WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR PRESENTS

MARUIN GAYE PRINCE GAYE OF SOUL

CREATED & ADAPTED BY NATE JACOBS

Costume Designer **Darci Collins**

Wig Designer **Dominique Freeman**

Properties Designer **Annette Breazeale**

Scenic Designer & Technical Director Roland Black Production Manager **Kevin White**

Production Stage Manager

Juanita Munford*
Assistant Stage

Managers
Tianna Harris &
KaCie Lev*

Lighting Designer **Michael Pasquini**

Sound Designer Patrick Russini

Projections Designer **Austin Jacobs**

Music Director

Matthew McKinnon

Choreographer

Donald Frison

Director

Nate Jacobs

April 17-May 26, 2024







CAST

Ariel Blue	Mama Gay/Ensemble
Brian L. Boyd	Frankie Gaye
Jada Carson	Ensemble
Jazzmin Carson	Kim Weston/Ensemble
Jonathan Isaac	Ensemble/ u/s Marvin Gaye
Michael Kinsey	Papa Gay
LaKesha Lorene*	Anna Gordy/Ensemble
Delores McKenzie	Ensemble/ u/s Tammi Terrell
Michael Mejia-Mendez*	Stevie Wonder/Ensemble
Raleigh Mosely II	Ensemble/ u/s Frankie Gaye
Amber Myers	Ensemble/ u/s Kim Weston
Avery LaMar Pope	Ensemble
Sheldon Rhoden	
Jai Shanae*	Tammi Terrell/Ensemble
Terry Spann	Berry Gordy
Emerald Rose Sullivan*	Janis Gaye/Ensemble

^{*}Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

MUSICIANS

Our live band plays backstage!

Matthew McKinnon	Music Director/ Main Keys
Jamar Camp	Auxiliary Keys
Dan Haedicke	Guitar
Jordon Henry	Bass
Henley Connor III	Drums

SPECIAL THANKS

Leya Black—Scenic Artist
Fabulous Finds benefitting The Pines of Sarasota

WBTT TEAM

Founder & Artistic Director	Nate Jacobs
Executive Director	Julie Leach
Education and Outreach Associate	Peterly Jean Baptiste
Development Associate	Regina Belvin
Technical Director	Roland Black
Artist Relations Associate & Assistant Box	x Office Manager Ariel Blue
Resident Properties Manager	Annette Breazeale
Stage Hand	Kiamani Canady
Resident Seamstress	Darci Collins
Properties Intern	Jayde Dauley
Development Director	Debra Flynt-Garrett
Resident Choreographer	Donald Frison
Receptionist & Box Office Associate	
Finance Manager	Robert Grant
Marketing And Communications Director	Beth Graves
Production Assistant	Tianna Harris
Sound Assistant	Austin Jacobs
Resident Sound Engineer	Alexander Judd
Custodian	
Box Office Associate	
House AssociatesS	
Resident Music Director	
House Associate/Stage Hand	Mydra McKinnon
House Manager	_
Box Office Manager	
Resident Stage Manager	
Resident Lighting Designer	
Wardrobe Manager	
Marketing Associate	_
Assistant to Seamstress	
Resident Sound Designer	
Resident Guest Director	
Education Director & Artistic Associate	
Production Manager	
Assistant to the Artistic Director &	Donovan Whitney
Casting Coordinator	Saucha Augustina
Photography	
Media Relations Sharon Kunkel	
Graphic Design	
Videography	wagy/bill wagy Productions

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I'm overjoyed that we are bringing back one of the most popular and signature original shows we've ever staged at WBTT—Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul. The talented and incomparable Sheldon Rhoden is reprising the title role, marking over a decade of memorable performances with us. Many other WBTT favorites join him in this phenomenal cast. After inviting Sheldon into my company many years ago I immediately recognized his unique talent. Casting him in an original revue entitled Soulful Duets of the 70s, he was assigned two Marvin Gaye songs and every night he came onstage to sing them, the women would go wild. It was also evident to me that Sheldon was clueless about the natural magnetism he had and conveyed onstage.

When the show closed I was inspired to write a full musical production called *Marvin Gaye: A Man and His Music*. The show would star our new singer Sheldon Rhoden. To his surprise I met with him privately at the theatre to inform him of the new show. He was totally taken aback but accepted the opportunity. Little did either one of us know the popularity, excitement, and legacy we were creating. The show opened to rave reviews and incited immediate interest and adoration for Sheldon. He embraced it with humility and grace which made our audiences love and appreciate him even more.

