

WESTCOAST BLACK THEATRE TROUPE

NATE JACOBS  
FOUNDER & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

A WORLD PREMIERE  
**RUBY**

BOOK BY NATE JACOBS & MICHAEL JACOBS

LYRICS BY MICHAEL JACOBS

MUSIC BY NATE JACOBS, BRENNAN STYLEZ & ANTONIO WIMBERLY

ADDITIONAL MUSIC BY NEHEMIAH LUCKETT

Properties Designer  
**Annette Breazeale**

Costume Designer  
**Andrea Herrera**

Scenic Designer  
**Jeffrey Weber<sup>^</sup>**

Production Manager  
**Kevin White**

Production Stage Manager  
**Lizzi Nehls\***

Playwright  
**Michael Jacobs**

Dramaturg  
**Susan Haedicke**

Assistant Stage Manager  
**KaCie Ley\***

Lighting Designer  
**Ethan Vail**

Sound Designer  
**Patrick Russini**

Projection Designer  
**Austin Jacobs**

Intimacy Director  
**Braxton Rae**

Choreographer  
**Donald Frison**

Music Director  
**Dan Sander-Wells**

Director  
**Nate Jacobs**

**February 28–April 7, 2024**

Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues.

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UNITED  
SCENIC  
ARTISTS

<sup>^</sup>United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE is the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection designers in Live Performance.



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

## CAST

Ruby McCollum.....	<b>Catara Brae</b>
Sam McCollum .....	<b>Maurice Alpharicio</b>
Zora Neale Hurston .....	<b>Ashley Elizabeth Crowe</b>
Doctor Adams .....	<b>Larry Alexander*</b>
Olivia .....	<b>Sieglinda Fox</b>
Judge Adams.....	<b>David Sitler*</b>
Sheriff Gary .....	<b>Ben Brandt</b>
Ensemble/ Roxanne “Roxie” Jett.....	<b>Matelyn Alicia</b>
Ensemble/ Joe Brown.....	<b>Lee Hollis Bussie*</b>
Ensemble/State Prosecutor .....	<b>Shawn Cacciola</b>
u/s Zora Neale Hurston.....	<b>Jazzmin Carson</b>
Ensemble/ Penelope Masterson.....	<b>Nya Chambless</b>
Ensemble/ Laura Elizabeth Caldwell.....	<b>Eliza Engle</b>
Ensemble/ Maybelle Masterson.....	<b>Sarah Haun</b>
Ensemble/ Silvia “Silvie” Armstrong .....	<b>Ilexis Holmes</b>
Ensemble/ Millicent Whitney.....	<b>Sarah Middough</b>
u/s Doctor Adams.....	<b>Casey Murphy</b>
Ensemble/ Doreatha “Daffney” Dorchester.....	<b>Shena Renee*</b>
Ensemble/ Leroi Martin .....	<b>Patric Robinson*</b>
Ensemble/ Lavergne Blue.....	<b>Ned Averill-Snell</b>
Ensemble/ Gordan Bailey .....	<b>Rickey Tedesco</b>

*\*Member of Actors’ Equity Association (AEA), the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States*

## MUSICIANS

Our live band plays backstage!

### **Orchestrations by Nehemiah Luckett & Dan Sander-Wells**

Music Director / Main Keys.....	<b>Dan Sander-Wells</b>
Aux Keys.....	<b>Jamar Camp</b>
Guitar .....	<b>Dan Haedicke</b>
Bass .....	<b>Isaac Mingus</b>
Drums .....	<b>Henley Connor III</b>
Reeds.....	<b>Richard Philbin</b>

## WBTT TEAM

Founder & Artistic Director.....	<b>Nate Jacobs</b>
Executive Director .....	<b>Julie Leach</b>
House Associates.....	<b>Stefan Abner, Zion Thompson</b>
Education and Outreach Associate .....	<b>Peterly Jean Baptiste</b>
Development Associate.....	<b>Regina Belvin</b>
Shop Foreman.....	<b>Roland Black</b>
Artist Relations Associate & Assistant Box Office Manager.....	<b>Ariel Blue</b>
Properties Artisan Manager .....	<b>Annette Breazeale</b>
Stage Hands.....	<b>Kiamani Canady, Riley Foreman, Donovan Whitney, Jennifer Woodford</b>
Resident Seamstress.....	<b>Darci Collins</b>
Properties Intern.....	<b>Jayde Dauley</b>
Development Director .....	<b>Debra Flynt-Garrett</b>
Resident Choreographer .....	<b>Donald Frison</b>
Receptionist & Box Office Associate.....	<b>Arnette German</b>
Finance Manager .....	<b>Robert Grant</b>
Marketing & Communications Director .....	<b>Beth Graves</b>
Production Assistant .....	<b>Tianna Harris</b>
Sound Assistant.....	<b>Austin Jacobs</b>
Resident Sound Engineer .....	<b>Alexander Judd</b>
Custodian .....	<b>Gerald Law</b>
Box Office Associate .....	<b>Margaret Lindsey</b>
House Associates .....	<b>Marta McKinnon, Mydra McKinnon</b>
Resident Music Director .....	<b>Matthew McKinnon</b>
House Manager.....	<b>Myllanna McKinnon</b>
Box Office Manager.....	<b>Eleanor Miller</b>
Resident Stage Manager .....	<b>Juanita Munford</b>
Resident Lighting Designer.....	<b>Michael Pasquini</b>
Wardrobe Manager.....	<b>Adrienne Pitts</b>
Marketing Associate.....	<b>Maicy Powell</b>
Assistant to Seamstress .....	<b>Pat Primavera</b>
Resident Sound Designer .....	<b>Patrick Russini</b>
Resident Director .....	<b>Chuck Smith</b>
Education Director & Artistic Associate.....	<b>Jim Weaver</b>
Production Manager .....	<b>Kevin White</b>
Asst to the Artistic Director & Casting Coordinator....	<b>Donovan Whitney</b>
Photography .....	<b>Sorcha Augustine</b>
Media Relations.....	<b>Sharon Kunkel, Wordslinger Marketing &amp; PR</b>
Graphic Design.....	<b>Paula Murray, Artefact Design</b>
Videography.....	<b>Bill Wagdy/Bill Wagdy Productions</b>

