming Home (Erasing the Distance, where she is an Ensemble member). Regional credits include Black Side of the Moon and Nothing to Lose but Our Chains (The Second City at Woolly Mammoth Theatre) and Almost Accurate Guide to America (The Second City at The Kennedy Center). Angela holds a BA in Theatre from Loyola University Chicago and is represented by Gray Talent Group. She thanks God, her family, friends, and agents for their continued love and support. www.angelaalise.com
CHUCKIE BENSON
(Apollo Performer)
recently originated “Truman Hayes” in the world premiere musical, TRU, at the Chicago Music Theatre Festival. He received a Jeff nomination for his performance as the “Lion” in Kokandy’s production of The Wiz. Chuckie was also a part of the Chicago cast of Spamilton. He has had the honor of playing some of his favorite roles at Wagon Wheel Center of the Arts including “Coalhouse Walker Jr.” in Ragtime, “Curtis” in Sister Act, and “Teen Angel” in Grease! Regional credits include: Hair (Mercury Theater Chicago), “Tom Collins” in Rent (Theo Ubique), Woman of the Year (Porchlight Music Theatre), and “Jim” in Big River (Timber Lake Playhouse). Chuckie received his BFA in Music Theatre Performance from Western Michigan University, and is a native to Lansing, MI.

LIZ CHIDESTER (Vi Petty) is a singer/songwriter, actor, and teaching artist from Virginia. Her Chicago theatre credits include: Lizzie (Firebrand Theatre), High Fidelity (Refuge Theatre Project, Jeff Award - Best Musical), Billy the Kid (Cabinet of Curiosity Events), Big River and Pump Boys and the Dinettes (Theatre at the Center), Ring of Fire (Mercury Theater Chicago), and Stupid F***ing Bird (Sideshow Theatre Company). Her original albums with her band LIZ AND THE LOVELIES include Progress into Simplicity (2017 - Best Roots EP, Independent Music Awards 2018), Otter Hill (2015), and People Pumping Pedals (2014). She teaches group and private lessons at Old Town School of Folk Music.

Liz is stoked to work with American Blues Theater and this incredible cast and crew! www.lizandthelovelies.com/acting

IAN PAUL CUSTER (Hi Pockets) is a proud Ensemble member at American Blues Theater. Recent American Blues credits: “David Halberstam” in The Columnist (Jeff nomination - Best Production, Midsize), It’s A Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago! (Jeff nominations - Best Ensemble and Best Production, Midsize), “Orin Skrivello” in Little Shop of Horrors (Jeff nomination - Best Production of a Musical, Midsise), and “Adam” in Yankee Tavern. Recent Chicago credits: Bad Jews (Theater Wit, North Shore Center, Royal George), 33 Variations (TimeLine Theatre, Jeff Award - Best Production, Midsize), Annie Bosh is Missing (Steppenwolf Theatre), High Holidays (Goodman Theatre), To Master the Art (Broadway Playhouse/TimeLine Theatre), Strangers, Babies (Steep Theatre), and Fiddler on the Roof (Paramount Theatre). Regional credits: Hero: The Musical (Asolo Rep Theatre), Cymbeline (Notre Dame Shakespeare), Romeo and Juliet (Cardinal Stage), and Peter Pan (360 Entertainment - London, England). Television credits: APB, Empire, Chicago Fire, and Chicago PD. Love to Shannon, my friends and family, and Gray Talent Group for all the support.

ANN DELANEY (Company) is thrilled to be making her American Blues Theater debut. Her recent Chicago theatre credits include Hatfield and McCoy (The House Theatre of Chicago); It’s a Wonderful Life, Cabaret, Nice Work If You Can Get It, Spamalot, and Big Fish (Theatre at The Center); All Our Tragic and Gilbert
and Sullivan Rep (The Hypocrites); Bonnie and Clyde (Kokandy Productions), Fancy Nancy (Northbrook TYA), Hobo King (Congo Square Theatre); and Mr. Burns (Theater Wit). She would like to send love to her mom and dad! www.anndelaney.net

VASILY DERIS (Big Bopper) is grateful to be working on such a fun show with the best cast and crew in town.
Chicago credits: the Jeff Award-winning Smokey Joe’s Café (Theo Ubique), “Barry” in the Jeff Award-winning High Fidelity (Refuge Theatre Project), “Eric” in Creatives (Chicago Theatre Workshop), “Shawn Eckhardt” in Tonya and Nancy: The Rock Opera (Underscore Theatre), and “Pharaoh” in Joseph (Paramount Theatre). Vasily wouldn’t be here without the support from his family and friends cheering him on every step of the way. Sophie, thanks for being my daily inspiration and my constant kick in the butt.

