AUGUST WILSON’S
MA RAINET’S BLACK BOTTOM

WRITTEN BY AUGUST WILSON
DIRECTED BY RON OJ PARSON

Featuring David Alan Anderson*, Thomas J. Cox*, Felicia P. Fields*, Jalen Gilbert, Tiffany Renee Johnson, Blake Montgomery, Peter Moore, Kelvin Roston, Jr.*, A.C. Smith* and Alfred H. Wilson*

Scenic Designer Todd Rosenthal, USA
Costume Designer Myrna Colley-Lee, USA
Lighting Designer Jared Gooding
Sound Designer Ray Nardelli, USA
Properties Master Rachel Watson
Dramaturg Regina Victor
Fight Director Joe Foust
Intimacy Director Sasha Smith
Casting Director Geoff Button
Production Stage Manager Rebecca Pechter*

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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.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.
Additional support for Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom provided by the Director’s Society Sponsors.
August Wilson’s Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

Use of cameras, video recorders, audio recorders and/or any other type of recording device during a performance is strictly prohibited.
CAST

Toledo .................................................................................................................. David Alan Anderson*
Sturdyvant ......................................................................................................... Thomas J. Cox*
Ma Rainey ......................................................................................................... Felicia P. Fields*
Sylvester .............................................................................................................. Jalen Gilbert
Dussie Mae ......................................................................................................... Tiffany Renee Johnson
Policeman .......................................................................................................... Blake Montgomery
Irvin ....................................................................................................................... Peter Moore
Levee ................................................................................................................... Kelvin Roston, Jr.*
Slow Drag ............................................................................................................. A.C. Smith*
Cutler ..................................................................................................................... Alfred H. Wilson*

UNDERSTUDIES

Cutler, Slow Drag ............................................................................................... Willie B.
Policeman ............................................................................................................. Jacob Baim
Ma Rainey .......................................................................................................... debrah neal
Irvin, Sturdyvant ............................................................................................... Blake Montgomery
Levee, Sylvester ................................................................................................. Terence Sims
Dussie Mae .......................................................................................................... Darian Tene
Toledo ................................................................................................................... Henri Watkins

SETTING

Chicago, IL; March 1927, a recording studio.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director .............................................................................................................. Ron OJ Parson, SDC
Production Stage Manager ................................................................................ Rebecca Pechter*
Scenic Designer ................................................................................................. Todd Rosenthal, USA
Costume Designer ............................................................................................. Myrna Colley-Lee, USA
Lighting Designer ............................................................................................... Jared Gooding
Sound Designer .................................................................................................. Ray Nardelli, USA
Properties Master .............................................................................................. Rachel Watson
Dramaturg .......................................................................................................... Regina Victor
Choreographer .................................................................................................... Cristin Carole
Fight Director ..................................................................................................... Joe Foust
Intimacy Director ............................................................................................... Sasha Smith
Assistant Director ............................................................................................... Am’Ber Montgomery
Associate Scenic Designer ............................................................................... Lauren Nigri
Assistant Sound Designer ................................................................................ Christopher M. LaPorte
Assistant Costume Designer ............................................................................. Virginia Varland
GladRags Designs Studio Assistant .................................................................. Daniel Tenner
Assistant Fight Director ..................................................................................... Almanya Narula
PRODUCTION STAFF, CONT.

Assistant Stage Manager ................................................................. Abigail Medrano
Deck Crew ....................................................................................... Joe Creen
Sound Board Operator ..................................................................... Amanda Hosking
Scene Shop/Scenic Construction ......................................................... Means of Production
Stitcher .............................................................................................. Janelle Manno
Draper .................................................................................................. Emily Waecker
Wig and Hair Design ........................................................................ Penny Lane Studios
Milliner .................................................................................................. Emily Waecker
Technical Supervisor ......................................................................... Elizabeth Flauto
Wardrobe Supervisor .......................................................................... Jane Heuer
Costume Supervisor ........................................................................... Emily Waecker
Master Electrician ............................................................................... Simon Robinson
Sound Engineer .................................................................................. Amanda Hosking

SPECIAL THANKS

Victor Fields, Sarah Heberlein.

At Writers Theatre, we always invite our audiences to “lean forward and engage” and that’s because we want you to immerse yourself in the work on our stages. We not only welcome it, we encourage it, and we recognize that that engagement looks and means something different for everyone. In your own way, please feel welcome to join in—laugh if so moved, cry if so moved, applaud if so moved, exclaim appropriately if so moved. We want you to bring your full self into this space and to understand that all your fellow audience members are free to do the same in their own way. Indeed, our best nights are the ones when the artists and audience are perfectly tuned, firing and feeding off of each other.

We get it—when the lights go down, excitement goes up! A theatre is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. Your best reaction is an honest reaction. So remember, don’t sit back and relax. Do Lean Forward and Engage.

And remember, if you need anything during your visit, please don’t hesitate to ask a Writers Theatre audience services associate. They’re on hand to help make sure your experience is exceptional.

And enjoy the show!