I am excited to bring Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul back to the stage this season. It features a more mature, seasoned, and confident Sheldon Rhoden, a stellar supporting cast, and the multitalented music director Matthew McKinnon conducting our Marvin Gaye band. Sheldon is a wonderful artist who represents the brand of WBTT, a homegrown native of our community who found his voice and honed his talent and has embraced the incredible support and mentorship. Many of our artists have benefited from this show and it has helped propel them to their dreams and professional careers.

It gives me great joy to bring Sheldon and this show back to the stage. I can truly say it has been an immensely rewarding experience to work with this phenomenal man. Open your hearts, minds, and spirits as we celebrate one of the most iconic singers and songwriters of all time. Although the Prince of Soul is no longer with us, his music and legacy lives on. It's our hope that telling his story through his songs will move you as much as when you first heard Marvin Gaye's voice.

-Nate Jacobs

Sheldon Rhoden as Marvin Gaye, 2011

THANK YOU TO OUR PRODUCTION SPONSORS!

PRESENTING SPONSORS

Ali & Gloria Bahaj Dr. Phil & Suzan Gaynes The Koffman Family

LEADING SPONSORS

Carole & Gary Booher
Kitty & John Cranor
The Exchange
Nancy & Tom Flanagan
Rita Greenbaum
Michele Hooper & Lemuel Seabrook
Dr. Donald & Doris Johnson
Pat Kordis
Marian Moss
Cecil & Shirley Pickett
Rose Marie Proietti
Sheldon Roden
Dr. Bob & Beth Scheible
Jim & Charlie Ann Syprett

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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

Stubborn Kind of Fellow (M. Gaye-M. Stevenson-G. Gordy)Ensemble
It's a Highway to Heaven (A. Dorsey-A. Bradford) Underscore
He Doesn't Hate You (N. Jacobs-J. Dodge)
His Eye is On the Sparrow (C. Martin-C. Gabriel)
I've Got the World on a String (H. Arlen-T. Koehler) Marvin Gaye
Honey Love (C. McPhatter- J. Wexler)
Cry (C. Kohlman)Marvin Gaye & The DC Tones
Hey Little School Girl (E. McDaniel-R. Palmer-M. Ames) The Marquees
Wyatt Earp (E. McDaniel-R. Palmer-M, Ames)The Marquees
Mama Loochie (H. Fuqua-M. Gaye) The Moonglows
Mr. Sandman (P. Ballard)
Too Busy Thinking About My Baby
Stubborn Kind of Fellow
Too Busy Thinking About My Baby (Reprise) Women Ensemble (M. Whitfield-J. Bradford-B. Strong)
Fingertips (C. Paul-H. Cosby)Stevie Wonder
Can I Get A Witness
Pride and Joy
How Sweet it Is (To Be Loved by You)
Ain't That Peculiar

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT TWO

I Heard It Through the Grapevine
It Takes Two (S. Moy-W. Stevenson) Marvin Gaye & Kim Weston
It's Me (B. Gordy JrS. Robinson)Marvin Gaye & Kim Weston
Ain't No Mountain High Enough Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell (N. Ashford-B. Simpson)
Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell (N. Ashford-B. Simpson)
What You Gave Me
Your Precious Love
What's Going On
Yesterday (J. Lennon-P. McCartney)Marvin Gaye & Tammi Terrell
Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology) (M. Gaye)Marvin Gaye & Ensemble
Inner City Blues (Makes Me Wanna Holler) Marvin Gaye & Ensemble (M. Gaye-J. Nyx)
Whatever Happened to Motown? (N. Jacobs-J. Dodge) Ensemble
Let's Get It On (M. Gaye-E. Townsend)Marvin Gaye & Ensemble
When Did You Stop Loving Me, When Did I Stop Loving You
I Want You (A. Ross-L. Ware)Marvin Gaye & Ensemble
Star Spangled Banner (F.S. Key-J.S. Smith) Marvin Gaye
Sexual Healing (D. Ritz-O. Brown-M. Gaye) Marvin Gaye & Ensemble
Distant Lover (G. Gordy Fuqua-M. Gaye-S. Greene) Marvin Gaye
Frankie's Song (N. Jacobs) Frankie Gaye & Ensemble
If I Should Die Tonight (M. Gaye-E. Townsend)



