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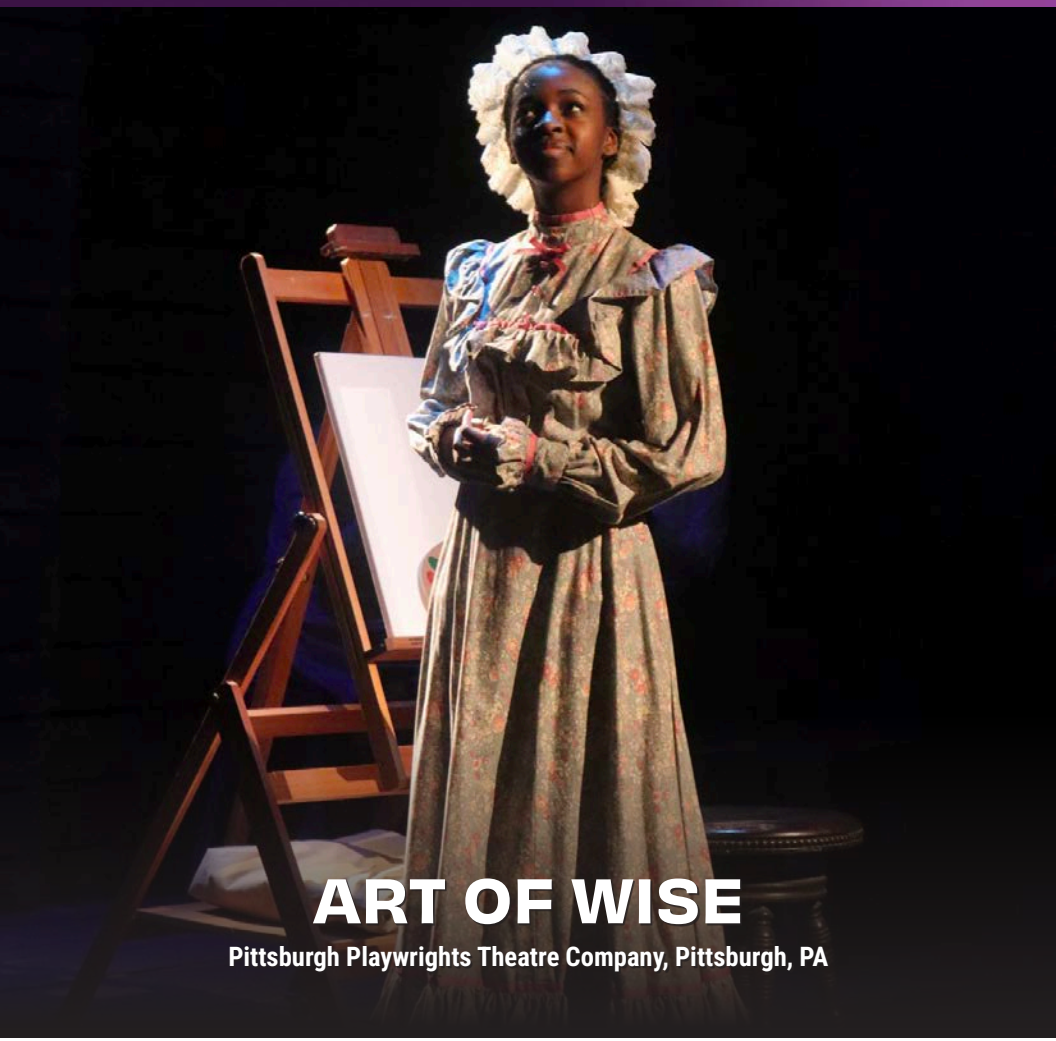

ART OF WISE

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, Pittsburgh, PA

Tuesday, July 28, 2:00pm
Tuesday, July 28, 8:00pm
Wednesday, July 29, 2:00pm
Wednesday, July 29, 8:00pm

Winston-Salem Theatre Alliance

PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA • HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD ANATOMY OF AN OPERA: NIA IMANI FRANKLIN • STEAL AWAY HOME OUR STORIES...WE ARE, BECAUSE WE WERE • REIMAGINED VOLUME III: YOUNG THANG • PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON • RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE • SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL • MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE • NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM • MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY • JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD • ANATOMY OF AN OPERA: NIA IMANI FRANKLIN • STEAL AWAY HOME • OUR STORIES...WE ARE, BECAUSE WE WERE • REIMAGINED VOLUME III: YOUNG THANG PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA • HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES

INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL®

A NC Black Rep Experience

Winston-Salem | The City of Winston-Salem salutes the 2026 International Black Theatre Festival.

