

# **PLAYBILL**



DIRECTED BY CAELON COLBERT

**SEPTEMBER** 

ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK @ QUAPAW QUARTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH









### **ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK**

### **PRESENTS**

## A RAISIN IN THE SUN

#### W/ITH

Willie Lucius Valerie Benton Miki Gaynor Amaya Hardin Tristan Kemp Adrien Boles Gabe Williams Xander Udochi Ben Barham Nick Farr Kristin "KV" Knox Taylor Leron Keith Harper Shone Hampton Dariane LyJoi Mull Alexandria Brown Chuck Bonet

**Scenic Designer** Dariane LyJoi Mull Costume Designer Verda Davenport **Lighting Designer**Dena Kimberling

**Sound Designer & Engineer**Steven W. Jones. Jr.

Hair/Wig Designer & Technician
Torres De'yon Eskew

Makeup Designer
Quinton Sanders

**Props Master** Amaya Hardin **Stage Manager** Lance Beckman Asst. Stage Managers
Austin Bernard
Karma Avant

Asst. Director/ Dramaturg Keith Harper

**Technical Director**Dariane LyJoi Mull

**Producers** Mari Allen Burbank

**Director**Caelon Colbert

## **CAST**

Walter Lee Younger	WILLIE LUCIUS
Lena "Mama" Younger	VALERIE BENTON
Ruth Younger	MIKI GAYNOR
Beneatha Younger	AMAYA HARDIN
Travis Younger (alternating)	TRISTAN KEMP
Travis Younger (alternating)	ADRIEN BOLES
Joseph Asagai	GABE WILLIAMS
George Murchison	XANDER UDOCHI
Karl Lindner	BEN BARHAM
Bobo	NICK FARR
Mrs. Johnson	KRISTIN "KV" KNOX
Ghost	TAYLOR LERON
Moving Man	KEITH HARPER
Moving Man	SHONE HAMPTON
Ruth/Mrs Johnson Standby	DARIANE LYJOI MULL
Beneatha Standby	ALEXANDRIA BROWN
Karl Standby	CHUCK BONET

## **PRODUCTION/CREATIVE**

Producer	MARI ALLEN BURBANK
Director	CAELON COLBERT
Assistant Director/Dramaturg	KEITH HARPER
Stage Manager	LANCE BECKMAN
Assistant Stage Managers	AUSTIN BERNARD,
	KARMA AVANT
Technical Director	DARIANE LYJOI MULL
Scenic Designer	DARIANE LYJOI MULL
Lighting Designer	DENA KIMBERLING
Costume Designer	VERDA DAVENPORT
Sound Designer/Engineer	STEVEN W. JONES
Hair/Wig Designer &	
Technician	TORRES DE'VON ESKEW
Makeup Designer	QUINTON SANDERS
Props Master	AMAYA HARDIN
Wardrobe Supervisor	TWANDA HOUSE
Wardrobe Crew/Dresser	LELA BELLETON
Light Board Operator	JHAREL JEREZ
Scenic Charge Artists	GEORGEANN BURBANK,
	AMAYA HARDIN

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



## **CAELON COLBERT**

Director of A Raisin in the Sun

I have been so excited to bring this American classic back to Central Arkansas for our third season! Our production of *A Raisin in the Sun* honors Hansberry's original

text and vision while introducing elements of magical realism that blur the line between these character's dreams and their own reality. These moments add a poetic layer that reveals the family's internal struggles, desires, and disappointments. They are not meant to disrupt the narrative but to deepen its emotional impact and offer a surreal lens through which the characters' dreams and burdens can be seen.

This production also acknowledges our connection to loved ones who have passed on, reminding us that their dreams and fears still live with those who carry their legacy forward. In this way, the production reaches beyond realism to touch the spiritual and emotional roots of the Younger family's journey.

I want to invite the audience to engage with these elements as a way to enhance this beloved story. Hansberry's play is already a landmark of American theatre, and through this lens we aim to honor its truth while opening space for deeper empathy and connection.

Enjoy the show!



