

AUGUST 15 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2024



#ATColorPurple

# The COLOR PURPLE

the musical



Season 29



BASED UPON THE NOVEL WRITTEN BY ALICE WALKER  
AND THE WARNER BROS./AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT MOTION PICTURE

Book by **Marsha Norman**  
Music & Lyrics by **Brenda Russell,**  
**Allee Willis, Stephen Bray**

Directed by **Candy McLellan Davison**  
Music Direction by **Ann-Carol Pence**  
Choreographed by **Pytron Parker**

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# The **CO**LOR **PUR**PLE

the musical

BASED UPON THE NOVEL WRITTEN BY ALICE WALKER  
AND THE WARNER BROS./AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT MOTION PICTURE

Book by **Marsha Norman**

Music & Lyrics by **Brenda Russell, Allee Willis, Stephen Bray**

Scenic Design  
**Alexander Whittenberg**

Lighting Design  
**Rachael Blackwell**

Sound Design  
**Chris Lane**

Properties Design  
**Kristin Talley**

Costume Design  
**Dr. L. Nyrobi N. Moss**

Wig Design  
**Emily Grace Blackstone  
Sydni Stephenson**

Intimacy Choreographer  
Fight Choreographer  
**O'Neil Delapenha**

Associate Music Director  
**Chané Bailey-Ross**

Technical Director  
**Ashley Hogan**

Stage Manager  
**Marshall Lee Smith Jr.\***

Production Manager  
**Daniel Pope**

Director of Production  
**Katie Chambers**

Directed by **Candy McLellan Davison**  
Music Direction by **Ann-Carol Pence**  
Choreographed by **Pytron Parker**



\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the U.S.

## **THE COLOR PURPLE**

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Clyde & Sandra Strickland  
Bartow Morgan  
Scott & Holly Phelan  
Stewart & Lisa Cink

### THANK YOU!

to those who have made very special contributions to this production:  
**Aurora Theatre Volunteer Guild • Atlanta Ballet • Letha Kelly**

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AURORA'S COMMITMENT

Aurora Theatre at Lawrenceville Arts Center acknowledges the Muscogee Creek Nation, Kialegee Tribe, and all indigenous people who were forcefully removed from their lands and pledges to make our space one of healing and belonging in the sincerest effort to understand the history that brought us to reside on this land, wishing our Land Acknowledgement to be the beginning of our return to unity, not just for each other but the awareness that we are truly a part of the earth. We gratefully recognize our history and invite you to do the same. To learn more about our Georgia's Indigenous Tribes and to donate, please visit the following websites: [www.muscogeenation.com](http://www.muscogeenation.com) & [www.uncip.org](http://www.uncip.org).





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## FROM THE CO-FOUNDER

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“...like a beautiful quilt stitched together by friends.”  
- *The Color Purple*

When the creative team for *The Color Purple* met together for the first time, there was divine intervention. Candy McLellan Davison, our Director, discussed centering the show around fabric, tapestry, a quilt. With an abundance of references in the book, in the musical, plus the history of the African diaspora, her vision for the show was **TEXTURE**, which has such complex meaning. The texture of a fabric is something composed of closely interwoven elements, but texture could mean the composite of the elements of prose or poetry, or the pattern of musical sound created by tones or lines played or sung together. Candy was referring to all of it.

Minutes later, Alexander Whittenberg, our Set Designer, cited research from *Gee's Bend*, where a series of handmade patchwork quilts serve as a crucial chapter in American history. Alex revealed his initial image, which he created by collaging over a hundred different quilts, cutting and reshaping each piece until he landed on this.

It was Candy's quilt!



Based on this single image, Candy, along with Choreographer Pytron Parker and Chanél Bailey-Ross, our Associate Music Director worked seamlessly to knit this story together.

Aurora purposefully blends a wide range of creative voices when stitching each show together. We take diverse perspectives both on stage and behind the production table to embrace each story. We seldom replicate what others have done. We find our own truth in the stories we tell.

At Aurora we believe **EACH** person's unique story matters. A few notable examples:

- Dr. Pyeongkang Park is the Korean conductor whose professional orchestra will regularly fill our Arts Center with world class classical musicians in the coming season.

- Joey Jordan is our community partner from the Meherrin Tribe, who worked with us to host LAC's first Pow Wow in April.
- Dina Sheth regularly hosts Arangetrams, the ceremonies marking the end of training of a Bharatanatyam dancer and the beginning of their career.
- Jacky Segui, Our Director of Community Impact, coordinates our global events, and produces many of our Latiné celebrations, most notably Noche de Velas which brought 1000 people to LAC this past Christmas season.

In every story we tell, we gather artists together like a tailor gathers fabric, to create a fullness; and some of those people we meet became connected to Aurora in ways that irrevocably change us. People like Candy, Pytron and Chanél are zeniths. Each of these women shine brightly and to be in the room with these women change the way we tell stories. These women are amethyst, lilac, plum, magenta, lavender, and deep violet.

In our 29th Season, my prayer is that we celebrate the color purple in each and every human we meet.