Art of Wise

By **Mark Clayton Southers**

Directed by **Monteze Freeland**

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company is rooted in the African American community, and its mission is to produce the works of local racially and culturally diverse playwrights as well as Pittsburgh-themed plays. We provide a nurturing environment for all who work on and off the stage, and build and serve a culturally diverse audience that can strengthen our civic community. We believe that bridges are built when diverse groups of people work together to make and experience stories told through the arts.

We seek to nurture a racially and culturally diverse community of theatre professionals, while supporting a similarly diverse management staff and board of directors who, working together, develop audiences that reflect the diversity of Pittsburgh's community.

Cast

Bendoo Wise ..... Sheldon Ingram
Oni Wise ..... Karla C. Payne
Amahle Wise ..... Adjoa Opoku-Dakwa
Albert Wise ..... Justus A. Payne
Campie Wise ..... David Minniefield
Jonathan Wise ..... Samuel GC Muñoz*
Sarah Wise ..... Jenny Malarkey
Samantha Wise ..... Maddie Kocur
Drummer ..... Zosha Nowe
Violinist ..... Em Kohut-Kegarise
Violinist ..... Yanna Mavrogeorgis

**Member of Actors Equity Association*

Setting

Wise Cotton Plantation, Mobile, Alabama, 1822.

The performance runs two hours 15 minutes including a 15-minute intermission.

TECH CREW

Director ..... Monteze Freeland

Production Stage Manager ..... Ashley Renee Southers

Scenic Designer ..... Tony Ferrieri

Props Master ..... Sarah “Gracie” Jackson

Costume, Make-Up & Hair Designer ..... Cheryl El Walker

Seamstress ..... Katie Cotten

Lighting Designer ..... Latrice Lovette

Lighting Electrician ..... Tony Clayton

Lighting Hanging Crew .... Marcus Carl Southers & Matthew Southers

Sound Designer ..... Monteze Freeland

Audio Engineer ..... Wayne Gaines & Matthew Southers

Choreography ..... Mils James

Fight Choreography ..... Samuel GC Muñoz

Festival Build Crew ..... Marcus Carl Southers, Matthew Southers Jr, Sam Lothard, Andre Joseph Clayton Southers

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WHO'S WHO

Sheldon Ingram (Bendoo Wise) started his journey into acting in January, 2021, by studying in three acting programs in New York and Los Angeles. His studies began with HB Studio in New York, before moving onto Andrew Wood Acting Studios in Los Angeles, and then the New York Academy for Performing Arts. During those studies, Sheldon took in the disciplines of film, television, scene study, character analysis, and movement. Later that year, Sheldon connected with his acting coach Tom Kibbie in Cork, Ireland where he studied the Sanford Meisner acting techniques. By May of 2022, Sheldon launched his acting career, and the following month, booked his first film roles with Academy Award-nominated director, Lee Daniels, for the film The Deliverance. Sheldon landed two roles: demon voice and gynecologist. A few months later, Sheldon landed a guest star role on Law & Order SVU. He continued to land additional roles for two Lifetime movies, A Rose for Her Grave and Gaslit by My Husband. Sheldon also starred in an independent horror film called House of Tears, shot in 2024. His acting talents cover multiple platforms, as a theater actor and voice actor. His first theater performance was in Norfolk, Virginia, as Lt. Davenport in the Pulitzer Prize-winning A Soldier's Play. He is currently working on his third theater role in Pittsburgh, playing Bendoo Ojabe, in Art of Wise. He also played Rev. Reginald Mabry in Chicken & Biscuits, and William Johnson in Three Blind Mice.

Maddie Kocur (Samantha Wise) is thrilled to be telling such a powerful and heartbreaking story with this powerhouse cast! You may have recently seen her in Mountain Playhouse's A Year with Frog and Toad as Woman 1 and the Pittsburgh CLO's Gallery of Heroes school tour as the Female Swing. Earning her BFA in Musical Theater from Seton Hill University, her

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favorite college credits include Roxie Hart in Chicago and Joanne in Company. Other selected theater credits include Pittsburgh CLO's A Musical Christmas Carol (Fan/Laundress), Mary Warren in The Crucible, Tabatha Mercer in Hide (Vigilance Theater Group), Claire/Justine in Frankenstein (Prime Stage), and Time/Girl in Everybody (12 Peers Theatre). Many thanks to Monteze, Mark, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company, the cast and crew of Art of Wise, and all of my love to friends, coaches, and my family for your constant support! @maddiekocur

Em Kohut-Kegarise (violinist) is a violinist at Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts 6-12. In addition to playing the violin, they enjoy spending time with friends and family, being outdoors, and rock climbing. Em loves all kinds of music and instruments. They are very excited to be in the show!