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I became aware of the story of Ruby McCollum from an email several years ago. As one may assume, I receive a lot of suggestions for shows our patrons would like to see presented at WBTT, so it takes some time for me to peruse all of the information. I finally got around to pulling up an email from one of our patrons who said “this story has your name written all over it. I can see you doing something wonderful with it.” Around 12 AM one morning I opened the email to be introduced to Ruby McCollum and her intriguing and powerful story. I quickly shared the information with my brother Michael who has been a collaborating partner on several original shows created at the theatre. It has been a thrill creating the long-awaited new musical *Ruby* with my brother who wrote the book and lyrics with me and sharing this story and legacy of heroism of a woman who would not stand for the abuse and disrespect of Black women in this country. I know you will be thrilled with the telling of her story and the exciting new music I, along with music arrangers Antonio Wimberly, Brennan Stylez, Dan Sander-Wells, and Nehemiah Luckett, have created. They have been wonderful collaborators who have helped me to develop beautiful arrangements and orchestrations. This is one of the biggest undertakings of developing a show for this theatre ever. It has been a labor of love for our creative team and I hope that it will make a lasting artistic impression upon your life. I am so very proud of it.

— **Nate Jacobs**

## SPECIAL THANKS

Fabulous Finds benefitting The Pines of Sarasota  
Tracey Conyer Lee—Script Consulting  
KaCie Ley—Final Script Editing  
Rosemary & Thyme  
Leya Black—Scenic Artist  
Tiger Lily Floral  
Dylan Schifrin—Music Copyist

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Ruby McCollum was an unfamiliar name until the fateful day my brother, Nate Jacobs, called to ask if I might be interested in collaborating with him on the development of a musical production about her. Thus, began my exploration of this story about these fascinating Florida natives. At first glance, the story of Ruby McCollum and her husband Sam McCollum reflects the familiar theme of systemic racism of the Jim Crow South in the early 1950s. But, a deeper exploration reveals their story is an enigma. Through the writings of Zora Neale Hurston, Ruby McCollum is revealed and we see her courage and dignity. I found in her and Sam McCollum great inspiration, unparalleled achievement, and the rare strength to resist the status quo; to live, and speak truth to a power that prospered in the dark of forced silence. Our story of Ruby is about people in all their humanity—the light and the dark of it. It is but one of many that could be lost to time. I would like to thank Nate Jacobs and the WBTT administrative, creative and design teams, and this AMAZING cast for their roles in translating Ruby from the page to the stage. I am especially thankful to Susan Haedicke (Dramaturg) and Tracey Conyer Lee (Script Consultant) for their invaluable support in crafting this incredible story. It is my hope that this story will inspire each of you to learn with wisdom about our many stories, yet to be revealed.

“Learning without wisdom is a load of books on a donkey’s back. No matter how far a person can go, the horizon is still way beyond you. If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it. The present was an egg laid by the past that had the future inside its shell.” (Zora Neale Hurston)

— **Michael Jacobs**

## **“A Smothering Blanket of Silence”: The Trial of Ruby McCollum**

Written by Susan Haedicke

On Sunday morning, August 3, 1952, Ruby Jackson McCollum, the wealthiest African American woman in Live Oak, Florida, parked in the alley near the entrance to the Colored waiting room of Dr. Clifford Leroy Adams. Leaving her two youngest children in the car, Ruby entered the doctor's office and, after a brief argument, shot Dr. Adams four times. The other patients in the waiting room fled in horror. Ruby then calmly left, locking the door behind her, and drove home to change her dress and feed the baby. Why would this Black woman kill the only White doctor in the area who treated African American patients? And, even more startlingly, why wasn't she summarily lynched given that the Ku Klux Klan had a strong presence in Live Oak? Such a confrontational act in the deep South with its Jim Crow laws in full force was extremely rash, if not suicidal, but it also profoundly threatened the Southern myth of white supremacy and male dominance. Ruby's real story had to be suppressed to preserve the Southern way of life.

Ruby McCollum was a strong, accomplished and resilient woman who was an equal partner with her husband Sam in the multiple McCollum businesses. Their illicit bolita (gambling) organization operated under the full protection of local and state officials in north Florida who were generously paid to look the other way. Since they received cash payments, there was no audit trail so they could avoid

paying taxes on their profits. From the beginning, however, Ruby, as Sam's business manager and book-keeper, kept meticulous books on all these transactions with names and payoff amounts. Sam's so-called partners were well aware that their careers would be shattered if this information became public, so Ruby was in a powerful position. A sensational lynching could persuade the McCollum family to make the books public.

Dr. Adams was a respected and well-loved doctor in Live Oak. He had a thriving practice among the white residents, but he also looked after the “colored folk.” He became the McCollum family doctor in 1946 and delivered Ruby and Sam's third child, but from the beginning, Dr. Adams participated in the McCollum bolita business. In 1948, he became sexually involved with Ruby. Although the details of their relationship have been buried, it is likely that Dr. Adams forced himself on Ruby. By asserting his implicit paramour rights (a vestige of slavery when white men could claim black women's bodies for pleasure), he would become a wedge in the Ruby/Sam partnership, emasculate Sam by controlling Ruby, and make the successful bolita business work for him. To that end, he compelled Ruby to have their biracial child in July 1951 and impregnated her again in 1952. All that ended when Ruby killed Dr. Adams on August 3, 1952.

