



PLAYBILL

Langston Hughes'




BLACK NATIVITY

The Gospel Christmas
Musical Experience

DECEMBER 6-17

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ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK

PRESENTS

Langston Hughes'

BLACK NATIVITY

WITH

Valerie Benton
Warren L. Booker
Carmen Edwards
Torres De'von Eskew
Nick Farr

Angelica Glass
Twanda House
Portia S. Jones
Tristan Kemp
Tylen Loring

B. Cordell Piggee
Kristen Phantazia Smith
Leah Stewart
Spencer Elizabeth Stewart
Ricky D. Wade

Costume Designer

Caelon Colbert

Scenic Designer

Sid McGough

Lighting Designer

Sid McGough

Stage Manager

Lamar Jamerson

Asst. Stage Manager

Tyranni Hubbard

**Properties Manager/
Wig Supervisor**

X Freelon

Costume, Hair, & Makeup Designer

Caelon Colbert

**Music Supervision, Orchestration,
& Arrangements**

B. Cordell Piggee

Music Assistant

Marcus Murphy

Technical Director

Sid McGough

Light Board Operator

Keith Harper

Sound Board Operator

Lamar Jamerson

Co-Directed by

Caelon Colbert & Dariane LyJoi Mull

CAST

VALERIE BENTON
WARREN L. BOOKER
CARMEN EDWARDS
TORRES DE'VON ESKEW
NICK FARR
ANGELICA GLASS
TWANDA HOUSE
PORTIA S. JONES
TRISTAN KEMP
TYLEN LORING
B. CORDELL PIGGEE
KRISTEN PHANTAZIA SMITH
LEAH STEWART
SPENCER ELIZABETH STEWART
RICKY D. WADE

PRODUCTION/CREATIVE

Costume, Hair, & Makeup Designer.....CAELON COLBERT
Scenic Designer.....SID MCGOUGH
Lighting Designer.....SID MCGOUGH
Stage Manager..... LAMAR JAMERSON
Asst. Stage Manager..... TYRANNI HUBBARD
Properties Manager/Wig Supervisor..... X FREELON
Music Supervision, Orchestrations,
& Arrangements..... B. CORDELL PIGGEE
Music Assistant..... MARCUS MURPHY
Technical Director.....SID MCGOUGH
Light Board Operator..... KEITH HARPER
Sound Board Operator.....LAMAR JAMERSON
Producer..... MARK A. BURBANK
Producer..... MONICA BERNARD
Co-Directors..... CAELON COLBERT &
DARIANE LYJOI MULL

SONGS

ACT I

"Let Everything That Hath Breath (Psalm 150)"
"Miss You Most (At Christmas)"
"No Room"
"I Feel Like Going On"
"Something About the Name Jesus"
"Mary's Lullaby"
"He Loves Me Still"
"Do You Hear What I Hear?"
"What Child Is This?"
"Sweet Little Jesus Boy"
"Lean On Me"

ACT II

"Jesus"
"Looking For You"
"He Wants It All"
"The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power"
"There's a Leak In This Old Building"
"1 On 1"
"His Eye Is On the Sparrow"
"For Every Mountain"
"Jerusalem"
"I Shall Wear a Crown"

BOWS

"Joy To the World/Joyful, Joyful"

WHO'S WHO



VALERIE BENTON

Valerie Benton is elated to be a part of Black Nativity again with Actors Theatre of Little Rock. She performed in last year's Black Nativity. Most recently, performed with The Studio Theatre in Little Rock where she played the Church Soloist in the hit production, The Color Purple. Valerie is the theatre/drama teacher at Jacksonville Middle School. Because of her own acting opportunities, Valerie has been able to provide her students with real-world theatre experience and expose them in ways she did not dream. Valerie enjoys working out, reading, and hanging out with family.



WARREN L. BOOKER

Warren L. Booker, Jr is a proud Packingtown/Pine Bluff native. He began his acting career at a young age. His acting resume is quite extensive and includes plays, writing, directing, short films, feature films, commercials and voice-overs. Most recently, Warren appeared in The Studio Theatre's The Color Purple as "Pa". Also, he can be seen in "The Best Thing", "Nice Guys Finish Last", and "God's Not Dead" on multiple streaming platforms. Warren has adopted the following quote: "Popcorn is cooked in the same pot, at the same time, at the same temperature. Yet, the kernels pop at different times". Stay in the pot! Your time will come if it hasn't already. Be Blessed!



