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Get to Know Our Host for the 2019 Footlights People’s Choice Awards: Comedian and Producer **Matt Kemple**

By Stephanie Harte

Matt Kemple is a true DIY kind of guy. After graduating from St. Norbert College, as the only theater major in the class of 2002, he thought he was destined to be an actor.

Today, his job titles include executive producer and founder of Milwaukee Comedy and the Milwaukee Comedy Festival, manager and founder of the Underground Collaborative, and co-producer and founder of the Milwaukee Fringe Festival, a performing and visual arts extravaganza that began in 2016.

He will also be the host for the third annual Footlights People’s Choice Awards, which will be held Saturday, June 22 at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts.

“I’m one of those people where if I see something that should exist, I make it exist, Kemple says. “Milwaukee kind of just has this vibe of people that won’t necessarily do it for you, but they will be like, ‘yea you should totally do that.’ I don’t think other cities are necessarily as supportive.”

Kemple’s path to becoming an actor began to verge when he started to work on set building and lighting design in his home state of Ohio post-graduation. He says this experience helped him understand all the different facets of theater, which then snowballed into producing.

“I realized I could still get that feeling I got from being on stage and acting, sometimes even more so, from standing on the sidelines and putting something together,” he says.

Shortly after moving to Milwaukee, Kemple helped start Pink Banana Theatre Company, a nonprofit dedicated to providing professional opportunities to emerging artists. Kemple explains that due to the lack of small independent theater happening in Milwaukee at the time, recent theater graduates from area colleges were having trouble finding opportunities.

“You couldn’t get jobs with the larger, more professional companies unless you had non-professional experience,” Kemple explains. “It was sort of this Catch-22. This company was created out of a void and a need for people to get more experience.”
Although the company disbanded in 2015, Pink Banana produced hundreds of one acts by local writers and two full-length shows a year. Pink Banana’s shows were targeted towards audiences in their late teens and early 20s.

“Looking back, we didn’t really think much of it, but we gave a lot of opportunities for people to create new work,” Kemple says. “You could really push the limits in tiny black box spaces. We put things up with extension cords and no resources, but you can do some really raw theater and some cool stuff came out of that.”

Since Pink Banana lacked funds to rent spaces, company members commonly hosted rehearsals in their living rooms and performed in warehouses and storefronts. Finally, Kemple founded the Underground Collaborative in 2012, an event venue in the lower level of the Grand Avenue Mall. Today, the space features a theater, art gallery, administrative offices and rehearsal studios.

John Schneider, one of the co-founders of the Milwaukee Fringe Festival with Kemple, describes the Underground Collaborative as a vital hub for artists who work outside Milwaukee’s larger institutions.

“Matt is an incredibly hard-working, big-hearted visionary, deeply devoted to Milwaukee’s comedy and fringe arts scenes,” Schneider says. “His role in the growth and development of comedy and new, experimental art in Milwaukee continues to be invaluable.”

Kemple’s love for comedy stemmed from his theater background and playing improv games in college. Celebrating its 14th year in August 2019, the Milwaukee Comedy Festival was originally called the Sketch and Improv Festival. The name changed to what it is now in 2007 after stand up comedy got added to the lineup.

Today, the Milwaukee Comedy Festival is the largest multi-day comedy event in the state of Wisconsin. Along with local talent, the festival features comedians from across the country including New York, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Seattle and Philadelphia, as well as Toronto, Alberta and Vancouver, Canada.

“Comedy is really selfish because I just love laughing,” Kemple says. “It’s a really great way to laugh all the time if you are putting on shows all the time.”

Although the festival is the largest event Milwaukee Comedy hosts, Kemple
The Footlights People’s Choice Awards honors outstanding performances from the Greater Milwaukee area, recognizing both professional and non-professional artists and companies. Nominations and voting are open to the public at Footlights.com, with nominations running through March 31 and voting through April 30. Performances from April 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019 qualify for nominations.

On June 22, come to the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts early to take photos with family, friends and colleagues on our red carpet in the Kuttemperoor Grand Hall. The two-story Grand Hall offers an open, spacious atmosphere, with wall-to-wall windows and a floor-to-ceiling hand-carved fireplace by artist Susan Falkman. The red carpet will open at 4:30 p.m. so you will have plenty of time to mingle and grab a drink before the show starts at 6:30 p.m.

New this year, Footlights will be offering V.I.P. tickets, which include up-front event seats, exclusive preshow hors d’oeuvres, cocktails, a swag bag filled with event merchandise and entertainment by local performing artists in the Ploch Art Gallery. The Ploch Art Gallery’s intimate space can accommodate up to 75 people, and will feature a stunning exhibition by Wisconsin artists that rotates every six to eight weeks.

“I really try and create something that’s unique and special because people are literally paying money because they want to feel better,” Kemple explains. “To bring a group together where they are happy, laughing and having fun, that to me is the most amazing feeling in the world.”

Ensures Milwaukeeans still have places to laugh year-round. Kemple and his crew at Milwaukee Comedy recently doubled the amount of shows they will produce each month from five or six, to ten or 12. Along with regional and national headliners at the Underground Collaborative, Milwaukee Comedy also hosts Keg Stand Up at Lakefront Brewery and Subjective: A Comedic Showing at Var Gallery and Studios.

Fringe Festival team members pose for a photo backstage at the Marcus Center. Photos courtesy of Matt Kemple.

FOOTNOTES

About the Awards and Our 2019 Venue, the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts

The Footlights People’s Choice Awards honors outstanding performances from the Greater Milwaukee area, recognizing both professional and non-professional artists and companies.