DEREK HASENSTAB (Norman Petty) is delighted to make his American Blues Theater debut. Chicago theatre credits include shows with Lookingglass Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Writers Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, About Face Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Court Theatre, Marriott Theatre, and Drury Lane Oakbrook, among others. Regional credits include: “Doc” in Come Back, Little Sheba (IRNE and Elliot Norton Nominations, Huntington Theatre Company), “Hermes” in Metamorphoses (Arena Stage, Mark Taper Forum), and “Tom” in The Glass Menagerie (Kansas City Repertory Theatre). National Tour: “Zazu” in The Lion King. He is proud husband to Tempe Thomas, beaming father to Olivia, and bass player for the increasingly fertile band, The Lincoln Squares.

ALEX GOODRICH (Clearlake Announcer) is thrilled to make his American Blues Theater debut with this amazing play and team! Chicago credits include Hero: The Musical (Jeff Award - Best Supporting Actor in a Musical); Honeymoon in Vegas; She Loves Me; How To Succeed in Business.; Elf the Musical; On The Town; I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change; and For The Boys (Marriott Theatre); The Importance of Being Earnest (Writers Theatre); Love’s Labor’s Lost; The Emperor’s New Clothes; A Midsummer Night’s Dream; Seussical; Taming of the Shrew; Aladdin; and How Can You Run… (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Miss Bennet; Shining Lives; Civil War Christmas; and She Stoops to Conquer (Northlight Theatre); Old Jews Telling Jokes (Royal George); The Comedy of Errors and One Man Two Guvnors (Court Theatre); Everything Is Illuminated (Next Theatre); A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Indiana Repertory); and Goodnight Moon and Harold and the Purple Crayon (Chicago Children’s Theatre). He loves his wife and two kids very much.

MOLLY HERNÁNDEZ (Maria Elena) is thrilled to be making her debut at American Blues Theater. Favorite credits include “Rosabella” in The Most Happy Fella (Theo Ubique); “Julie Jordan” in Carousel, Mary Poppins, Evita, and Scapino (Timber Lake Playhouse); Crime Scene: Breath Life and Forgotten Future: Education Project (Collaboraction). Last year she was given the Award of Excellence in Professional Theatre from the Illinois Theatre Association and was nominated for a Jeff Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her
BIOGRAPHIES

work in *The Most Happy Fella*. Molly can be seen on *Chicago PD* ep. 105 as “Elisa Rodríguez” and *APB* ep. 105 as “Maya Ruiz”. Big thanks to the Songbook Academy, the Illinois Theatre Association, Gray Talent Group, Connor, Erin, mom, and dad. AMDG. Mollyhernandez.weebly.com

**CISCO LOPEZ** *(Ritchie Valens)* is thrilled to make his American Blues Theater debut. Chicago credits include *Merrily We Roll Along, Woman of the Year, New Faces Sing Broadway 2001*, and *In the Heights* (Porchlight Music Theatre); *Bonnie & Clyde* (Kokandy Productions); *In To America* and *Letters Home* (Griffin Theatre); *Planted* (Rogue Elephant Productions); *Dead Man Walking* (Piven Theatre); *Mutt* (Stage Left and Red Tape Theatre); *Macbeth* (Midsommer Flight); *Take Me Out* (Eclectic Theatre); and *Fiddler on the Roof and Damn Yankees* (Light Opera Works). Film credits: *Boystown* and *Closet Memories*. He holds a BFA in Theatre Performance from Baylor University and is represented by Shirley Hamilton.