CARMEN EDWARDS

Carmen Edwards is coming to the stage once again! Previous credits Include Dreamgirls and The Color Purple (Second Baptist Ministry Productions). She has been involved in the arts since childhood and continues to use her talents in various capacities across the city and state. Special thanks to everyone that has shown their love and support. Enjoy the show!



TORRES DE'VON ESKEW

Torres De'von Eskew is a native of Little Rock Arkansas. Torres is a proud graduate of Parkview Arts Magnet School. Upon graduating from Parkview, Torres attended Wiley College in Marshall, Texas on a full ride vocal music scholarship. There he majored in Mass Communications with a minor in Sociology. During his time at Wiley College Torres, credits include Walter Lee (A Raisin in the Sun), Sophia (The Color Purple Workshop). Torres would like to pay homage to his parents, the late Krissy Vonell Eskew & Derek Eskew, His twin brother Tavorres Eskew, Mrs. Amelia Farlow, & Dr. Stephen L. Hayes .

WHO'S WHO



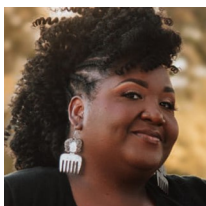
NICK FARR

Dr. Nick Farr is making his Actors Theatre Little Rock debut with this year's *Black Nativity!* Nick is celebrating just over one year of participating in theatre. A few of Nick's favorite roles have been *Sister Act* (T.J.), *Next to Normal* (Dan), *The Color Purple* (Mister), and *Matilda the Musical* (Escapologist). Nick serves as the Artistic Director of *Una Voce* at Wildwood Park for the Arts and is an active Vocal Coach for youth. Nick also serves as Principal of Maumelle High School. Nick holds a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership, a Doctorate in Music Education, and is pursuing a MFA in Directing. Nick enjoys the opportunity to propagate the Arts in Arkansas and seeks every opportunity to help others grow.



ANGELICA GLASS

Angelica is always excited to return to the stage! Angelica is a native of Monticello, AR, currently residing in Pine Bluff. She graduated from the University of Arkansas where she studied psychology and music performance. Angelica is a Human Resources professional working in healthcare. She performs at various community events; she also ministers as the Worship Leader at her local church. Previous productions include *'Rock of Ages'* (Justice Chartier), *'The Bodyguard'* (Nikki), *'9 to 5: The Musical'* (Violet Newstead), *'Legally Blonde The Musical'* (Judge), and *'Sister Act'* (Deloris VanCartier). She stays true to her mission to share her God-given gift with as many people as she can.



TWANDA HOUSE

Twanda House is delighted to join the cast of *Black Nativity!* Having sat in the co-director's seat for *Black Nativity* and *The Prodigal Son* (St. John Missionary Baptist Church), she is ready to finally make her acting debut. Twanda is a Systems Administrator for Dillard's Inc.



PORTIA S. JONES

Portia S. Jones is so excited to make her debut at Actors Theatre of Little Rock! She was previously seen in Southeast Arkansas Arts and Science Center 2023 production of *Steel Magnolias* as well as 2022 production of *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* (Ensemble). A native of Altheimer, she is the Special Projects Coordinator for Pine Bluff Parks & Recreation, serves as the worship leader at *Destiny Worship Center*, and is a newly appointed member of ASC's Board of Trustees. As an up-and-coming social media influencer, known as *Inspirations by LoveJones*, Portia's influencer journey began when she started to open up publicly about her weight-loss journey. Jumping rope is where it all started, birthing a business (*Inspired to Jump*) and a fitness brand which encourages everyone to stop putting limits on themselves because of their size. She is so thrilled to be a part of this production, and is excited where this journey will take her!

WHO'S WHO



TRISTAN KEMP

Tristan Kemp is excited to make his debut at Actors Theatre of Little Rock! He has been acting since the age of 5. He is a current model for Dillard's. Most recently seen in commercial and TV/film work. I look forward to bringing my character to life in this role.



TYLEN LORING

Tylen Loring is so thrilled to be a part of his 4th ATLR production with Black Nativity! He was born and raised here in Little Rock where he fell in love with theatre and the community. His favorite past roles include Jay in Descendants the Musical, Gomez in The Addams Family, Ensemble in Black Nativity, Gabe in Next to Normal, Bobby in The Color Purple, Max in Bright Star, Judah in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and most recently Ensemble in Sweeney Todd. He is so grateful to be a part of these amazing productions. Outside of shows, Tylen has also starred in multiple events and cabarets this year. And now, he is so grateful to be a part of this show with this wonderful cast and crew!