*Denotes Members of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers
A SPECIAL SALUTE TO SPONSORS OF
MA RAINEY’S BLACK BOTTOM

Writers Theatre extends a sincere thank you to the following individuals for their sponsorship support of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom:

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Writers Theatre is thrilled to welcome back ComEd as its Official Lighting Sponsor for the 2018/19 Season. ComEd is a longtime supporter of the arts in Chicagoland, and Writers Theatre is honored to partner with a company that acknowledges the power of theatre to contribute to the health and vitality of our community by bringing us together. The 2018/19 Season marks ComEd’s fourth season as Official Lighting Sponsor, and Writers Theatre is extremely grateful to once again have ComEd’s partnership.

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Please visit www.writerstheatre.org/gala to learn about how you can support Writers Theatre’s WordPlay Gala!

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David Alan Anderson (Toledo) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in Witch. Other Chicago credits include Gem of the Ocean (BTAA winner) and The Mountaintop (Jeff Nominee), both with Court Theatre. David has over twenty-five seasons with Indiana Repertory Theatre in Indianapolis, where his many credits include Looking Over the President’s Shoulder, What I Learned in Paris, Julius Caesar, The Whipping Man, Romeo and Juliet, A Christmas Carol and many others. Recent works include Troy in Fences (Indiana Rep, Denver Center, Arizona Theatre Company and Milwaukee Rep), Morning After Grace (Asolo Rep), Radio Golf (Cleveland Playhouse) and The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (Indiana Rep and Syracuse Stage). Other regional credits include The Guthrie, Baltimore Centerstage, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival, KC Rep, Geva Theatre and many others. Directing credits include MVP, The Color of Justice (Indiana Rep), Topdog/Underdog and Two Trains Running (Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis). He is a company member with Penumbra Theatre in St. Paul, MN. Recent television works include two seasons on Showtime’s new hit series The Chi. He is a recipient of the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship sponsored by the Ten Chimneys Foundation.

Felicia P. Fields (Ma Rainey) makes her Writers Theatre debut. Felicia returns to Chicago having recently starred in Low Down Dirty Blues (Lone Tree Arts Center) in Colorado. Other theatre credits include productions at Marriott Theatre, Court Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace, Theatre at the Center, Northlight Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, The Broadway Playhouse, Goodman Theatre and is presently working on a new production, Love & Southern Comfort. Ms. Fields earned a Tony Award nomination for her portrayal of Sofia in The Color Purple on Broadway and a 2006 Theatre World Award, two Broadway.com Awards, a NAACP nomination and the award for Best Actress in a Musical for her performance in 1988, most recently in 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, as well as The Jungle, The Odyssey, West, Arabian Nights, The Great Fire, Nelson Algren: For Keeps, Single Day (Joseph Jefferson Nomination, Solo Performance), Old Curiosity Shop (Joseph Jefferson Nomination, Supporting Actor), Winston Smith in 1984 and Hook in Peter Pan (a play), among many others. He has appeared regionally at Goodman Theatre, most recently as Bob Cratchit in A Christmas Carol, Steppenwolf Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Court Theatre, The House Theatre of Chicago, The Gift Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Thom also worked for ten years at the Weston Playhouse Theatre in Vermont, performing in productions ranging from Tartuffe to Urinetown, and directing Weston’s Young Company. Film/TV: Chicago Fire (NBC), Brotherhood (Showtime) and Since You’ve Been Gone (Miramax).

Thomas J. Cox (Sturdyvant) makes his Writers Theatre debut. As an ensemble member with Chicago’s Lookingglass Theatre Company, he has appeared in many productions since
in Sophisticated Ladies. Television/Film credits include Slice with Chance the Rapper, Save the Last Dance, Who Gets the Dog, Chicago PD, Chicago Fire, Bad Judge (NBC), Sense 8 (Netflix), Early Edition (CBS), The Knights of Prosperity (ABC) and many commercials/voice-overs to date. She is the recipient of a Clarence Dewitt Award, many Joseph Jefferson nominations and won the Jeff Award for her performances in Sophisticated Ladies. Thanks to Stewart Talent and Ron.

Jalen Gilbert (Sylvester) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously understudied East Texas Hot Links. See him next as Bowzie in Too Heavy for Your Pocket (TimeLine Theatre). Recent credits include Tru in Hooded (First Floor Theater), John in Mies Julie (Victory Gardens Theater) and Dontrell in Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea (First Floor Theater). Television and Film credits include Chicago Med (NBC), As with Knives and Skin, The Exorcist (Fox) and Solo. Jalen is a proud graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University BFA Acting program. Jalen is happy to be signed with Paonessa Talent.

Peter Moore (Irvin) makes his Writers Theatre debut. Pete is a founding member and the Artistic Director of Steep Theatre in Chicago, where his credits include Linda, Birdland, Hinter, Earthquakes in London, Wastwater, The Few, The Cheats, Brilliant Adventures, The Life and Sort of Death of Eric Argyle, If There is I Haven’t Found it Yet, Love and Money, Festen, A Brief History of Helen of Troy and Harper Regan, among many others over the last 17 years. Other theatre credits include Steppenwolf’s 2017 production of The Crucible, Route 66 Theatre’s The Downpour and Jackalope Theatre’s In the Canyon. TV & Film credits include Chicago Fire, Chicago Justice (NBC), the pilot Convergence and the Bollywood hit Dhoom 3. Pete is a graduate of Bowdoin College and The School at Steppenwolf, and is represented by Paonessa Talent.

