



# PLAYBILL

A graphic featuring a bright starburst with a long vertical line extending downwards, set against a dark purple background with scattered white stars. Below the starburst are several soft, white, ethereal clouds. The title "BLACK NATIVITY" is overlaid on this graphic in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

# BLACK NATIVITY

WRITTEN BY **LANGSTON HUGHES**

DIRECTED BY **CAELON COLBERT &  
DARIANE LYJOI MULL**

**DECEMBER 23**

ROBINSON CENTER  
MUSICI HALL

 [actorstheatrelr.org](http://actorstheatrelr.org)

   [actorstheatrelr](https://www.tiktok.com/@actorstheatrelr)

**ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK**

PRESENTS

# BLACK NATIVITY

WITH

Valerie Benton  
Angelica Glass  
Carmen Edwards  
B. Cordell Piggee  
Twanda House

Torres De'von Eskew  
Tylen Loring  
Tyranni Hubbard  
Tristan Kemp  
Spencer Elizabeth Steward  
Warren L. Booker, Jr.

Kristen Phantazia Smith  
Ricky D. Wade  
Valerie Foster  
Austin Bernard  
Somerlyn Mason  
Courtney "Coco" Briggs

**Music Supervision,  
Orchestrations, Arrangements**

B. Cordell Piggee

**Costume Design**

Caelon Colbert

**Stage Manager**

Trey Moore

**Asst. Stage Manager**

Alexandria Brown

**Technical Director**

Sid McGough

**Producers**

Monica Bernard  
Mark A. Burbank

**Co-Directors**

Caelon Colbert & Dariane LyJoi Mull

# CAST

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VALERIE BENTON

ANGELICA GLASS

CARMEN EDWARDS

B, CORDELL PIGGEE

TWANDA HOUSE

TORRES DE'VON ESKEW

TYLEN LORING

TYRANNI HUBBARD

TRISTAN KEMP

SPENCER ELIZABETH STEWARD

WARREN L. BOOKER, JR.

KRISTEN PHANTAZIA SMITH

RICKY D. WADE

VALERIE FOSTER

AUSTIN BERNARD

SOMERLYN MASON

COURTNEY "COCO" BRIGGS

# PRODUCTION/CREATIVE

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Producer..... MONICA BERNARD  
Producer.....MARK A. BURBANK  
Director..... CAELON COLBERT  
Director..... DARIANE LYJOI MULL  
Music Supervision,  
Orchestrations, Arrangements..... B. CORDELL PIGGEE  
Stage Manager..... TREY MOORE  
Asst. Stage Manager..... ALEXANDRIA BROWN  
Technical Director..... SID MCGOUGH  
Costume Designer..... CAELON COLBERT

## BAND

Keys..... MARQUIS BLAKE  
Drums/Percussion..... ZACH BARNES  
Guitar..... JAVANI SANDERS  
Bass..... CALEB MCKISSIC  
Saxophone..... DANA MCEWEN, PHILIP MOUTON

# WHO'S WHO

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## VALERIE BENTON

Valerie Eastman Benton (she/her) is again elated to be a part of Actors Theatre of Little Rock in their production, *Black Nativity* - her third run with this show. She most recently appeared as a part of the adult ensemble with Argenta Contemporary Theatre in *A Christmas Story, the Musical*. Other credits include the Soloist in *The Color Purple*. Valerie is the Theater and Yearbook educator at Jacksonville Middle School where she has the grand opportunity to instill creativity in her students. For fun, Valerie enjoys time with family, running, reading, and researching anything that she doesn't know. She graciously thanks her family for all their support while following her passion for theater.



## ANGELICA GLASS

Angelica is overjoyed to return to *Black Nativity*! A proud Monticello, AR native now residing in Pine Bluff, Angelica is a graduate of the University of Arkansas, where she studied psychology and music performance. By day, she serves as a Human Resources professional in pediatric healthcare, but her heart belongs to the stage. Her past roles include Justice Charlier (*Rock of Ages*), Nicki (*The Bodyguard*), Violet Newstead (9 to 5: *The Musical*), and Deloris Van Cartier (*Sister Act*). Angelica is passionate about sharing her God-given talents and considers every performance an opportunity to inspire and connect with audiences. She is grateful to be part of this production and hopes it uplifts everyone who experiences it.