Jenny Malarkey (Sarah Wise) is thrilled to be back with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company, where she was last seen in In the Heat of the Night. A Pittsburgh native, she has performed with such companies as: The Pittsburgh Public Theater, Saint Vincent Summer Theater, New Horizons Theater, Bricolage Co., Little Lake Theatre, Pittsburgh Musical Theatre, Prime Stage, and Kinetic Theatre. When not on stage, Jenny works as the Education Manager at The Pittsburgh Public Theater where she loves sharing her passion for performance with students all across the city. She would like to give a huge thank you to this amazing cast, crew, and our fearless director, Monteze. Enjoy the show!

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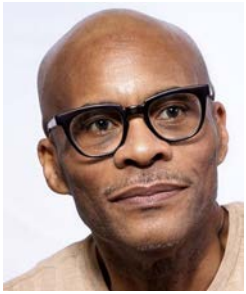
WHO'S WHO



David Minniefield (Campie Wise) is an actor, director and teaching artist for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Best plays of 1994: Job Under The Gavel, Post-Gazette. Director/actor, best plays of 2000: Zooman and the Sign, Post-Gazette. Director, best staged reading, Living East Liberty, 2001. Supporting actor nomination: The Black and White Festival of 2004, Tigger's Tat. Director, Charlie Grey Award 2017, Best In-School Performing Arts Education Program, Pittsburgh Urban Christian School. Toured with CLO in Play to Win, the Jackie Robinson story, and ¡Arriba! ¡Arriba!, the Roberto Clemente story, as Luis. He created Ecclesiastes LIVE. He is honored to bring Campie to life.

Samuel GC Muñoz (Jonathan Wise, Fight Choreography) Career highlights include Marvel's feature film THOR (Asst. Motion Capture Stunt Coord.), and 2Households 2Assholes: Shakespeare's R&J (Off Broadway). His craft has been seen at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Defiant Theatre, Virginia Shakespeare Fest., Ravenna Nightmare Film Fest-Italy, Queens World Film Fest., Amazon Prime, Hulu, The Pittsburgh Symphony, City Theatre & Pittsburgh Playwrights. He is Co-Creator of RADMOON, an Associate Professor of Movement, Stage Combat & Acting at Point Park University, Fight Director-Certified Teacher with the Society of American Fight Directors, and a member of SDC, AEA, SAG-AFTRA.

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International Black Theater Festival

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INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL®
A NC Black Rep Experience

2026 Forsyth County Commissioners

Denise Price, Deputy County Manager
Shontell Robinson, County Manager
Kyle Haney, Deputy County Manager

WHO'S WHO

Zosha Nowe (drummer) is a passionate drummer and a ninth-grade student at the Neighborhood Academy. He began drumming at a young age, learning from local teachers, particularly internationally renowned Fode "Lavia" Camara, who mentors him at the Legacy Arts Project, where Zosha is also a Youth Artist Apprentice. A committed student and performer, Zosha showcases his musical talents in dance classes and at events like Dance Africa Pittsburgh. He is eager to broaden his artistic journey, particularly in theater.

Adjoa Opoku-Dakwa (Amahle Wise) is thrilled to join the cast of Art of Wise. She is a 9th grade musical theater major at Pittsburgh CAPA. At her school she has most recently been part of CAPA's Black History Month play, Filling Basins, and the all school musical Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812. Outside of CAPA, Adjoa's roles include being a dancer in Hill Dance Academy Theater's Black Nativity, Pittsburgh Public Theater's A Christmas Story, Prime Stage Theater's The Miracle Worker and Pittsburgh Playwrights' production of Joe Turner's Come and Gone. In 2022 and 2023, Adjoa also won 1st place in the youth monologue and scene divisions, respectively, of the Pittsburgh Public's Shakespeare competition. She loves cooking, singing, acting and dancing. Adjoa sends thanks to her amazing family, friends and teachers.