#### WILLIE LUCIUS

Walter Lee Younger

Willie is extremely excited and honored to be apart of this wonderful and iconic show! He has been a part of productions in his hometown Chattanooga, TN as well as Memphis and here in Little Rock. Some of his favorites include: Dance Nation (Dance Teacher Pat), Godspell (Judas), Avenue Q (Gary Coleman), Sugar in our Wounds (Henry), Rent (Ensemble), Dreamgirls (Ensemble), and as director of Psycho Beach Party. He would like to thank his supportive husband Brandon and best friends for their love and support. Enjoy the show! Never stop dreaming!



#### **VALERIE BENTON**

Lena "Mama" Younger

Valerie Benton is elated to perform once again with Actors Theatre of Little Rock. This will be her fourth performance with this amazing organization. She has performed for Actors Theatre of LR in Black Nativity during the 2022, 2023, and 2024 Christmas seasons. In December 2024, Valerie made her debut with Argenta Community Theatre in The Christmas Story, The Musical as part of the ensemble. She has also been blessed to play the Soloist with Studio Theatre in Little Rock in the hit production, The Color Purple. Professionally, Valerie is the theatre teacher at Jacksonville Middle School. Because of her own acting opportunities, she has been able to share real-world theatrical experiences with her students and expose them in ways she did not dream possible. Valerie is a quiet storm who enjoys running, walking, writing, reading, and hanging out with family.



#### **MIKI GAYNOR**

Ruth Younger

Miki Gaynor (she/her) is always thrilled to return to the Actors Theatre of Little Rock stage! Previous credits include Lady in Red (For Colored Girls...), Amina (Dance Nation), and Papa Ge (Once On This Island). When not performing, Miki keeps busy as a jewelry maker, professional cuddler, and writer.



#### **AMAYA HARDIN**

Beneatha Younger

Amaya Hardin (she/her) is extremely excited to be back at ATLR this Summer in one of her dream shows! Some of her credits include Once on this Island (TiMoune), Hello Dolly! (Dolly Levi), and The Little Mermaid (Ariel). Amaya is a recent graduate of Ouachita Baptist University where she studied with the marvelous Dr. Natilan Crutcher and many others. Amaya would like to give special thanks to her beloved friends and family for their love and support. Enjoy the show!



#### TRISTAN KEMP

Travis Younger (alternating)

Tristan Kemp is a driven and talented 13-year-old homeschooled 8th grader who excels in both athletics and the performing arts. He plays basketball, football, and runs track, showcasing strength, speed, and leadership on and off the field. Tristan is also passionate about acting.this is his third production with ATLR, where he continues to grow as a dynamic performer. Known for his strong work ethic, energy, and determination, Tristan balances academics, sports, and theater with confidence and dedication. Whether he's memorizing lines or scoring points, he shows up with heart, hustle, and a commitment to excellence. With big dreams and a powerful drive, Tristan is on a path to inspire others and make an impact in everything he does.



#### **ADRIEN BOLES**

Travis Younger (alternating)

This is Adrien's first time working with The Actors Theater, and he couldn't be more excited! His most recent credits include: Shrek, Jr.! (Argenta Contemporary Theater, Donkey); Sister Act, Jr.! (The Royal Theater, Joey); Annie, Jr.! (Argenta Contemporary Theater, Rooster); and Willy Wonka, Jr.! (The Royal Theater, James/Oompa Loompa). Adrien wants to thank his incredible Director, Caelon, for believing in him, and his fellow actors for their trust, their tutelage, and their tremendous talents!



#### GABE WILLIAMS

Joseph Asagai

Gabe Williams is happy to be making his return back to ATLR. This is his 2nd show with them, after doing Dreamgirls last winter, but definitely not his last!



#### XANDER UDOCHI

George Murchison

Xander Udochi is a Nigerian-American actor who specializes in theatre and film as a fight director and an actor combatant within The Society of American Fight Directors. He underwent his training through the University of Central Arkansas where he would later graduate and go out into the world to collaborate with artists all around. He is excited for yet another experience with ATLR! Past credits include: Athos in The Three Musketeers (UCA Summer Theatre), Nibbles in Westside Story (Actors Theatre of Little Rock), Olivia in Twelfth Night (Bard at the Bar), Pirate in Peter Pan (Wildwood), Tai Chi in An Unlikely Hero (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts), and Tybalt/Friar Lawrence (Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre).