## CARMEN EDWARDS

Carmen Edwards is thrilled to return to the stage ready to inspire and entertain through her latest role as Marian Brown-Mercer. Previous credits include *Dreamgirls* (Michelle) and *Church Lady* (*The Color Purple*) along with many other performances. Giving all glory to God and special thanks to her family, friends, and church family. enjoy the show!



## B. CORDELL PIGGEE

B. Cordell Piggee is excited to be on stage again with ATR and serve as Music Director. 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.

# WHO'S WHO

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## TWANDA HOUSE

Twanda House is ecstatic to make her third appearance with ATLR!!! Having sat in the co-director's seat for *Black Nativity* and *The Prodigal Son* (St. John Missionary Baptist Church), she made her acting debut in *Black Nativity* (ATLR: Season One) and returned to the stage once again in Chicago (ATLR: Season Two). She is delighted to reprise her role as Desiree once again and cannot wait for all the new and exciting experiences ahead. Twanda is a Systems Administrator for Dillard's Inc. and enjoys singing in her church choir, game nights with family and friends, and spending time with her husband, Jarred and their fur baby, Edison.



## TORRES DE'VON ESKEW

Torres De'von is a native of Little Rock, Arkansas. He is excited to share his passion and love for the arts with Central Arkansas. Torres attended the Historical Black University, TheWiley University in Marshall, Texas. Torres De'von is an Author, Educator and Philanthropist. Torres De'von was award a Spotlight Award in the 2024 Southwest Theatre Conference for his portrayal of Robert "Bobby" Marrow II in *Choir Boy*. His theatre credits include; Walter Lee Younger (*A Raisin in the Sun*), Jonas (Langston Hughes's *Black Nativity*) Robert "Bobby" Marrow II (*Choir Boy*). "Proverbs 18:16; a man's gift market room for him and bringeth him before great men."Torres De'von dedicates his performance to his parents Derek & (The Late) Krissy Eskew, his Twin Brother Dr. Tavorres Eskew and to Jack Robey's Class of 2023. co



## TYLEN LORING

Tylen Loring is so grateful to be back on stage for his 3rd year with ATLR in *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 Gabe in *Next to Normal*, Bobby in *The Color Purple*, Judah in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Ernst Röbel in *Spring Awakening*, Yoyo in *Psycho Beach Party* and most recently Janet in *Rocky Horror*. Now, he is thankful to be spreading this christmas joy with the amazing cast and crew.

# WHO'S WHO

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## TYRANNI HUBBARD

Tyranni is thrilled to perform with ATLR once again! She was most recently seen in Annie as Grace Farrell, and her previous credits include The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Esmeralda), Beautiful: The Carole King Musical (Shirelle/Little Eva), and One Ninth (MinnieJean Brown). As a graduate from Ouachita Baptist University, Tyranni is degreed with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, and she is passionate about acting, singing, directing, and teaching fine arts. In her free time she enjoys volunteering in the children's ministry at St. Mark Baptist Church, exploring the outdoors, and spending time with her family. She would like to thank God and her family for their support. Enjoy the show and Merry Christmas!



## TRISTAN KEMP

Tristan is a dynamic 12-year-old actor and model who has been performing since age 5. With appearances in several commercials, plays, and short films, he also models for Dillard's. This is his second year starring as Joshua in the Black Nativity play, where he brings his big personality and even bigger heart to the stage. In addition to his passion for acting, he stays active as a member of his school's football, track, and basketball teams at Central Arkansas Christian. Whether performing or competing, he is dedicated, talented, and full of energy.



## SPENCER ELIZABETH STEWARD

Spencer Elizabeth Steward (she/her) is a Westwind School for the Performing Arts seventh grader. She is elated to be back at ATLR. Her prior roles included Deloris Van Cartier (Sister Act Jr.) Young Asaka (Once on This Island), Fregley (Diary of a Wimpy Kid), When Spencer isn't performing on stage, she indulges in various artistic pursuits, including sewing, drawing, singing, and dancing. Spencer wants to thank her family and friends for their continued love and support.