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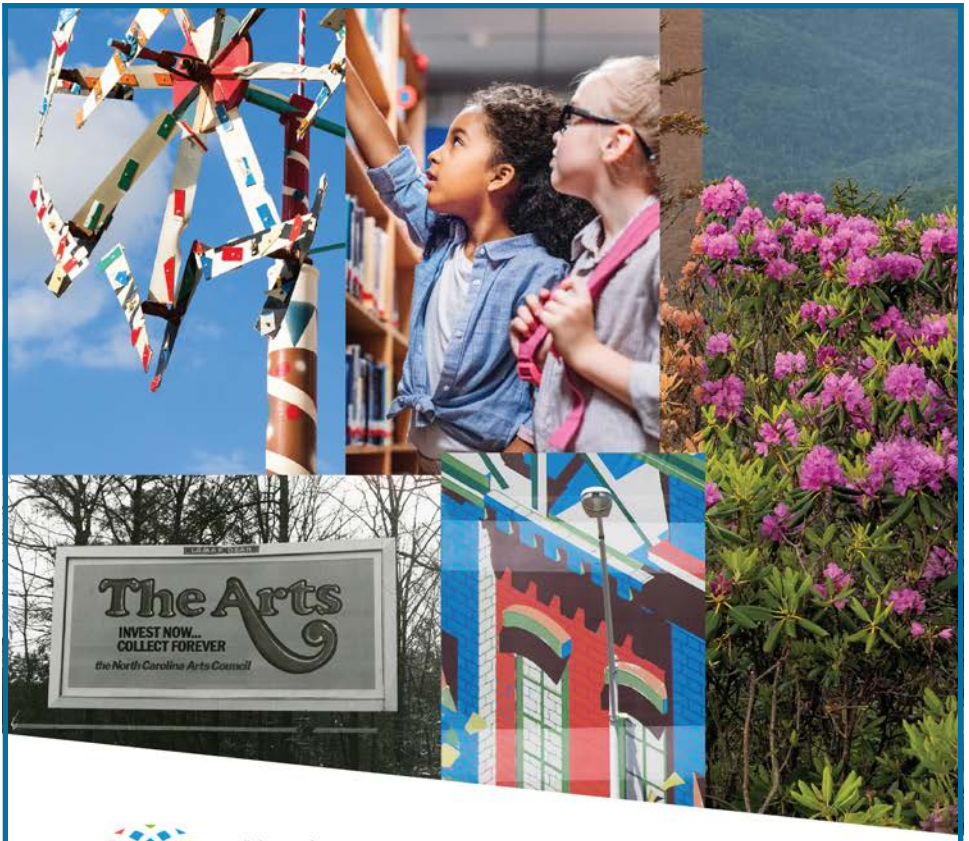
WHO'S WHO

Karla C. Payne (Oni Wise) is an actor, voice-over artist, and poet who has appeared in countless productions for several theater companies, including The Barnstormers Theatre (New Hampshire), The City Theatre, New Horizon Theater, and Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company, where she most recently appeared as Sister Pauletta Denise Jones in the 2025 production of Sanctified, written and directed by Javon Johnson from The Oval. Karla also notably portrayed Beverly Jenkins in Chicken and Biscuits, produced by New Horizon Theater in spring 2023, and was featured in a film short entitled As I Please, scored by the Grammy Award-winning Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. In 2023, Karla launched her company, InnerVizions Coaching & Wellness LLC, providing performance and life coaching for actors. She has also written an ebook entitled The Zen Actor's Guide: Unleashing Your Inner Confidence for Fearless Performances. Karla is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and the Pittsburgh chapter of The Pierians, Incorporated.

Justus A. Payne (Albert Wise) is an 8th grade student at Schiller STEAM Academy. He most notably appeared as Young Harpo/Young Adam in Pittsburgh CLO's 2024 musical production of The Color Purple. Justus is also a member of Alumni Theater Company, where he most recently performed in The Joint is Jumpin' and Black Sheep. As a budding writer, Justus has authored two poetry eBooks and was thrilled to have his one-act play, Come Home Happy, featured in the 2024 Young Playwrights Festival at the City Theatre.



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CREATIVE TEAM

Mark Clayton Southers (Playwright, Producing Artistic Director) and his family reside in Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. He is the founder and producing Artistic Director of the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company.

His very first play When the Water Turns Clear was produced at Chicago's ETA Theater. His second play Ashes to Africa was a finalist at the 2001 Dayton Playhouse Future Fest. His third play Ma Noah was the recipient of the 2004 Theodore Ward prize at Columbia College, Chicago.

He has written over 20 full-length and one-act plays including the poem play Angry Black Man Poetry aka End Angered Species which had a successful run at Teatr Śląski in Katowice, Poland in 2009 and Miss Julie, Clarissa and John which ran at the 2017 National Black Theatre Festival and also had a three-week run in 2017 at Scotland's prestigious Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

He has a series of three plays which make up his Culture Clash Series. They include Hood Winked, James McBride and I Nipoti.

Inspired by his mentor August Wilson, Mark has also set out to complete his very own collection of ten plays each taking place in the 1800s. To date he's completed eight full-length plays, including The Bluegrass Mile, which premiered in October 2023 with the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, and The Coffin Maker, which premiered in May of 2024 with the Pittsburgh Public Theater. Mark is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, and the former Artistic Director of both the August Wilson African-American Cultural Center in Pittsburgh PA and the Short North Stage August Wilson Festival in Columbus Ohio.