Tiffany Renee Johnson (Dussie Mae) makes her Writers Theatre debut. She is a Chicago native with a BFA from Howard University, and is represented by Gray Talent Group. Her theatre credits include: Flyin’ West (American Blues Theater), Red Velvet (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), Saint Joan (Poetic Forum Collective), the US premiere of truth and reconciliation (Sideshow Theatre Company), the world premiere of VANYA (or, “That’s Life!”) (Rasaka Theatre Company), Coming Home (Erasing the Distance), Hairspray (Drury Lane Theatre) and The Nativity (Congo Square Theatre). Regional credits include Race (Next Act Theatre) and The Bluest Eye (Environmental Theatre Space). Television credits include: Chicago Med, Chicago PD, Chicago Fire (NBC), APB (Fox) and Embeds (Go90). “The sun is my limit, and I won’t stop reaching until I hold it on my hands,” she always says. To God be all the glory.

Blake Montgomery (Policeman, u/s Irvin, Sturdyvant) makes his Writers Theatre debut. Previous Chicago appearances
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**Kelvin Roston, Jr.** (Levee) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared as Roy Moore in *East Texas Hot Links* (Jeff Award, Best Ensemble) and *The Old Settler*. Chicagoland theaters: Congo Square, Court Theatre, Paramount Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Goodman Theatre, ITC, eta Creative Arts, Black Ensemble Theatre, TimeLine Theatre, Northlight Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Regional theatres: The Black Rep, The Fulton Theatre, New Theatre Restaurant, MSMT and Baltimore Center Stage. International: Tokyo Theatre Orb and The Royal Festival Hall. Television: *Chicago Med, Chicago PD* (NBC), KFC and Instant Care commercials. Film: *Get a Job, Princess Cyd and Breathing Room*. He is a four-time Jeff Award nominee, three-time BTA Award winner and two-time Black Excellence Award winner. He is the winner of the Light in the Darkness Public Education Award from NAMI for his play, *Twisted Melodies*, written and performed by himself. Kelvin is an Artistic Associate of Congo Square, a proud member of AEA and represented by Paonessa Talent.

**A.C. Smith** (Slow Drag) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* and *East Texas Hot Links*. In Chicago, Smith considers the Court Theatre to be his home, where he has worked for the past eight years or so in productions ranging from Moliere to the great August Wilson and a host of other classic works. Smith received the Joseph Jefferson Award for his portrayal of Troy Maxson in Court Theatre’s production of *Fences*. Regional credits include Clarence Brown Theatre (Knoxville, TN), Portland Stage Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, Peninsula Players Theatre and The Black Rep, where he has been a company member for 21 years and is a nine-time Woodie King, Jr. Award winner. National tour credits include *The Piano Lesson* directed by Lloyd Richards. Off-Broadway credits include the title role in *Jelly Belly* (Audelco Award Nomination—New Federal Theatre). Smith has appeared on film, television, radio, voice-over, commercials and in *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines.

**Alfred H. Wilson** (Cutler) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in *East Texas Hot Links*. Recent credits: Old Joe in *Radio Golf*, Chorus in *Agamemnon*, Solly Two Kings in *Gem of the Ocean*, Estrogon in *Waiting*...
for Godot, Fielding in Jitney, Wining Boy in The Piano Lesson (Court Theatre), Oldest Old Man in Father Comes Home From The Wars, Pullman Porter Blues (Goodman Theatre), Bono in Fences (Kansas City Rep, Nevada Conservatory), Simon in The Whipping Man (Cardinal Stage), Becker in Jitney (West Coast Black Theatre), Toledo in Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Delbert Tibbs in The Exonerated (The Next Act Theatre), Toledo in Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Actor’s Theatre of Louisville, Milwaukee Rep), Travis in The Etiquette of Vigilance (Steppenwolf Theatre), Holloway in Two Trains Running (Geva Theatre Center), Sam in Master Harold and the Boys (TimeLine Theatre), Solly Two Kings in Gem of the Ocean, Old Joe in Radio Golf (Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati), and Old Joe in Radio Golf (Pittsburgh Public Theatre). Chicago credits include: Charlie in Bourbon at the Border (Eclipse Theatre), Becker in Jitney, Memphis Lee in Two Trains Running (Pegasus Players), where he was awarded a Jeff Award for Best Actor in a Play and Charles in Panther Burn (MMPAACT). He was also a co-founder of Onyx Theatre Ensemble. He has also worked at Victory Gardens Theater.

Willie B. (u/s Cutler, Slow Drag) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously appeared in East Texas Hot Links. Willie is a native of Cleveland, Ohio, where he started his acting career at the Karamu House. Chicago credits include Elmina’s Kitchen, Before It Hits Home, A Soldier’s Story (Congo Square Theatre Company), Conversation on a Dirt Road, Father and Son Night, The Last Apple, Riffs, Dream of Ophelia, Checkmates, The Lifting (Eta Creative Arts Foundation), Wendell Green, The Horn, Master Harold… and the Boys (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), East Texas Hot Links, Sty of the Blind Pig (Onyx Theatre Ensemble), Of Mice and Men (Organic Theater Company), The State of Mississippi vs Emmett Till, Ghost Gardens (Pegasus Theatre Chicago), Phil Hill and Little Tommy Parker’s Colored Minstrel Show (Chicago Theatre). Television credits include Angel Street (CBS), Early Edition (CBS) and The Playboy Club (NBC). Film credits include Light It Up, Barbershop and Dark Left Over Blessings.