Nominations and voting are open to the public at Footlights.com, with nominations running through March 31 and voting through April 30. Performances from April 1, 2018 through March 31, 2019 qualify for nominations.
The Footlights People's Choice Awards will be held in the Harris Theater, which includes over 600 seats and a unique installation of hand blown glass birds soaring overhead by Wisconsin artist Steve Feren. The Harris Theater's state-of-the-art sound makes it ideal for all types of performances during the ceremony, from choirs and orchestras to musical numbers and theater scenes.

Following the awards ceremony will be Footlights' largest after party yet, taking over the entire Wilson Center. Food and drinks will be offered in the Kuttemperoor Grand Hall, with entertainment outside in the beautiful Burke Colonnade. Please visit Footlights.com for more information and to purchase tickets.

Photos courtesy of the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts.

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Introducing Waukesha Civic Theatre’s New Managing Artistic Director: Rhonda Schmidt

In seventh grade, Rhonda Schmidt saw Donny Osmond portray the title character in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and left the Chicago Theatre knowing exactly what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

“I loved the idea of performance being able to move you, change you,” Schmidt explains. “For each encounter I had with theater after *Joseph* it was always, yep, that’s what I am going to do.”

Schmidt recently became the seventh managing artistic director for Waukesha Civic Theatre, a rare opportunity she says she couldn’t pass up. Schmidt previously directed *To Kill a Mockingbird* for Waukesha Civic Theatre and has worked with several local companies including the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Skylight Music Theatre and Sunset Playhouse. She also served as theater director for University Lake School and Divine Savior Holy Angels High School.

“I view my role as managing artistic director as still being a teacher by building people up to become leaders and helping to navigate productions and artistic teams,” Schmidt says. “Waukesha is becoming a thriving, booming artistic place. If we can be at the heart of that, I think that’s really important.”

A main goal for Schmidt in her new position is to promote diversity at all levels of the theater, from artists to audience members. A specific company she looks to as an example is the Milwaukee Rep, which withholds a strong mission to tell stories as racially and ethnically diverse as the community it serves.

“What I love about the Rep so much is their beautiful, beautiful diverse casts,” she shares. “It’s stunning and I would love for it to be modeled in our community theaters.”

Schmidt not only strives to select shows contingent on diversity, but to cast people of color in roles that mainstream media doesn’t typically associate them with, like Asian men in the romantic leads or black women as young scholars.

Another one of Schmidt’s goals is to amplify the buzz around Waukesha Civic Theatre and encourage the community to choose live theater as a main source of entertainment.

“In community theater we need to honor the audience that we’ve had for so many years and really respect and nurture that, but I think we are also building a new group of community theatergoers,” Schmidt explains. “I know the board and I are really interested in initiatives that draw young people to the theater.”

Schmidt admires Waukesha Civic Theatre’s commitment to family, and looks forward to
her own children growing up with the theater, much like the past managing artistic director John Cramer. Schmidt met her husband Aaron through Waukesha Civic Theatre when she hired him as the lighting designer for a show she directed. The couple now lives in Waukesha with their two kids.

“I told him we couldn’t pay him much, but we are fun to work with and we will put on a beautiful show,” Schmidt shares. “It’s five years later and we still work together. Our kids are growing up watching theater be made, which is really special.”

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Mark Clements
Artistic Director

Chad Bauman
Executive Director

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Fax Number: 414-225-5490
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   Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex
   108 E. Wells Street; Milwaukee, WI 53202
E-mail: tickets@MilwaukeeRep.com

Hours of Operation:
Monday – Sunday Noon to 6 pm
On days with performances, the Ticket Office will remain open until show time.

Administrative Office
Phone Number: 414-224-1761
Fax Number: 414-224-9097
Mailing Address: Milwaukee Repertory Theater
   Patty & Jay Baker Theater Complex
   108 E. Wells Street; Milwaukee, WI 53202

Hours of Operation:
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Emergency Phone Number
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THE REP EXPERIENCE

Concessions
Enjoy a drink or dessert in the Quadracci Powerhouse or Stiemke Studio lobby prior to the performance or at intermission. Please remember that food and drink (except bottled water and Rep sippy cups), are not allowed in the theater.

Gift Shop
Located in the Quadracci Powerhouse is The Rep’s Gift Shop, which offers show-specific merchandise and Rep logo products, as well as books and scripts of current and past productions. You can also purchase parking passes.

Rep-in-Depth
Get an insider’s look at the play from a member of the cast or artistic team with a discussion that begins approximately 45 minutes prior to every performance in the Quadracci Powerhouse and Stiemke Studio.

Rep TalkBacks
After select performances, engage in a deeper conversation with members of the cast, artistic team and occasional special guests. Get TalkBack schedules by calling the Ticket Office at 414-224-9490, online at www.MilwaukeeRep.com.
Access

Deaf or Hard of Hearing Services: The Quadracci Powerhouse (QP) and the Stiemke Studio are equipped with an infrared listening system which ensures clarity of sound from any seat in the house. Performances are offered in American Sign Language for a Thursday evening of all QP productions and one Sunday matinee for all Stiemke Studio productions. We also offer a Captioned Theater performance during the second to last Sunday matinee performance of all QP productions. Please call The Rep Ticket Office at 414-224-9490 for more information. Script synopses are available upon request for QP and Stiemke Studio productions by calling 414-224-1761.

Blind or Low Vision Services: Large print programs are available in the Quadracci Powerhouse and Stiemke Studio from any usher. Every Rep production has one audio-described performance. Using an earpiece attached to a small hand-held receiver, patrons hear a live, real-time description of the action on stage. Call the Ticket Office for more information.