B. CORDELL PIGGEE

B. Cordell Piggee is excited to make his stage debut with ATLR after serving as music director for last year and this year's Black Nativity. Most recently seen as Grady in The Studio Theatre's The Color Purple. He is a singer/songwriter and up and coming actor from Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a husband, father, and a faithful Worship Leader at Grace United Church. He specializes in vocal teaching, choir development, and Worship Team Development. He is a professional background singer, sharing the stage with various gospel recording artists such as Jonathan Nelson, Maurette Brown Clark, Y'Anna Crawley, Crystal Aiken, and Harold Wade Jr. Cordell is humbly excited to grow and emerge in the theatre community.



KRISTEN PHANTAZIA SMITH

Kristen Phantazia Smith (she/her) is elated to be returning to the Actors Theatre stage! After almost a decade away from the Thespian world, she is glad to be back in the swing of things as a member of such a rich community right here in Central Arkansas. Kris believes in the transformative power the arts holds and regularly participates in any capacity she can. This has manifested itself through philanthropy, partnership, and performance. Some of her most recent theatre credits include Sister James (Doubt), Joanne (Rent), and Cinderella (Cinderella). Kris prioritizes showcasing black excellence and integrating it into majority white spaces, through her passion and in her profession. She dedicates this run of Black Nativity to her Dad. 'I am holding the memory of you deep in my soul as I navigate my first Christmas without you here. I know your view of the stage is perfect from your seat in heaven. I love you.'

WHO'S WHO



LEAH STEWART

Leah C. Stewart is excited to make her Actors Theatre debut! Although it is her first ever theatrical work, she is extremely enthused to be able to participate, and is very grateful to begin her career as in this run of Black Nativity. She hopes you all enjoy the show, and asks that you please continue to support her in the future!



SPENCER ELIZABETH STEWART

Spencer Elizabeth Stewart is a gifted sixth grader who currently attends Westwind School for the Performing Arts. Spencer is ecstatic to be making her acting debut as Gianna Brown at the Actors Theatre. With prior roles including Ursula (The Little Mermaid), Ms. Hannigan (Annie Jr.), and Dorothy (The Wiz), she has already amassed a remarkable résumé. When Spencer isn't performing on stage, she indulges in various artistic pursuits including sewing, drawing, singing, and dancing. Spencer is a great inspiration to her classmates and a brilliant example of what it means to chase your aspirations with devotion and perseverance. This young star has a bright future ahead of her, and we are confident that she will continue to captivate and charm audiences for many years to come.



RICKY D. WADE

Ricky Wade is ecstatic to be a part of such a great production! He was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi and raised in North Little Rock (Rose City) to a musical family. He is back to the stage after his last production "Troubled Island" with Opera in the Rock. (2018) Wade is a choir and music instructor at J.A. Fair K-8 Preparatory Academy. He serves as the Minister of Music at The Worship Center COGIC and as the Choir Coordinator for the 2nd Jurisdiction of Arkansas State Choir. He is a Spring '16 initiate into the Rho Gamma Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America Inc. Wade is the proud director of his choir "Ricky Wade & Promise" and he looks forward to beautiful musical moments within The Black Nativity.

In Memoriam



DARIUS NELSON

For this year, Actors Theatre of Little Rock's production of Black Nativity is centered on a family that is spending their first Christmas without a cherished loved one. That experience is all too familiar now as we mourn the loss and celebrate the life of cast member Darius Nelson, a father, husband, son, and spiritual leader in our community. His presence is missed, but forever felt through the vibrant and blessed life he has lived and the gifts and joy he has shared with others.

WHO'S WHO

CAELON COLBERT

Co-Director

Caelon Colbert is excited to direct Black Nativity with Actors Theatre of Little Rock alongside Dariane this year! Last seen in ATLR's production of Sweeney Todd. He recently served as the director of 13: The Musical, choreographer for The Color Purple, and is a host for Cast Party Cabaret at The Studio Theatre. Also, he is a teaching artist with ACT II's education program. Other favorite performance credits include: Rent (Mark), Godspell (Jesus), The Spongebob Musical (Patrick Star), Shrek the Musical (Shrek), Sister Act (Eddie Souther), The Little Mermaid (Sebastian), and Into the Woods (Jack). He is directing Spring Awakening and Dreamgirls in ATLR's upcoming Season 2!