For more information please visit: www.markclaytonsouthers.com.

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CREATIVE TEAM

Monteze Freeland (Director & Sound Designer) is grateful to return home to PPTCO! Last season, Mr. Freeland's play Fishy Woo Woo premiered on the Carter Redwood stage. Previous PPTCO credits include Savior Samuel, In the Heat of the Night, Miss Julie, Clarissa and John, Christmas Star, East Texas Hot Links, The Piano Lesson, King Hedley II, and Fences. Mr. Freeland currently serves as the Co-Artistic Director of City Theatre Company and was named the 2017 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Performer of the Year in addition to City Paper's 2021 Person of the Year. In June, he will transition into the role of Artistic Director of Alumni Theater Company, a Black youth arts organization. Thank you to the Southers family for returning art to the Hill District. For Grandma Doris, who first showed me the beauty in a flower.

Willa Cotten aka Katy (Seamstress), is a Pittsburgh-based costume designer who holds a Bachelors degree in Fashion Merchandising. She is an assistant costumer and seamstress with nearly a decade of experience in professional theater. Since 2016, she has been a valued member of the costume team at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, where she has contributed to the creation and execution of costumes for numerous acclaimed productions.

Throughout her career, Willa has collaborated closely with award-winning resident costume designer Cheryl El-Walker, helping bring to life the works of legendary playwright August Wilson as well as contemporary playwrights including Mark Clayton Southers, Ernest McCarty, Javon Johnson, and Dorothy Marcic. Her credits include Seven Guitars, King Hedley II, Jitney, Joe Turner's Come and Gone, Radio Golf, Dinah, The Bluegrass Mile, Sistas: The Musical, Art of Wise, and Sanctified.

Known for her attention to detail, craftsmanship, and collaborative spirit, Willa specializes in costume construction, alterations, fittings,

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ENT 211 AD

wardrobe coordination, fabric selection, and historical costume research. She is committed to creating costumes that support storytelling while ensuring performer comfort, authenticity, and durability.

In addition to her theatrical work, Willa serves as seamstress and costumer for The BGVs, designing and maintaining performance wardrobes that reflect each artist's unique style and stage presence.

Her work has contributed to productions presented by Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, New Horizon Theater, Inc., and the International Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Through every project, Willa brings creativity, professionalism, and a passion for the performing arts to the stage.

Cheryl El Walker (Costume, Make up & Hair Designer) is an award-winning costume designer and makeup artist who is also a veteran stage actor from Pittsburgh. She is the resident costume/makeup artist for the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company. Her creative work in various venues has earned her several Onyx awards from the African American Council of the Arts (AACTA): Best Make-up Artist (2007); Best Costume for a Musical for Christmas Is Coming Uptown (2008); Best Leading Actress for Freeman (New Horizon Theatre, 2008); Best Costume Design for a Play (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012) and the PPTCO 2012 Legacy Award. In 2013, Cheryl debuted another one of her skills and received PPTCO's Theater Festival in Black and White Award for Best Director. Cheryl performed in and designed costumes, makeup and hair for both Dinah (2024) and Sanctified (2025). She designed costumes for Radio Golf (2024) and appeared in The Nacirema Society for New Horizon. Cheryl is an alumna of Point Park University and is pleased to announce that she has done costume, makeup and special effects for all ten August Wilson plays.

A remarkable scene to behold

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6/26 • TDR-4488403617

CREATIVE TEAM

Tony Ferrieri (Scenic Designer) Art of Wise marks Tony's sixth production with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company. Awards and milestones include The Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Award for Established Artist, New Works Festival Lifetime Achievement Award, "Designer of the Year" by Pittsburgh City Paper and Post-Gazette, The Frankel Award, Fred Kelly Award for Outstanding Achievement, Harry Schwalb Excellence in the Arts Award, features in Live Design and Stage Directions magazines, 43 years as Resident Scenic Designer at City Theatre, and over 580 scenic designs. Recent designs include: King James for Cleveland Playhouse and City Theatre, Crocodile Fever and The Skeleton Crew for barebones productions, The Bluegrass Mile for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, The Coffin Maker for Pittsburgh Public Theater, Southside Stories Revisited and Native Gardens for City Theatre Company, Hamlet and The Current War for Quantum Theatre, Anything Goes for Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera, Book of Merman and Double Threat Trio for CLO Cabaret, Smart Blonde for 59E59 Theatre in New York, Feeding the Dragon for Hartford Stage and Primary Stages, Carousel and Clue for Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center, Uncle Tom's Cabin and Thou Shalt Not for Pittsburgh Playhouse Conservatory. In addition Tony designed the Liberty Magic space for The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and an escape room in Enter the Imaginarium for Bricolage.