**MICHAEL MAHLER** *(Tommy / Cricket; music director)* is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater and is thrilled to be back. His Blues appearances include *It’s a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!*, “Seymour” in *Little Shop of Horrors*, “Clifford” in *Side Man*, and “Jimmy” in *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*. Other Chicagoland credits include *Honeymoon in Vegas* (Marriott Theatre); *The March* (Steppenwolf Theatre); *Working* (Broadway Playhouse); *The Illusion* (Court Theatre); *The Fox on the Fairway, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (Jeff nomination), and *The Producers* (Theatre at the Center). Recent music directing credits include *Parade* (Writers Theatre) and *Road Show* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Jeff nomination). Michael is a composer/lyricist who contributed additional lyrics to the new Broadway production of *Miss Saigon*. Other works include *Diary of a Wimpy Kid, The Man who Murdered Sherlock Holmes* (Jeff Award), *October Sky* (San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award), and *Hero* (Jeff Award). Michael dedicates his performance to his new little buddy, Ezra Cameron Mahler.

**KIERAN MCCABE** *(Jerry / Cricket)* This Philadelphia native is proud to make his American Blues Theater debut. Kieran’s favorite credits include “Fluke Holland” in *Million Dollar Quartet*, “Scapino” in *Scapino*, “Orin Scrivello” in *Little Shop of Horrors*, “Agustin Migaldi” in *Evita*, “Mr. Manningham” in *Gaslight*, “Stacee Jaxx” in *Rock of Ages, Carousel, Mary Poppins, Titanic, and A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (Timber Lake Playhouse), and “Freak” in *columbinus* (Loyola Chicago). Kieran drums and writes for the Indie Rock trio Day Off (@dayofftheband). Kieran puts his English Creative Writing degree to good use as a Head Writer for Kettle Camp Studios, a Chicago based production company. He’d like to thank his Mom and Dad, his six siblings, and his teachers at St. Joe’s Prep. For more of Kieran’s work, visit kieranmccabe.weebly.com. OAMDG.

**DANIEL RILEY** *(Apollo Performer)* is a Chicago-based performer who studied at Harold Washington College and Roosevelt University. He has worked in theatre and cabaret with numerous groups in and around Chicago, most recently Paramount Theatre, Davenport’s Piano Bar, The Inconvenience, and the Ravinia Festival. Dan also coaches
and accompanies soloists and choirs of all ages in many styles of music. He regularly sings with Holy Name Cathedral and the Lakeside Singers, and can be seen Sunday mornings on WGN-TV singing for Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. Dan is also featured (along with Michael Mahler) on *Dark Side of the Moon A Cappella* (VOCOMOTION Productions). Thanks to Lil and Mike for the opportunity!

**ZACHARY STEVENSON** (*Buddy Holly*) is thrilled to be making his American Blues Theater debut! Originally from Vancouver Island, Canada, Zach recently relocated to Chicago after spending the last few years being based in Kansas City, MO. Select credits include: *Million Dollar Quartet* (Paramount Theatre – “Carl” U/S), *Hair* (CanStage), *Ring of Fire* (Chemainus Theatre Festival / Western Canada Theatre), *Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave* (Blue Bridge Repertory), *Urinetown* (Belfry Theatre), *Red Rock Diner* (Arts Club Theatre), *Assassins* (Quintessence), and over ten productions of *Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story* throughout the US and Canada, for which he’s been nominated for a Jessie Richardson Award and Ovation Award. Zachary has also had the pleasure of music directing several productions, including *Million Dollar Quartet* (Arts Club), and *Ring of Fire* (Chemainus Theatre Festival), as well as performing in countless headlining concerts across North America. Off stage, Zach is busy writing a one-man show about the 1960s folk singer and activist, Phil Ochs. For more, check out www.zacharystevenson.com. Rave on and enjoy the show!

**LAUREN VOGEL** (*Company*) is an American actress, comedy writer, and multi-instrumentalist. Regional Credits: Feinstein’s/54 Below NYC, American Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, The Pasadena Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, and The Olney Theatre Center. Lauren is an ensemble member with The Hypocrites, (*All Our Tragic* Equity Jeff Award, *Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, H.M.S. Pinafore, Johanna Faustus*, etc.) Other Chicago credits include: A Red Orchid Theatre, Steppenwolf Garage, Trap Door Theatre, American Theatre Company’s Core Series, Chicago Children’s Theatre. Lauren is currently starring as Woods in “Chicago H.R.;” a comedy web series produced by The Second City training center. LaurenVogel.org

**SHAUN WHITLEY** (*Joe / Cricket*) is thrilled to be working again with American Blues Theater. He is a multi-instrumentalist, actor, composer, and Jeff-nominated music director. He performed nearly 1800 times as “Carl Perkins” in the longest running Broadway musical in Chicago history, *Million Dollar Quartet*. Other Chicago credits include: Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Drury Lane Oakbrook, The Second City, Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Strawdog Theatre, TUTA, Redmoon Theater, Blindfaith Theatre, and Provision Theater. He studied Shakespeare at RADA in London. He teaches at the Old Town School of Folk Music. Love to Megan and Elaine, his favorite girls.