Wheelchairs: All Rep stages are fully accessible. Please contact the Ticket Office at 414-224-9490.

Late Arrivals
Out of courtesy to the actors and audience, patrons arriving after the performance has started will be seated at the discretion of House Management.

Parking
Milwaukee Center offers onsite parking with indoor access to The Rep operated by InterPark. Enter from Kilbourn Avenue or Water Street.

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You may purchase parking passes to the Milwaukee Center’s garage for $8 in the Quadracci Powerhouse, Stiemke Studio and Stackner Cabaret lobbies as well as The Rep’s Ticket Office during Rep performance times. SAVE TIME AND MONEY!

Policy on Children
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August Wilson’s

Two Trains Running

Directed by
Timothy Douglas ∗

Scenic Designer
Tony Cisek

Costume Designer
Kara Harmon

Lighting Designer
Michael Gilliam

Composer/Sound Designer
Matthew M. Nielson

New York Casting
Stephanie Klapper, CSA

Casting Director
Frank Honts

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Originally mounted by Yale Repertory Theatre (Lloyd Richards, Artistic Director; Benjamin Mordecai, Managing Director)

August Wilson’s Two Trains Running is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

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CAST (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Hambone................................................................. Frank Britton*
West........................................................................... Doug Brown*
Sterling...................................................................... Chiké Johnson*
Wolf......................................................................... Jefferson A. Russell*
Risa........................................................................... Malkia Stampley*
Memphis..................................................................... Raymond Anthony Thomas*
Holloway.................................................................. Michael Anthony Williams*

Understudies
Sadé Ayodele (Risa); DiMonte Henning* and Justin Jones (Sterling)

Understudies are not substituted for listed players unless a specific announcement is made prior to the performance.

PRODUCTION SUPPORT

Assistant Stage Manager .................................................... Jade Bruno*
Assistant Stage Manager .................................................... Audra Kuchling*
Stage Management Resident......................................... Josh Hart

Two Trains Running will be performed with one 20-minute intermission.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

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PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Manager ....................................................... Jared Clarkin
Associate Production Manager ....................................... Kaitlyn Anderson
Co-Technical Director ................................................... John Houtler-McCoy
Co-Technical Director ................................................... Sean Walters
Properties Director ........................................................ Jim Guy
Charge Scenic Artist ..................................................... Jim Medved
Costume Director ........................................................ Nicholas Hartman
Lighting & Video Director .............................................. Aaron Lichamer
Sound Director ............................................................ Erin Paige
Production Stage Manager ............................................. Kimberly Carolus*

Milwaukee Repertory Theater operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States. The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE and our stagehands and carpenters are members of Milwaukee Theatrical Stage Employees’ Union IATSE Local 18. The Rep is an equal opportunity employer. The Rep is proud to be a member of The United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF), which provides major annual financial support.
August Wilson is a celebrated African-American playwright whose works have awarded him two Pulitzer Prizes and several Tony Awards and nominations. Wilson’s American Century Cycle or the Pittsburgh Cycle as some call it, consists of ten plays, each set in a different decade with the intent to illustrate African-American life in the 20th century. The Rep has staged seven of these plays including Fences, Gem Of The Ocean, Jitney, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Radio Golf and Two Trains Running.

“I think my plays offer white Americans a different way to look at black Americans. For instance, in Fences they see a garbage man, a person they don’t really look at, although they see a garbage man every day. By looking at Troy’s life, white people find out that the content of this black garbage man’s life is affected by the same things — love, honor, beauty, betrayal, duty. Recognizing that these things are as much part of his life as theirs can affect how they think about and deal with black people in their lives.” — August Wilson

Gem Of The Ocean, featured in The Rep’s 53rd Season (2006/07), is the first play in the cycle and won the 2007 Tony Award for Best Play. Milwaukee Rep’s production was under the direction of the distinguished Timothy Douglas, who directed the world premiere of Wilson’s Radio Golf in 2005. Douglas later returned to direct The Rep’s production of Radio Golf (2009/10) and currently is directing Two Trains Running in the 65th Anniversary Season.

Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, part of The Rep’s 40th Season (1993/94), is the second play in the Cycle set in the 1910s. It tells the story of freed former slaves in the North and their continued conflicts with racism and discrimination. Artistic Director Joseph Hanreddy flew to Oregon to see a production of this play at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1993 and hired the director, Clinton Turner Davis, to direct The Rep’s production.

Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, included in The Rep’s 57th Season (2010/11), is the third play in the Cycle about the historic exploitation of black recording artists by white producers. It opened on
65th Anniversary Stories


Fences, the sixth play in the cycle, is perhaps Wilson’s most famous and well-known play and is set in the 1950s. The Rep has put this production on stage twice; first in the 36th Season (1989/90) and recently in the 62nd season (2015/16). Fences received six Tony nominations in 1987 and won four including Best Play, Best Actor, Best Featured Actress and Best Direction. It also won Wilson the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1987. The Rep’s recent production featured director Lou Bellamy, who had a close relationship with August Wilson.

Two Trains Running, the seventh play in the cycle, is set during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and explores the changing attitudes towards race, a common theme in several of Wilson’s works. Director Timothy Douglas had the privilege of working closely with August Wilson in bringing his plays to the stage.

Jitney was part of the Rep’s 48th Season (2001/02) and is the eighth play in the cycle. It was produced many times off-Broadway in the early 2000s, but didn’t premiere on Broadway until 2017 where it won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play, which may sound odd as it was the first time the play appeared on Broadway but thanks to the Tony Awards’ “classics” rule, it was deemed a revival. Jitney tells the story of jitney drivers, unofficial and unlicensed taxi cabs in 1970s Pittsburgh, and focuses on a strained relationship between father and son.