#### **BEN BARHAM**

Karl Lindner

Ben Barham is excited to Actors Theatre of Little Rock after appearing in Spring Awakening! Local credits include: The Wizard in The Wizard of Oz (Wildwood Park for the Arts), Simon Stimson in Our Town, and Ebeneezer Scrooge in A Christmas Carol (Argenta Community Theatre). Ben is a licensed attorney whose first career was in professional theater working at such companies as the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, Thunder Bay Theatre, The San Diego Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Penguin Rep Theatre, Drove Theatre Company, and The Juilliard School. He has a BFA in Theater Arts from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University and studied classical theatre at Shakespeare's Globe in London. Ben is honored to be a part of this cast and to have the opportunity to do one of the best plays ever written.



#### **NICK FARR**

Bobo

Nick serves as the Principal of Maumelle High School, Director of Choral Activities at Shorter College, Artistic Director of Una Voce at Wildwood, and Treasurer on the Actors Theatre of Little Rock Board of Directors. Nick was recently named a Grammy Quarterfinalist for Music Educators, which places him in the running to win a Grammy this February. Nick trains young and seasoned vocalists, both individually and collectively, including his own two talented daughters, Kennedy (18), and Rhyan (7). He enjoys and embraces the artistic talent in his home, including the talents of his wife to be, (and dance/choreographer extraordinaire), Daija Black.



#### KRISTIN "KV" KNOX

Mrs. Johnson

Kristin "K.V." Knox is a dynamic performer and seasoned media professional with over 20 years in entertainment and broadcasting. She has appeared in A True Definition: B.A.D. Chics and Manstructure (So Wright Theater Company), Sugar in Our Wounds (The Weekend Theater), BackSliders (Bearden Productions Center for the Arts), and A House Full of Trapped Doors (A.Maizing Grace Foundation, Inc. & Wine Press Productions). Her stage work includes performances at The Rep, Argenta Community Theater, and now her first production with Actors Theatre Little Rock. Offstage, Kristin is a dedicated community advocate, motivational speaker, and public servant. A former on-air personality for top Arkansas radio stations, she currently serves on the boards of Women in Film Arkansas and the Little Rock 48-Hour Film Project.



#### **TAYLOR LERON**

Ghost

Taylor LeRon (he/him) is excited to return the Actors Theatre. Previous credits include Principal Hawkins (The Prom), U/S Curtis (Dreamgirls), and Reggie (Skeleton Crew). Thanks for coming to the show!



#### **KEITH HARPER**

Moving Man

Keith Harper is excited to make his return to Actors Theatre! Previous credit here include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr (The Mountaintop). Some of Keith past credits include Booster in August Wilson's Jitney (Arkansas Rep), Boy in Dragons Love Tacos (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts) and Hoke Coleburn in Driving Miss Daisy (Suncoast Broadway Dinner Theater). Keith is the co-producer of the Sparking Dialogue Series at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. His current movie The Company You Keep currently has 9 million views on Tubi TV.



#### SHONE HAMPTON

Moving Man

Shone Hampton (He/Him) is very happy to be apart of yet another beautiful production here at ATLR!! Shone has done a few shows with ATLR and with every opportunity he gets with this amazing ATLR family, it just gets better and better! Shone hopes that the story in this show really is an eye opener to everyone and that it touches so many people in so many ways! We hope you enjoy the show!!



#### DARIANE LYJOI MULL

Ruth/Mrs. Johnson Standby

Dariane LyJoi Mull M.Ed, MPS is a young, gifted, and Black graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Theatre Arts Department and the Clinton School of Public Service. She is now the Drama Teacher at Pinnacle View Middle School and proud to be a co-founder of Actors Theatre of Little Rock. She most recently served as a stage manager and scenic designer for West Side Story and prop designer for Prom. She was last seen on the stage in Dreamgirls (Effie US), Rent (Ensemble u/s Joanne), The Color Purple (Sofia), & Next to Normal (Diana). She is so excited to be apart of the play that was so formative to developing her passion for theatre and tremendously proud of the work ATLR is creating.