**ALAN JANES** (*Playwright*) is an English writer and producer who has worked in TV, film, radio, and theatre. His best-known work is the musical *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* which ran for over 14 years and almost
6,000 performances in London’s West End and has been on tour in the UK for 17 years. Buddy has also played Broadway, 5 U.S. National Tours, 8 years in Germany, 3 years in Australia and New Zealand, and countless other productions around the world. Janes was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Musical for Buddy. He also co-wrote and produced the musicals 125th Street and Jailhouse Rock, which both premiered on London’s West End.

LILI-ANNE BROWN (Director) A native Chicagoan, Brown works as a director, actor and educator, both locally and regionally. She is the former Artistic Director of Bailiwick Chicago, where she directed Dessa Rose (Jeff Award), Passing Strange (BTA Award and Jeff nomination for Best Director of a Musical), See What I Wanna See (Steppenwolf Theatre Garage Rep), and the world premiere of Princess Mary Demands Your Attention by Aaron Holland. Other directing credits include The Wolf at the End of the Block (16th Street Theater); Marie Christine (BoHo Theatre); Peter and the Starcatcher (Metropolis Performing Arts); The Wiz (Kokandy Productions, BroadwayWorld Award); Xanadu (American Theater Company); Jabari Dreams of Freedom by Nambi E. Kelley (world premiere, Chicago Children’s Theatre); American Idiot (Northwestern University); the national tour of Jesus Snatched My Edges; Little Shop of Horrors, Hairspray, Unnecessary Farce, Cabaret, Sweet Charity, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, and Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story (Timber Lake Playhouse). She is a member of SDC, AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and a graduate of Northwestern University.

MICHAEL MAHLER (Music Director) See cast.

SARAH E. ROSS (Scenic Design) is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater. Her work as a scenic, properties, and puppet designer has been seen at American Blues Theater, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Marriott Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Shattered Globe Theatre, The Joffrey Ballet, The Second City, Theater Wit, BoHo Theatre, Writers Theatre, Theatre at the Center, Peninsula Players Theater, Renaissance Theaterworks, and others. She’s been nominated for five Jeff Awards and has won two: Best Scenic Design, Midsize for The Rainmaker (American Blues Theater) and Best Costume Design, Midsize for Tobacco Road (American Blues Theater). She is an active member of the international Society of Properties Artisans Managers (SPAM) and a member of Local USA 829. She is an Assistant Professor at University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point.

JARED GOODING (Lighting Design) is a proud Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater where he has designed This Wonderful Life, Beauty’s Daughter, and The Columnist. Design credits include the Associate Design of Lookingglass Alice (Lookingglass Theatre Company), serving as the Lighting Assistant for The Wiz Live on NBC, designs for Madison Children’s Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, UIC Theatre, Strawdog Theatre, The Hypocrites, TimeLine Theatre, Definition Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, Sideshow Theatre, About Face Theatre, MPAACT, Pegasus Theatre, Next Theatre, Congo Square Theatre, Citadel Theatre, ETA, and Fleetwood Jourdain Theatre. His work is featured at goodingdesigns.com, he is a company member with MPACCT, and holds a BFA in Lighting Design from The Theatre School at DePaul. He spends his off time managing a DJ company for Chicago area bars.

SAMANTHA C. JONES (Costume Design) is a proud Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater. Credits include: BREACH, Native Gardens, Samsara, and The Gospel of Lovingkindness (Victory Gardens Theater); Inana and Boy (TimeLine Theatre); Skeleton
Crew (Northlight Theatre); The Belle of Amherst and Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner? (Court Theatre); The Mystery of Love and Sex (Writers Theatre); Monster (Steppenwolf for Young Audiences); The Scottsboro Boys (Porchlight Music Theatre); The 100 Dresses (Chicago Children’s Theatre); Thaddeus and Slocum (Lookingglass Theatre Company); and Prowess and The Peacock (Jackalope Theatre). Regionally her she has worked with Triad Stage, Arkansas Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Peninsula Players Theater, and others.