## WARREN L. BOOKER, JR.

Warren L. Booker, Jr is a proud Packingtown/Pine Bluff native. He began his acting career early in life. His acting resume is quite extensive and includes Stage plays, Writing, Directing, Short Films, Feature Films, Commercials and Voice-overs. Most recently, Warren was voted "Best Actor" and "Best Filmmaker" for Urbane Magazine's Finest of 2024. He also just wrapped "Dreamgirls" this month as Marty Madison. This year, he also co-wrote and directed "There's a Stranger in Town" stage play at Second Baptist Church. "The Black Nativity" was his debut performance with (Actor's Theatre of Little Rock) and Warren is excited to resume his role as Elijah for a second time. equally ecstatic about his role as Marty in this production of "Dreamgirls"! Warren has adopted the following quote: "Popcorn is cooked 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! Be Blessed and Stay in the Pot!!!

# WHO'S WHO

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## KRISTEN PHANTAZIA SMITH

Kristen Phantazia Smith (she/her) is blessed to be gracing the ATR stage again this winter. After returning to performing a couple of years ago with a deep love of performing rooted in her heart, she has shifted her focus to prioritize showcasing Black excellence and integrating it into majority & historically white spaces through her passion and in her profession. Representation matters. Both in the works that are brought to the stage and in the people that make the work come alive. Kris is proud to help communities see themselves reflected on stages across central Arkansas, and to pour into local artists off stage reminding them that they belong, just as they are. To her Dad: 'I know your view of the stage is perfect from your seat in heaven. Your memory will forever be deep in my soul and laced in my songs. I love you.' Some of her favorite recent theatre credits include: Roxie Hart (Chicago - ATR), Shirelles (Beautiful - ACT), Joanne (Rent - ACT), and Cinderella (Cinderella - ACT). 'Life's not as bad as it may seem if you open your eyes to what's in front of you.' Dream no more, we're here. Enjoy the show!



## RICKY D. WADE

Born in Clarksdale, MS (raised in North Little Rock, AR)- Wade was provided with an adaptable upbringing. Though Gospel music raised him, he credits the expansion of his approach & creativity to his mother. It was she who allowed him to experiment by listening to other genres of music; a rarity in some Black- Christian households. His father, a recording artist & musician, influenced his choice of becoming an artist. By way of his father, it was around 10 years old that Wade experienced his first studio- recording session. As a young child, he knew that he would be a part of the industry some day. Growing up, he modeled after Daryl Coley, Tonex, The Winans, Torry & Todd Dulaney, Jonathan Nelson, Usher, Anthony Hamilton, and Chris Brown. As an adult, he adds Kim Burrell, Jason Nelson, and PJ Morton to his list of current influences.



## VALERIE FOSTER

Valarie Janell Foster is a wife, mother of three, and a proud native of Little Rock. A graduate of Philander Smith University, Valarie has had a lifelong connection to the arts, beginning with her involvement in theater during her high school years at Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School, where she played Aunt Em in *The Wiz* and performed in *Pippin*. Her stage credits include roles in *The Wiz* and *Ain't Misbehavin'* at The Weekend Theatre, as well as background vocals for *The Color Purple* presented by Second Baptist Worship and Arts Ministry and *The Wiz Revised* by Drummerboi Infinity. Valarie is also a dedicated member of the Little Rock Gospel group, Psalm 150. Valarie currently serves as the Director of Choirs at Dunbar Magnet Middle School and the Minister of Music at The Place of Harvest Church, sharing her love of music with the next generation. "Shout out to my family and all that came out to support this wonderful show!! Always remember to do what you love and love what you do!!"

# WHO'S WHO

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## AUSTIN BERNARD

Austin is excited to be performing at ATR again. He is a member of ACT's Pre-Professional Company. Recent credits include: Ensemble (Black Nativity), Charlie (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory), Richie (13 the Musical), Young Agwe (Once On This Island), Pugsley (Addams Family), Young Simon (Kinky Boots). And Children's Chorus (Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat).



## SOMERLYN MASON

Somerlyn is a multi-talented performer with a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts, covering Science, General Education, and Visual and Performing Arts. Recently, she made a memorable debut as Church Lady (Darlene) in "The Color Purple." By profession, Somerlyn is a dedicated second-grade teacher, but her passion for performing arts has been evident since she started singing solos at the tender age of 2, inspired by her talented musician parents. She actively serves on the praise team at New Hope Baptist Church. Currently, Somerlyn is showcasing her talents as a Stepp Sister and a member of Les Styles in the stage production of "Dreamgirls," and she's also gaining valuable experience on the production side of the show. Her diverse experiences and profound love for the arts drive her to seek out her dream role, one that will allow her to display her versatility across genres, from comedy to drama. With a rich background in both education and performance, Somerlyn is poised to make a significant impact in the world of acting.