Be well Friends,



**Ann-Carol Pence**  
Co-Founder/Producing Artistic Director



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## CAST

Celie .....	<b>AMITRIA FANAE*</b>
Shug .....	<b>TIFFANY DENISE HOBBS*</b>
Sofia .....	<b>SHENA RENEE*</b>
Mister .....	<b>ADAM WASHINGTON</b>
Harpo .....	<b>LAWRENCE FLOWERS*</b>
Nettie, U/S: Celie .....	<b>JASMINE RENEE ELLIS</b>
Squeak, U/S: Shug .....	<b>COLEY GILCHRIST</b>
Church Lady Doris, Ensemble, U/S: Sofia .....	<b>BRIANNE KNIGHTS</b>
Church Lady Darlene, Ensemble .....	<b>ROLINE DELVA</b>
Church Lady Jarene, Ensemble .....	<b>DAJA RICE</b>
Ol' Mister, Ensemble, Dance Captain .....	<b>MICHAEL A. BLACKMON*</b>
Preacher, Grady, Ensemble .....	<b>LERELL ROSS</b>
Pa, Ensemble, U/S: Mister .....	<b>REG HUNTER</b>
Olivia, Ensemble .....	<b>ROSE SETON</b>
Ensemble .....	<b>RASHAWD FORD</b>
Buster, Guard, Ensemble .....	<b>DAVID MURPHY</b>
Ensemble, Asst. Dance Captain, U/S: Grady .....	<b>AKEEM EDWARDS</b>
Ensemble, U/S: Squeak, Olivia .....	<b>MORIAH J. BASKETT</b>
Ensemble .....	<b>KENTISHA SHINE</b>
Ensemble .....	<b>FALLON-ELLIOT</b>
Ensemble, U/S: Harpo .....	<b>DESHAWN WILLIAMS</b>
Ensemble .....	<b>JEAN-ANGEL MATTISON</b>
Adam, Ensemble .....	<b>DALLAS HOGAN</b>
Ensemble .....	<b>MICHAEL ATKINSON</b>
U/S Church Lady .....	<b>MYA BURNS</b>
U/S Nettie .....	<b>DESTINY DANIELLE</b>
U/S Church Lady .....	<b>AVANI LESANE</b>

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION STAFF

Co-Founder, Producing Artistic Director .....	<b>ANN-CAROL PENCE</b>
Managing Director .....	<b>KATIE PELKEY</b>
Co-Founder/Artistic Director Emeritus .....	<b>ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ</b>
Assistant Director .....	<b>ARIANNA HARDAWAY</b>
Assistant Stage Manager .....	<b>LAMARR WHITE JR*</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Stage Manager, Fight Captain .....	<b>DAVAN GLYNN</b>
Assistant Lighting Designer .....	<b>ROCHELLE RILEY</b>
Sound Engineer .....	<b>MIKAELA FRASER</b>
Assistant Technical Director .....	<b>JACK BLACKSTOCK</b>
Head of Lighting .....	<b>ISAAC BURRIER</b>
Scenic Charge .....	<b>CARO KOK</b>
Electricians .....	<b>ADAM DONER, ANIKA ASLINGER, ALEAH STEPHENS, JAMES BRANSTETTER, TOMMY BRADLEY</b>
Production Personnel .....	<b>TOMMY BRADLEY, AUSTIN CLEMENTS, MARAJA COLEMAN, PHOEBE SWEATMAN</b>
Assistant Costume Designer .....	<b>JARROD BARNES</b>
Fly Rail .....	<b>JACK BLACKSTOCK, NICKO GONZALEZ</b>
Follow Spot .....	<b>TOMMY BRADLEY, RILEY GIVEN</b>
Costume Director .....	<b>ALICE NEFF</b>
Draper, Wig Co-Designer .....	<b>SYDNI STEPHENSON</b>
Wardrobe Supervisor, Wig Co-Designer .....	<b>EMILY GRACE BLACKSTONE</b>
Draper .....	<b>NATE TRIA</b>
First Hand .....	<b>BERKELEY PILLAY</b>
Stitchers .....	<b>BONNIE HAGEN, PAMALA JOHNSON, SYDNEY WILLIAMS</b>
Costume Apprentice .....	<b>MADELAINE MANTRANA</b>
Orchestra Contractor .....	<b>FELIX FARRAR</b>
Casting Associate .....	<b>AMY DUFFY</b>

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## MUSICAL NUMBERS

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### ACT I

Huckleberry Pie .....	Young Celie, Young Nettie
Mysterious Ways .....	Celie, Nettie, Ensemble
Somebody Gonna Love You .....	Celie
Our Prayer .....	Nettie, Celie, Mister, Doris, Darlene, Jarene, Pa
That Fine Mister .....	Doris, Darlene, Jarene
Big Dog .....	Mister, Celie, Young Harpo, Mister's Daughters, Male Ensemble
Lily of the Field - .....	Celie, Nettie, Mister
Dear God (Sofia) .....	Celie
A Tree Named Sofia .....	Doris, Darlene, Jarene
Hell No! .....	Sofia, Celie, Sofia's Sisters
Brown Betty .....	Harpo, Squeak, Celie, Male Ensemble
Shug Avery Comin' to Town .....	Mister, Celie, Ensemble
All We've Got to Say .....	Doris, Darlene, Jarene
Dear God (Shug) .....	Celie, Shug
Too Beautiful for Words .....	Shug
Push Da Button.....	Shug, Harpo, Ensemble
Uh-Oh!.....	Sofia, Squeak, Celie, Buster, Female Ensemble
What About Love? .....	Celie, Shug
Finale Act I.....	Shug, Celie, Nettie

### ACT II

African Homeland .....	Nettie, Celie, Young Adam, Young Olivia, Ensemble
The Color Purple.....	Shug, Celie
Church Ladies' Easter.....	Doris, Darlene, Jarene
I Curse You Mister .....	Celie, Mister
Mister's Song (Celie's Curse) .....	Mister
Miss Celie's Pants .....	Celie, Shug, Sofia, Female Ensemble
Any Little Thing .....	Harpo, Sofia
What About Love? (Reprise).....	Celie, Shug
I'm Here .....	Celie
The Color Purple (Reprise) .....	Celie, Company

### ORCHESTRA

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Music Director/Keyboard .....	<b>ANN-CAROL PENCE</b>
Associate Music Director/Keyboard 2 .....	<b>CHANÉL BAILEY-ROSS</b>
Percussion .....	<b>MARK BIERING</b>
Guitar .....	<b>MELVIN JORDAN</b>
Bass.....	<b>RAMON POOSER</b>
Reeds .....	<b>JOEL BARKER, JACQUES BELL</b>
Trumpets.....	<b>VICTOR PIRES</b>