NATE JACOBS* (Director, Founder/Artistic Director) is Westcoast Black
Theatre Troupe's Founder & Artistic Director. He is a driving force in Florida's theatre scene. A graduate of Florida A&M University, Nate founded

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in 1999. He has written, composed, directed and performed in many shows, as an actor, singer, dancer and comedian. He works extensively in the community, training and mentoring youth in the performing arts. As a result of his outstanding contributions to young people, the Sarasota County Branch NAACP Youth Council recognized Nate as one of its 2012 Men of Valor. In the spring of 2013, he was inducted into the Community Video Archives Hall of Fame for his significant contributions to the arts and education. In 2015, Nate was recognized as a Champion of Diversity for the arts during the Biz (941) and La Guia magazines' Unity Awards Luncheon, and was honored with the prestigious Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award during the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C., "for his contributions to Black theatre specifically and American theatre in general." In 2017, Goodwill Manasota named him a Community Ambassador of the Year. In 2018, the Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County honored Nate with the Arts Leadership Award for Artistic Achievement. In 2021 Nate received the Perfect Pitch Award from Key Chorale, which recognized him as a driving force in the arts and for his collaborations with other arts organizations, including American Roots: The Gospel Experience, a series of concert performances with WBTT performers and Key Chorale presented in three area churches in the fall of 2019. In August 2022 he brought Soul Crooners, Featuring Sistas in the Name of Soul to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. – WBTT's fifth appearance there. He was featured in The New York Times in December 2021, in an article highlighting his mentorship and leadership, as well as WBTT's community outreach.



DONALD FRISON

(Choreographer)
An accomplished
choreographer, dancer
and singer for over
30 years, Donald has
enjoyed great success. He
was a dancer for the NBA
Memphis Grizzlies Dance

Team and a five-time champion on the syndicated talent competition television show Star Search with Ed McMahon. His theatre credits as a performer include Dreamgirls, Ain't Misbehavin', Five Guys Named Moe, Cats, It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues and The Music Man. For WBTT he choreographed Your Arms Too Short to Box with God in 2020, among many other shows throughout several seasons. "As WBTT's Resident Choreographer I strive to keep the vision growing," Donald says. "I've been fortunate to have had my work showcased at the National Black Theatre Festival with two shows, How I Got Over and Soul Man. I am so proud and honored to be part of such an amazing company with a wonderful vision. Thank you, Nate, cast and creative and Julie, for trusting me and my gift. Thank you to the staff and trustees for all your love and support. I thank God for blessing me with a gift to give to the world. May God bless all of you!"



MATTHEW MCKINNON

(Music Director)
Matthew is proud to be on the WBTT team as its resident music director.
Being no stranger to the theater scene, Matthew has had the opportunity to music direct several

productions including Broadway in Black, for which he won the Broadway World Award for Best Music Direction, Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue, Langston Hughes' Black Nativity, Fame, Joyful! Joyful!, and others. Matthew's love of music started as a child; he began studying the cello at the age of 5. He was accepted into Berklee College of Music and also attended Florida A&M University for B.A. in Music Education with emphasis in choral conducting. Matthew has been a composer, arranger, and director for many solo artists, groups, bands, and gospel choirs. He has performed/accompanied and shared the stage with great entertainers such as Jennifer Holliday, Melba Moore,

^{*} Member of Actors' Equity Association (AEA), the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

Kirk Franklin, Jill Scott, Chester Gregory, and others. Matthew is also an award nominated recording artist under the name *Matt Mykel* with his music being distributed now on all digital platforms. He is a proud husband and married to his lovely wife, Nilaja who he calls Sunny.



ARIEL BLUE (Mama Gay)—a well-known member of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was recently featured in *Motherless* in New York and at WBTT. She was also featured in *The* Know Women (Sarasota)

magazine, and was last seen in WBTT's Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue. Her many appearances on the WBTT stage include Black Nativity, Sistas in the Name of Soul, A Motown Christmas, The Amen Corner, Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul, and Soul Man. She has produced two of her own one-woman shows, most recently. The Bluelight Special. Ariel has worked consistently with WBTT since her breakout role in Ain't Misbehavin' in 2010. Other memorable shows include Little Shop of Horrors, Dreamgirls, Avenue Q, The Wiz, It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues, All Shook Up, Disenchanted, Love Sung in the Key of Aretha, and Beehive: The Musical. Ariel has been fortunate to perform at the National Black Theatre Festival with WBTT in 3 productions: How I Got Over (2017), Soul Man (2019), Light Up The Night (2022). She has performed as a vocalist in the Connelli Circus in Switzerland and with the Florida Studio Theatre Improv. Ariel was also a contributing performer for the Sarasota-Manatee community's Suffragist Project in 2020. She is a graduate of Stetson University with a major in communications and a minor in theatre. In addition to performing, Ariel is an Aunt to two wonderful humans: Hovan & Hadara. www. simplyarielblue.com / IG: @simplyarielblue.