## COURTNEY "COCO" BRIGGS

Courtney "Coco" Briggs (she/her) is a native of Fredericksburg, VA, but mostly growing up in a rural area, Helena-West Helena, AR. She currently lives in Little Rock, AR. She is a dedicated singer and performer who loves to touch others through her gift of song. She recently made her theatrical debut starring as Effie White in Dreamgirls.

# WHO'S WHO

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## CAELON COLBERT

Director

Caelon Colbert is a native Little Rock actor, singer, teacher, and director. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre at Arkansas State University in 2021. He is a student of Lindsey Mendez and Ryan Scott Oliver's Actor Therapy. He has a passion for enlivening and advocating for youth and marginalized groups in the arts. Director of the 2023 BroadwayWorld Arkansas Best Production for Young Audiences for 13: The Musical at The Studio Theatre. Recent production credits include: director of Spring Awakening & Black Nativity (Actors Theatre of Little Rock), director of Once On This Island (The Studio Theatre), choreographer of The Color Purple (The Studio Theatre.) Favorite acting credits include: Jesus (Godspell), Patrick Star (The SpongeBob Musical), Mark Cohen (RENT), Anthony Hope (Sweeney Todd), Shrek (Shrek the Musical), Sebastian (Disney's The Little Mermaid) & Jack (Into the Woods).

## DARIANE LYJOI MULL

Director

DARIANE LYJOI MULL, a native of Little Rock, is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the Clinton School of Public Service earning a BA in Theatre Arts, Masters of Public Service, and a Masters of Education in Secondary Education. She is now the Drama Teacher at Pinnacle View Middle School and co-founder and board president of Actors Theatre of Little Rock. She was last seen on stage in Hello Dolly (First Cook/Ensemble) with Arkansas Repertory Theatre, and prior to that, Rent (Ensemble u/s Joanne) with Argenta Contemporary Theatre, and The Color Purple (Sofia), & Next to Normal (Diana) at Studio Theatre. Outside of acting, her most recent projects include stage managing and scenic designing What the Constitution Means to Me (Actors Theatre of Little Rock), co-directing Hunchback of Notre Dame (Royal Theatre), assistant directing and scenic design for Once On This Island (Studio Theatre), co-directing Black Nativity (Actors Theatre of Little Rock) and assistant directing One-Ninth (Argenta Contemporary Theatre). She is incredibly honored to play another one of her "dream" roles and looks forward to continuing to claim space for Black Women here in our theatre community.

## TREY MOORE

Stage Manager

Trey Moore is a resident of Arkansas and is proud to take on this show was their first project with ATLR. Trey received their Bachelors of Art in Theatre from Arkansas State University and is now working on their Masters in College Student Personnel at the University of Central Arkansas. Trey would like to thank ATLR for this fantastic opportunity and is excited to take on many more projects with them in the future.

# WHO'S WHO

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## **MARK A. BURBANK**

Executive Producing Artistic Director

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.

## **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 ATR, Sid is dedicated to supporting and enhancing the theatre's artistic vision and its commitment to fearless works. Sid's recent projects with ATR include Lighting Design for Dance Nation, Lighting Design for What the Constitution Means to Me, and Prop Design for Chicago.

## **JAKE COFFMAN**

Graphic 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

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Pinnacle View Middle School

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## ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK STAFF

Mark A. Burbank, **Executive Producing Artistic Director**  
Sid McGough, **Technical Director**  
Jake Coffman, **Graphic Designer**

## INVEST IN THE ARTS!

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All donations are tax deductible and welcome at any time.

They can be made by check to ACTORS THEATRE OF LITTLE ROCK or by emailing [info@actorstheatrelr.org](mailto:info@actorstheatrelr.org). We can also be found on PayPal and Venmo.

# BECOME A SPONSOR!

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Sponsoring comes with perks such as performance tickets, advertisements in our playbills, cross promotion marketing, and more!

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# BECOME A SPONSOR!

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# BRIGHTEN THE STAGE CAMPAIGN

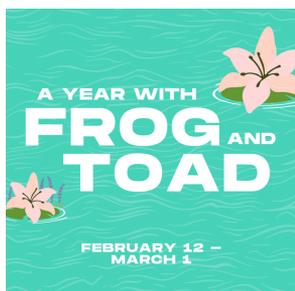
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