*The Pittsburgh Courier*  
commissioned Zora Neale Hurston, successful novelist, essayist and

ethnographer, to cover the shocking trial of Ruby McCollum, but she faced many significant hurdles. The Judge had placed a gag order on Ruby, so no journalists could interview her before, during or after the trial. And, the close-lipped African American community, fearful of giving even a hint of support for Ruby, either quickly left before Hurston could ask a question or responded by over-enthusiastically condemning Ruby's actions. Even in the trial, Ruby was prevented from telling her story as the Judge sustained thirty-eight of State Attorney's objections. The convenient "official" motive for the killing promoted by the white press and reiterated during the trial stated that Ruby shot Dr. Adams because she did not want to pay her \$116 bill. A skeptical Hurston claimed: *this motive had been agreed upon, and however bizarre and unlikely it might appear to the outside public, it was going to be maintained and fought for. Anything that might tend to destroy this illusion must be done away with. Presto! It just did not exist.*

That motive, however, did not make sense given Ruby's wealth and her reputation for always paying her bills on time, but it did obscure the sexual relationship between the esteemed doctor and Ruby, hiding it under what Hurston called *a smothering blanket of silence*. Whispers among the Hill community belied its authenticity, and the birth of Ruby's bi-racial child made the fiction harder to promote. In reaction to the enforced silence around the crime, Hurston mused:

*It was as if I walked in a dream, somebody else's dream, of fog and mist with occasional heavy drops of cold rain. Somewhere beyond me, and hidden from me by the*

*enshrouding mists, the tremendous action of this drama of Ruby McCollum and Dr. Adams, and the actors in the trial went on. It was behind a sort of curtain, on the other side of silence.*

Hurston resolved to speak for Ruby since Ruby was not permitted to speak for herself. Her carefully chosen excerpts from Ruby's testimony defined the nature of her relationship with Dr. Adams, for example: "I had to either yield or maybe die, I suppose that was what would happen, so I couldn't tell him no." And Hurston's coverage hinted at self-defense as the reason for the killing. For Hurston who spent a lifetime exposing sexual abuse and gender inequalities in her writing, the story of Ruby McCollum was an excellent way to expose the continuing unspoken practice of paramour rights. However, Hurston also strove to quell the image of Ruby as victim:

*Ruby has not come to the bar, craven and whimpering. She has been sturdy and strong... a woman who ruled the lives of two strong men, one white, the other colored. She had dared defy the proud tradition of the Old South openly and she awaits her fate with courage and dignity.*

The truth about Ruby's murder of Dr. Adams threatened to expose the fiction of the separation of the races and endanger the Southern way of life, so the stakes were high. Suppressing the actual nature of their relationship was deemed essential, but impossible to achieve. What became public knowledge inspired others to "defy the proud tradition of the Old South." The uncertainty over whether to silence uncomfortable realities or to expose them is still with us today.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Hiram E. Jackson, Chief Executive Officer of Real Times Media (and Nate and Michael's cousin), for his gracious patronage of the *Ruby* project and for granting WBTT the rights to the Zora Neale Hurston articles related to Ruby McCollum, published in *The Pittsburgh Courier*.

Real Times Media (RTM) is a multimedia company headquartered in Detroit, Michigan. It was established in 2006, but its legacy stretches back over 100 years. As preservers and purveyors of culture, it's mission is to uplift and celebrate African American culture as it maintains the heartbeat of the African American voice. Real Times is the parent company to five of the country's most respected African American-owned news organizations, *The Atlanta Daily World*, *Atlanta Tribune: The Magazine*, *The Chicago Defender*, *The Michigan Chronicle*, and the *New Pittsburgh Courier*.



Real Times Media remains committed to delivering quality news, events, and entertainment for African American audiences. In addition to its news brands, Real Times enterprises and interests include:

Who's Who In Black, a professional lifestyle brand focused on live and virtual business/social events, content, and marketing services.

RTM360°, a marketing and communications consultancy providing strategy, production, activation, and media services.

RTM Digital Studios, an unparalleled archive of historical photographs, videos, and film clips of the African American experience available through licensing for advertising, marketing, publishing, and film initiatives.



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*\*\*Sponsors who have supported the production  
of Ruby for multiple seasons*

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT ONE

Welcome to Live Oak .....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Party at Sam's.....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Cradle of Pride and History.....	<b>Zora, Hill Women Trio</b>
Curious and Peculiar.....	<b>Zora, Hill Women Trio</b>
My Name Is Zora Neale Hurston.....	<b>Zora</b>
Shall We/Wade .....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Man on the Run.....	<b>Sam</b>
I Have Decided .....	<b>Judge Adams, Ensemble</b>
Zora Speaks.....	<b>Zora</b>
\$116 .....	<b>Hill Ensemble</b>
Who You?.....	<b>Hill Women Trio</b>
I Grew Up Here.....	<b>Zora</b>
These Old Tracks.....	<b>Ruby, Zora, Hill Ensemble</b>
Good Morning Miss Jackson.....	<b>Sam, Hill Men Trio</b>
Let Me Be the Man.....	<b>Sam, Hill Men Trio</b>
Transition to Together .....	<b>Zora</b>
Together .....	<b>Sam and Ruby</b>
Choo Choo.....	<b>Hill Ensemble</b>
Bolita Man .....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Each Step Forward.....	<b>Zora</b>
Fine House, Fine Car (Bolita Man Reprise) .....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Good Thing Going .....	<b>Judge Adams, Sheriff Gary, Dr. Adams</b>
Why Care Now .....	<b>Sam and Ruby</b>
You Need Me Introduction.....	<b>Dr. Adams and Ruby</b>
Scandalous .....	<b>Zora, Hill Women Trio, Downtown Women Trio</b>
Crossing The Line.....	<b>Zora, Olivia, Hill Women Trio</b>
Never What it Appears to Be .....	<b>Zora</b>
You Need Me.....	<b>Ruby and Dr. Adams</b>
Caught Between Two Barrels.....	<b>Ruby, Hill Women Trio</b>
Find Her Now.....	<b>Ensemble</b>
Breathe.....	<b>Ruby</b>