## THE COLOR PURPLE CAST



MICHAL ATKINSON



MORIAH J.  
BASKETT



MICHAEL A. BLACKMON\*



ROLINE DELVA



AKEEM EDWARDS



JASMINE RENEE'  
ELLIS



AMITRIA FANAE\*\*



RASHAWD FORD



LAWRENCE  
FLOWERS



COLEY GILCHRIST



TIFFANY DENISE  
HOBBS\*



DALLAS HOGAN



GREG HUNTER



BRIANNE  
KNIGHTS



JEAN-ANGEL  
MATTISON



DAVID MURPHY



SHENA RENEE\*



DAJA RICE



LERELL ROSS



ROSE SETON



KENTISHA SHINE



FALLON-ELLIOTT



ADAM WASHINGTON



DESHAWN  
WILLIAMS

### UNDERSTUDY/SWINGS



MYA BURNS



DESTINY DANIELLE



AVANI LASANE



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

**MICHAL ATKINSON (she/her- Ensemble)** is incredibly thankful for the opportunity to join the cast of *The Color Purple* as ensemble. As a Georgia Gwinnett College student, she is excited to be part of her first professional theatre production as well as her first production with Aurora Theatre. She would like to thank the directors for allowing her the opportunity to give her all to this show and have some professional experience. She would also like to thank her family for always supporting her in everything she does. She would also like to thank her castmates for being incredible role models to learn and grow off of. Lastly, she would like to thank the audience for coming to the show, and she hopes you enjoy the amazing story that will be told!

**MORIAH J. BASKETT (she/her- Ensemble, U/S: Squeak, Olivia)** is an actor, singer, dancer and writer from SW Atlanta, GA. She recently graduated from Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey with a BFA in Musical Theatre and is now a member of Aurora Theatre's 24-25 Apprentice Company. Recent credits include Judith in *Sopisticated Ladies* (Deidre Goodwin), Ilse in *Spring Awakening* (Mark Hardy), Featured Ensemble in *On The Town* (Ryan Kazprzak, Ashley Rodbro), and this year's Collision Alumni Reading with the Alliance Theatre. Moriah is thrilled to join the cast of *The Color Purple* at Aurora and looks forward to many more projects with Aurora and beyond.

**MICHAEL A. BLACKMON\* (he/him- Ol' Mister, Ensemble, Dance Captain)** Performance credits include: Andrew Gaines ..... *Summer...The Donna Summer Musical*, Ken.... *Ain't Misbehavin, I Left My Heart.... The Tony Bennett Project*, John... *Miss Saigon*, Pedro...*Man of La Mancha*, Judas... *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Teen Angel... *Grease*, Sergeant...*Boys From Syracuse*, Tony Giodarno/Horse Understudy...*Full Monty*, Linville ....*Damn Yankees* (with Darius De Lass and Stephanie Pope), *Bye, Bye Birdie* (with Tommy Tune and Anne Reinking), Prince Charming....*Cinderella*, *Mame*, *Broadway Soul* (with Bj Cosby and Frieda Payne) *Scarlet Pimpernel*, *On The Town*, *Carnival*, *Camelot*, *Annie*, *Singing In The Rain*, Carnegie Hall, Carnival Cruise Lines, Ballet for Young Audiences, Springfield Ballet Company, Broadway Melody Las Vegas.

**ROLINE DELVA (she/her- Church Lady Darlene, Ensemble)** is an actress, singer and proud Haitian woman. She was recently seen on the *Fairytales Tour* and *What Happens in Vegas* tour with Destination Theater. She has also been seen as M'Lynn on *Steel Magnolia* at Marietta Theater in the Square, Elizabeth on Atlanta's newest holiday musical *Mother of God* and Dotty Moffett at the Atlanta premiere of *Caroline*, or *Change* at the Jennie T. Anderson Theatre. As a performing artist, she hopes to share God's love and light with the world.

**AKEEM EDWARDS (he/him-Ensemble, Asst. Dance Captain, U/S: Grady)** is a published Creative Entrepreneur and native of Jacksonville, Florida. He began his training at the age of 16 at Jacksonville Centre of the Arts. Edwards is equipped with knowledge in various styles from Ballet, to Musical Theatre and Hip-hop. After receiving his B.A. in Psychology he relocated to Atlanta in 2016. Since then he's worked with Netflix, HBO Max, Disney+, Hulu, Paramount Plus, B.E.T., Showtime, Tyler Perry, Debbie Allen, Garth Fagan Dance, Anthony Burrell, Juel D. Lane, Kiki Ely, and many others. He is excited to be joining the cast for *The Color Purple* as as Assistant Dance Captain and Ensemble and looks forward to a great run with an amazingly talented cast!

**JASMINE RENEE' ELLIS (she/her- Nettie, U/S: Celie)** Aurora Theatre (*Sister Act*), Atlanta Shakespeare Company (*MacBeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, and 5 others), Actor's Express (*Lizzie-Suzi Award Winner*), Horizon Theatre Company (*Roe*), Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company (*Marie and Rosetta-Suzi Nominee*), Synchronicity Theatre, The Weird Sisters Theatre Project, Destination Theatre. Regional: BUICentennial Productions (*Mother of God*) Georgia Ensemble Theatre (*Ghost*). Film/TV: "Genius: Aretha"(National Geographic) "Man in Full" (Netflix)

**AMITRIA FANAE'\* (she/her- Celie)** I'm Here! Amitria is thrilled to make her debut at the Aurora Theater! In 2018 she was Awarded Best Actress in a Musical from Broadway World for Celie in *The Color Purple* at Theatre West End. In 2022 she also received the Suzi Bass Nomination for her portrayal of Rosetta Tharpe in *Marie & Rosetta* a 2021 production at True Colors Theatre. Other Theatrical credits include: *Dream Girls*, *Ain't Misbehavin*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Godspell*, *Beehive*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, and *Shrek*. Amitria has also performed in Walt Disney's *The Festival Of the Lion King* as

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Zawadi and Universal Studios *Diagon Alley* as Celestina Warbeck. Special thanks to Mom, Muhammad, Family, & Friends for the love & support. "What I do isn't easy, it's natural." @Amtriafanae

**LAWRENCE FLOWERS\* (he/him- Harpo)** Jimmy Early/*Dreamgirls* (Lone Tree Arts Center); Joseph/*Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (New Bedford Festival Theatre); Jimmy Early/*Dreamgirls*, Shepherd /*Black Nativity*, Music Director/ Mahalia (Dominion Entertainment); Scarecrow/*The Wiz* (The Fulton Theatre/ NBF Theatre); CC/*Dreamgirls* (Atlanta Lyric); Black Dude/*Toxic Avenger* (Horizon Theatre); Harpo/*The Color Purple* (Maine State Music Theatre); Little Moe/*Five Guys Named Moe* (Theatrical Outfit); The Stewart/ *Into The Woods* (City Springs Theatre); Ken/ *Ain't Misbehavin* (GA Ensemble Theatre). TV credits: "Greenleaf" Season 2 & 3 (OWN); "Aretha Genius" (NGC) Multi Billboard, Stellar & Image Award winning, Intl Artist. Songwriter/Producer, Grammy RA Member, FSU Alumni Stellar & Image Award winning, Intl Artist (L.F. intercession.)

