

NEW PLAY PREMIERE!

LOOK FORWARD

THE RUBY BRIDGES STORY

BY NATALIA NAMAN TEMESGEN



SEPTEMBER 30

THROUGH

OCTOBER 9

IN MCCLURE THEATRE

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LOOK FORWARD

THE RUBY BRIDGES STORY

BY NATALIA NAMAN TEMESGEN

Directed by **BETH REEVES**

Scenic Designer **MATTHEW SWINDELL**

Assistant Scenic Designer **MAX YOUNG**

Lighting Designer **KATIE UNDERWOOD**

Costume Designer **ALEX ALLISON**

Properties Designer **PATTI FENZEL**

Sound Designer **JULIANNE SLATON**

Technical Director **WALTER PIGFORD**

Stage Manager **MH HARRISON**

Dramaturg **ADAMA JOY SALL**

Assistant Technical Director **DAVID JONES**

Costume First Hand **MOLLIE LIPKOWITZ**

Production Associate **MH HARRISON**

Production Assistant **SCOTTIE SCOTT**

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THE CAST

Loren Floyd	Ruby Bridges
Bri Walker	Lucile Bridges
Jonathan Samuel Eddie	Abon Bridges
Kirin Wilson	Mrs. Henry
Christian Becerra	Dr. Coles
Kenny Butler	NAACP Rep, Abon U/S
Carson Skidmore	Marshal
Jackson Baughman	Marshal
Braxton Lee	NAACP Rep U/S

Red Team

Carson Rose McCabe	Ensemble
Levi Zsiros	Ensemble
Melony Conway	Ensemble
MaCayla Henderson	Ensemble
Libby Schrimsher	Pam

Blue Team

Kaia Castaño	Ensemble
Oakley Parker	Ensemble
Jocelyn Minger	Ensemble
Jasiah Taylor	Ensemble
Ivy Hunt	Pam

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

- BETH REEVES

“Just look forward.” “Do the best you can leave the rest to God.” My parents instill this into me everytime that I see them. This also mirrors the echo of Ruby Bridges’ parents. I see myself in Ruby. No matter how much chaos or fear that was around either of us, love always prevailed. We are both little black girls raised in the south who knew that everything that we did was based off of the seeds of faith that were strategically planted into us. Our families’ faith, community love, and rich heritage served as a beacon of light that impacted others. I must say that Ruby’s light beamed much brighter in much more horrifying times. This story makes me think of David and Goliath. Often faced with giants all around her, her courage was a light that shined through the darkness of people’s fear and hatred. She always heard the aria and cadence of her parents’ voices. After spending time with this script as a director, I might think that the cadence of Ruby’s heartbeat might sound like the following:

Just look forward- “Faith is”...love. All that Ruby knew was love. Her mother and father were faithful, cultivating seeds of determination and love into her. The two most precious offerings that Ruby’s parents shared were faith and love. It was black love that led Ruby into the William Frantz School. It was black love that nurtured her belief. It was black love that kept the family together.

Just look forward- “...the substance of things hoped for”... Ruby’s imagination served what she hoped for. She hoped every color would come together. Everytime we see her hope/imagination we see a rainbow of colors. Alma Thomas’, artist and native of Columbus, Ga., picture serves as a metaphor for Ruby’s imagination during moments with Mrs. Henry during the play. According to the Smithsonian, Thomas was an exuberant colorist, abstracting shapes and patterns from the trees and flowers around her. Ruby and Alma admired the beauty of trees. Trees allowed them to escape their reality. It gave them hope.

Just look forward- “the evidence of things not seen”... I don’t believe that Ruby Bridges could have imagined that her footsteps would lead the paths for other little black girls by the names of Shirley Chisolm, Maxine Waters, Vice President Kamala Harris, Associate Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson...and even me.

Me. This script chose me. Collaborating with playwright and my friend, Natalia Temesgan, has truly been one of the best experiences. It has been an honor to direct her words and art. As Ruby had an assignment to act out on her faith, my assignment was to make sure that you see that her faith outweighed any fear. I had the opportunity to teach about Ruby Bridges to South Columbus Elementary School. They learned that one is never too small to make a big difference. Students were able to focalize how she displayed bravery. Using arts integration as a resource, students empathized and expressed the meaning of her tenacity and perseverance. Perseverance. I dedicate this performance to Ruby Bridges, The Little Rock Nine, The Four Little Girls of Birmingham, The McDonogh Three, Linda Brown, James Meredith, and Dr. Janet Bussey.