Mils "M. J." James (Choreography) is an actor, singer, dancer, choreographer, director and teaching artist. A product of Point Park University and Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts high school, he is founding artistic director of Reflections Theatre CO-OP in NYC and has performed all over the world in such productions as Memphis, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Once on this Island, and Do Lord Remember Me,

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BLACK THEATRE HOLY GROUND

and he has danced for the Jacob/Campbell company and Forces of Nature in New York. He has also worked alongside Sherman Hemsley, Reggie Kelley, Eileen J. Morris, Renn Woods, Walter Rutledge, Vivian Reed, and Tony award-winners Hinton Battle and Billy Porter to name a few. As an instructor he has taught in various program. As a director he has had the opportunity to bring vision to such productions as Ubuntu Holiday for Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co., shows for Trilogy Opera Company and Luxe Creative Design, the sorority of AKA for The Annual Ivy Ball, and Let My People! The Miseducation of African American History, a touring show he created in 2017. He has most recently choreographed Javon Johnson's Sanctified for PPTCO, and is so honored to be able to be the choreographer for Art of Wise.

Latrice Lovett (Lighting Designer) is a native of Washington, DC who currently resides in High Point, NC. She has done lighting in several different genres of the performing arts including dance, theatre, musical theatre, live concerts and opera. She completed her bachelor's degree at North Carolina Central University in Technical Theatre. She has also received her MFA in Design & Technology from University of Missouri-Kansas City where she studied Lighting Design. She is currently creating lighting designs and working on other lighting projects under her company Lovett Lighting LLC.

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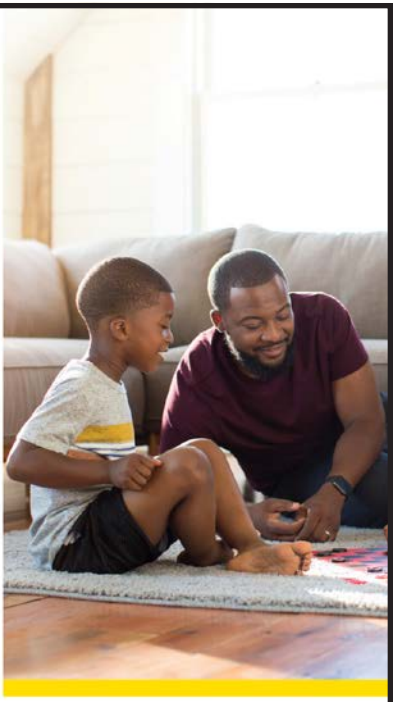

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CREATIVE TEAM

Ashley Renee Southers (Production Stage Manager & Lighting Technician) has always had a passion to pursue the arts. She loves working alongside her family at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company. She considers herself a D-I-A-P (Do-It-All-Person). She graduated from Point Park University in 2018, with a Bachelor's Degree in English/Creative Writing. In her free time, she loves writing, watching movies, and hanging out with family, friends, and her dogs Cocoa and Bentley. She would like to thank her father Mark Southers for being an inspiration for her upbringing. She always enjoys challenging herself, and expanding her creativity through the arts.

Linda Wallen (Artist, original paintings) has made a living with her paint brushes for over 50 years. Originally from South Bend, Indiana, she ran away from graduate school to become a street artist in New Orleans in the 70s. She ended up in Pittsburgh in 1980 where she has been painting portraits and teaching at the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and CMU. For many years Ms. Wallen took artists and students to France to paint, creating an art center in Le Pouldu in Brittany. Marrying an actor prompted Linda to study set design and prop-making.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

WELCOME BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL

THU JULY 30

POETIC R&B PRESENT LUTHER VANDROSS TRIBUTE 930 - ROAR

FRI JULY 31

LIVE MUSIC W/ MOXIE 930 - ROAR

MOTOWN DANCE PARTY 930 - MILLER'S

LOVE IN THE CLUB PARTY 930 - ROAR

SAT AUG 1

DAYTIME DISCO 3PM - ROAR

SAHARA REGGAE BAND 930 - MILLER'S

LIVE MUSIC W/ ENVISION 930 - ROAR

TIX & INFO ONLINE AT ROARWS.COM | OPEN NOON - 2AM

ROAR

633 N LIBERTY STREET

SCAN ME

Miller's on trade

622 TRADE STREET NW

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Art of Wise started out as a tale of a young African-American girl who has a gift of painting beautiful flowers. It was my attempt to create a play that showed a somewhat softer side of life in the early eighteen-hundreds.