**RASHAWD FORD (he/him- Ensemble)** is thrilled to be making his professional theatre debut at the aurora theatre. He is a Eatonton, Georgia native and has been in over 20 productions. He's latest work includes *Working: A Musical*, Tyler's Perry *A Madea's Homecoming* and many more. Rashawd wants to think his family for being his biggest supporters. He is overjoyed to premier in *The Color Purple* and proud to represent AMDA New York. @o.rashawd

**COLEY GILCHRIST (she/her- Squeak, U/S: SHUG)** is a 24-year-old singer, songwriter, actress, dancer, and producer. Originating from Stone Mountain, GA and hailing from Conyers, GA, she began creating and performing at the age of 7. Since graduating from DeKalb School of the Arts in 2018, Coley has toured the country with the theatrical stage show, *DRUMLine Live!*, international party bands, performed at TEDx Decatur, had her vocals debuted in "A Madea Homecoming" on Netflix and more, all while making her explosive and admirable launch into music as an independent pop/ r&b artist. She's constantly envisioning ways to entertain and empower the masses. With God as her reinforcement, she is fervently unveiling her multi-hyphenated artistry to the world.

**TIFFANY DENISE HOBBS\* (she/her- Shug Avery)** Aurora Theatre debut! Select Atlanta: *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Actor's Express), *A Tale of Two Cities* (The Alliance Theatre), *Race & King Hedley II* (True Colors Theatre). Select Regional: *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Public Theatre (NY)), *Twelfth Night* (Yale Repertory Theatre), *Clybourne Park & A Raisin in the Sun* (Dallas Theatre Center). National Tour: *The Lion King*. Broadway: *Waitress*. Select Television: "Claws", "The Mighty Ducks", "She-Hulk", "Atlanta", "Ozark", "Pose", "The First Lady". Film: A HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR, THE TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO 7, SENIOR YEAR. Education: Southern Methodist University, Yale University, The University of Georgia, The Second City, Upright Citizens Brigade. Tiffany thanks her family and friends for their unmitigated support.

**DALLAS HOGAN (Adam, Ensemble's)** professional Debut in *The Color Purple*. Recent credits include George in *The Wedding Singer* (PGSH) & Carlos in *Descendants* (GGC). As a proud SOTA @ Central alumni, my experience with singing, acting, and dancing has been transformative, honing my skills and deepening my passion for the arts. My journey in theater has been shaped by incredible mentors and unforgettable experiences, and I look forward to continuing to grow and share my passion for the stage .I am grateful to Jaclyn Faircloth and the GGC Bearly Actors for their unwavering support and inspiration.

**GREG HUNTER (he/him- Pa, Ensemble, U/S: Mister)** is a Georgia native and has been an active Atlanta theatre artist for years. His most recent credits include: Ruth and the *Green Book* (Center for Puppetry Arts), *Light in the Piazza* (Jennie T. Anderson Overture Series), *Wait Until Dark* (Georgia Ensemble), and *Beautiful* (Aurora Theatre). Greg is beyond elated to work with this amazing cast of storytellers, and he would like to thank the Aurora team for this opportunity; he hopes that you are moved by this production! www.greg-hunter.com

**BRIANNE KNIGHTS (she/her- Church Lady Doris, Ensemble, U/S: Sofia)** is thrilled to be back on the Aurora stage! She is an actor, singer, dancer, and writer. She is a proud alumnus of the Youth Ensemble of Atlanta and attended the Conservatory of Performing Arts at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA. Since the age of 11, she has performed in various theaters across Atlanta including the Rialto, 7 Stages, Southwest Performing Arts Center, and Horizon Theatre

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to name a few. She's also performed abroad in China at the Hangzhou Grand Theater, the Ningbo Grand Theater, and more. Past credits here at Aurora include *Sister Act* as Mary Patrick, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical* as Ensemble & Diva Donna u/s, and *Mary Poppins* as Ms. Corry. In between musicals, you can find her singing with corporate bands across the southeast region. She'd like to thank her family for all the love and support! IG: @bri.knights

**JEAN-ANGEL MATTISON (she/her- Ensemble)** joined the cast of *The Color Purple* as a GGC student ensemble member. She's been doing theater for a few years now and is very excited to be a part of this show! Her previous credits include *The Wedding Singer* (ensemble) and *Black Nerd* (grandma). She would like to shout out her younger sister/best friend/partner in crime, Justice, and her Dad, who's been her biggest fan from day one, and her favorite professor, Jaclyn, who has encouraged her through her entire theater journey. She hopes you all enjoy the show!

**DAVID MURPHY (Buster, Ensemble)** is extremely grateful to be making his professional debut in Atlanta with the Aurora Theatre. Recently moving back home to Atlanta, he has been seen regionally with Nashville Repertory Theatre, Nashville Children's Theatre, and more. David is a recent graduate of Belmont University '22 where he studied Songwriting and Theatre. He could not be happier to tell such an impactful story with such an amazing cast and crew. He would like to thank his family, Victoria, friends, and the entire creative team involved. He dedicates these performances to the next generation of creatives who are watching, listening, and finding their way day by day. Keep up with David by following him on Instagram @davidbmurphy

**SHENA RENEE\* (she/her- Sofia)** is a classically trained vocalist and actress based out of Atlanta Georgia. 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!