BRIAN L. BOYD (Frankie Gaye) was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale, FL, and now resides in Atlanta, GA. He is a graduate of Florida A&M University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Performance.

Brian was voted BroadwayWorld's Vocalist of the Decade for Sarasota in 2020.

He presented his WBTT Young Artist Program, A Rhapsody Revelation in 2019. His WBTT appearances include A Soldier's Play, Dreamgirls, Guys and Dolls, Eubie!, Caroline, or Change, The Amen Corner, Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul, Raisin, The Mountaintop, A Motown Christmas, In The Heights, Broadway In Black, Dearly Departed, Black Nativity, and How I Got Over: A Tribute to Mahalia Jackson. Brian performed with the troupe at the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. in 2017. Other regional credits include Ragtime (Midtown Arts Center, CO.), Dreamgirls (Lone Tree Arts Center, CO.), Smokey Joe's Cafe (The Legacy Theatre, GA), and Motones vs. Jerseys (Washington, D.C.). Brian's film work includes Co-Pilot, Spare Me, and Bridge To The Other Side, which you can find on Amazon Prime. Brian is the Co-Director of M.A.D. Music Acting Dance Inc. with fellow artist Brentney J., and is the artistic director of his own company, The Enigma Artistic Experience. www.musicactingdance.com.



JADA CARSON

(Ensemble) is a recent graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design where she obtained a BFA in Acting. During her time at SCAD, along with being a part of different film sets, Jada

performed in BAM! Celebrating Black Artists in Music for 2 years, Antony and Cleopatra: The Experiment, and SCAD's mainstage production of School Girls; or, The African Mean Girls Play, She has been involved in the arts most of her life, beginning at the age of 7 in her church's choir, participating in show choir for three years, and then being accepted into the Alabama All State Honor Choir. During her time in Gonzales, LA, she made stage appearances in Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr. (Flounder), Disney's The Lion King Jr. (Rafiki), Shrek, The Musical Jr. (Dragon), She also appeared in The Color Purple (Doris) in Meridian, MS. Jada is excited to perform with her fellow artists and be a part of this amazing production!



JAZZMIN CARSON (Kim Weston/Ensemble) is delighted to be in her sixth production at Westcoast Black Theater Troupe! Her credits include performances such as Erzulie, the Goddess of Love in Once

on This Island, ensemble in Dreamgirls, Joyful! Joyful!, and WBTT's premiere of Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue, portraying the role of Henrietta Hash! A graduate of Alabama State University's Bachelor of Arts program, Jazzmin's collegiate show credits include August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean and Dominique Morriseau's Paradise Blue, where her love for theatre bloomed into what is now her dream and passion. She is a recipient of the Irene Ryan National Acting Scholarship and The College of Fellows Jane Alexander Acting Award, presented by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Jazzmin is thrilled to share the stage with WBTT legends and be a part of this phenomenal production!



JONATHAN ISAAC

(Ensemble/ u/s Marvin Gaye) grew up influenced by a wide range of music. His supportive, single mother ensured he took advantage of great opportunities - leading him to perform before

audiences at an early age. For over two decades, Jonathan's soulful voice has been featured with various groups - both in recordings and on tours - in the DMV region. He has backed mainstream artists from many different genres, led several bands, and performed on main stages across the East Coast (namely festivals, orchestras, and professional theatres). Additionally, he still enjoys opportunities to coach the next generation of artists. Having moved to central Florida, Jonathan happily joined the WBTT family for several productions - including Black Nativity (2016, 2018); Jazz Links: The Harlem Renaissance (2017); and the SCD+WBTT Collab (2023). He is pleased to return to our stage and continue this journey of evolution! Special thanks to the director, staff, friends & family for your unwavering support. You may connect with Jonathan Isaac for bookings and networking via any social platform @contactjisaac.