Finally, Radio Golf was featured in The Rep’s 56th Season (2009/10). This is the final play in the cycle set in 1997 and last play ever written by Wilson. In June 2005, Wilson reported that he had been diagnosed with liver cancer. He died shortly after in October and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery in his beloved hometown of Pittsburgh. Greenwood Cemetery also served as the setting to his play, Seven Guitars. Completing the cycle are King Hedley II and The Piano Lesson, all yet to be staged at The Rep. Two weeks after Wilson’s death, the Virginia Theatre in New York’s Broadway Theater District was renamed the August Wilson Theatre. It is the first Broadway theater named after an African-American.
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Frank Britton, Hambone
Frank is honored to make his Milwaukee Rep debut and to return to a role he played in 2014 at Round House Theatre. Off-off Broadway credits include Shape (La MaMa e.t.c.), regionally with Firehouse Theatre and Virginia Shakespeare Festival. He is a native of Washington D.C., a graduate of the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts and a 17-year veteran of the D.C. theatre scene, having appeared in productions at Arena Stage, The Studio Theatre, Round House Theatre and Imagination Stage, among others. He is the recipient of the 2018 Helen Hayes Award (The Robert Prosky Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Play – Helen Production) for his role in Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train at 1st Stage. Many, many thanks to Timothy, Mark, and the cast and crew. Instagram: @frankbrittonactor

Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Rep), A Raisin in The Sun (Indiana Rep/Syracuse Stage), The Three Sisters, Cyrano de Bergerac and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (American Players Theatre), Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner (Indiana Rep/Geva Theatre) and Of Mice and Men (Milwaukee Rep/Arizona Theatre Company). New York credits include A Time To Kill and Wit (Manhattan Theatre Club) on Broadway, off-Broadway in Lost In The Stars and Encores! (New York City Center) and Ruined (Manhattan Theatre Club/Goodman Theatre). Chicago credits include Meet Vera Stark (Goodman Theatre), Sizwe Banzi is Dead (Court Theatre) and The Crucible, The Unmentionables and Huck Finn (Steppenwolf Theatre). Other regional credits include a revival of The Unmentionables (Yale Rep), Topdog/Underdog (Renaissance Theaterworks) and King Lear (Milwaukee Rep).

Doug Brown, West
Doug is pleased to be returning to Milwaukee Repertory Theater, where he last appeared in the 2010 production of Radio Golf. Regionally, he has played leading and principal roles at Round House Theatre, Ford’s Theatre, Syracuse Stage, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Play House, Folger Theatre, Studio Theatre and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Thank you, Pat, for all your support.

Jefferson A. Russell, Wolf
Jefferson is making his Milwaukee Rep debut. Recent credits: Jitney and Shakespeare in Love (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park). Regional credits: Our Country’s Good and The Recruiting Officer (American Players Theatre), Ragtime (Ford’s Theatre), Fences (Pioneer Theatre), world premiere of Ironbound and others (Round House Theatre), Clybourne Park (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), Trinity River Plays (Dallas Theater Center/Goodman Theatre), Sunset Baby (Rep Stage), The Piano Lesson (Hangar Theatre), The Tempest (Folger Shakespeare), Gem of the Ocean, Blues for an Alabama Sky, Hedda Gabler, The Soul Collector and Aubergine (Everyman Theatre) and Fetch Clay Make Man and The Convert (Marin Theatre). National Tours: Harlem and Color Me Dark (Kennedy Center). Graduate of Hampton University (BA, Sociology/Criminal Justice), MFA from the Academy of Classical Acting at George Washington University. Former Baltimore police officer and a founding member of Galvanize, a network for artists of color.

Chiké Johnson, Sterling
Chiké most recently appeared as Brucie in American Conservatory Theater’s production of Sweat. Other recent productions include Our Town and A Christmas Carol (Milwaukee Rep), A Raisin in The Sun (Indiana Rep/Syracuse Stage), The Three Sisters, Cyrano de Bergerac and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (American Players Theatre), Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner (Indiana Rep/Geva Theatre) and Of Mice and Men (Milwaukee Rep/Arizona Theatre Company). New York credits include A Time To Kill and Wit (Manhattan Theatre Club) on Broadway, off-Broadway in Lost In The Stars and Encores! (New York City Center) and Ruined (Manhattan Theatre Club/Goodman Theatre). Chicago credits include Meet Vera Stark (Goodman Theatre), Sizwe Banzi is Dead (Court Theatre) and The Crucible, The Unmentionables and Huck Finn (Steppenwolf Theatre). Other regional credits include a revival of The Unmentionables (Yale Rep), Topdog/Underdog (Renaissance Theaterworks) and King Lear (Milwaukee Rep).
Malkia Stampley, 
Risa
Malkia was last seen at The Rep in A Christmas Carol, Dreamgirls, Sueño and The Color Purple. Regional credits include King Lear and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Optimist Theater), Doubt (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Holes and Welcome to Bronzeville (First Stage), Learning to Stay and Good People (forward Theater), Crowns (Skylight Music Theatre) and Raisin (Court Theatre). Malkia’s directing credits include Black Nativity (Black Arts MKE), Antarctica, WI (First Stage) and Five Guys Named Moe (Skylight Music Theatre.) She co-wrote the play LINES, which premiered April 2018. TV credits: “Shameless,””Chicago P.D.,””Empire” and “The Chi.” Film credits: HBO’s Native Son, Killing Eleanor, Netflix’s Beats and Small Town Wisconsin. She is a founding member of Bronzeville Arts Ensemble, Artistic Associate at Congo Square and winner of the Woodie King Jr. Award for her role in Dreamgirls.