**DAJA RICE (she/her- Church Lady Jarene, Ensemble)** is a Performing & Teaching Artist.

She obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Performance and Education from North Carolina Central University and her Master of Fine Arts in Acting from University of Georgia. Some of her favorite roles to date have been Effie White in *DreamGirls*, Claudia Macteer in *The Bluest Eye*, and Deloris Van Cartier in *Sister Act*. Daja has spent most of her career performing on the stage but also enhancing the personal, professional, and artistic development of youth through the performing arts. She currently runs a mobile musical theatre program, Rice Performing Arts Camp, which she co-founded with her husband, Jonathan Rice.

**LERELL ROSS (he/him- Preacher, Grady, Ensemble)** is an Atlanta, GA based musician and performer. Born and raised in Camden, New Jersey, he traveled to Atlanta to study music at Morehouse College with a concentration in vocal performance. LeRel has worked as a stage performer, pianist, and Music Director in the metro- Atlanta area and beyond. Companies he has worked with include Dominion Entertainment, Theater Covington, Atlanta Opera, Out of Hand Theater, Staged Door Theatre, Georgia Ensemble Theatre, and Synchronicity Theatre, a partnership in which he received multiple Suzi Bass Awards. LeRel is excited to make his Aurora debut and hopes to continue to spread love and promote positive change through his skills and creativity in both Atlanta and beyond!

**ROSE SETON (she/her- Olivia, Ensemble)** is very excited to be apart of *The Color Purple* at Aurora! Rose in the past has worked with Aurora in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* as Little Eva, and in collegiate programs on *Ordinary Days* as Deb. Rose enjoys art, dancing, singing/songwriting, and dreaming big!

**KENTISHA SHINE (she/they- Ensemble)** is a Contralto, Actor, and Dancer from Adairsville, GA. She is thrilled to have her professional debut here with Aurora Theatre! Kentisha just graduated with her B.F.A's in Musical Theater at Young Harris College and her recents credits there was Grace, Stepsister in *Cinderella*, Anna in *A Doll's House*, and Captain/#25 in *The Wolves*. After graduating, she accepted an offer to be an Apprentice here with Aurora Theater for a year! She is very excited to be in her first professional show as an ensemble member in this production of *The Color Purple* with the Aurora Family! Thankful for her friends and family for supporting her dreams and want to say an extra thank you to the Aurora company for this opportunity! IG:@Kentisha.s



**FALLON-ELLIOT (he/him- Ensemble)** is incredibly excited to be making his debut with Aurora Theatre. Recent credits include playing Audrey 2 in *Little Shop of Horrors* and Henrik (u/s) in *A Little Night Music* - both with UGA Theatre. He is currently in his final semester at the University of Georgia finishing his B.A. in Theatre. He sends all the love to his siblings Sydney, Quentin, and Jada for their love and support. @starship\_fallon\_elliott

**ADAM WASHINGTON (he/him- Mister)** is thrilled to be working with Aurora once again. Past credits include: *The Boy Who Kissed the sky* (Alliance Theatre), *Sunday in the Park with George* (Jennie T. Anderson Theatre), *A Gentleman's guide to love and murder* (City Springs Theatre) and *Pancakes Pancakes!*(Alliance Theatre). Many thanks to my family for their undying support, my friends for always pushing me to be better, and to you for supporting the arts. Anything you do, let it come from you. Then it will be new, give us more to see.

**DESHAWN WILLIAMS (he/him- Ensemble, U/S: Harpo)** is a performer born and raised in Stone Mtn. Georgia. He recently graduated from Kennesaw State University in with a BA in Theatre Performance Studies with a concentration in musical theatre and is now a member of Aurora Theatre's 24-25 Apprentice Company. Recent credits include Featured Ensemble in *Rock of Ages* (The Strand) Jimmy in *Reefer Madness* (Kennesaw state University ), and Agwe in *Once on this Island* (Kennesaw State University). Deshawn is thrilled to join the cast of *The Color Purple* and looks forward to many more projects with Aurora theater and beyond

**MYA BURNS (she/her- U/S: Church Lady)** is so excited to be a part of The Color Purple- An all black cast full of talented Atlanta Artist is a room she loves to be in. Mya's recent credits: *Sister Act*(Aurora Theatre) and

*Beautiful: the Carole King Musical*(Aurora Theatre). Mya has learned from performing at Aurora, that understudies are a very valuable part of a production. Mya will be performing as Church Lady #1 during the first week of September. But be on the lookout just in case she makes more spontaneous appearances! She would also like to give a shoutout to whoever is reading this bio(yeah you) and taking the time to come see live theatre! Thank You! Next credit : *A Dynamite in Hairspray* at Outfront Theatre. IG: @mya.burns\_

**DESTINY DANIELLE (she/her- U/S: Nettie)** is delighted to join The Color Purple in her Aurora debut. She is a theatre/ film actress here in Atlanta. Her most recent theatre credits include: *The Poet, The Spy, and the Dark Lady* (Emilia) with Out Front Theatre, *Spring Awakening* (Martha) and *Caroline, or Change* (Emmie) with The Jennie T. Anderson Theatre, *Romeo and Juliet* (Juliet) and *Skelton Crew* (Shanita) at Barter Theatre as well as *R&J* (Juliet) and *Merchant of Venice* (Portia) at the Atlanta Shakespeare Co. Upcoming: 2 ft films in post production and other theatre projects. S/O to the entire team for telling such a beautiful story. Follow along her journey here IG: @mii\_destiny!

**AVANI LESANE (she/her- U/S: Church Lady)** is thrilled to be working with Aurora Theatre for the very first time! Avani has studied film and media at Georgia State University and has been a life-long lover of the performing arts. She has been acting on stage since the age of 3, making her theatrical debut as a Cherub in Stephenson High School's production of *The Wiz*. A proud alum of Youth Ensemble of Atlanta, Avani continued to perform in and around Atlanta throughout her formative years. You may have seen her as Cora in *Calendar Girls* (Act3 Productions), Toffee in *Zombie Prom* (Marietta Theatre Company), or Edna/Ensemble in *Brightstar* (Georgia Ensemble Theatre).