RICK SIMS (Sound Design) is a proud Artistic Affiliate with American Blues Theater. He has composed and designed sound for numerous Chicago-area theaters, including Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, American Blues Theater, Congo Square Theatre, Writers Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Chicago Children’s Theatre, The Hypocrites, House Theatre of Chicago, Court Theatre, American Theater Company, Victory Gardens Theater, Raven Theatre, Steep Theatre, Northlight Theatre, and About Face Theatre. His additional credits include The Getty, Boston Playwrights’ Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Portland Playhouse. Rick won Jeff Awards for Sound Design for Moby Dick and Hepheastus (Lookingglass Theatre Company), a Black Theatre Alliance Award for Brothers in the Dust (Congo Square Theatre), and has received several nominations for both awards. Rick also wrote the book, music and lyrics for Hillbilly Antigone at Lookingglass Theatre Company, where he is an Artistic Associate.

KEVIN ROLFS (Properties Design) is a Chicago-based scenic artist, props designer and scenic painter who is excited to be working with American Blues Theater on this awesome show! His scenic painting work can also be seen around Chicago. You can find him online at kevinrolfs.com.

MALCOLM RUHL (Music Consultant) is excited to be working with American Blues Theater again, where he served as Music Director for Hank Williams: Lost Highway, receiving a Jeff Award for his work. A 7-time Jeff Award nominee, Malcolm’s Chicago musical direction credits include productions for Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre Company, Northlight Theatre, Mercury Theater Chicago, Apollo Theater, and Drury Lane Theatres, Theatre at the Center, and American Theater Company. His orchestration credits include Heart of Spain, The Original Grease, re-orchestrations of A Little Night Music for Writers Theatre and BoHo Theatre, and Oklahoma! for American Theater Company. Malcolm has produced CDs for Cory Goodrich and Christine Mild. malcolmruhl.com

JON MARTINEZ (Assistant Director/Choreographer) is a Chicago based choreographer and director. Credits include: The View Upstairs (Circle Theatre); On A Clear Day You Can See Forever (Porchlight Music Theatre); In The Heights (South Bend Civic Theatre); Priscilla Queen of the Desert (Jeff nomination, Pride Films & Plays); Rock of Ages (Timber Lake Playhouse); 3C (A Red Orchid Theatre); We’re Gonna Die (Haven Theatre/Steppenwolf Theatre); Tonya & Nancy The Rock Opera and Haymarket (Underscore Theatre). Jon also directed the Theater on the Lake remount of Bailiwick Chicago’s Jeff Award-winning production of Murder Ballad. He also has served as assistant/associate director/choreographer on Lizzie (Firebrand Theatre), Xanadu (American Theater Company); Carrie and Murder Ballad (Bailiwick Chicago); and Story of a Story: The Untold Story (Underscore Theatre). His ballet, Le Apache, premiered Night’s Dream at College of Lake County.
in 2016 at The Harris Theater in Chicago. He is also the founder of the non-profit To All Performers of Color which provides free musical theatre dance training to underserved communities. Jon is a company member of Firebrand Theatre and Underscore Theatre.

CARA PARRISH (Production Stage Manager) is a proud Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater and is glad to be returning for her second show with Blues, having stage managed Beauty’s Daughter last summer. Her other Chicago stage management credits include shows at Court Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, Writers Theatre, Chicago Children’s Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, and Black Ensemble Theater. She would like to thank her family and friends for all of their love and support.

KATE OCKER (Associate Stage Manager) is thrilled to be back at American Blues Theater. Past Blues credit includes Keith Huff’s Six Corners. Past theatres she has worked at include Paramount Theatre, Court Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Resident Ensembles Players, Great River Shakespeare Festival, and the Oklahoma City Ballet.