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT TWO

Black Woman\White Man.....	<b>Ruby, Ensemble</b>
Grab the Broom of Anger.....	<b>Hill Men Trio</b>
Southern Traditions.....	<b>Downtown Women Trio</b>
Be Careful.....	<b>Sheriff Gary</b>
In the Shadow of the Courthouse.....	<b>Ensemble</b>
All Done In Secret.....	<b>Zora, Hill Women Trio</b>
Feel the Spirit in the Room .....	<b>Roxie, Hill Ensemble</b>
Thirty-Eight Times .....	<b>Ensemble</b>
At the Time of Her Arrest .....	<b>Zora</b>
The Charge .....	<b>Judge Adams, Ensemble</b>
Courtroom Underscoring.....	<b>Hill Ensemble</b>
Alone.....	<b>Ruby</b>
It's Been Two Years.....	<b>Zora, Hill Women Trio, Judge Adams</b>
From Here (Here Now In Live Oak Reprise ).....	<b>Zora</b>
This Story .....	<b>Ruby, Zora, Ensemble</b>

*Setting: Live Oak, Florida, 1950s*

THERE WILL BE ONE 15-MINUTE INTERMISSION

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

## CAST AND CREATIVE



**NATE JACOBS\***  
(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 August 2022 he brought *Soul Crooners, featuring Sistass in the Name of Soul* to the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. — WBTT's fifth appearance there. 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 2021 he was featured in The New York Times, highlighting his mentorship and leadership, as well as WBTT's community outreach.



**MICHAEL JACOBS**  
(Playwright/Lyricist) is excited to have the opportunity to collaborate with his brother Nate Jacobs on the development of *Ruby*. Michael and Nate last collaborated

on the WBTT production of *Float Like a Butterfly*. In addition, the brothers collaborated on WBTT's 2016 production of *The Sam Cooke Story*. Michael has a long-cultivated passion for theatre and the arts. He is an accomplished poet and playwright and was founder and director of two community theatre groups in the Washington, DC area. Michael also served on the board of directors of the Essential Theatre in Washington. Michael is an attorney specializing in employment, labor, entertainment, and sports law. He teaches in the graduate school programs at City University of New York and New York University. As part of his ongoing contribution to the arts, Michael provides pro bono legal services and support to many young and aspiring artists. He is a graduate of Howard University Law School and Florida A&M University, where he studied Pre-Law and Theatre.



**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 three shows: *How I Got Over*, *Soul Man* and *Soul Crooners featuring Sistass in the Name of Soul*. I am so proud and honored to be part of such an amazing company with a wonderful vision. Thank

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

## CAST AND CREATIVE

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!"



### **DAN SANDER-WELLS**

(Music Director/  
Vocal Arranger/Co-  
Orchestrator) is a  
freelance music director,  
educator, arranger, and  
author based in NYC. A  
graduate of Westminster  
Choir College, Dan holds

Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the institution. Previous posts include Director of Choral Activities at Delaware Valley Regional High School where he served as Music Director for their Winter Musicals earning accolades from Paper Mill Playhouse, Bucks County Playhouse, and NJ State Thespian Festival for his music direction. Presently, his music direction experience ranges from high school to professional performers in theaters along the East Coast and around the Midwest. Previous collaborations include music directing the 50th anniversary revival of *Raisin* with Freddi Walker-Browne and Phylicia Rashad as well as conducting for Kate Baldwin's *Live Out Loud* cabaret at the Laurie Beechman Theater. Past collaborators also include LaChanze, Matt Sklar, and Andrew Lipka. As an author, he has collaborated with James Jordan on multiple publications (Conductor as Prism, 2017, The Moral Acoustic of Sound, 2018, Intonational Solfege, 2022) and with Frank Abrahams and Ryan John on *Becoming Musical* (2017, all published by GIA Publications). @dwellsmusic



### **NEHEMIAH LUCKETT**

(Music Supervisor/  
Co-Composer/Co-  
Orchestrator) Nehemiah  
has been performing,  
composing and  
conducting for over  
30 years. He connects  
his deep love of music

to the transformative power of building community through breathing and singing with family and friends which he practiced from an early age in Jackson, Mississippi where he was born and raised. He has been a featured soloist at the National Cathedral, Carnegie Hall and has performed on six

continents. He has composed solo, choral and instrumental pieces. Projects currently in development include: *Love Out of Time*—a Bible-based Afro-futurist opera, *Triple Threats* with Tracey Conyer Lee, *Adia and Clora Snatch Joy* with Mfoniso Udofia, and *A Burning Church* with Zhailon Levingston and Alex Hare. Nehemiah is a member of The Dramatists Guild, American Society of Music Arrangers and Composers (ASMAG) and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). He is a composer, performer, music director and educator living in New York City with his husband.