MICHAEL KINSEY (Papa Gay) Michael Kinsey is a professional portrait and headshot photographer. His award-winning photography has been featured in Inc. Magazine, Sarasota Magazine, Dartmouth Alumni

Magazine, and other publications. Michael's theater work began with this company, working with Nate Jacobs at WBTT's inception as a founding member in 1994. Being a featured performer every season through its first 13 years, Michael has appeared in more than 20 Westcoast Black Theater Troupe productions. Beyond this stage, Michael has worked with Sarasota's Asolo Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, and the Urbanite Theatre. Currently Michael's first photography exhibition, "Views From The New Horizon" has debuted at the Art Center Sarasota to critical acclaim. The exhibition which features some of Michael's dynamic portrait work has been extended and will be traveling to different galleries and venues throughout the city. Michael is also preparing to premiere his third short film, Gloria 19 to local theaters very soon. Kinsey wrote and directed the project. Moving forward, Michael plans to achieve his goal of producing more projects for film and television.



LAKESHA LORENE*

(Anna Gordy/Ensemble) is ecstatic to make her Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe debut in *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul.* Lorene is an actress, producer and creative entrepreneur

and is passionate about the arts and digital content promotion of arts based initiatives. She was last seen on stage as Chelle in Dominique Morisseau's Detroit '67 by The Naptown African American Theatre Collective, in Phoenix Theatre's one-woman show by Dee Dee Batteast, No Aid's No Maids or Stories I Can't F*#%@n' Hear No More, and as "Frances" in the Fonseca Theatre's *Mud Row* by Dominique Morisseau. When she is not onstage, she is producing for her award winning film production company Loving Life Productions LLC (lovinglifeproductions. com) or producing at her newly founded theatre, the Naptown African American Theatre Collective (naatcinc.org). She

would like to thank Nate Jacobs and Donovan Whitney for the opportunity to work with this amazing cast and her family and friends for their loving support. All Glory to the Most High God! (@lakeshalorene)



DELORES MCKENZIE(Ensemble/ u/s Tammi
Terrell) is a singer actres

(Ensemble) U/S fammi Terrell) is a singer, actress, and voice over artist. She was born and raised in Sarasota. She was a principal production singer for Norwegian Cruise Lines for seven

years, traveling to ports from Puerto Rico to Israel. She was recently chosen to be the voice of Royer Studios Anti-Tobacco and Vaping campaign against teen tobacco use. Just to name a few of her theatre credits, Delores has played Sarah in Ragtime, Bess in Porgy and Bess, and Tuptim in The King and I. She appeared previously at WBTT in Eubie, Broadway in Black, and Sistas in The Name of Soul. Delores is thrilled to be working with WBTT again! You can follow her on instagram @Dee tour.



MICHAEL MEJIA-MENDEZ* (Stevie Wonder/Ensemble) is in his 13th season with WBTT. He recently starred in the limited engagement sold out show Harry Belafonte as a tribute to the singer

and activist. A talented actor and singer, Michael received stellar reviews and a Handy Award (Jay Handelman, Herald-Tribune) for his performance as Usnavi in WBTT's 2017 production of In the Heights. He earned rave reviews for his impressive work in Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul, Soul Man and Soul Crooners. He starred as Harry Belafonte in the Troupe's 2014 hit, Harry and Lena, was Seymour in the 2015 blockbuster Little Shop of Horrors and played the title role in 2016's The Wiz. In 2019 he appeared in WBTT's production of Soul Man at the National Black Theatre Festival. He has a featured role in *Playing* Through, a movie about groundbreaking Black golf champion Ann Gregory. In 2014, Michael was awarded a prestigious John Ringling Towers Fund grant in the performing arts category by the Arts & Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County. In January 2019 he was honored with an

Impact Award from Visible Men Academy in the Arts category. The awards "shine a light on visible men...who mentor, educate and inspire underserved boys in our community."



RALEIGH MOSELY II

(Ensemble/ u/s Frankie Gaye) was last featured on WBTT's stage in the holiday production Joyful! Joyful! and in his two sold out performances for his Young Artist Showcase

titled titanium: a soul experience. Mosely was also seen in *Dreamgirls* as Jimmy "Thunder" Early and traveled to North Carolina for WBTT's staging of Soul Crooners featuring Sistas in The Name of Soul at the National Black Theatre Festival in August 2022. Making his WBTT debut in the summer 2017 production of Broadway in Black, Raleigh has appeared in two productions each season since, including Black Nativity, Joyful! Joyful!, Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul, In the Heights, and A Motown Christmas among other shows. Born and raised in Miami, he earned his BFA in musical theatre from the University of Central Florida. His other theatre credits include In the Heights (Orlando Shakes, Theater West End), Violet (Garden Theatre), Ragtime (Titusville Playhouse), Broadbend, Arkansas (Studio Theatre at TDS), Oklahoma (Gulf Coast Symphony) and The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee. Raleigh has music available for streaming, download, and purchase on all corresponding platforms. "God is Love. Love is wealth."