SHANDEE VAUGHAN (Assistant Stage Manager) is a proud Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater and is delighted, as always, to be back in the room with American Blues. Recent Blues credits: The Columnist, It’s a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago, and Little Shop of Horrors. Most recently, she was seen performing Foley and playing the ukulele for WildClaw Theatre’s Deathscribe X, the International Festival of Radio Plays. Other recent Chicago credits include: Time Is On Our Side (About Face Theatre), Night in Alachua County (WildClaw Theatre), and The Woman in Black (WildClaw Theatre). shandeevaughan.com

BREA NA YOUNG (Assistant Stage Manager) graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago in the spring of 2017 with a BA in Theatre Design (concentration in Stage Management). She recently served as Assistant Stage Manager for American Blues Theater’s world premiere Six Corners. In addition, she stage managed shows such as Glengarry Glen Ross, Life’s a Dream, and The Last Days of Judas Iscariot. She had an internship (stage management) with Steppenwolf Theatre Company and has been working in theaters around the Chicago area since then.

AARON SHAPI RO (Production Manager) works throughout Chicago as a freelance production manager. He previously served as Production Manager at Victory Gardens Theater on productions such as Hand to God and Fun Home. Other credits include Disenchanted! and Unspeakable at the Broadway Playhouse, commercial productions of Splintered Soul and Twisted Knots with the Chicago Commercial Collective, Jeff nominated productions of Heathers and Tomorrow Morning with Kokandy Productions; The Rainmaker with American Blues Theater; Stupid Fucking Bird and Caught with Sideshow Theatre; Memphis, In The Heights, Dreamgirls, Far From Heaven, Sweeney Todd, Funny Thing Happened, Side Show, and the Jeff Award-winning productions of Ain’t MisBehavin’ and Sondheim on Sondheim with Porchlight Music Theatre where he is an Artistic Associate. Aaron was the founding Artistic Director for Oracle where he served for 4 years. He is also the co-founder of Studio BE/MCL Chicago in Lakeview where served as Executive Director for 5 years. Aaron has worked for over 100 different theatre and production companies, and educational institutions as an electrician, carpenter, sound engineer, designer, tech director, director, production manager, and producer.
REBEKAH CLARK (Assistant Scenic Designer) is a senior undergraduate theatre student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. This is her first time working with American Blues Theater! She has previously assisted scenic designer Joe C. Klug in his design work for Orlando Reparatory Theatre’s Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Musical Theatre Works’ Gypsy, and the Arkansas Shakespeare Festival’s upcoming productions of Henry IV Part I and My Fair Lady. Her design credits at UWSP include a lighting design of Blood Wedding and scenic design of Metamorphoses. Rebekah will graduate this May with a BA in Drama (design emphasis).

LILY GRACE WALLS (Associate Costume Designer) is thrilled to be on the team for American Blues Theater’s production of Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story. A Hoosier from birth, Lily graduated from Indiana University in 2015 with a BA in Theatre Arts and made the jump to the big city last year. Previously, she designed a number of shows in Bloomington, from Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (Ivy Tech Student Productions) to the king lear project, a world premiere original pronunciation production. Chicago credits include Akvavit Theatre’s English premiere of Bad Girls: The Stylists. She would like to thank Michael (husband), as well as Bamba and Khoshekh (cats) for their respective support and love.

SHELBY BRAND (Assistant Costume Designer) is excited to work with American Blues Theater for the first time. Other Chicago credits include costume design for They’re Playing Our Song, On a Clear Day You Can See Forever, and Little Me with Porchlight Music Theatre’s Revisits series, and Disaster! and Creatives at Chicago Theatre Workshop. Along with designing Shelby spends most of her time as a wardrobe supervisor where she has worked with Porchlight Music Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and on Spamilton. She would like to thank her parents and Pat for their endless encouragement and support.