Raymond Anthony Thomas, 
Memphis
Broadway credits: Jitney (Tony Award, Best Revival; New York Drama Critics Award, Best Ensemble), The Crucible (directed by Ivo van Hove) and Race (written and directed by David Mamet). Raymond has created roles in two Pulitzer Prize-winning plays, Water by the Spoonful (by Quiara Alegría Hudes) and Between Riverside and Crazy (by Stephen Adly Guirgis). Off-Broadway credits: Volunteer Man (Obie Award for performance), The Most Deserving (The Women’s Project), The Exonerated and as a member of the Atlantic Theatre Company, Human Error, The Lights and Edmond. He recently appeared in The Year to Come (La Jolla Playhouse), Artney Jackson (Williamstown Theatre Festival) and Fences and Jitney for August Wilson’s American Century Cycle for NPR. Film and television credits include Isn’t It Romantic, Trouble with the Curve, Shutter Island, “The Last O.G.,” “Blue Bloods,” “The Accidental Wolf,” “High Maintenance” and “Law & Order.”

Michael Anthony Williams, 
Holloway
Michael is ecstatic to be making his Milwaukee Rep debut! Off-Broadway: Persephone at The Brooklyn Academy of Music. Regional: Jitney and Of Mice and Men (Cincinnati Playhouse), Jitney and To Kill a Mockingbird (Ford’s Theatre), Starving (Woolly Mammoth Theatre), Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train and Two Trains Running (Round House Theatre), Venus and Omnium Gatherum (Olney Theatre), “Master Harold”... and the Boys (Studio Theatre), Fences and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom (Swine Palace), The Colored Museum (Victory Gardens), East Texas Hot Links (Onyx Theatre), The Bluest Eye (Theater Alliance), Two Trains Running (African Continuum Theatre) and Nomathemba with Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Steppenwolf Theatre/Crossroads Theatre/Kennedy Center). TV/Film: include “The Wire” (HBO), “FBI Files” (NBC) and “Homicide: Life on the Streets” (NBC), Losing Isaiah, The Replacements, Contact, Unbreakable and The Brave One. Michael dedicates his body of work to his daughter, Margarita Williams.

DiMonte Henning, 
Sterling (Understudy)
A native of Milwaukee, DiMonte serves as Producing Artistic Director of the theatre-arts organization, Lights! Camera! Soul! and was a former EPR at Milwaukee Rep in the 2015/16 season. His most recent appearance with The Rep was in this season’s production of Junk and in last season’s production of Our Town as George Gibbs. Favorite credits include Big River:
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (First Stage), Skeleton Crew (Forward Theatre), The Wiz (First Stage), Deathtrap (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), Dreamgirls (Milwaukee Rep), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Theatre LILA), August Wilson’s Jitney (Andre Lee Ellis & Co.) and Hair (Skylight Music Theatre). He has appeared on NBC’s “Chicago P.D.” in seasons four and six as a guest star. Additional TV credits include work with companies such as Uber, Cellcom, Bryant & Stratton College and Harley-Davidson.

August Wilson, Playwright

August Wilson (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored Gem of the Ocean, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, The Piano Lesson, Seven Guitars, Fences, Two Trains Running, Jitney, King Hedley II and Radio Golf. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, How I Learned What I Learned. Mr. Wilson’s works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for Fences (1987); and for The Piano Lesson (1990); a Tony Award for Fences; Great Britain’s Olivier Award for Jitney; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Fences, Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, The Piano Lesson, Two Trains Running, Seven Guitars, Jitney, and Radio Golf. Additionally, the cast recording of Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of The Piano Lesson. Mr. Wilson’s early works included the one-act plays The Janitor, Recycle, The Coldest Day of the Year, Malcolm X, The Homecoming and the musical satire Black Bart and the Sacred Hills. Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, 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. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

Timothy Douglas, Director

Timothy directed Gem of The Ocean, Night is a Child, Trouble in Mind and Radio Golf for Milwaukee Rep. Representative credits include the world premieres of August Wilson’s Radio Golf for Yale Rep, Rajiv Joseph’s The Lake Effect for Silk Road Rising (2013 Jeff Award for Best New Work) and Keith Josef Adkins’ Safe House for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park where he currently serves as an associate artist. Other credits include Disgraced and King Hedley II for Arena Stage, Father Comes Home From The Wars Parts 1, 2 & 3 for Round House Theatre, Richard II for Shakespeare & Company, Brontë: A Portrait Of Charlotte off-Broadway and the China Tour of Disgraced for PingPong Productions. He also served as the Associate Artistic Director at Actors Theatre of Louisville 2001-2004 where he directed 16 productions, including three Humana Festival premieres, and briefly served as Artistic Director of Chicago’s Remy Bumppo Theatre Company. Recipient of the Lloyd Richards Director’s Award from the
Tony Cisek,  
Set Designer  
Tony has collaborated with Timothy Douglas on over 40 productions including Gem of the Ocean and the premiere of The Night is a Child (Milwaukee Rep), The Trip to Bountiful and the premiere of Safe House (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), Hospice and the premiere of Pointing at the Moon (Alliance Theatre), The Color Purple (Portland Center Stage), Disgraced and King Hedley II (Arena Stage), A Raisin in the Sun (Indiana Rep), the premiere of Long Way Down (The Kennedy Center) and productions at Syracuse Stage, Round House Theatre, Folger Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Guthrie Theater, South Coast Rep and Theater Alliance. Tony’s work has also been seen at Roundabout Theatre Company, Goodman Theatre, Ford’s Theatre, Denver Center Theatre Company, New York Theatre Workshop and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, among others. He holds an MFA in Design from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. Please visit www.tonycisek.com.