Ase' (And so it shall be)

Beth

FROM THE DESK OF THE DRAMATURG

- ADAMA JOY SALL

We stand on the shoulders of Black Women.

Black women who are courageous, changemakers, trailblazers and activists. At just six years old, a kind, gentle and smart black girl with a courageous spirit and a faith so strong, changed the world in ways that still affect us today. Her bravery led her to be the first black student to integrate an elementary school in the south. Despite hateful people, callous remarks, and cruel actions being thrown at this child daily, **like the phoenix, she rose.**

She continued to wake up every morning and attend school, thus embodying what it is to be an activist, no matter how small. The strides she took made it possible for more black children to receive better educational opportunities, further cultivating the land in which seeds of hope, change, and excellence, sewn by our ancestors, continues to flourish.

The doors forced open and left ajar by this little black girl in 1964, have made way for black women such as Vice President Kamala Harris and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson to walk through them with pride today! Born in the same year of Ruby's history-making efforts, Kamala Harris remembers having a "stroller-eye view of the Civil Rights movement" as she accompanied her mother to marches (Rothberg). The activists and

changemakers of the civil rights movement such as Ruby Bridges, inspired Harris to fight against injustice and

oppression in her own career as she went on to be the first woman to serve as California's Attorney General in 2010. After a decade of dedication and work as an attorney general and senator, she made history as the first woman, African-American, and Indian-American to be sworn in as Vice President of the United States.

This very year brought another first for Black women that advances the hope of equality for us all, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson advanced into the role of associate justice of the US Supreme Court. Sworn into office on June 30, 2022, Brown Jackson became the 1st Black woman to serve on the highest court of the land. Both VP Harris and Justice Brown Jackson have inspired an entire generation of little black boys and girls that their goals and dreams are possible.

We stand on the shoulders of Ruby Bridges.



BIOS

Jackson Baughman (Marshal) Jackson Baughman is a senior at Columbus State University where he is pursuing a degree in Theatre Education. This is his first production with the Springer. He has been in a few productions with Columbus State University such as *Cows Don't Fly* and *Other Known Facts* (Gertrude) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Mustardseed) or the student productions *Fifteen Minutes* (Tony) and *A "Straight" Play* (Lee). He would like to thank the Springer for giving him this opportunity and he hopes you enjoy the show.

Christian Becerra (Dr. Coles) Christian is excited to be back for his Fourth production at the Springer. He is an Army Veteran and currently working as a local actor. You may have also seen him in *The Wizard of Oz* (Tinman), *ASSASSINS* (Zangara), *Shrek The Musical* (Ensemble). Some of his other favorite roles include Mitch in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, Aaron in *First Date*, and Henry in *Next To Normal*. Christian would like to personally thank his closest family members and girlfriend for their constant love and support!

Kenneth "Kenny" Butler (NAACP Representative) Kenny is pleased to be back for his second production at the Springer. He is a senior B.F.A. Performance student at Columbus State University. You may have seen him in *Akeelah* and *the Bee* here at the Springer. He was also Xavier in *Pipeline* and Kelly in *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* at CSU. He is thankful to friends, family, and teachers who continue to support his dreams.

Kaia Castaño (Ensemble) Kaia Castaño is thrilled for her debut at the Springer. She is currently in 5th grade at Clubview Elementary School. You may have seen her at every single Springer camp and workshop since moving to Columbus in 2016. She is honored to start her acting career with such a profound story about Ruby Bridges. Kaia would like to thank the Springer Opera House, her parents, her brother and all of you for coming.

Melony Conway (Ensemble) Melony Conway is excited to participate in her first production at the Springer. She is currently in the 5th grade at Lakewood Elementary. Melony is enjoying her role as child number 2 in *Look Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story*. Melony would like to thank her family and friends for always encouraging her.