### **LARRY ALEXANDER\***

(Doctor Leroy Adams)  
Larry's credits include:  
Broadway; Marius (*Les  
Miserables*), Tony (*West  
Side Story*, European  
Tour), Opening Act for  
*Liza Minnelli's World  
Tour* and Anatoly

(*Chess*: The First National Tour). freeFall Theatre; Elwood (*Harvey*), Dale Harding (*One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*), Mickey (*The Normal Heart*), PoohBah (*The Mikado*), *Sondheim on Sondheim* and Ernst (*Cabaret*). For his work in *Cabaret* he won the Theatre Tampa Bay Award for Outstanding Featured Actor Award. He spent 17 seasons with TheatreZone Naples and his credits included Peter Allen (*The Boy From Oz*), Archie (*The Secret Garden*), Dan (*Next To Normal*), Robert (*Company*), Anatoly (*Chess*), and Robert (*The Bridges of Madison County*). He has also worked with American Stage as Father in *Ragtime*, and Harry in *Mamma Mia!* His most recent endeavor was writing and directing *Poirot Returns!* (World Premiere) which was presented at StageWorks. Larry previously worked with WBTT as part of the cast of *A Soldier's Play* and is thrilled to be back in the world premiere of *Ruby*.



### **MATELYN ALICIA**

(Ensemble) is an Akron, Ohio native. In 2007, she appeared in her first theatrical production as 1920's blues singer Bessie Smith, in Mabel Robinson's *MAHALIA: Queen of Gospel* on

the main stage of the National Black Theater Festival. She would appear with NC Black Repertory Company in multiple

## CAST AND CREATIVE

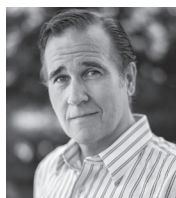
National Black Theater Festival mainstage productions, including Regina Taylor's *CROWNS* and Mabel Robinson's *Glory of Gospel*, in addition to several seasonal productions of Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity*. She made her first appearance with WBTT in 2015 in the world premiere of Nate Jacobs' *Jazz Hot Mamas*. After multiple international tours of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England with NY-based DP Joubert, LLC she returned to record & release her first vocal performer project, "God's Butterfly LIVE!" in 2018. Having made her debut as an international Jazz Solo Artist, she completed the "Vineyard Concert Series" throughout the Southwest of France over the Summer of 2023, and is beyond excited to return to WBTT in *Ruby*.



### **MAURICE ALPHARICIO**

(Sam McCollum) Maurice is an award-winning actor and U.S Army Veteran, born and raised in Durham, North Carolina. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting for Film from the

prestigious New York Film Academy — LA Campus. He's a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Credits include: *Dreamgirls*, *Choir Boy*, *Songs for A New World*, *Hairspray*, *RENT*, *The Brothers Size*, *Marcus*; or *The Secret of Sweet*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, *Brewers' Fayre*, *Black Nativity*, *CinderAH & The Messiah Inquest*. Lead Vocalist/Performer on Norwegian Cruise Line. He's also a National Anthem singer for the LA Lakers, LA Clippers, NY Knicks, LA Dodgers, LA Sparks, Houston Rockets, Indiana Pacers, & Charlotte Hornets. TV credits: *The Equalizer*, *Power Book III: Raising Kanan* & HBO Max's *Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty*. Much love & gratitude to my tribe (family, friends, Kreativ Media Partners) for their undying support and love. He can be reached (@\_mauricealpharicio) via Instagram.



### **NED AVERILL-SNELL**

(Ensemble) Ned Averill-Snell is thrilled to be making his WBTT debut. A Massachusetts native now based in Tampa, Ned has appeared in Sarasota in the Asolo State Theatre's *Dog Days*

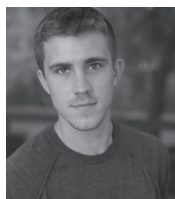
series, and elsewhere in Florida at Jobsite, Stageworks, TampaREP, American Stage, Orlando Shakes and other theatres. His performance as Joe Keller in *All My Sons* at TampaREP was named "Outstanding Performance by a Lead Actor" for 2023 by the judges of Theatre Tampa Bay, and he has twice been named "Best Actor" in *Creative Loafing's* Best of the Bay awards. Favorite roles include King Claudius in *Hamlet*, Teach in *American Buffalo*, Hickey in *The Iceman Cometh*, Eddie Carbone in *A View from the Bridge* and Juror 8 in *Twelve Angry Men*. Ned is the author of the novel *Small Professional Murder*, a mystery set in the milieu of Florida small theatre. As proprietor of Stage Photography of Tampa LLC, he creates production and publicity photos for many Tampa-area theatres. He is married to stage lighting designer Jo Averill-Snell, and their son, Connor, is studying to be a stage manager.



### **CATARA BRAE**

(Ruby McCollum) is a native of a small town called Leighton located in Northwest Alabama. She grew up singing in church and participating in every school performance she could. Upon high

school graduation, she auditioned for, and booked a job as a singer/dancer aboard Norwegian Cruise Lines. Catara Brae is very excited to embark on a new adventure with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe in the production of *Ruby*.



### **BEN BRANDT**

(Sheriff Gary) is happy to return to the WBTT stage! He was last seen at WBTT in *A Soldier's Play* as Lieutenant Byrd. Ben is from Gainesville, Florida, where he trained at the University of Florida's

School of Theatre and Dance. He continued his training at Florida Studio Theatre (*Charlotte's Web*, *Network*).