Kara Harmon,  
Costume Designer  
Kara’s regional credits include Goodnight, Tyler (Alliance Theatre), Gem of the Ocean (Round House Theatre), The Color Purple (Portland Center Stage), The Wiz (Ford’s Theatre) Nina Simone: Four Women and Native Gardens (Arena Stage), Black Odyssey, Ragtime and The Mountaintop (Trinity Rep), Seven Guitars and we, the invisibles (Actors Theatre of Louisville), A Raisin in the Sun (Indiana Rep, Syracuse Stage), A Guide for the Homesick (Huntington Theatre), In the Heights (Geva Theatre), Barbecue (Geffen Playhouse- NAACP Best Costume Design Award) and Much Ado About Nothing and The Comedy of Errors (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Off-Broadway design includes The Niceties (Manhattan Theatre Club) and Dot (Vineyard Theatre). Kara has worked as Assistant Costume Design for television on “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” “Daredevil” and “Boardwalk Empire.” She received her training from NYU’s Tisch School for the Arts. Visit www.KaraHarmonDesign.com.

Michael Gilliam,  
Lighting Designer  
Michael’s Broadway credits include Bonnie and Clyde, Brooklyn, Big River and Stand-Up Tragedy. He worked on Gershwin Alone in the West End and his off-Broadway credits include Cagney the Musical; Maurice Hines: Tappin’ Thru Life; The Best Is Yet to Come; Striking 12; Blue; End of the World Party; Zooman and the Sign; and Menopause the Musical. National tours include Spamilton, Looped, Peter Pan, Brooklyn, Guys and Dolls and Big River. His work has been seen in many of the country’s regional theatres. Among his awards are Los Angeles Ovation Awards, Drama-Logue Awards, Garland Awards, San Diego Critics’ Circle Awards and the Career Achievement Award from the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle.

Matthew M. Nielson,  
Composer/Sound Designer  
Off-Broadway credits include Public Theater/ NYSF, Lincoln Center Theater and 59E59 Theaters. Regional credits include Denver Center Theatre Company, Portland Center Stage, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Delaware Theatre Company, Ford’s Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, Barrington Stage, Round House Theatre, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Studio Theatre, Theater Alliance, Olney Theatre Center and Contemporary American Theater Festival. Film/TV credits include “Epix Drive-In,” From Hell to Here and Too Like the Lightning. Matthew has won several awards for his work in theatre and film. He currently runs recording studio and post-production house Sound Lab Studios and production music library The Curious Music Co. Samples can be heard online at CuriousMusic.com.
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Stephanie Klapper, CSA,  
New York Casting

Stephanie has previously collaborated with Blake Robison and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, having cast *A Christmas Carol, Cincinnati King, Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* and *The Roommate* this season, and *Shakespeare in Love, Mr. Joy, Be Here Now, Marie and Rosetta, Sooner/Later, Treasure Island* and *Murder for Two* last season. Previously for the Playhouse, she cast *A Prayer for Owen Meany, Disgraced, A Christmas Carol, Jane Eyre, Summerland, All the Roads Home, Ken Ludwig's Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery, The Secret Garden, Sex with Strangers, Mad River Rising, Native Gardens, The Revolutionists, To Kill a Mockingbird, Mothers and Sons, Bad Dates, Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club, Safe House, Tenderly: The Rosemary Clooney Musical, Circle Mirror Transformation, Peter and the Starcatcher, Buzzer, Fly, Seven Spots on the Sun, Clybourne Park, 4000 Miles, Pride and Prejudice and A Delicate Ship*, as well as *Shipwrecked! An Entertainment; The Book Club Play; Leveling Up; Abigail/1702; The Three Musketeers*; and *The Blonde, the Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead*. Her work is frequently seen on Broadway, off-Broadway and regionally, as well as on film and television. She has many exciting projects running and upcoming. Stephanie is a member of the Casting Society of America.

Frank Honts,  
Casting Director

Frank is in his third season at Milwaukee Rep as Casting Director and Director of the Emerging Professional Residency. Prior to joining The Rep staff in 2016, Frank worked at a number of regional theaters including Utah Shakespeare Festival, Renaissance Theaterworks, The Goodman, California Shakespeare Theater, A Contemporary Theatre (Seattle), and Paramount Theatre. He has worked extensively as both a director and dramaturg, and was honored to be a directing resident at Milwaukee Rep in the 2013/14 Season. Frank spent two seasons as Artistic Associate at Forward Theater Company in Madison, and he was the inaugural recipient of the Michael Flachmann Fellowship at Utah Shakespeare Festival. He is a graduate of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Kimberly Carolus,  
Stage Manager

Kimberly is delighted to be in her sixth season with Milwaukee Rep. Some favorites from her six seasons at The Rep include *In the Heights, One House Over, The Chinese Lady, An Iliad* and *after all the terrible things I do*. Kimberly has also worked at Great River Shakespeare Festival, First Stage, Fulton Theatre, Riverside Theatre in the Park (Iowa City, IA), and Walt Disney World. She would like to thank her family for their endless love and support.
Jade Bruno,
Assistant Stage Manager

Jade is excited to be working with Milwaukee Rep for the first time. She is a Chicago-based stage manager who graduated from Northern Kentucky University. Milwaukee credits include *Matilda the Musical* and *Antarctica, WI* with First Stage. Other regional credits include shows at Utah Shakespeare Festival, Second City Touring Company, Goodman Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Company and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Jade will be returning to Utah Shakespeare Festival this summer and fall to stage manage *Twelfth Night* and *Every Brilliant Thing*. Love and gratitude to Todd.