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## PRODUCTION STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**MARSHA NORMAN (Book)** won the Pulitzer Prize for her play, *Night, Mother* and a Tony Award for her book of the Broadway musical, *The Secret Garden*. Ms. Norman is co-chair, with Christopher Durang, of the Playwriting Department of the Juilliard School and vice president of the Dramatists Guild of America. Her other plays include *Getting Out*, *Traveler in the Dark*, *Sarah and Abraham*, *Trudy Blue*, and *Last Dance*. Her published work includes *Four Plays, Vol. I: Collected Plays of Marsha Norman* and a novel, *The Fortune Teller*. She has numerous film and TV credits, Grammy and Emmy nominations, and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters and the Fellowship of Southern Writers. She is a native of Kentucky who lives in New York City and Long Island with her two children.

**BRENDA RUSSELL (Music & Lyrics)** has a unique musical perspective, intimate voice and prolific treasure-trove of lyrics, that prove that a truly glowing talent only deepens with time. Composer of the classics "Get Here," "If Only For One Night," and the Grammy-nominated "Piano In The Dark," Brenda's songwriting prowess and chameleon-like ability to shift between musical genres and combine styles trumpeted ovations in 2005 with the opening of the Tony Award-winning hit Broadway musical *The Color Purple*, for which she, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray co-wrote the music and lyrics. Brenda and her co-authors were also nominated for a 2007 Grammy in the Best Musical Show Album category for the original cast album.

**ALLEE WILLIS (Music & Lyrics)** is a one-woman creative think-tank. A multi-disciplinary artist and visionary thinker whose range of imagination and productivity knows no bounds, her success exuberantly defies categorization; 'unique' pales as a descriptor. Willis is a Grammy-winning and Emmy- and Tony-nominated composer whose hit songs – including Earth, Wind & Fire's "September" and "Boogie Wonderland," The Pointer Sisters' "Neutron Dance," Pet Shop Boys with Dusty Springfield's "What Have I Done To Deserve This," and The Rembrandts' "I'll Be There For You (Theme From Friends)" – have sold over 50 million records. In 2006, Willis' songs were also featured in three of the top grossing films of the year, HAPPY FEET, NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM and BABEL.

**STEPHEN BRAY (Music & Lyrics)** is thrilled to be making his Broadway debut with *The Color Purple*. After beginning music studies with private instruction in Detroit, Bray continued training at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. Working with Madonna, he wrote and produced many of her top-ten recordings, including "Angel," "Into the Groove," "Papa Don't Preach," "True Blue" and "Express Yourself." Performing with Breakfast Club, he earned a Grammy nomination for Best New Artist and a top-ten single. He has composed and produced for multiplatinum artists including The Jets, Gladys Knight and Kylie Minogue. Film and television projects include BEVERLY HILLS COP II, WHO'S THAT GIRL?, ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS and the theme for PBS's "California Connected." Stephen is developing artists for his Souttone label and looks forward to more musical theatre. He would like to thank his daughter Milena for her eternal patience and his family for their continuing support.

**ANN-CAROL PENCE (she/her - Co-Founder/Producing Artistic Director)** arranged the music for Aurora's first *Christmas Canteen* in 1996 and was hired full-time in September of 1998 as Resident Musical Director. An education major at James Madison University, she used her background to develop Aurora's Learning Library (or L2). As a musician, she created Aurora's Musicals by Moonlight, and Aurora's New Musical Initiative. She has performed as pianist and music director both nationally (Goodspeed Opera House, Pasadena Playhouse, The Cleveland Playhouse, The Kennedy Center) and locally (The Alliance, Theatrical Outfit, Horizon Theatre, Georgia Ensemble Theatre). As a proud citizen of Gwinnett, Ann-Carol is most proud of Aurora Theatre winning the first ever Pinnacle Award for Large Non-Profit, and the first ever Moxie Award (for woman-led businesses) for Aurora Theatre. These distinctions go well with her 5 Suzi Awards for Outstanding Music Direction. She was a participant in the 2016 Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute and member of the "Best Class Ever!"

**KATIE PELKEY (she/her - Managing Director)** is celebrating 17 seasons with Aurora and has served in many roles, including Resident Stage Manager and Company Manager. She also created the highly-successful Stage Management and Costume Apprentice Company program that operates simultaneously with Aurora's Acting

Apprentice Company program. For five seasons, she worked as Aurora's Educational Resources Associate developing educational curriculum for teachers to use in conjunction with Aurora's TYA Learning Library offerings. And for over a decade, Katie served as Production Stage Manager for New Plays for Young Audiences, a prestigious TYA summer staged reading series based at New York University. She received her BA in Educational Theatre from New York University with a minor in Dramatic Literature. Many thanks to Maxwell and Alexander for their love and support!

**ANTHONY RODRIGUEZ (he/him - Co-Founder/Artistic Director Emeritus)** a career non-profit leader, is proud to be the first Executive Director of the Hub404 Conservancy. HUB404 is an innovative 9-acre "cap park" that will soar above GA 400 and provide a direct connection to MARTA's Buckhead rail station. HUB404 will create a dynamic, active, gathering place for the Metro-Atlanta region and transform the core of Buckhead. Prior to joining HUB404, Anthony was President and CEO of Aurora Theatre, a professional theatre he co-founded 26 years ago. He currently serves on various boards, both nationally and locally, including Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, National Alliance for Musical Theatre (Vice President), Theatre Communications Group, the Citizens Advisory Board for Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful, and the Advisory Board for Public Broadcasting Atlanta which includes the NPR station WABE and PBS station PBA30. Anthony is a past Chair of the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, the first Latino and first Arts Leader to hold that position. He served as Vice Chair of Arts for the Chamber and Chair of Partnership Gwinnett and serves on the National Steering Committee for the Latinx Theatre Commons. Anthony is a graduate of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute, Leadership Atlanta (#2classes) and the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures' Leadership Institute and Advocacy Institute. Anthony, born in New York, and raised in Atlanta, graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre. He resides in Duluth with his partner in life, Ann-Carol Pence, and their dog Bella.