### **LEE HOLLIS BUSSIE\***

(Ensemble) is thrilled to be back at WBTT after last appearing in the season opener *Once on This Island* as Papa Ge. Off Broadway credits include: *Soul*



## CAST AND CREATIVE

*Doctor* (Actor Temples Theatre) *Whoopee!*, *Little Mary Sunshine* (Theatre Row). Other selected credits include: Papermill Theatre, Phoenix Theatre, Greenbrier Valley Theatre, Creede Repertory Theatre, The Barnstormers Theatre, Tibbits Opera House, Black Hills Playhouse, West Central Illinois Arts Center, Second Avenue Theatre & Charleston Stage. Some of his favorite roles include: Fred - *A Christmas Carol*, Tom Collins- *Rent*, Professor Plum- *Clue* & Jamie - *The Last 5 Years*. Much love & thanks to family/friends. Contact: leehollisbussie.com; IG: @leehollisbussie



**SHAWN ANTHONY CACCIOLA** (Ensemble) is currently enrolled at State College of Florida and is one credit away from acquiring his AA. He strives for academic excellence, has been on the dean's list every year

of his college career, and was recently put on the presidents list. He also intends to be nominated for outstanding graduate at SCF. He has membership in Phi Theta Kappa, Sigma Kappa Delta, and the poet's society at SCF. After finishing school over the summer, Shawn will transfer to the University of South Florida (Tampa), as a communications major with a minor in international affairs. Shawn has also applied to be a part of USF's ambassador program and is working at an internship with Security Management International at USF. He was last seen onstage when performing at State College of Florida for a solo dance performance and has spent quite some time working in the local Sarasota performing arts industry. He has acted in films with Ringling College, Veteran Film Academy, Lost Compass Productions, Vice Documentaries, Juxtapose Entertainment, EMC Productions, SCF productions, and SHS productions. His experience with theater ranges from Sarasota High School theater, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, Odyssey Theater, SaraSolo, and SAPS. Shawn was in the chamber choir in high school, a part of the holiday dance team, and played Michael Jackson in SHS's thriller. He is actively honing his musical performance skills by playing guitar, singing, and song writing. Shawn will be releasing an EP by early May with an alternative rock sound so be on the lookout! Overall, this performer is ecstatic to take the stage once more and

he thanks the countless people who have helped cultivate his growth on his journey. He is eternally grateful for the abundance of opportunity that life has gifted him, and wishes to share that energy with the world. For casting or business inquiries please message S.cacciola429@gmail.com or message via instagram @Shawnjawn. Enjoy the show!



**JAZZMIN CARSON** (u/s Zora Neale Hurston) is delighted to be in her fifth 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!* *Joyfull*, 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 Morisseau'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!



**ASHLEY ELIZABETH CROWE** (Zora Neale Hurston) Ashley Elizabeth Crowe is a multi-hyphenated creative performing artist, born and raised in Los Angeles, CA. Ashley Elizabeth studied Musical

Theatre in New York at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), and earned her BA in Global Jazz Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She continues to perform in a dynamic range of mediums, including classical voice (CalPhil Choir, Marina Del Rey Summer Symphony), a capella vocal ensemble, sketch comedy, and film. A few of Ashley Elizabeth's theatre credits: *Cabaret*, *Hairspray*, *Dorothy in The Wiz* (Westchester Playhouse), and Deloris van Cartier in *Sister Act the Musical*

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(Torrance Theatre Co.). She is thrilled to be performing for the very first time with WBTT in such a wonderful and important show! @ashleyelizabethcrowe



### **NYA CHAMBLESS**

(Ensemble) has been drawn to acting and film making since seeing *Annie* on stage when she was only 2 years of age. Her first major theatre show was with Player's Theatre in *Chitty*

*Bang Bang*. Since then, Nya has appeared in several indie films, thesis films, commercials and theatre productions. Nya has been a spokesperson for the Arts & Cultural Alliance, a presenter for the IB Academy Film Awards for 4 years and a representative for the opening film to the Sarasota Film Festival. Most recently Nya has performed with WBTT in their Stage of Discovery program, their 20th Anniversary Show, Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration and several community performances. She has currently acted in several film productions, *Bridge to the Other Side*, *Florida Man*, and *Catch Me* and has written and directed two multi-award-winning short films. Nya has studied with Nate Jacobs, Bob Marks, Jason Cannon and Howard Fine. A native of Sarasota, Florida, Nya studies singing, dance, and acting and is in 8th grade.



### **ELIZA ENGLE**

(Ensemble) is thrilled to be returning to the WBTT stage for her third production. Eliza is a Colorado native and found her love for theatre at a very young age and has played roles from

Shakespeare to modern musicals. A few of her favorite credits include: *Caroline, or Change* (Rose), *Little Women: The Musical* (Jo March), *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Marcy Park), *Annie Get Your Gun* (Annie Oakley), *The Merry Widow* (Margo the Grisset), *A Chorus Line* (Bebe), *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Rosa Bud), *West Side Story* (Maria) and *Spamalot* (Laker Girl). Eliza received her BFA in musical theater at Stephens College and has also been blessed with working with mentors from all over the country including Geno Carr (*Come From Away*) and Martyl Rowland (Met Opera). Eliza has trained

in Ballroom and Latin dance as well as jazz, tap, and musical theatre dance. Eliza loves animals and the outdoors including hiking and rock climbing. She also fancies herself a pretty good baker in her spare time. But most of all she loves her little girl and husband who always support her every endeavor to follow her passions. Eliza feels blessed to be able to share this important story and be able to work with an accomplished and passionate creative team to produce a show that will make an impact for years to come.



**SIEGLINDA FOX** (Olivia) is a native of St. Louis, MO and has performed in numerous stage plays such as *The Amen Corner*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Flyin' West*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Passing Strange*, *Raisin: The Musical*,

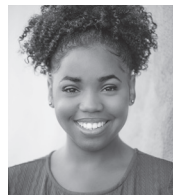
*Don't Bother Me*, *I Can't Cope*, *Ghost: The Musical*, *Hair*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and other performances on various stages in Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Wisconsin. She was in the 2013 film *Cronies* (A Spike Lee Production) as "The Gospel Singer".