Loren Floyd (Ruby Bridges) Loren Floyd is thrilled to do her second Springer Production! She is in the 8th grade and is currently homeschooled. Loren will be playing the role of Ruby Bridges but you might have seen her in *The Lion King* (Rafiki), and *The Jungle Book* (Shanti). Other Productions such as, *Newsies* and *Planes, Trains and Things that go Zoom!* Loren would like to thank her family and friends for their immense support. As well as her drama instructors and Sally Baker for sparking creativity. And Ruby Bridges for her courage and showing no one is too little to make a big impact.

MaCayla Henderson (Ensemble) MaCayla Henderson is currently in the 9th grade at Columbus High School in Columbus GA. This is her first performance on the Main Stage. She has been attending the Springer Theatre Summer Academy since 2019. She has worked Back Stage Crew 2021 Winter Production: *The Wizard of Oz*. She is excited to be apart of her Springer Opera House family and she would like to thank her Dad and her family for their endless support.

Ivy Hunt (Pam) Ivy Hunt attends 5th grade at Creekside Intermediate School in Cataula. She has attended Academy at the Springer since 2021 and the role of Pam is her acting debut. She would like thank her supportive parents.

Braxton Lee (NAACP Rep) Braxton is excited to be back for his second Springer production! You may have seen him previously in *The Best Little WhoreHouse in Texas* (Ensemble). He is a junior at CSU concentrating in Public Relations and minoring in Film. When he's not acting in a show, you can find him behind the scenes working on advertisement as the Marketing Director for the CSU Department of Theatre and Dance. He also enjoys directing short films, watching video essays, and pretending he knows how to skateboard. He would like to thank all of his family and friends for their support in his pursuit of following his passions.

Carson Rose McCabe (Ensemble) Carson Rose McCabe is a Sophomore at Columbus High School; She is 15 years old. Carson Rose is excited to be part of the ensemble cast for the debut production of Ruby Bridges. She has been a student of the Springer Academy for four years. She completed her first role with the Springer Opera House as Perry the Plane in *Cars, Trains, and things that go Zoom* in 2020. Carson Rose would like to thank her parents and grandparents for the support and love they have given her in the development of her theater skill set.

Jocelyn Minger (Ensemble) Jocelyn Minger is excited to be in her first play at the Springer. She is currently in the 5th grade at Wesley Heights. She loves to attend the summer and fall academy and is excited and hopeful that she will be cast in many more plays. Jocelyn would like to thank her family for their continued support.

Oakley Parker (Ensemble) Oakley is excited to participate in his first role on the Springer stage. He is currently in the fifth grade at Clubview Elementary School. Oakley would like to thank the Springer for this opportunity, his sister Gale for the inspiration, and his parents and grandparents for their support.

Jonathan Samuel Eddie (Abon) Jonathan is a teaching/performance artist, spoken word comedian, and writer that has a passion for youth empowerment and community building. He is a graduate of Georgia Southern University and has performed his unique brand of comedic poetry nationally. Jonathan travels the nation, offering (K - 12) students and adults insight and tools on positively leveraging their creativity. Jonathan was included in Georgia Trend Magazine's 2020 "40 under 40" listing, recognizing his community efforts. He is the founder/director of the Fountain City Teen Poetry Slam, Inc. He was also selected as one of six educators nationally to be a 2022 Apollo Stories Fellow, where he is building lesson plans and curricula for the legendary Apollo Theater. Follow him @JonSamEdd.

Libby Schrimsher (Pam) Libby Schrimsher is thrilled to be in her first Springer production. She is currently in 7th grade at Opelika Middle School. She has been featured in productions at Opelika High School, Opelika Theater Company, Auburn Area Community Theater, and Fantasy Playhouse in Huntsville, AL. Some of her favorite roles include Michael Banks in *Mary Poppins*, Jane in *Disney's Descendants*, Grandma Addams in *The Addams Family*, and Ramona in *Ramona Quimby*. She would like to thank her family for their support in all her theater endeavors.

Carson Skidmore (U.S. Marshal) Carson is a senior at Columbus State University and from Lawrenceville, GA. He is making his Springer Opera House debut! Some of his favorite show credits at CSU include *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* (O'Reilly), *Pippin* (Ensemble), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Lysander). He would love to thank his family and his friends for their never-ending support, and as always, he hopes everyone enjoys the show!