Working on period pieces, especially those that take place during the dark days of slavery, is always difficult. When I think about the resilience of my African and African-American ancestors, and presenting their lives onstage, I challenge myself to craft stories that are engaging but not overly traumatic.

There's a certain balance that must take place when telling these stories and it extends well past the page.

For me the beauty of taking a play from page to stage is within the collaboration that is formed between the playwright and director.

A visionary director can take a play to higher heights. That is the case working with director Monteze Freeland.

Mr. Freeland operates much like a dramaturg as well; after all, who wouldn't welcome a two-for-one deal? Over the years his vision for my work has been nothing short of amazing. His out-of-the-box approach has been refreshing to witness and the end results have made me a huge fan.

I hope you can enjoy and appreciate what we and the actors, designers and crew have put together.

Enjoy the show and thank you for being here.

Best,
Mark Clayton Southers
Playwright

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As we partake in the 2026 International Black Theatre Festival, let us embrace the stories, the performances, and the profound messages that will unfold over the coming days. Welcome to "Black Theatre Holy Ground".

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RFP

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Renée Fleming in Concert
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November 2026
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March 2027
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PiedmontOperaAt50.org

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MON - SAT JULY 27-31 & AUG 1

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LATE NIGHT	9P-12A
BAR/LOUNGE	12P-1A

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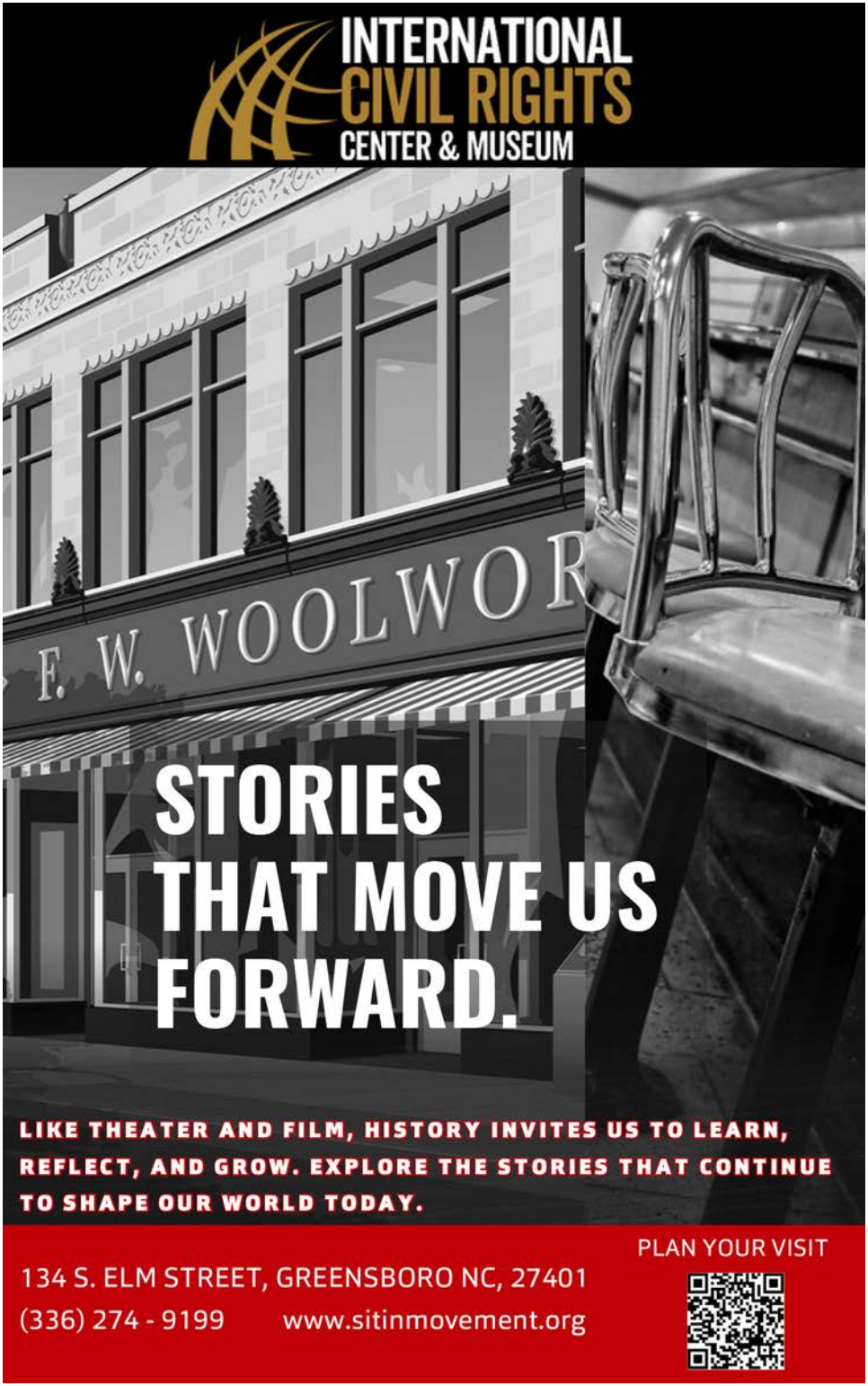
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Nico Amortegui, *Be a Wildflower*, 2025. © 2025 Nico Amortegui. Courtesy of the artist.