Audra Kuchling,
Assistant Stage Manager

Audra is delighted to be back at The Rep for her fifth season, after beginning her career at Milwaukee Rep as an intern in 2014. Favorite credits among her 20+ shows at The Rep include *Liberace!, Dreamgirls, The Foreigner, Our Town, Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* and *Mark Twain’s River of Song*. Audra is a 2014 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. She’s extraordinarily grateful for the artistic home she has made at The Rep over the years. All her love to Stephen for being her biggest supporter in all she does, and eternal gratitude to her mom for not minding having a kid in the arts.

Josh Hart,
Stage Management Resident

Josh is a recent graduate of the University of Chicago, with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Theater and Performance Studies. While at Chicago, he stage managed such shows as *Peter and the Starcatcher, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, and a burlesque-inspired circus showcase. He was assistant stage manager for Echo Theater Collective’s first production, *Blues for Mister Charlie*, in Chicago. He is thrilled and grateful to be working with Milwaukee Rep this season!

Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park,
Co-Producer

Founded in 1960 and a recipient of two Tony Awards — the 2004 Regional Theatre Tony Award and the 2007 Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical for *Company* — Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park is known for its artistic excellence, commitment to new works, creative educational programming, and as an artistic home for some of America’s best actors, directors and designers. For more than 30 years, the Playhouse has produced at least one world premiere production each season. Artistic Director Blake Robison and Managing Director Buzz Ward oversee a full-time staff of 79. Together with a board of 50 trustees and nearly 1,000 volunteers, they remain committed to a tradition of excellence that carries the Playhouse to the end of its sixth decade. The Playhouse offers productions 10 months each year, attracting nearly 190,000 people annually to its two theaters and education and outreach programs. For more information, visit cincyplay.com.

Mark Clements,
Artistic Director

Mark is an award-winning international theater director whose work has appeared in over 100 major theaters throughout Europe and the United States. He began his tenure as Artistic Director with the 2010/11 Season by bringing musicals to the mainstage, starting a tradition that is now the highlight of every season, including *Cabaret, Next To Normal, Assassins, Ragtime, Dreamgirls, The Color Purple, Man of La Mancha, Guys and Dolls* and *In the Heights*. Milwaukee Rep directing credits include the world premieres of *One House Over*, his own adaptation of the current *A Christmas Carol, Five Presidents* and *American Song*. Also directed for
BIOGRAPHIES CONT.

Milwaukee Rep: Things I Know To Be True (American Premiere), Junk, The Glass Menagerie, Of Mice and Men, Othello, Death of a Salesman, The History of Invulnerability, End of the Rainbow, Clybourne Park and Bombshells. Some of his New York and international work includes Speaking in Tongues, The Milliner and Blunt Speaking, in addition to creating and directing the West End and UK National Tour of Soul Train. Prior to joining The Rep, Mark served as an Associate Artistic Director for several UK theater companies, most notably, Artistic Director for the award-winning Derby Playhouse in the UK from 1992 - 2002, where he directed over 40 productions. He has been nominated for an Olivier Award and several UK Theatre Awards, and has won three Barrymore Awards from his time at Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. He currently serves on the National Advisory Board for the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship Program at Ten Chimneys. Mark is currently working with Ayad Akhtar on adapting his critically acclaimed novel American Dervish for the stage to make its world premiere at Milwaukee Rep in an upcoming season.

Prior to joining The Rep, Mark served as an Associate Artistic Director for several UK theater companies, most notably, Artistic Director for the award-winning Derby Playhouse in the UK from 1992 - 2002, where he directed over 40 productions. He has been nominated for an Olivier Award and several UK Theatre Awards, and has won three Barrymore Awards from his time at Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. He currently serves on the National Advisory Board for the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship Program at Ten Chimneys. Mark is currently working with Ayad Akhtar on adapting his critically acclaimed novel American Dervish for the stage to make its world premiere at Milwaukee Rep in an upcoming season.

Chad Bauman, Executive Director

Appointed in 2013, Chad is now in his sixth season at Milwaukee Rep. Under his guidance, the theater has grown significantly from a $9M organization to a $13M organization. He’s completed two capital campaigns, one to remodel and expand the Stackner Cabaret and the other to build the endowment, launched the John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Program, created a new A Christmas Carol and deepened the theater’s community engagement programs. Through his efforts, the theater has been awarded UPAF’s Good Steward Award three out of the last five years and is the only Milwaukee performing arts organization with a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Before moving to Milwaukee, he was the Associate Executive Director at Arena Stage where he was instrumental in opening the Mead Center for American Theater, a 200,000 square feet, three theater performing arts complex dedicated to American voices and playwrights. While at Arena Stage, he worked on the Broadway transfers of Next to Normal (Pulitzer Prize; Tony Award), Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Tony Award), Wishful Drinking starring Carrie Fisher, Looped starring Valerie Harper, and John Grisham’s A Time to Kill, in addition to the world premieres of Marcus Gardley’s Every Tongue Confess starring Phylicia Rashad and Red Hot Patriot starring Kathleen Turner. He is currently President of the Milwaukee Arts Partners, a trustee of Pathways High School and an advisor to TRGArts. Bauman is a graduate of Harvard Business School’s Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management program and has a Master of Fine Arts in producing from the CalArts.
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Mark Clements

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Dan Kazemi (Composer/Musician),
Marc Kudisch (Actor), Reese Madigan (Actor),
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Anonymous (4)

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Rogue Stage Theater
When world-renowned poet Beverly Weston disappears, his dying wife Violet reunites with their long distance relations, all of whom harbor secrets.