Jasiah Taylor (Ensemble) Jasiah Taylor is super excited to get back to acting at The Springer. This is her 3rd production. She is currently in 9th grade at Rainey McCullers School of the Arts where she majors in Voice. You may have also seen her in *Evita* (ensemble) *Rainbow Fish* (Guppie) and *Jungle Book* (Shere Khan). Jasiah would like to thank her mother for always pushing her to try. She would like to thank her dad for always being there. Her villiage, for always supporting her. Finally, Jasiah would like to thank Ms. Zarate, Mr. Urda, and Mr. White for giving her the tools to help her reach her dreams. Thank you!

Bri Walker (Lucille) Bri is very excited to be returning for her second production at the Springer Theatre as Lucille. She made her Springer debut with *Dreamgirls*, back in 2018. Bri is a graduate of Columbus State University, where she obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts for Theatre Performance. Bri has been studying Theatre since the tender age of 11. She has a true love of the arts. Bri would like to thank her mother, father, husband, sisters, brother and children for ALL of their support!

Kirin Wilson (Mrs. Henry) Kirin is excited to be working with the Springer again for this production! Kirin has been a teacher with the Springer Theatre Academy, as well as performed in many shows in the past several years. You may have seen her in *Elf the Musical* (Jovie), *Winter Wonderettes* (Suzy), *The Little Mermaid* (Adella), or a few others here and there! Kirin now primarily spends her time teaching music to children and their important grown ups and being Center Director at Music Together Columbus. Kirin would like to thank her fiancée Nick (and her dog Samson!) for their support this season of life, and the STA and city of Columbus for the opportunities for young artists to create, and for the creative environment that raised her.

Levente Zsiros (Ensemble) Levente Zsiros is a fifth grader at North Columbus Elementary School. He is very excited to debut in the show after his first year at the Springer Academy. Levente would like to thank his family for the ongoing support.



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March 3 - 19, 2023

PRODUCTION BIOS

Beth Reeves (Director) is a professional teaching artist/actor/director and graduate of Columbus State University Department of Theatre and Dance, where she received her M.Ed. in Theatre Education. She teaches African-American Theatre Performance, Intro to Acting and Directing, Theatre Appreciation and Socially Responsible Theatre (Theatre for Social Justice) for her alma mater. With directing *Look Forward: The Ruby Bridges Story*, she completed an artist-in-residency with South Columbus Elementary School in 2020. She was able to use art strategies as a process for students to comprehend, empathize, and express the meaning of Ruby Bridges' tenacity to students in kindergarten and fifth grades.

Patti Jo Fenzel (Properties Designer) earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology from CSU in 2010 and has worked in theaters around the country including Florida Repertory Theater, Texas Shakespeare Festival and Opera New Jersey.

MH Harrison (Stage Manager)

MH Harrison is a 2019 Graduate of Columbus State University, where they earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theater Design and Technology and a Minor in Studio Art. MH currently works at the Springer as a Stage Manager, Deck chief, and resident MH.

Matthew Swindell (Scenic Designer) is the Springer's Director of Production. He graduated from Columbus State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Technology. He has worked on many Springer productions over the past ten years in a variety of different roles including Director, Scenic Designer, Lighting Designer, Technical Director, and Road Manager for the Springer's touring company, Springer Theatricals. You may also remember Matthew from his time on stage as Teddy Roosevelt in the Springer's 2017 production of *Newsies*.

Julianne Slaton (Sound Designer) earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design & Technology at Columbus State University with a proficiency in Sound Design. She started at the Springer as a volunteer and transitioned to working here full time on our 2015 production of *A Chorus Line*. She has since enjoyed working as sound designer on almost every Springer production since, as well as completing her first professional scenic design for the Academy's production of *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*.

Katie Underwood (Lighting Designer)

Katie Underwood is a senior member of the Springer artistic staff responsible for casting and contracting production personnel for all mainstage and studio productions. She is also one of several directors on our staff with past credits including *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Great Gatsby*. Katie serves as the primary lighting designer for productions taking place in our McClure Theatre with favorite designs including *Ace: The Eugene Bullard Story*, *The Jungle Book*, and *Mother of Rain*. She is a Springer Theatre Academy alumni and a graduate of the CSU with a BFA in theatre design and technology. Katie recently completed her MBA from Kennesaw State University. She is an avid runner and fitness enthusiast. When not in rehearsal or doing school work, Katie enjoys spending time with her husband and two girls. If she's not at work or at home, she's probably at the gym.