Jacob Baim (u/s Policeman) makes his Writers Theatre debut. Jacob is a Northwestern undergraduate studying Theatre, Musical Theatre and Playwriting. Some favorite credits from Northwestern include Company, Something in the Game, Urinetown and the past three Waa-Mu Shows as a performer and writer. Internationally, he has performed in Atlantic, A Scottish Story at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Recently, Jacob was in Into the Woods, produced by the Jewish Theatre Ensemble. He is also on the executive board of the Jewish Theatre Ensemble. Jacob is also a company member at Unit 14 Theatre Company. He is the proud founder of TBD, a Neofuturism inspired performance group on campus. jacobbaim.com.

debrha neal (u/s Ma Rainey) makes her Writers Theatre debut. She most recently appeared in Definition Theatre’s No Child at Victory Gardens Theater, and the 2017/18 Jeff-nominated ensemble of Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery
AUGUST WILSON’S MA RAINEY’S BLACK BOTTOM

(Pegasus Theatre Chicago), which was also nominated (Best Ensemble) by the Black Theatre Alliance Awards. Other credits include the Chicago Premiere of Bootycandy (Windy City Playhouse), The Old Settler, The Piano Lesson (Hansberry-Sands Theatre Company), the World Premiere of Sanctified (Congo Square Theatre), Love Child (Jeff Award, Best Play), American Menu (Chicago Theatre Company) and BTAA nominated Heat (Best Ensemble, eta Creative Arts Foundation) to name a few. debrah’s most recent TV credits include Empire (FOX, Episode 503), The Chi (SHOWTIME, Episode 204), and The Red Line (CBS, Episode 102). She is forever grateful to her family for their love and continuous support in all of her professional endeavors. debrah is proudly represented by Paonessa Talent Agency.

Terence Sims (u/s Levee, Sylvester) makes his Writers Theatre debut. Previous credits include Crumbs from the Table of Joy (Raven Theatre), Damascus, Barbecue (Strawdog Theatre), The Green Book (Pegasus Theater), understudy for Skeleton Crew (Northlight Theatre), Monster, understudy for Between Riverside and Crazy (Steppenwolf Theatre) and To Kill A Mockingbird (Children’s Theatre of Madison). He has studied American Theatre Arts at Rose Bruford College in London and is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago. Terence is a member of Kinfolk Collective, an afrofuturist aesthetic tribe of artists and scholars working to rewrite and remaster the narrative of members of the African diaspora. He is represented by Gray Talent Group.

Darian Tene (u/s Dussie Mae) makes her Writers Theatre debut. Recent credits include: Southern Gothic (Windy City Playhouse), You Think It’s Easy Being the Tooth Fairy (Lifeline Theatre), Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery (Pegasus Theatre), The Wiz (Kokandy Productions), Give It All Back (Sideshow Theatre), Little Shop of Horrors (American Blues Theater) and A Charlie Brown Christmas (Emerald City Theater). She is from Chicago, Illinois and a University of Alabama graduate. She is represented by Gray Talent Group.

Henri Watkins (u/s Toledo) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously Assistant Directed East Texas Hot Links. Watkins is an alumnus of University of Michigan. He assisted Ron OJ Parson with Court Theatre’s production of The Mountaintop. Additional Chicago credits include Chicago Children’s Theatre, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Black Ensemble Theater and Goodman Theatre.

August Wilson (Playwright) 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 the descendants of Africans in North America, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century, forming the complication entitled THE AMERICAN CENTURY CYCLE. His plays have been produced on Broadway, at regional theaters
across the country and all over the world. 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 seven 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, and Jitney. 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 the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by President Bill Clinton, and 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. New York Public Radio recorded all ten plays in the THE AMERICAN CENTURY CYCLE at the Greene Space, casting many of the actors that worked on the original productions.

PBS aired a documentary on Mr. Wilson entitled, The Ground On Which I Stand, as part of the American Masters series. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death.

Ron OJ Parson (Director) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously directed East Texas Hot Links, The Caretaker and The Old Settler. Ron hails from Buffalo, New York and is a graduate of the professional theatre program of the University of Michigan. He is the former co-founder and artistic director of Chicago’s Onyx Theatre Ensemble and is currently a resident artist at Chicago’s Court Theatre. Ron has worked as both an actor and a director at various theatres in Chicago and regionally. Ron also directed the world premiere of Palmer Park at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada. ronojparson.com.

Todd Rosenthal (Scenic Designer) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously designed A Moon for the Misbegotten and Company. Broadway credits include August: Osage County (2008 Tony Award for Best Scenic Design), The Motherf*cker with the Hat (2011 Outer Critic’s Circle Nomination and Tony Nomination for Best Scenic Design), Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (2012 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play), Of Mice and Men (filmed by National Theatre Live), This Is Our Youth, Fish in the Dark and Straight White Men. Select Off-Broadway includes Red Light Winter (Barrow Street Theatre), Domesticated (Lincoln Center Theatre), Close Up Space (Manhattan Theatre Club) and Qualms (Playwrights Horizons). Set designer for six years for Big Apple Circus. International credits Downstate
(London), August: Osage County (London & Australia), The Beauty Queen of Leenane (Ireland), Madama Butterfly (Irish National Opera) and Nice Fish (London’s West End). Regional work includes Steppenwolf (30 productions), Goodman (artistic partner), Guthrie Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, American Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, Alliance Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago and many others. Museum exhibitions include “Mythbusters: The Explosive Exhibition” and “The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes.” He has received many other accolades including the 2019 Distinguished Achievement Award in Scene Design & Technology (presented by the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT), the Laurence Olivier Award, the Helen Hayes Award, the Ovation Award, the Backstage Garland Award, the Joseph Jefferson Award, the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award and the Michael Merritt Award for Excellence in Design and Collaboration. He has been nominated for four American Theater Wing Henry Hewes Design Awards for best set design. Todd is a Full Professor at Northwestern University and a graduate of the Yale Drama School.