### **SARAH HAUN**

(Ensemble) Sarah Haun is a local actor based in the Bradenton/Sarasota area. She is excited to make her WBTT debut as part of the ensemble of *Ruby*. Some of her favorite credits include: Lita

Encore in the Starlite Room's production of *Ruthless!* and Antonia in USF Theatre's production of *They Don't Pay? We Won't Pay!* Sarah is a University of South Florida Graduate earning her BA in theatre performance. She now teaches theatre full time and loves working with future theatre artists! She would like to thank her family and friends for their continuous love and support!



### **ILEXIS HOLMES**

(Ensemble) is super excited to be in her second show at WBTT! She was last seen as Ti Moune in the season opener *Once on This Island*. Ilexis is a graduate



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from Southeastern University with a bachelors in Vocal performance. She has been performing her entire life and can't wait to share the gift that God has given her! One of Ilexis' most special jobs was working at Disney World where she played squirt in Animal Kingdoms *Finding Nemo The Musical*. She is thankful to her friends for their endless prayers and encouragement. She thanks her family for always believing in her and loving her unconditionally! But most importantly she gives thanks to her Heavenly Father for putting this opportunity along her path and trusting her to complete the assignment he has called her to do. All she does is to glorify God!



### **SARAH MIDDOUGH**

(Ensemble) is thrilled to be making her Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe debut in *Ruby!* Tour credits include Mutti in *My Heart In A Suitcase* (ArtsPower National Theatre Co.).

Select regional credits include Mother in *Ragtime* (American Stage), Doris Walker in *Miracle on 34th Street* (Alhambra Theatre & Dining), Julia Sullivan in *The Wedding Singer* (Count Basie Theatre), Grace Farrell in *Annie* (Count Basie Theatre), Brooke Wyndham in *Legally Blonde* (Alhambra Theatre & Dining), and Maggie Winslow in *A Chorus Line* (Count Basie Theatre). She extends her heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in this production for their hard work and generosity. Love to Devin and Walter! @sarahmiddough



**CASEY MURPHY** (u/s Doctor Adams) is thrilled to be on stage again at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. As an actor, he has worked in New York, regionally, and locally. Select theatres include Urbanite Theatre, Florida

Studio Theatre, Theatre Odyssey, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Bigfork Summer Playhouse, Cohoes Music Hall, and the Michigan Shakespeare Festival. When not on stage, he has worked in development for both Asolo Repertory Theatre and Sarasota Orchestra. Casey is a proud graduate of the University of Michigan.



### **SHENA RENEE\***

(Ensemble) Shena Renee is a classically trained vocalist and actress based out of Atlanta Georgia. She was last seen on WBTT's stage as Effie in last season's *Dreamgirls*. She recently

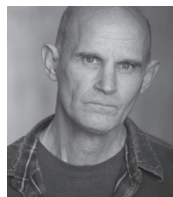
played Church Lady, in *The Color Purple* (City Springs Theatre Company) Off Broadway: Effie White in *Dreamgirls* (Springer Opera House) Diane Hudson in *The Perfect Pastor* (The Cannon Center for the Performing Arts) Tia Davenport in *The Truth About Black Men* (The Koger Center For the Arts), Julia Biggs in *The Preacher's Wife* (Bunche Auditorium), Ensemble in *Black Nativity* (Southwest Arts Center). Film: *Lil and Eve*, *Preaching Lies*. She's not done yet!



### **PATRIC ROBINSON\***

(Ensemble) a native of Jacksonville, Fla., has been delighting audiences with his creations in various theatres in New York City, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Georgia. A few of his most notable roles

are: Sergeant Waters (*A Soldier's Play*), Walter Lee (*Raisin In The Sun*), Pseudelus (*A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*), Bynum (*Joe Turner's Come And Gone*) Gitlow (*Purlie*), Hoke (*Driving Miss Daisy*), and Wining Boy (*The Piano Lesson*). WBTT's audiences may remember Robinson from *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *The Piano Lesson*. Patric is thrilled to be back in the house.

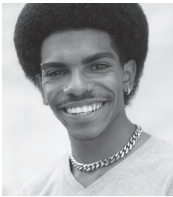


**DAVID SITLER\*** (Judge Adams) is thrilled to be making his debut here at WBTT to help tell this amazing story. He has been in over 160 productions spanning Broadway - *An Inspector Calls* with Rosemary

Harris, on National Tour in *Frost/Nixon* with Stacy Keach, as well as Off Broadway, most recently at Irish Rep in *Translations*, as well as regionally from coast to coast in roles from Atticus to Scrooge. He has worked at Florida Studio Theatre a number of times, most recently in the one man show *The Things They Carried*. Film credits include *Chan Can Dunk*, *The Strange Ones*, *We*

## CAST AND CREATIVE

*Wanted Children* and *Girl Boxer* and can be seen on TV in *Little America*, *Let the Right One In*, *Hunters*, the video game *Red Dead Redemption 2* and the Charlie Puth music video “Left and Right” with over 390 million views. Thanks to Nate, this great cast and crew, and all the great people here at WBTT. Proud member of AEA.



### **RICKEY TEDESCO**

(Ensemble) last appeared on Asolo Repertory's Jane B. Cook stage as Alfred in the 10-minute play *The Florida Highway Men*, in Theatre Odyssey's 10-minute play festival.