AMBER MYERS

(Ensemble/ u/s Kim Weston) is a Sarasota/ Bradenton native and no stranger to the stage. She received training from Nate Jacobs, Florida Studio Theater, Westcoast Black Theatre

Troupe, and State College of Florida. She has been in productions such as Joyful! Joyful!, Black Nativity, and Arms Too Short to Box With God with WBTT and West Side Story as Rosalia at State College of Florida. She has done work with the Players Theatre and The Urbanite Theater. She was one of four featured artists for the Sarasota Pops Orchestra concert, "Spirit of America".



AVERY LAMAR POPE (Ensemble) is elated to be making his Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe debut! Avery is a storyteller and author from Cleveland, OH. He tells stories through

mediums including:

acting, poetry, music, and playwriting. Acting credits include: Tantrum Theater. Cleveland Play House, Playhouse Square, Great Lakes Theater, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Public Theatre, Dobama Theatre, and Karamu House, Playwriting credits include: Horizon Theatre Company, Dobama Theatre, and First Look Buffalo Theatre Company. As a poet, he has performed on local and national stages. is a founding member of the Sparrow's Fortune Spoken Word Collective, and is a self-published author having released "A Dozen Roses (... and other flowers too)" in 2023. He graduated Cum Laude with a BFA in Performance from Ohio University and is a 2024 Karamu House Room in the House Performing Arts Fellow, a 2024 Cleveland Arts Prize Verge Fellowship Finalist, and a 2022 Nord Family Foundation Playwright Fellowship Finalist. He thanks Nate Jacobs for this opportunity and all of the powerful artists he's blessed to tell this story with. Most of all. Avery is incredibly grateful to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his family, and his close friends for their support. Psalm 91



SHELDON RHODEN

(Marvin Gaye) is a native of Sarasota. He is celebrating 16 years with WBTT since he first took the stage here in 2008. WBTT Founder/Artistic Director Nate Jacobs cast him in 2011 in the title

role in Marvin Gaye: The Man and His Music and again in 2014 in Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul. Sheldon performed in these shows for sold-out audiences, going on to win Herald-Tribune Curtain Call awards in 2011 and 2014. He is thrilled to reprise the role of Marvin Gaye in this production. Sheldon has appeared in many shows with WBTT, including Soul Man, Motown '60s Revue, Dynamic Duets of the '70s, Magnificent Mills Brothers and the Soul Crooners. In April 2014 he premiered his self-directed show, titled Sheldon Sings; his EP "From Boy to MAN" was released the same year.

The biggest highlight of Sheldon's life has been the birth of his first child, Jaydon Roden, born October 31st, 2014.



JAI SHANAE* (Tammi Terrell/Ensemble) is a multi-talented artist native to Tampa, Florida. Jai has been seen and involved in numerous artistic projects, but was most recently seen in Ragtime (American

Stage), The Color Purple (Stageworks Theatre), Mamma Mia (Maples Repertory Theatre), and Guys & Dolls (Westcoast Black Theatre). Other regional credits include: Tammi Terrell in Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul (Westcoast Black Theatre); and a Hunnie in Jelly's Last Jam (National Black Theatre Festival). Jai Shanae also starred in the short film Killer Date Night where you'll also find her vocals on the closing credits soundtrack. Previously majoring in Chorus, Creative Writing, and Musical Theater during her high school years at Howard W. Blake, Jai Shanae wishes to have the platform to provide a safe, artistic space for battered women and children, and put an end to humantrafficking and sexual violence." I am black. I am woman. I am a survivor." @JaiShanae



TERRY SPANN (Berry Gordy) hails from Milwaukee, WI where he began singing and acting at an early age. He is now a passionate performing artist and director. His theater directing credits include Charles Fuller's A

Soldier's Play, August Wilson's Radio Golf, Katori Hall's Hoodoo Love, and Rodger's and Hammerstein's South Pacific! His live performance credits include: Guess Who's Coming To Dinner, Miss Ever's Boys (WATCH Award for Outstanding Featured Actor), Julius Caesar, Arabian Nights, A Raisin In The Sun, Clybourne Park, Jesus Christ Superstar, How to Succeed In Business Without Really Trying, Rent, The Wiz, Parade, Sweet Charity and Hair! He's had a blast working with this amazing cast and crew and thanks his family and friends for their support!