Myrna Colley-Lee (Costume Designer) makes her Writers Theatre debut. Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom is her sixth August Wilson play to date and third in collaboration with director Ron OJ Parson. Actively designing since the late 1960s, she is credited as one of the foremost costume designers in the Black Theatre Movement. Most recent works: All My Sons and Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner (St. Louis Repertory Theatre), Two Trains Running (Geva Theatre Center) Radio Golf (Pittsburgh Public Theatre), the world premiere of The Ballad of Emmett Till (Goodman Theatre), Gee’s Bend, The Piano Lesson, Forest City (Cleveland Play House), the Off-Broadway production of Becoming Adele (Gotham Stage Company), Ain’t Misbehavin’, Relativity (St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre), Wedding Band (Steppenwolf Theatre), Bus Stop and Fences (Allentown Playhouse). Her exhibition, A Theatre of Color: Costume Design for the Black Theatre, debuted at Detroit’s Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in 2014. A comprehensive exhibition of Colley-Lee’s work, the show highlighted over 200 original costume designs, renderings and collages as a study of her design process. Colley-Lee’s work was also featured at the 2012 exhibition Songs of Social Significance at the San Antonio Tobin Collection Gallery of The McNay Museum, at the 2006 major exhibition at the Mississippi Museum of Art and in GladRags: Sketches, Swatches, and Costume Designs, which toured over a dozen venues. Colley-Lee has received numerous awards, including Outstanding Costume Design from the National Black Theatre Festival, the Winona Lee Fletcher Award for Outstanding Achievement as a Designer from the Black Theatre Network, Honored Artist from the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Lifetime Achievement Award and the Doctor of Creative Arts, honoris causa, from Mississippi State University.

Jared Gooding (Lighting Designer) makes his Writers Theatre debut. His design credits include the Associate Design of Lookingglass Alice (Lookingglass Theatre Company), serving as the Lighting Assistant for The Wiz Live (NBC), designs for Victory Gardens Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, American Blues, UIC Theatre,
Strawdog Theater, The Hypocrites, TimeLine Theatre, Madison Children’s Theater, Definition Theatre, Windy City Playhouse, Sideshow Theatre, First Floor Theater, About Face Theatre, MPAACT, Pegasus Theatre, Next Theatre, Congo Square, MPAACT, Citadel Theatre, eta Creative Arts and Fleetwood Jourdain Theatre. His work is featured at goodingdesigns.com, he is a company member with MPAACT and an Ensemble Member with American Blues Theater. He spends his off time managing a DJ company for Chicago area bars.

Ray Nardelli (Sound Designer) returns to Writers Theatre where he previously sound designed TREVOR the musical, Parade, She Loves Me and Oh Coward! Credits include The Auditorium Theatre’s 125th Anniversary Starring Patti LuPone, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Court Theatre, Congo Square Theatre Company, American Theater Company, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Northlight Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Lookingglass Theatre Company and Victory Gardens Theater. His Off-Broadway credits include Lookingglass Alice (The New Victory Theater), and regionally, his work has appeared at the Guthrie Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, Syracuse Stage, the Alliance Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, McCarter Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Arena Stage, Hartford Stage Company, the Alley Theatre and the American Girl Theatre (New York, Chicago). Mr. Nardelli has received four Jeff Awards and eight Jeff nominations. National tour production work includes War Horse, The Book of Mormon, Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas, Les Misérables, Flea, Jersey Boys, Wicked, Rock of Ages, 9 to 5, The Lion King, Billy Elliot, Come Fly With Me, Potted Potter, Kristin Chenoweth, Cats, La Cage aux Folles, Mary Poppins and Peter Pan. Pre-Broadway productions include The Last Ship, Bring It On The Musical, Ann, The Addams Family, The Light in the Piazza (Assistant Designer), All Shook Up, Death of a Salesman and Moonlight and Magnolias. Mr. Nardelli has composed music for over 400 films, television programs, DVDs and computer games worldwide, and has recorded, mixed and edited eight original musical cast recordings.

Sasha Smith (Intimacy Director) returns to Writers Theatre where she was previously the intimacy director for Smart People. Sasha has been a violence and intimacy choreographer in Chicago for the last six years. Select credits include Familiar, You Got Older (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), There’s Always the Hudson (Goodman Theatre) Hinter (Steep Theatre), A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Gynecologic Oncology Unit at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Hospital of New York City (Route 66 Theatre Company), Venus in Fur (Circle Theatre), The Toilet (Haven Theatre), Ideation, Octagon (Jackalope), the Jeff Award-nominated Murder Ballad and the Jeff Award-winning Wild Party (Bailiwick).