DARIANE LYJOI MULL

Co-Director

Dariane LyJoi Mull M.Ed. MPS is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the Clinton School of Public Service and is the Drama Teacher at Pinnacle View Middle School. Directing this show for the second year in a row has been such a blessing, and even more so to have this opportunity to work alongside her best friend as co-directors. Before taking on this project, she most recently was the assistant director for One Ninth and assistant stage manager for Bring It On the Musical at Argenta Community Theatre. She could last be seen on stage in Rent (Ensemble u/s Joanne) and her past credits include scenic designer and producer for Skeleton Crew, The Color Purple (Sofia), Next to Normal (Diana), stage manager for 13: the Musical, Memphis (Ethel/Bessie), Sound of Music (Nonnberg Nun), Spongebob the Musical (Karen), and Songs for a New World (Woman 1). Actors Theatre of Little Rock has been a labor of love and she's proud to be co-founder and board president as we see how ATLR will continue to grow.

LAMAR JAMERSON

Stage Manager

Lamar Jamerson is excited and blessed to be the Stage Manager for Black Nativity! Lamar is a military brat who grew up to love acting, singing, dancing and writing at such a young age. You may have seen him in his last performance in Actors Theatre of Little Rock's production of "Sweeney Todd" (Ensemble, U/S Sweeney Todd & Judge Turpin) and the Argenta Community Theater's production of "RENT" (Tom Collins). Lamar has been seen in productions like Hairspray (Seaweed), at Murry's Dinner Playhouse, Twelfth Night (Duke Orsino) during Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre's Fall Tour, as well as Clybourne Park (Albert/Kevin), at the Weekend Theater in Little Rock. Lamar also toured in Upstate New York with Shake On The Lake in productions of Richard III (Richmond) 2018 and As You Like It (Orlando) in 2019. "I just want to thank the people who have seen my light onstage, and off the stage in the real world. I love you, Todd Breaux. Your light and support has made me the better person and performer that I am becoming today."

TYRANNI HUBBARD

Asst. Stage Manager

Tyranni is elated to be a part of this year's production of Black Nativity! She was most recently seen on stage at Argenta Community Theatre in One Ninth (Minniejean Brown), and her other credits with ATLR include Bright Star (Margo Crawford) and As You Like It (Amiens/Audrey). Tyranni would like to thank God and her family for their support! Enjoy the show and Merry Christmas!

WHO'S WHO

MONICA BERNARD

Producer

Monica is excited to be making her producers debut here at ATLR. She is a Louisiana native, currently resides in Little Rock, Arkansas. She is a retired US Armed Forces veteran of 22 years. She has two beautiful sons, Amari and Austin. Monica holds a B.S. in Psychology, enjoys helping others and is very passionate about her advocacy work. She served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate with Pulaski County and was also a National Victim Advocate for victims of domestic and sexual abuse, certified through NACA for four years. Her most recent credits include an acting debut with Argenta Community Theatre where she played Imogene Brown in the historical play One Ninth. She has also stage managed Skeleton Crew (Ozark Living Newspaper Theatre Company/ATLR), The Color Purple (The Studio Theatre), & Black Nativity (ATLR). Also, she worked as backstage crew during Kinky Boots and 13: The Musical (The Studio Theatre). She hopes everyone enjoys this beautiful Christmas story and thanks them for their support.

MARK A. BURBANK

Producer

Mark A. Burbank is a multi-hyphenate creative (producer/ director/ performer/designer), educator, and activist. They hail from Little Rock, AR, but have directed, performed, and taught around the country. Mark is also the Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director of Actors Theatre of Little Rock. Mark 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. Mark 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. Mark 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). Mark is a graduate of the University of Central Arkansas.

SPECIAL THANKS

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Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church, Matthew Sewell, Jake Coffman, Taylor Fulgham, Erica Brooks, Elvis and Angela Mull, Elvis Mull Jr., Tylen Loring, Portia S. Jones, Reilly Heffer, Austin Bernard, Mark A. Burbank, Georgeann Burbank, Arkansas Repertory Theatre, The Studio Theatre, Argenta Community Theatre, KARK 4, KATV 7, Pinnacle View Middle School Drama Program, The Mull Family, The Owens Family

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