**CANDY MCLELLAN DAVISON (she/her - Director)** is a graduate of the University of West Georgia and of the professional acting apprenticeship at Aurora Theatre. She is based in Atlanta, Ga and is a Singer, Dancer, Stage and TV/Film Actor, Choreographer,

Director, Casting Associate and Teaching Artist. Her recent directing credits include: *The Niceties*, *t's a Wonderful Life: Live Radio Play* (Stage Door), *Operating Systems* (Louisiana State University), *Caroline, or Change* (Jennie T. Anderson), *Dragons Love Tacos*, *She Persisted: The Musical*, *Junie B Jones the Musical* (Ga Ensemble Theatre), *Christmas Canteen in July* (Aurora Theatre) IG: @candymclove

**PYTRON PARKER (she/her - Choreographer)** a multifaceted artist, is building a life in the performing arts. Through dance education, choreography, artist development, and storytelling, she's been impacting lives for 17 years. Credits include *Sister Act* (Aurora Theatre), *A Christmas Carol* (Nebraska Theatre Caravan), *West Side Story & White Christmas* (Mill Mountain Theatre), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Flatrock Playhouse), *In The Heights* (Theatrical Outfit & Aurora Theatre and Marietta Theatre in the Square), *Ragtime* (Cumberland County Playhouse), *Hairspray*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Intimate Apparel*, *For Colored Girls* (GTA). She starred in *The Queen's Ball: A Bridgerton Experience* (Netflix, Shondaland & Fever). She's honored to share her gifts with Aurora. PytronParker.com@payparker

**ARIANNA HARDAWAY (she/her - Assistant Director)** Atlanta Theatre: *The Play That Goes Wrong* as Sandra (Aurora Theatre), *Zombie Prom* as Coco (Marietta Theatre Co.), *Melpomene in Xanadu* (Out Front Theatre), Maude Lynn understudy in *The House That Will Not Stand* (Horizon Theatre) She would like to thank all of her friends & family for their support, and for you to enjoy the show.

**CHANÉL BAILEY-ROSS (she/her - Associate Music Director)** is a musician and music educator in Atlanta. Chanél received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from Spelman College in 2006, her teaching certificate in Music Education in 2011, and Master of Music in 2021 from Georgia State University. She's currently in her 14<sup>th</sup> year as a music educator. Chanél is also a church musician, a composer, and an arranger. She was invited to the annual Archbishop James P. Lyke Conference in 2018 to present her songwriting process for responsorial psalms. As an accomplished engraver, she has transcribed many scores, including *The Messiah: A Soulful Celebration*, commissioned by Elon University. Chanél made her debut as a pit musician in 2022 playing keys for *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella* at Aurora. She's also played keys for *Disney & Cameron Mackintosh's Mary Poppins*, *Summer: The*

*Donna Summer Musical*, and *Sister Act*, all at Aurora. She is grateful to be music directing *The Color Purple* alongside Ann-Carol Pence. This has been a most rewarding, fulfilling, and edifying experience.

**MARSHALL LEE SMITH JR\* (he/him - Stage Manager)** Marshall is excited to be back at Aurora Theatre and was recently appointed the Atlanta Regional Representative for the Stage Manager's Association! Select Credits: *The Preacher's Wife: World Premiere*, *Fat Ham*, *Tale of Two Cities*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Wondrous Realities of Jasmine Starr-Kidd* (Alliance Theatre); *Mother of God: World Premiere* (Mother of God Productions); *After Before: World Premiere* (Cenotaph Productions); *Cats*, *West Side Story* (City Springs Theatre Company); *Cinderella* (Aurora Theatre Company); *Dreamgirls*, *Black Nativity* (Dominion Entertainment Group). Marshall would like to thank God, his fiancée, family & friends for supporting the arts. @PSM\_Marshall | MarshallSmithSM.com

**LAMARR WHITE JR\* (he/him - Assistant Stage Manager)** St. Louis native, LaMarr White Jr, Graduated from Jackson State University with a B.A. in Speech and Theatre. LaMarr found his love for the stage in high school as an actor and musician. He went on to connect with Stage Management while in college, which led him to his work as SM PA at Alliance Theatre on *A Christmas Carol* (2023), a novel production of *A Tale of Two Cities* (2024), and most recently, the world premier of *The Preacher's Wife Musical* (2024). *The Color Purple* will be his first staging here at Aurora Theatre as an ASM. He is elated to be a part of yet another musical production. LaMarr would like to thank his friends and family for all their love and support.

**DAVAN GLYNN (she/her - Assistant Stage Manager)** is excited to be working on her second professional production at Aurora. This is her first show as AppCo25's Stage Management Apprentice. Her previous credit includes *Sister Act: A Musical Comedy* (Aurora) Lots and lots of love to her family and friends!

**ALEXANDER WHITTENBERG (he/him- Scenic Designer)** is an Atlanta based designer for film/tv, theatre and themed entertainment. Recent projects include: *Knead* (Aurora Theatre) *Wait Until Dark* (Georgia Ensemble Theatre), Mariah Carey's performance on the Billboard Music Awards and a series of Christmas Windows in NYC for Amazon. Film/TV: POPULAR THEORY (pre-

miering Feb '24), RISE (Disney+), "Headless: A Sleepy Hollow Story," BEAR WITH US and the second season of "Them" (Prime Video). He'd like to thank his brilliant team of collaborators for welcoming him to the Aurora family, his associate Gavin Mosier and Suzanne Cooper Morris at the Alliance for her support and generosity. He is a member of the Art Director's Guild: IATSE Local 800. Follow Alexander on IG: @Whittenberg\_Creative

**RACHAEL N. BLACKWELL (she/her- Lighting Designer)** Originally from Hampton, Virginia, Rachael now calls Atlanta home, where she serves as the Lighting & Projections Director at the Alliance Theatre. She earned a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Alabama State University and an MFA in Lighting Design & Technology from the University of Cincinnati's CCM. In 2020, Rachael received the Gilbert Hemsley Lighting Internship and the Judy Dearing Design Competition for Lighting from the Black Theatre Network. She earned an Off-Broadway nomination in 2021 for her lighting design of the musical *Rathskeller: A Musical Elixir*. In 2024, Rachael was the Distinguished Lighting Design keynote speaker at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC.) Since she relocated to Atlanta, Rachael has designed for Georgia State Theatre, Georgia Ensemble Theatre, and for the Palefsky Collision Project. She is excited to be joining the Aurora Theatre for *The Color Purple* and hopes you enjoy this phenomenal cast and crew! You can find more of Rachael's work at [bnrlight.com](http://bnrlight.com) or on IG: @bnrlight