Regina Victor (Dramaturg) returns to Writers Theatre where they previously dramaturged A Moon for the Misbegotten. Regina is a non-binary femme of color (pronouns are they) born and raised in Oakland California, now residing in Chicago. They consider civic engagement, mentorship and social justice to be the core of their artistic practice. In the Spring 2017 Regina Victor co-produced and facilitated a panel on Cultivating Critics of Color at Chicago Dramatists, and has co-founded Rescripted, an artist-led online journal for criticism and essays with Katherine O’Keefe. A producer, dramaturg,
director, writer and performer, Regina has worked with Steppenwolf Theatre Company, California Shakespeare Theater, Walkabout Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, About Face (AIDSOnstage), Shattered Globe Theatre, African American Shakespeare Company, Chicago Dramatists and more. They recently served as the Steppenwolf Multicultural Fellow and Artistic Apprentice in the Artistic Department for the 2017/18 Season. They are currently Halcyon Theatre’s Associate Producer. Stay up to date at www.reginavictor.com.

Am’Ber Montgomery (Assistant Director) makes her Writers Theatre debut. Originally from Detroit, MI, Am’Ber received her BFA from the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater Actor Training Program. She has also participated in training programs at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Globe Theater in London and LISPA International School for Performing Arts. She has spent the last year as a Multicultural Fellow at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in their department of Education where she had the opportunity to work on SYA productions The Crucible and The Burn (World Premiere). As a director she has led or assisted on productions at American Players Theatre, Greenhouse Theater, Penumbra Theatre Company and the Guthrie Theater.

Rebecca Pechter (Stage Manager) returns to Writers Theatre where she previously stage managed Smart People, Quixote: On the Conquest of Self, The Mystery of Love & Sex, East Texas Hot Links, Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf: A Parody, The Dance of Death, Yellow Moon, The Letters, The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead, The Caretaker, The Detective’s Wife, Travels with My Aunt, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Old Settler, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, A Minister’s Wife, Old Glory and Picnic. Other credits include Death Tax (Lookingglass Theatre Company) and a stage management apprenticeship for The Crucible, Good Boys and True, Carter’s Way and Superior Donuts (Steppenwolf Theatre Company). She is a proud member of Actors’ Equity Association.

Abigail Medrano (Assistant Stage Manager) returns to Writers Theatre where she previously assistant stage managed Witch, Smart People, Quixote: On the Conquest of Self and Doubt: A Parable. Credits include The Humans, Xanadu (American Theater Company), Dreamgirls (Porchlight Music Theatre), Stick Fly (Windy City Playhouse), Café Variations (SITI Company/ArtsEmerson), We Are Proud to Present a Presentation… and Astro Boy and the God of Comics (Company One Theatre).

Kathryn M. Lipuma (Executive Director) has served as the Executive Director of Writers Theatre since March 2007 where she is responsible for overseeing all management, administration and operations for the company. Most recently, she led the planning and construction of WT’s new state-of-the-art theater complex, designed by internationally renowned architect and MacArthur Fellow and “Genius” grant recipient Jeanne Gang of Studio Gang Architects, which opened in February 2016. Prior to Writers, Lipuma spent nine seasons as Executive Director at the Tony Award-winning Signature Theatre Company in New York. At Signature, she produced award-winning revivals of Horton Foote’s The Trip to Bountiful, August Wilson’s Seven Guitars and Lanford Wilson’s Burn This and worked with such
acclaimed writers as Edward Albee, Lee Blessing, Horton Foote, Maria Irene Fornés, John Guare, Bill Irwin, Romulus Linney, Paula Vogel, August Wilson and Lanford Wilson. During her tenure, the organization enjoyed consistent growth and recognition as well as the launch of Signature Theatre Company’s successful $15 Ticket Program. Prior to her time at Signature, she spent six years with Chicago’s Goodman Theatre. Lipuma is the Chair of the Board of Directors of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre and the immediate past Chair of the Board of Directors of the League of Chicago Theatres, an alliance representing more than 200 Chicago-area theater companies and producers. She is a member of The Chicago Network, an organization of 400 leading women of Chicago business, professional, cultural, nonprofit and educational communities. She is also the co-creator of DoNorth, an umbrella organization joining four cultural neighbors—Chicago Botanic Garden, Kohl Children’s Museum, Ravinia Festival and Writers Theatre—to attract new audiences to the cultural, environmental and community activities of the North Shore. She is a graduate of The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Michael Halberstam (Artistic Director) is the co-founder of Writers Theatre. He has directed over thirty-five productions for the company, including Not About Heroes (starring Nicholas Pennell), Private Lives, Look Back In Anger, Candida, The Father, Crime and Punishment, Benefactors, The Seagull, The Duchess of Malfi, Othello, The Savannah Disputation, the world première musical A Minister’s Wife, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, She Loves Me, The Real Thing, Hamlet, Sweet Charity, Days Like Today, Isaac’s Eye, Arcadia, Death of a

Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf: A Parody (which he co-directed with Stuart Carden), Julius Caesar (which he co-adapted and directed with Scott Parkinson), The Importance of Being Earnest and Twelfth Night, Or What You Will. Halberstam has appeared in numerous Writers Theatre productions, including Richard II (title role), Loot and Misalliance. Previously, he spent two years at The Stratford Festival in Ontario and performed in Timon of Athens, The Knight of the Burning Pestle (title role), Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It. Halberstam’s other Chicago acting credentials include productions with Wisdom Bridge Theater, Court Theatre and Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Elsewhere he directed The Gamester (Northlight Theatre), A Man for All Seasons (Peninsula Players Theatre), Hamlet (Illinois Shakespeare Festival), Candida (Jean Cocteau Repertory in New York), Ten Little Indians (Drury Lane Theatre), a highly acclaimed revival of Crime and Punishment, which Writers Theatre produced off-Broadway at 59E59 Theaters in New York City, Enchanted April and State of the Union (Milwaukee Repertory Theater). In 2011 he directed A Minister’s Wife at Lincoln Center Theater, and also directed the west coast première at San Jose Repertory Theatre in 2013. His forays into opera have included The Rape of Lucretia (Chicago Opera Theater), Francesca da Rimini featuring the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Christoph Eschenbach and Le Freyshutz, a Berlioz adaptation of the Weber opera conducted by Christoph Eschenbach in its North American Premiere (Ravinia Festival). He spent two and a half years teaching Shakespeare at The Theatre School at DePaul University and has received awards for excellence in theater management and artistic achievement from The Chicago Drama League, The Arts & Business
Council, Chicago Lawyers for the Creative Arts and The Chicago Associates of the Stratford Festival. He also received the 2010 Zelda Fichandler Award, the 2013 Artistic Achievement Award from the League of Chicago Theatres, was named Chicago Tribune’s 2013 "Chicagoan of the Year" for Theater; received the 2016 Award of Honor for Outstanding Contributions to the Field from the Illinois Theatre Association; a special award for 2016 from the Joseph Jefferson Award Committee for outstanding theatrical accomplishments and contributions to Chicagoland theatre for the past 25 years; and a distinguished Alumnus Award from the University of Illinois. He currently serves on the board of the Arts Club of Chicago.
WT Education reaches 11,500 students a year throughout Chicagoland. Our programs include Write On!, a customizable artist-in-residence program that pairs teaching artists with schools and community organizations to explore performance and text with a focus on encouraging young people to find their creative voices; The Novel Series, a cutting-edge theatre and literary arts curriculum designed to allow students to explore literature and the art of bringing text to life; The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights, a touring performance written by Yolanda Androzzo that chronicles a student’s journey as she learns about the Civil Rights Movement; a student matinee series; ACTIVATE, a wrap-around in-school residency in conjunction with matinees, designed to deepen students’ experience with plays on our stages; and the WT Youth Council, an artistic leadership advisory board for motivated, passionate high school students interested in hands-on, in-depth exposure to arts administration.

Our audience engagement programming includes: Sunday Spotlight, featuring an expert in a field relating to the themes or setting of our productions; From Page to Stage, a public collaboration between Writers Theatre and select North Shore libraries and community partners that explores the literary and theatrical themes of our stage productions; The Making of… series that provides access to the process behind crafting our productions; Pre-Show Conversation: Up Close, pre-show discussion designed to provide context for the production; and Post-Show Conversation: The Word and The Artist, a facilitated post-show discussion of the play. All of these events are free and open to the public. For more information, visit writerstheatre.org/events.

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For more information on any of these programs visit writerstheatre.org/education
WRITERS THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT

Writers Theatre was founded to explore productions in which the word on the page and the artists that bring the word to life hold primary importance. Central to this mission are three important core values: **valuing text**, both classic and contemporary, as the fundamental source of inspiration; **creating deliberately intimate performances** where audiences are face-to-face with powerful stories; and **honoring the time and commitment of our artists** by remaining at the forefront of industry compensation. With a reputation for consistent artistic excellence, innovative educational programming and strong ties to our community, Writers Theatre has built an award-winning repertoire and today, serves as a vital and highly-regarded company in the Chicago theatre community.

WRITERS THEATRE HISTORY

In 1992, Writers Theatre was founded in order to create an environment where the written word and the nurturing of artists were the foundation of all productions. We opened our first venue that year in the anteroom of a newly opened bookstore in Glencoe on the North Shore of Chicago. The limited space available gave way to a new aesthetic that has been a company hallmark ever since—intimacy.

Under the artistic leadership of Founding Artistic Director Michael Halberstam, who continues in that role to this day, WT became a welcome addition to the already vibrant Chicago arts community. The Theatre quickly garnered significant critical acclaim and established a reputation as a home for world-class art and artists, opening a second performance space in 2003. Our inviting 108-seat Tudor Court space continued the company’s trademark level of intimacy while allowing for a new scale of production and affording the opportunity to expand audiences, programming and educational outreach.

Acclaimed by *The Wall Street Journal* as “America’s number one theatre company” in 2016, Writers has offered more than 100 productions, including 27 world premieres. We have garnered numerous awards and accolades, including 133 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations and 26 Awards, as well as multiple citations of Artistic Director Michael Halberstam for excellence and contributions to the field, including The 2010 Zelda Fichandler Award and the 2013 “Chicagoan of the Year in Theater” Award from the Chicago Tribune. In 2007, Writers debuted nationally with a New York premiere of *Crime and Punishment*, followed in 2011 by a Lincoln Center Theater production of *A Minister’s Wife*—the musical adaptation of George Bernard Shaw’s *Candida*, conceived and directed by Halberstam.