EMERALD ROSE SULLIVAN* (Janis Gaye/ Ensemble) is known for her TV roles on FBI: Most Wanted, The Blacklist and Gotham; Film credits include Paranormal Activity: Next of Kin and Baby Ruby.

Emerald was previously seen in the WBTT productions of *Pipeline*, *The Mountaintop*, *Knock Me A Kiss*, *Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul, The Piano Lesson* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Other theatre credits include *The Mountaintop* at Hattiloo Theatre, *Possessing Harriet* at East Lynne Theatre Company and *Riots: B'Hoys Do Macbeth* at the Metropolitan Playhouse. She received her BA degree in Acting from Pace University. Emerald is thrilled to be playing the role of Janis Gaye for the third time at WBTT!

ROLAND BLACK (Scenic Designer and Technical Director) was born and raised in the great state of Wyoming where he attended the University of Wyoming majoring in Theatre Technical Direction and Lighting Design. Over the past 25 years, Roland has worked as a Designer and Technical Director in educational, corporate and professional theatre. In his current role as WBTT Shop Foreman, Roland constructs the scenic elements for this season's productions. Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul will be Roland's second time designing for the WBTT stage.

ANNETTE BREAZEALE (Properties Designer) is WBTT's Resident Properties Manager. She has designed props for area stages including Banyan Theatre Company and the FSU Conservatory at the Asolo Theatre. In addition, she has worked as art director and production designer for national and international feature films and music videos. She would like to thank Nate Jacobs for the opportunity to work with such a talented and inspirational group of theatre artists.

DARCI COLLINS (Resident Seamstress and Costume Designer) was born and raised in Minnesota. Darci has been working in the theatre industry for 29 years. This is her 5th season at WBTT. She has always known this is what she loves to do. Her passion has led her to work in theatres across the U.S. such as Asolo Repertory Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, and Chanhassen

Dinner Theatre. Some of her favorite shows she has worked on include Eubie! (WBTT), Dreamgirls (WBTT), My Fair Lady (Chaska Valley Family Theatre), Anything Goes (Chanhassen Dinner Theatre), Chicago (Massasoit Community College), and Cabaret (Massasoit Community College). She was nominated for BroadwayWorld's Sarasota Award for Best Costume Design for her work on Eubie! and was recently nominated for WBTT's 2023 production of Dreamgirls. WBTT feels like her family and she is happy to be an employee in a position she loves.

DOMINIQUE FREEMAN (Wig Designer) Creative, versatile, and passionate about her craft, Dominique Freeman has been able to establish herself as a successful stylist over the past 14 years. She received her education from the world-renowned Aveda Institute. Her passion for her craft and clients is what separates her from others. After spending years perfecting her craft, Dominique is now branching into the entertainment world.

TIANNA HARRIS (Assistant Stage Manager) is elated to return as assistant stage manager for Marvin Gaye: Prince of Soul! She previously worked as an ASM in this season's A Soldier's Play and Once on this Island, and last season's Dreamgirls and Flyin' West. She enjoys learning about all the moving parts of theatre and has worked as a stagehand on countless productions. She began working with WBTT when they launched the summer camp intensive program, Stage of Discovery, in 2016. As an alumna of this program, she is no stranger to the stage. She last appeared in WBTT's holiday show Black Nativity. Through her work in theatre Tianna has learned a lot and is delighted to continue her work with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe both on and off stage.

AUSTIN JACOBS (Projections Designer) began his career as an editor assistant in Atlanta, Georgia, honing his skills in editing, writing, and producing under Tammy William (Tammy Del Films). He obtained an on set PA certification from Tammy while attending school and the Georgia Film Academy. Austin then returned to Washington D.C., joining Events DC in the creative services department and working as a freelance editor, contributing to winning two local Emmy Awards. Later, he

moved to Sarasota, working in the sound department at WBTT and emerging as a projection designer, notably designing the show *Dreamgirls* for WBTT's 2022-2023 season.