**CHRIS LANE (he/him - Sound Designer)** is an Atlanta-based sound designer and composer. Previous Atlanta credits include: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Aurora Theatre); *DATA*, *Ghost*, *A Very Terry Christmas*, *Sounds of the West End*, *Knock Knock*, *In My Granny's Garden* (Alliance Theatre); *Four Women*, *Skeleton Crew*, *Paradise Blue* (Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company); *An Octoroon*, *Downstairs*, *The Brother's Size*, *Heathers* (Actor's Express); *Pipeline*, *Sweet Water Taste* (Horizon Theatre); *The 39 Steps*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Footloose* (Theatre Buford); *Hands of Color* (Synchronicity Theatre). Executive Director & Co-Founder at Multiband Studios. [www.multibandstudios.com](http://www.multibandstudios.com).

**DR L. NYROBI N. MOSS (Costume Designer)** is a multi-award-winning costume designer. *The Color Purple* marks Nyrobi's 4th season with Aurora Theatre. In 2018 she was nominated for Outstanding Costume Design in a Musical for *The Color Purple* at

\*MEMBER OF ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, THE UNION OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND STAGE MANAGERS IN THE U.S.

Actors' Express. In 2023, she was nominated for Outstanding Costume Design in a Play for Aurora's *The Play That Goes Wrong*. She also costumed Aurora's *Feeding Beatrice* in 2022, and the virtual remount of *2 The Left: A Tribute to the Life of Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes* in 2020. Nyrobi's design work has appeared in live theatre on stages regionally, nationally, and internationally, and also extends to TV and film. IG: @GoddessComplexCostumes; IG: @DrNyrobi

**MIKAELA FRASER (she/her - Sound Engineer)** is very excited to be a part of Aurora Theatre's production of *The Color Purple* and hopes you enjoy the show.

**KRISTIN TALLEY (she/her - Properties Designer)** is currently a working Atlanta teaching artist, dancer, singer, actor and props designer. In 2019, she graduated from Young Harris College with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre and a minor in history. After graduating college, she became a member of the Aurora Theatre's AppCo20. During her apprenticeship, Kristin started designing props. She is so thankful to be the resident props designer at the theatre where she started. A few of her recent shows with the Aurora include *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Kim's Convenience*, *Christmas Canteen* ('21, '22), *Cinderella*, and *On Your Feet*. She is also a principal dancer in DOLLY PARTON'S: CHRISTMAS ON THE SQUARE on Netflix. Enjoy the show!

**EMILY GRACE BLACKSTONE (she/her - Co-Wig Designer, Wardrobe Supervisor)** is excited to be back with Aurora for another season. Her previous shows at Aurora include *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Men with Money & Newsies*. She has also worked with the Alliance Theater in Atlanta as well as Arena Stage and the Shakespeare Theater in Washington, DC. She studied theater with the Gainesville Theater Alliance. She thanks her family and Patty for all their support.

**ALICE NEFF (she/her - Costume Director)** is happy to have joined the resident staff at the Aurora. She was the shop manager for *Cinderella*, *Swindlers*, and *Christmas Canteen 2021*, a draper for *On Your Feet*, *Men with Money*, and *Mamma Mia!*, and designer for *Mary Poppins*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, a Horizon Theatre co-production. She was the shop manager for the Theatre & Dance Department at Appalachian State University for many years, a draper at Glimmerglass Opera, and

a stitcher for the Hallmark mini-series "True Women." She has designed for Florida Rep in Fort Myers, and for several professional theatres and schools in the southeast. She holds a BFA in Costume Design and Construction from UT-Austin.

**SYDNI STEPHENSON (she/her - Co-Wig Designer, Draper)** is excited to be back at Aurora for this amazing show! She has a degree in Production Design with a concentration in Costume Design from The Savannah College of Art and Design. Recent credits include *Sister Act*, *Greener Pastures*, *Beautiful: The Carol King Musical*, *Play That Goes Wrong*, *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *Kim's Convenience* and *Mary Poppins* here at The Aurora Theatre.

**O'NEIL DELAPENHA (he/him - Intimacy Choreographer, Fight Choreographer)** is an actor, director, producer, intimacy choreographer and combatant in the Atlanta community. He is honored to be a part of his first production at Aurora, and has been involved with projects at several Atlanta theatre including, The Atlanta Shakespeare Company, Horizon Theatre Company, Stage Door Theatre, True Colors Theatre, Actor's Express, and Havoc Movement Company. O'Neil is dedicated to creating a respectful and safe environment for all performers, allowing them to fully embody their characters and deliver compelling performances.

**AMY DUFFY (she/her - Casting Associate)** is an actor, music director, and arts administrator. After moving to Atlanta to be a part of Aurora Theatre's AppCo, she has worked with the following companies: Alliance Theatre, The Atlanta Lyric Theatre, Atlanta Shakespeare Co., Buicentennial Productions, Horizon Theatre, Serenbe Playhouse, Stone Mountain Park, Habima Theatre, and the Georgia Aquarium. She is the proud co-founder of Destination Theatre. Thanks for being here today! Follow along with her work at @destinationtheatre!

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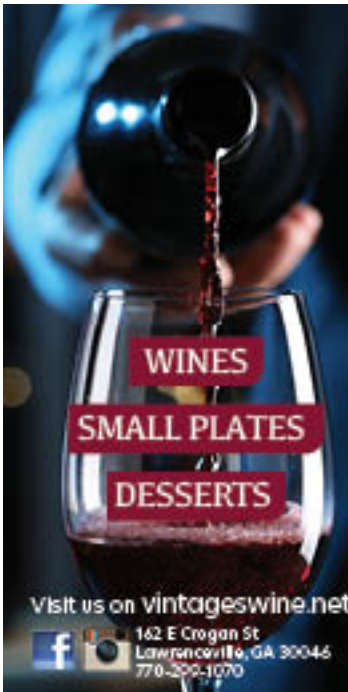
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