In February 2016, Writers Theatre opened a new, state-of-the-art facility. This established the company’s first permanent home in a new theatre center in downtown Glencoe, designed by the award-winning, internationally renowned Studio Gang Architects, led by Founder and Design Principal Jeanne Gang, FAIA, in collaboration with Theatre Consultant Auerbach Pollock Friedlander. The new facility has allowed the Theatre to continue to grow to accommodate its audience, while maintaining its trademark intimacy. The new facility resonates with and complements the Theatre’s neighboring Glencoe community, adding tremendous value to Chicagoland and helping to establish the North Shore as a premier cultural destination.
ABOUT THE WOMAN’S LIBRARY CLUB OF GLENCOE

The Woman’s Library Club of Glencoe shares the space at the theatre center holding meetings, luncheons, book clubs, bridge and other events at the building.

- The Woman’s Library Club of Glencoe, a 501(c)(3) organization, was incorporated on April 18, 1872. The WLC owns the land on which the WT theatre center sits and has provided use of the land to WT without charge.
- WLC is the third oldest woman’s club in Illinois for philanthropic, educational and social endeavors. The WLC book collection was donated to Glencoe to form the nucleus of the original library for Glencoe. WLC’s first building was used as a library until the current Glencoe Public Library was built.
- WLC members meet regularly to pursue the Club’s philanthropic, intellectual and social activities. For a full list of WLC activities and a current calendar, check wlcglencoe.com.
- Club members also staff the North Shore Exchange (an upscale consignment shop). This 501(c)(3) shop is a charitable arm of WLC and is located at 372 Hazel Avenue in Glencoe, 847-835-0026.

Membership in the Woman’s Library Club of Glencoe is open to all women interested in furthering the club’s goals. The current membership consists of over 120 women living in 10 area suburbs. If you are interested in becoming a member, pick up an application in the Writers Theatre lobby, email wlcglencoe@gmail.com or visit the website at wlcglencoe.com.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Kendra Nichols Wallace

ARTISTS COUNCIL

The Artists Council is a select group of our most devoted supporters, whose extraordinary annual contributions sustain the Theatre and enable it to realize ambitious artistic and institutional goals. Members of the Artists Council are granted unparalleled access to the creative process as well as the unique opportunity to forge a personal connection with our art. We gratefully acknowledge our Writers Theatre Artists Council members who made commitments in the period between October 1, 2017 and December 31, 2018.

$50,000 and above
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Gillian & Ellis Goodman
Jane & Richard Lipton
Jennifer & Alec Litowitz
Alexandra C. & John D. Nichols
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Barbara Speer
Pam & Russ Strobel
Anonymous (2)
The Director’s Society of Writers Theatre is a group of dedicated patrons who share our passion for the written word. They provide the financial foundation that allows us to create a nurturing artistic home for world-class artists while producing nationally acclaimed productions. Writers Theatre extends privileges of membership to individuals who provide an annual gift of $1,000 or more. Director’s Society members enjoy opportunities to share in the creative process through exclusive events that provide unique access to the artistic process. We are proud to acknowledge our Director’s Society members for gifts received in the period between October 1, 2017 and December 31, 2018.

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                                      Katherine Dembinski, Jamie Herb, Taylor Mikulski,
                                      Kaylin Rogers, Jason Vences

Front of House
Front of House Leads ................................................................................ Kate Orgel, Weston Williams
Front of House Staff ................................................................................ Stephe Condon, Sonia Goldberg,
                                      Cheryl Heisler, Andrew Lampl, Matt McNabb, Susan Parmentier

EDUCATION
Director of Education ............................................................................... Kelsey Chigas
Education Manager .................................................................................. Peter G. Andersen
Education Coordinator ............................................................................ Evelyn Reidy
Teaching Artists ...................................................................................... Peter G. Andersen, Stephanie Chavara, Kelsey Chigas,
                                                           Michael Driscoll, Sean Garratt, Kristin Hammargren, Risha Hill, Andrew Marikis,
                                                           Lauren Montgomery, Will Quam, Wilfredo Ramos Jr., Evelyn Reidy, Michele Stine

MARKETING
Director of Marketing & Communications .............................................. Chad Peterson
Marketing Manager ................................................................................... Erik Kaiko
Design & Content Coordinator ................................................................ Stanton Long
Communications & Social Media Coordinator ........................................... Hayley Barron
Marketing Assistant ................................................................................ Ari Craven
Public Relations ....................................................................................... Cathy Taylor PR
Graphic Design Services ........................................................................... Lowercase, Inc.

PRODUCTION
Director of Production & Facilities ......................................................... Adam Friedland
Assistant Production Manager ................................................................. Kelly Crook
Technical Supervisor ............................................................................... Adam Veness
Facilities Technician ................................................................................ Shawn J. Goudie
Facilities Consultant ............................................................................... Integrated Facilities Management Consulting
Custodians ................................................................................................. Marco Bernal, Jose Artega Valdez
Sound Engineer ....................................................................................... Amanda Hosking
Master Electrician .................................................................................... Simon Robinson
Wardrobe Supervisor ............................................................................... Jane Heuer
Costume Supervisor ................................................................................ Emily Waecher
Season Production Stage Manager ......................................................... David Castellanos
Stage Manager ......................................................................................... Becky Pechter
Assistant Stage Manager .......................................................................... Abigail Medrano