KACIE LEY* (Assistant Stage Manager) is delighted to return to Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. Originally from Green Bay Wisconsin, she moved to the Sarasota area in 2022 after graduating from St. Norbert College in Wisconsin. WBTT credits include Assistant Stage Manager for Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue, Once On This Island, and Joyful! Joyful! She would also like to thank the WBTT team for giving her the opportunity to join them again this year!

JUANITA MUNFORD* (Production Stage Manager) is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association. She has extensive experience as a stage manager. A native of Manchester, N.H., Juanita attended St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vt. After working in St. Michael's Playhouse, she moved to Sarasota in 1983 and became the stage manager for more than 90 shows at the Asolo Repertory Theatre. Juanita's first WBTT show as stage manager was Marvin Gaye: The Man and His Music in 2011 and she has served in that role ever since. She loves working with Nate Jacobs and all the amazing people at WBTT.

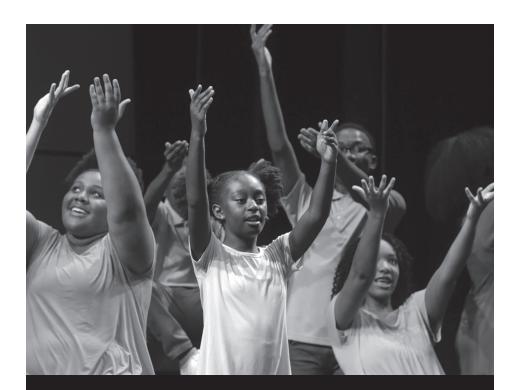
MICHAEL PASQUINI (Lighting Designer) designed this season's A Soldier's Play; Joyful! Joyful!; and Once On This Island; as well as last season's Big Sexy: The Fats Waller Revue; Flyin' West; Black Nativity; and Guys and Dolls. Recent area designs include Judith for Urbanite Theatre; Tick, Tick... Boom! and Ruthless! The Musical for The Sarasota Players; as well as A Comedy of Tenors for Florida Studio Theatre. Michael is a graduate of Booker High School's VPA Theatre Program and Florida State University's School of Theatre. Michael serves as the Treasurer of the

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 412; and is the Head Electrician and Assistant Lighting Designer for Sarasota Opera.

PATRICK RUSSINI (Sound Designer) has worked as a Professional Sound Designer, Audio Technician and Sound Engineer since 2012. His audio artistry has showcased the signature sound of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe shows since he joined the staff in 2016 as Sound Engineer; he was recently named Resident Sound Designer for the company, Patrick has traveled three times with WBTT Founder and Artistic Director Nate Jacobs to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C., ran sound for WBTT's 70's Soul Party at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota, and was named The Best Sound Design of a Play or Musical in the 2022 BroadwayWorld Sarasota Awards. He's also personally worked with rock legend Alice Cooper, Blues/Gospel/Rock Singer/ Songwriter guitarist Jonny Lang, and many other artists. Patrick is excited to be part of the WBTT team.

KEVIN WHITE (Production Manager) - After a decade of working in the Philadelphia theatre community, Kevin moved to Sarasota in May of 2021. This is his second season with WBTT! A graduate of DeSales University (2015) and the Arden Professional Apprenticeship Program (2016), he has worked on production, education, and artistic projects with a wide range of theatres throughout the country. In addition to arts administration and theatrical production experience, Kevin is an actor, director, producer, and comedian and has produced a number of his own small shows & productions! Outside of his life in the theatre you can find Kevin on the beach, watching Eagles football, playing video games, or running the occasional 5k. Much love to Tori, Chloe, and family!





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Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe is pleased to recognize our legacy donors as our "Friendship Train." These donors have indicated in writing that WBTT is included in their estate plans. We are so grateful to them for ensuring that WBTT will touch the lives of young artists, students and patrons long into the future.

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Coconut Cake was chosen as the Winner of The Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin Rolling World Premiere Award at the National Black Theatre Festival in 2022 and is premiering at 5 different theatres in 2024.

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OUR MISSION

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe was founded in December 1999 as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to produce professional theatre that promotes and celebrates African American history and experience, engages a broad base of patrons and audiences, supports the development of a dynamic group of aspiring artists and builds self-esteem in youth of color.

Tax-deductible gifts from generous individuals, businesses, and foundations underwrite WBTT's annual operating budget. Your support helps to keep tickets affordable and provides funds to mentor new local talent and to develop high-quality productions. In addition, your gifts allow us to offer theatre experiences to an underserved population.

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