NOW OPEN DOWNTOWN

DISCOVER THE ART OF NOW IN NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina Museum of Art, Winston-Salem (formerly SECCA) is pleased to announce a new exhibition and program space, now open in the heart of downtown Winston-Salem.

Open Wednesday through Sunday, the space invites visitors to interact with art and artists, generate ideas and connections, and support our state's creative ecosystem.

GALLERY HOURS

WEDNESDAY	1PM	→	5PM
THURSDAY	1PM	→	7PM
FRIDAY	1PM	→	5PM
SATURDAY	11AM	→	5PM
SUNDAY	1PM	→	5PM

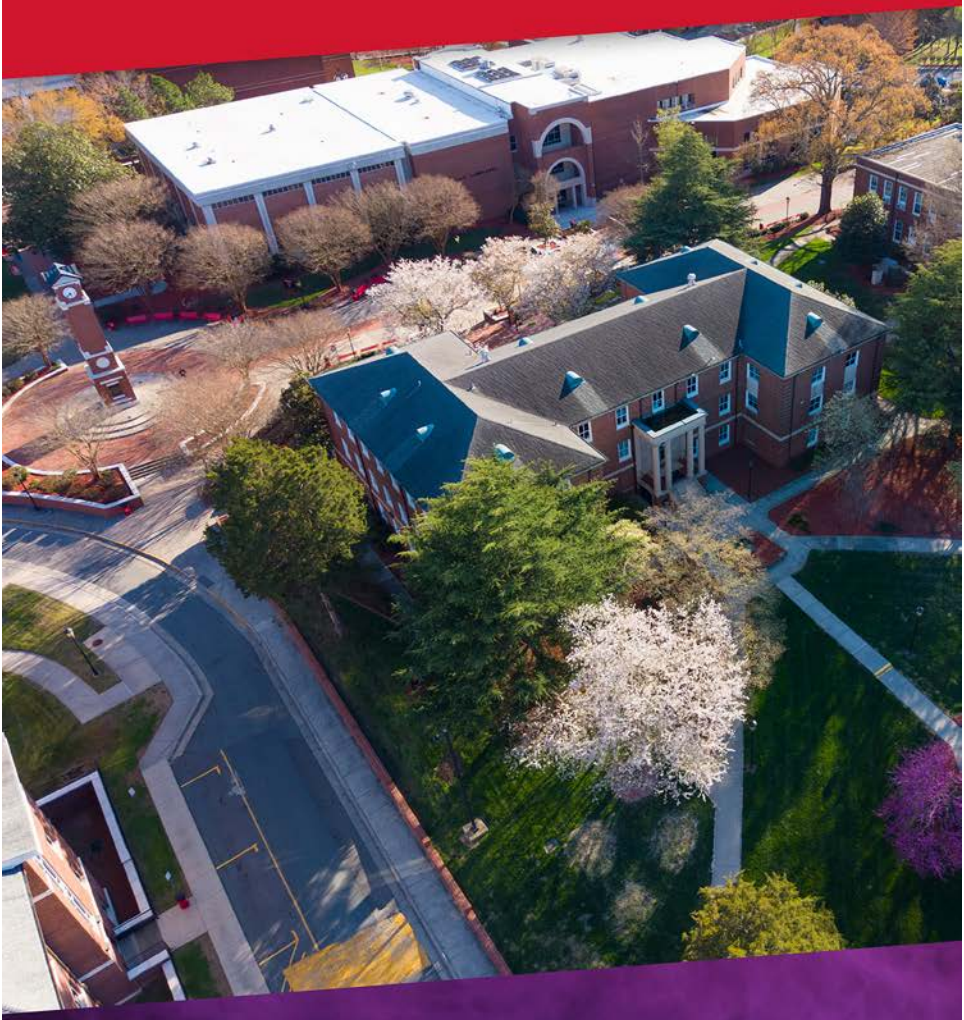
NCMA Winston-Salem Downtown is centrally located at
400 W Fourth St, Suite #130

Admission is free and open to the public. Learn more at
www.ncmawinstonsalem.gov

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

welcomes

the INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL



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