#### **ALEXANDRIA BROWN**

Beneatha Standby

Alexandria Brown is excited to make her return at Actors Theatre. Previous credits include For Colored Girls (Actors Theatre of Little Rock) How Black Mother's Say I Love You (The Weekend Theater), and Corduroy (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts). Alexandria loves to give a voice to the voiceless and enjoys doing that through art. Thank you to the cast and crew for everything that you do. All glory to the Lord for giving me the ability to do this.



#### **CHUCK BONET**

Karl Standby

Chuck is very excited to be making his Actors Theatre of Little Rock debut in this powerful production of A Raisin in the Sun. Recent credits include Uncle Jocko/Pastey (Gypsy) and Ensemble (My Fair Lady), both for Argenta Contemporary Theatre. Other favorite roles include lago (Othello), Papa Julian (Once On This Island), and John Hinckley (Assassins). Previous directing credits include Waiting for Lefty and A Few Good Men. Chuck would like to thank the incredible community of theatre artists in Central Arkansas for embracing him and providing him the opportunity to live out his passion for theatre once again. His love and appreciation for this community is boundless. Enjoy the show!

## **CREATIVE TEAM**

CAELON COLBERT Director

Caelon Colbert is a dynamic actor, singer, director, and educator based in Little Rock, Arkansas. A proud graduate of Arkansas State University, he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre in 2021. He has continued his training through the prestigious Actor Therapy program, studying under Broadway talents Lindsey Mendez and Ryan Scott Oliver. Caelon currently serves in an administrative role with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's School of Literary & Performing Arts. He is also a co-host of the Spotlight Cabaret series at both Argenta Contemporary Theatre and The Joint. Deeply committed to arts education and equity, Caelon is passionate about empowering youth through theatre and advocating for underrepresented voices on and off the stage. His directing credits include Dreamgirls, Spring Awakening, Once on This Island, Black Nativity, The Theory of Relativity, and 13: The Musical productions marked by bold vision and inclusive storytelling.

#### **KEITH HARPER**

Asst. Director/Dramaturg

Keith Harper is excited to make his return to Actors Theatre! Previous credit here include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr (The Mountaintop). Some of Keith past credits include Booster in August Wilson's Jitney (Arkansas Rep), Boy in Dragons Love Tacos (Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts) and Hoke Coleburn in Driving Miss Daisy (Suncoast Broadway Dinner Theater). Keith is the co-producer of the Sparking Dialogue Series at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. His current movie The Company You Keep currently has 9 million views on Tubi TV.

#### LANCE BECKMAN

Stage Manager

Lance Beckman (he/him) is a high school drama teacher in the Little Rock School District. This will be his second time stage managing at Actors Theatre of Little Rock. He would like to thank Caelon Colbert for the opportunity to work on this show, and the Little Rock community for supporting the arts!

## **STAFF**

#### MARI ALLEN

#### **Executive Producing Artistic Director of ATLR**

Mari Allen is a multi-hyphenate creative (producer/director/performer/designer), educator, and artivist. They hail from Little Rock, AR, but have directed, performed, and taught around the country. Mari is also the Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director of Actors Theatre of Little Rock. Mari is no stranger to the stage having over 80 production credits ranging from community, education, and professional productions. Previously, they were the Associate Artistic Director and Executive Director of The Studio Theatre, where they have directed and produced eleven productions, including Songs for a New World, Mamma Mia, A Christmas Story: the musical, and Dogfight. Other directing projects include Parade and Mary Poppins at the Royal Theatre, Young Frankenstein with the Community Theatre of Little Rock, and Johnny Appleseed with Missoula Children's Theatre. Mari spent the covid year teaching theatre at Little Rock Central High School, and has taught classes and workshops in acting, dance, singing, and auditioning with schools and theaters around the country. Mari is also an accomplished designer, choreographer, musical director, and actor. Favorite acting credits include Tony (West Side Story), Squidward (The Spongebob Musical), Anthony (Sweeney Todd), Prince Dauntless (Once Upon A Mattress), Jeffery (Godspell), Prince Topher (Cinderella), Enjolras (Les Miserables), and Rolf (The Sound of Music). Mari is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas.