You may have also

seen him on WBTT's stage in *Joyful!*, *Joyful*, *Dreamgirls*, and *Black Nativity!* Rickey graduated from the State College of Florida's music program in 2022. He is a versatile entertainer, whose dream is to inspire change through music and performance of all kinds. Rickey plans to further his studies obtaining a bachelor's degree in either Musical Theatre, or Music Production, while reaching a goal to make it to Broadway! He is very grateful to be back on WBTT's stage, and thanks patrons, his family, and friends for their constant support on his musical journey!

**ANNETTE BREAZEALE** (Resident Property Artisan Manager) is WBTT's Resident Property Artisan 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.

**SUSAN HAEDICKE** (Dramaturg) has worked as a professional freelance dramaturg in the US, England and France over the past two decades. Some of her recent work has been to adapt Shakespearean plays, for example, *Macbeth* and *The Winter's Tale*, for large scale street performances in Europe. She also created a one-woman show, *Who's Driving the Tractor?*, on women farmers in England. Dr. Haedicke is Emeritus Professor in Theatre and Performance Studies at University of Warwick, England where she

taught courses in Dramaturgy, Adaptation for Performance, and Contemporary Performance Practices. She has published extensively on performances in urban public spaces in her book, *Contemporary Street Arts in Europe: Aesthetics and Politics* (Palgrave 2013), as well as in several articles. More recently, she has published numerous essays and a book, *Performing Farmscapes* (Palgrave 2021), on using performance to make sustainable agriculture and ethical global food systems more compelling to the general public.

### **ANDREA HERRERA** (Costume Designer)

Andrea is a Costume Designer born and raised in Colombia. She recently got a M.F.A in Theatre from the University of Florida where she designed multiple productions such as *Antigone* and *Cabaret*. Other credits include *Three Sisters*, *Clyde's* and *Miss Julie* at the FSU/Asolo Conservatory. She is beyond grateful for having the opportunity of being part of the production team for *Ruby*. Follow her work at @andrea.herrera.costumes

### **AUSTIN JACOBS** (Projections Designer)

Austin 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 2023 season.

### **KACIE LEY\*** (Assistant Stage Manager)

Kacie 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!

### **LIZZI NEHLS\*** (Production Stage Manager)

Lizzi Nehls is excited and honored to work on her fourth production with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. In her career, Lizzi

## CAST AND CREATIVE

has worked on Broadway, Off-Broadway and 10 years at Hippodrome Theatre as their Production Stage Manager. She also toured with *3 Mo' Tenors*, created and directed by Marion Caffey. While living in Gainesville, FL she was the adjunct professor of Stage Management at the University of Florida. Currently she serves as the Production Manager for Booker High School's VPA Program. Lizzi has been a proud member of Actors' Equity Association for 24 years.

**BRAXTON RAE** (Intimacy Director) is an artist whose creative work and scholarship is focused on blackness, queerness, womanism, and marginalized identities. Braxton is a passionate intimacy director and loves using intimacy to enhance storytelling. Currently, Braxton is a visiting Assistant Professor of Devised Theatre and the Maker in Residence with the University of Florida's School of Theatre and Dance and Center for Arts, Migration, and Entrepreneurship. Recently Braxton directed *Always Patsy Cline* at Great River Shakespeare Theatre Festival and the world premiere of *Small Steps* by Briandaniel Oglesby. In 2021 Braxton created their first performance art album titled *Truth*, which can be experienced at [www.truthbybraxtonrae.com](http://www.truthbybraxtonrae.com) Braxton received their MFA in Theatre Direction from UT Austin and their artistic goals are to foster diversity, equity, inclusion and love in the arts.

**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 *70s Soul Party* at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota, and was recently awarded The Best Sound Design of a Play or Musical for the 2021-22 & 2022-23 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.

**ETHAN VAIL** (Lighting Designer) Credits include: WBTT: *Dreamgirls*, *Broadway in Black*; Urbanite Theatre: *That Must be the Entrance To Heaven*, *At The Wake of A Dead Drag Queen*, Asolo Repertory Theatre: *Grand Horizons*, *Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Camelot*; Millbrook Playhouse (Mill Hall, Penn.): 65 productions, including the regional premiere of *Fun Home*. He was the 2013 recipient of the U.S. Institute for Theatre Technology's Young Designers, Managers & Technicians Award, sponsored by Barbizon Lighting Company, for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a production he designed for Purdue University. Ethan is also the Production Manager and Resident Lighting Designer for the Sarasota Ballet.

**JEFFREY WEBER**^ (Scenic Designer) A New York native with a fine arts background, Jeff received his master's degree in scenic design from the University of Nebraska. Now a Florida resident, he works nationally with theatre companies including Super Summer Theatre, Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre, Majestic Repertory Theatre, Urbanite Theatre, and Horizon Theatre Company, to name a few. Jeff appreciates being invited to collaborate with WBTT to bring *Ruby* to life this season.

**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!

^United Scenic Artists, Local USA 829 of the IATSE is the union representing Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound and Projection designers in Live Performance.



### **ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION**

Actors' Equity Association (AEA) was founded in 1913 as the first of the American actor unions. Equity's mission is to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Today, Equity represents more than 40,000 actors, singers, dancers and stage managers working in hundreds of theatres across the United States. Equity members are dedicated to working in the theatre as a profession, upholding the highest artistic standards.

Equity negotiates wages and working conditions and provides a wide range of benefits including health and pension plans for its members. Through its agreement with Equity, this theatre has committed to the fair treatment of the actors and stage managers employed in this production.

AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. For more information, visit [actorsequity.org](http://actorsequity.org).

# 2023-2024 SEASON SPONSORS

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## THE FRIENDSHIP TRAIN

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.

If you would like to consider jumping on board, contact Debra Flynt-Garrett, Development Director, at 941-404-7755.

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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.

Thank you!

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