GWENDOLYN WHITESIDE (Artistic Director) is a proud Ensemble member of American Blues Theater and has served as Artistic Director since 2010. Under her leadership, American Blues has nearly doubled the size of its Ensemble, added 32 Artistic Affiliates, and diversified its base of artists. She created the nationally-recognized annual Blue Ink Playwriting Award, Blueprint Development for new work, implemented community service into the company’s mission, and created the free arts education program The Lincoln Project for Chicago Public Schools which serves 3,000 students annually. She led American Blues through its 2009 rebirth and built the operational budget from zero to $1 million+ in seven years. Whiteside served numerous panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and sat on the national Board of Directors for Network of Ensemble Theaters. Currently she sits on the Board of Directors for The League of Chicago Theatres. She’s a graduate of Northwestern University (cum laude), The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (MFA), and a Kellogg Executive Scholar in Nonprofit management (Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University). She was nominated for “Chicagoan of the Year” in Chicago Magazine and named in Newcity’s annual Players list numerous times. In seven years, eight American Blues’ productions won or were nominated for production by the Joseph Jefferson Award committee. She’s received 13 Joseph Jefferson Awards, Citations, and nominations as an actress and Artistic Director. Her favorite performances include Jeff Award for Solo Performance (Grounded) and seven years as “Mary Bailey” (It’s a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!). She’s the recipient of two After Dark Awards and numerous Broadway World Chicago Awards and nominations. She directs the Joseph Jefferson Award nominated annual holiday production It’s a Wonderful Life: Live in Chicago!
ABOUT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Winner of American Theater Wing’s prestigious National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves. American Blues Theater follows three guiding values both on and off its stages – to be accessible, responsible, and true.

Our diverse and multi-generational artists have established the second oldest professional Equity Ensemble theater in Chicago. Our 34-member Ensemble has nearly 600 combined years of collaboration on stage. As of today, our theater and artists received 197 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 35 Black Theater Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades.

American Blues Theater is committed to developing the classic plays and musicals of tomorrow. Our new work development consists of a variety of programs – including world and regional premieres, the Blue Ink Playwriting Award, Blueprint commissions, and Ripped: The Living Newspaper Festival of new short-plays. More than half of our mainstage productions are world and Chicago premieres.

DEFINITION OF “ENSEMBLE”
An Ensemble theater is a group of individuals dedicated to collaborative creation and committed to consistently working together over years to develop a distinctive body of work and practices. Ensemble members, both artists and administrators, are empowered to help shape their theater’s artistic direction and organizational structure.

AMERICAN BLUES THEATER HISTORY

BUILT BY THE AMERICAN BLUES FAMILY
American Blues Theater was founded in July 1985 by a director, playwright, designer, and actor. The company dedicated itself to new and classic American plays. Richard Christiansen of the Chicago Tribune cited American Blues in his editorial “Chicago Theater Forges New Standards of Glory.” In August of 1993, the company leased a warehouse on Byron and Lincoln. In 38 days, James Leaming led a community-based 90+ volunteer crew to transform the space into an intimate 134-seat theater. From 1994-1997, the Ensemble was lauded with numerous Joseph Jefferson Awards and After Dark Awards.

LEADERSHIP FROM OUTSIDE THE ENSEMBLE
From 1997-2009, the company was led by Artistic Directors from outside of the Ensemble. Under the leadership of Brian Russell and Damon Kiely (’97-’07), the theater’s name changed to American Theater Company (ATC), the mission statement was revised, and the business expanded greatly. In 2008, under new management, the Ensemble theater practice was dismantled. After 18 months of talks with the new management, all four Founders and every Ensemble member prior to 2008 chose to leave the ATC organization in March 2009 citing “major administrative and artistic differences".

14 American Blues Theater
BLUE SKIES AHEAD
The Ensemble reformed under its original name American Blues Theater. Founding Board members reconstituted the Board, giving tremendous support and guidance. Ensemble member Gwendolyn Whiteside became the Artistic Director. Whiteside ushered in the annual Blue Ink Playwriting Award, Blueprint Development, implemented community service into the company’s mission, and adapted the arts education program The Lincoln Project for Chicago Public Schools that serves 3,000 students annually.

“One of our favorites in Chicago!” – Dean Richards, WGN
“Ensemble founded one of Chicago's most venerable off-loop theaters.” – Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune

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If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors at American Blues Theater, please call (773) 654-3103.
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Gwendolyn Whiteside, *Artistic Director*
Suzy Robertson, *General Manager*
Sarajane Johnson, *Director of Development*
Elyse Dolan, *Assistant Producer*
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## GENERAL INFORMATION

American Blue Theater Administrative office
4809 N. Ravenswood Ave, Suite 221 Chicago, IL 60640
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**Starts at $27!**
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American Blues Theater is grateful for every contribution.
We regret that due to space limitations we are unable to list donations under $99.
Please accept our deepest appreciation as your donation makes a difference!

We make every effort to keep this list as accurate and complete as possible.
Please contact us at info@AmericanBluesTheater.com to correct any unintentional errors or omissions.

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