#### **CAELON COLBERT**

Associate Artistic Director

Caelon Colbert is a dynamic actor, singer, director, and educator based in Little Rock, Arkansas. A proud graduate of Arkansas State University, he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre in 2021. He has continued his training through the prestigious Actor Therapy program, studying under Broadway talents Lindsey Mendez and Ryan Scott Oliver. Caelon currently serves in an administrative role with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's School of Literary & Performing Arts. He is also a co-host of the Spotlight Cabaret series at both Argenta Contemporary Theatre and The Joint. Deeply committed to arts education and equity, Caelon is passionate about empowering youth through theatre and advocating for underrepresented voices on and off the stage. His directing credits include Dreamgirls, Spring Awakening, Once on This Island, Black Nativity, The Theory of Relativity, and 13: The Musical - productions marked by bold vision and inclusive storytelling.

#### SID MCGOUGH

Technical Director

Sid McGough, a Hendrix College alum from Texarkana, TX, is the Resident Lighting Designer and Technical Director for Actors Theatre of Little Rock. A Founding Artist with ATLR, Sid is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the theatre's artistic vision and its commitment to fearless works. Sid's recent projects with ATLR include Lighting Design for Dance Nation, Lighting Design for What the Constitution Means to Me, and Prop Design for Chicago.

#### **JAKE COFFMAN**

Graphic & Multimedia Designer

Jake Coffman is an Arkansas native with a long history in the Arts, including a background in singing, graphic design, and marketing. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Music and Mass Communications from Ouachita Baptist University, and is a classically trained vocalist. He currently serves as the Graphic Designer for Actors Theatre of Little Rock, and is also the Director of Marketing and Branding at Nexus Coffee and Creative in downtown Little Rock. Jake also has a history on stage! Past favorite stage credits include Billy Crocker (Anything Goes), The Escapologist (Matilda the Musical), and Larry the Lobster (The Spongebob Musical).

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

#### SPECIAL THANKS

UA Little Rock Theatre Arts Pinnacle View Middle School Arkansas Repertory Theatre Elvis and Angela Mull

## ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK STAFF

Mari Allen, Executive Producing Artistic Director/Co-Founder
Dariane LyJoi Mull, Co-Founder
Caelon Colbert, Associate Artistic Director
Sid McGough, Technical Director
Jake Coffman, Graphic and Multimedia Designer

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There are many opportunities to support ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK with your gifts - a vital part of keeping our unique company alive!

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## **BECOME A SPONSOR!**

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Actors Theatre of Little Rock is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has emerged as a beacon of creativity, providing a space for bold artistic works to Central Arkansas!

Questions? Email <u>info@actorstheatrelr.org</u> to learn more about Actors Theatre of Little Rock and more ways to support us!

If you would like to support our mission, you can donate today at <a href="https://donorbox.org/brighten-the-stage">https://donorbox.org/brighten-the-stage</a>



## THE OTHER SEASON

Introducing our 2025 "Other" Season! After Season Two, we have revitalized, new programming that engages our artistic community and beyond past the perimeters of our mainstage shows



# OTHER SEASON



TWELFTH NIGHT March • Directed by Michael Wilson Goodbar

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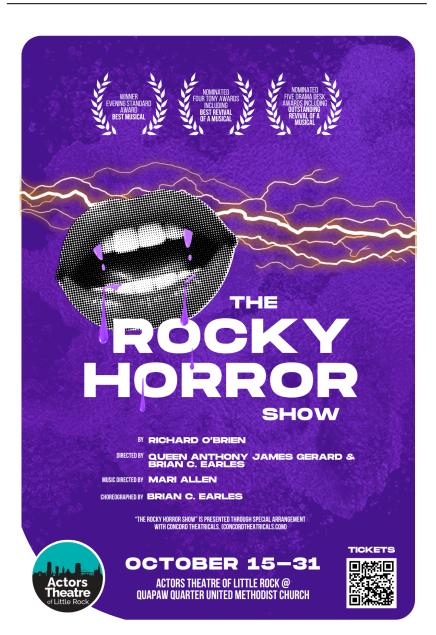
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