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March 23
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Waukesha Civic Theatre
A small town girl from Kansas, Millie arrives in New York ready to become a star. This madcap comedy is full of bright, 1920s music and dance.

March 28 – April 14
Waukesha Civic Theatre
(262) 547-0708
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Wisconsin Lutheran College
Actor/singer Bruce Ewing shares the challenges, personal crises, and healing on his journey - and a discovery of faith that led him toward a life of hope and triumph!

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This concert recreates the glorious sound of Carole King, leaving audiences with memories of the great music she wrote and recorded.

April 6
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MOZART’S REQUIEM
Waukesha Choral Union
The Waukesha Choral Union welcomes community singers, talented soloists, and Jubilate Chorale for this grand celebration.

April 7
Shattuck Hall
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CLASSICS IN BLOOM
Wisconsin Philharmonic
The brilliant American pianist Andrew Russo shines bright in Franz Liszt’s heroically difficult score.

BROOKLYN RIDER
Frankly Music
We welcome back the ever-fascinating string quartet Brooklyn Rider, exploring the healing properties of music, recognized since the ancient Greek civilizations.

PHILOMUSICA STRING QUARTET
Wisconsin Lutheran College
Join us for the Philomusica String Quartet’s April concert featuring Franz Joseph Haydn.

ALINA KIRYAYEVA
Wisconsin Lutheran College
Alina Kiryayeva masterfully fuses the classic with the contemporary, blending classical style with popular musical tunes from many different genres.
AGATHA CHRISTIE’S THE MOUSETRAP
Concordia University Theatre
A group of strangers is stranded in a boarding house during a snowstorm when a murderer emerges. But who is it?

BEN BUTLER
Milwaukee Chamber Theatre
Richard Strand's splendid play, a battle of wits for the soul of a nation, defies simple characterization - part comedy, historical drama and biography.

EVERY BRILLIANT THING
Milwaukee Repertory Theater
A young boy tries to ease his mother's depression with a list of everything worth living for. As the list grows, he learns the deep significance it has on his own life.

STAS VENGELEVSKI & FRANK ALMOND
Wisconsin Lutheran College
These two dynamic, powerhouse performers will collaborate to bring a delightful variety of musical offerings to a concert that you simply won’t want to miss!

TWO TRAINS RUNNING
Milwaukee Repertory Theater
It's 1969 and change is in the air. But for the owner of a rundown diner, the Civil Rights movement may just be an impractical dream.

SPRINGDANCES
UWM Peck School of the Arts
Springdances will feature dynamic and thought-provoking new works by UWM Dance Faculty Maria Gillespie and Daniel Burkholder.

SPAMALOT
Sunset Playhouse
Lovingly lifted from the classic film comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Spamalot recounts the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

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Concordia University Theatre
The staff and customers of a beauty salon in Louisiana often engage in small-town gossip, but deep strength emerges when tragedy strikes.

THE GIVER
Waukesha Civic Theatre
Jonas lives in a utopia with no pain, no fear – and no choice. Language is precise and sterile; emotions and other physical impulses are controlled.

WONDERFUL TOWN
Falls Patio Players
Join Ruth and Eileen Sherwood as they leave behind their mundane Ohio lives in pursuit of making it big in New York City.

FANFARE AND FINALE CONCERT
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
The Brass Choir, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, and Senior Symphony are showcased in the ensembles’ final performances of the season.

AND ALL THAT JAZZ
Waukesha Choral Union
The concert will feature a program of jazz music with the addition of the vocal stylings of talented area high school vocal jazz ensembles.

THE CHILDREN’S HOUR
UWM Peck School of the Arts
Set in a prestigious boarding school for girls, a disgruntled and privileged student accuses the two headmistresses of having an affair.

THE GIVER
Waukesha Civic Theatre
Jonas lives in a utopia with no pain, no fear – and no choice. Language is precise and sterile; emotions and other physical impulses are controlled.

FRANKIE MORENO
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**JUBILATE CHORALE**
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Jubilate Chorale celebrate their 25th anniversary season with songs of hope, joy, and inspiration.

**RHYTHM AND BLUES CONCERT**
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
Performance features all Jazz combos, including the elite Bronzeville Jazz Ensemble, plus Calypso and Soca steel bands.

**FLUTE FESTIVAL CONCERT**
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
The two flute choirs are highlighted in the ensembles’ final appearances of the season.

**SEASON FINALE**
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Another string blowout with Schoenberg’s landmark Transfigured Night, and Mendelssohn’s beloved Octet.

**THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE**
All in Productions
An eclectic group of six mid-pubescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime.

**KISS ME, KATE**
Skylight Music Theatre
Passions run high onstage and off as a tempestuous couple struggle to present a musical version of Taming of the Shrew.

**STRING SERENADE CONCERT**
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
The all-string ensembles Prelude Orchestra, String Orchestras South/West and String Orchestras North/Central will be featured.

**METAMORPHOSIS CONCERT**
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
The Sinfonia Philharmonic and Wind Ensemble will be featured.
SYMPHONIC CELEBRATION CONCERT
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra
This performance will feature the Percussion Ensemble, Philharmonia, and Chamber Orchestra.

LEADING LADIES
Sunset Playhouse
A hilarious comedy about two down-on-their-luck actors, Jack and Leo, who pass themselves off as a rich old woman's nieces to obtain her fortune.

BUT WHY BUMP OFF BARNABY?
Waukesha Civic Theatre
Barnaby Folcey is murdered at a family gathering where he had the motive to murder everyone, but no one had reason to want him dead.

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Optimist Theatre/ Shakespeare in the Park
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Outskirts Theatre
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Sunset Playhouse
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