Alex Allison (Costume Designer) grew up in Lincoln, NE and began performing at local community theatres at a young age. His favorite costume and wig design credits include *Grease* and *Stardust Road* at Temple Theatre in Sanford, NC; *Hairspray* at Pinewood Bowl Inc. in Lincoln NE; *Guys and Dolls* at The Stage Theater in Hickman, NE; *Wigs for Bonnie and Clyde* at The Stage Theater in Hickman, NE; *The Drowsy Chaperone* at The Monomoy Theatre in Chatham, MA; and *The Fantasticks* at The Monomoy Theatre in Chatham, MA. Alex has been working as a costume and wig designer across the US and also worked with Norwegian Cruise Lines as a Production Wardrobe Supervisor.

THEATRE COURTESIES

Walter Pigford (Technical Director) Walter is excited to join the Springer team. He is from Georgia, graduating from Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus (previously known as Armstrong State University) with a BA in theater. After graduating he lived in NYC for 4 years working on the Off-Broadway circuit and working full time as the Assistant Technical Director at Pace University. He has worked at various regional theaters around the country but is glad to be back in his home state bringing theater to the Columbus community.

Adama Joy Sall (Dramaturg) is so excited and grateful to be working with her Springer family once again! She is currently a student at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts pursuing a degree in Theater, hoping to create and collaborate on meaningful, exciting projects. She is thrilled to share her Dramaturgical work with everyone who is seeing this amazing story of a courageous little black girl who made a change in this world. Adama hopes to be like Ruby Bridges, inspiring people as she journeys through life!

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No doubt we have all been distracted by a cell phone or watch alarm ringing or lighting up when attending the theatre. Out of consideration for your fellow audience members, we ask that you turn off all electronic devices that emit noise or light. Thank you.

ALLERGY ALERT

For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from the use of scented perfumes, colognes, or lotions before coming to the theatre.

LATE SEATING

We endeavour to minimize the distraction for our patrons and actors when seating latecomers. If you arrive late for a performance, you will be seated at the first appropriate moment in the show in designated latecomer seating. You are welcome to move to your assigned seat at intermission.

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We ask that you please take a moment to identify the exit nearest you, so you can safely exit in the event of an emergency.

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Please refrain from talking to your neighbor during the performance, as it can be distracting to other audience members as well as the performers on stage.



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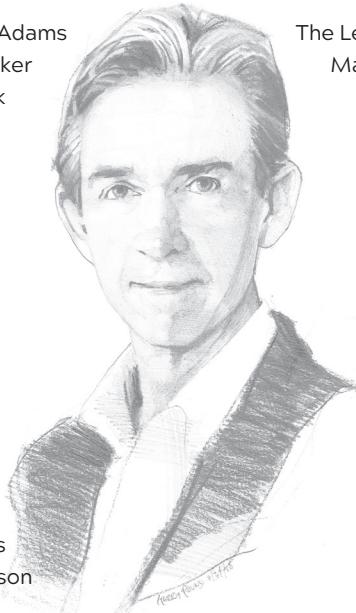
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January 28, 1952 - August 24, 2016



As an actor, Ron Anderson breathed life into the roles he portrayed. As an instructor, he taught his students how to disappear into a character. But it was in the role of mentor that Ron truly changed lives; helping actors not only become various characters, but also teaching them how to build character within themselves. The Pezold Foundation is proud to recognize the immeasurable contributions Ron made to our community and to celebrate the arts he dedicated his life cultivating.


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Paul R. Pierce (Producing Artistic Director) has led the Springer Opera House as producing artistic director since 1988, taking the State Theatre of Georgia in new artistic directions while expanding its audience and influence throughout the nation. For over 30 years, Paul has directed and produced more than 300 comedies, dramas and musicals at the Springer. A Rome, Ga. native with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Georgia, he is also an Equity actor who has performed in over 1,000 American and Canadian cities with stock, regional, touring and children’s theatre companies. Paul is the author of nine plays and *The Springer Ghost Book*.

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