

KC REP

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March 8, 2017

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A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Runs March 24-April 16, 2017 at Spencer Theatre

Cast & Creative Team Overview

RUFUS BURNS (*Joseph Asagai*)

KC Rep: *A Raisin in the Sun*, *A Christmas Carol*. **Local:** *An Octoroon*, *The Motherf*cker with the Hat*, *Ruined*, *The Salvation of Iggy Scrooge* (Unicorn Theatre); *The Wrestling Season*, *The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza* (The Coterie); *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* (Heart of America Shakespeare Festival); *Titus Andronicus* (The Living Room Theatre). **Education:** MFA in Acting & Directing from UMKC. AEA Member

CARWIN COOPER (*Travis*)

KC Rep: debut. Carwin is freshly 13 and enjoys acting in school plays, video games, math, and creating characters to play with his siblings.

WALTER COPPAGE (*Bobo*)

KC Rep: *A Christmas Carol*, *Carter's Way*, *The Gospel At Colonus*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Comedy Of Errors*, *Antigone*. **Regional:** *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*(Steppenwolf Theatre); *Radio Golf* (Studio Theatre DC). **Local:** *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead*, *A Lesson from Aloes* (Kansas City Actors Theatre); *The Mountaintop*, *How To Steal A Picasso*, *Water by the Spoonful*, *The Clean House*, *Ruined*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Permanent Collection*, *Quills* (Unicorn Theatre); *Our Town*, *The Miracle Worker*, *My Children My Africa*, *The Giver*, *Frankenstein*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Valley Song* (The Coterie); *Amadeus* (Spinning Tree Theatre); *As You Like It*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure* (Heart of America Shakespeare Festival). **Film:** *All Creatures Here Below*, *In The Wake Of Ire*, *12 Days Of Giving*, *The Profit*, *Jayhawkers*, *Destination: Planet Negro*, *James Ellroy's Stay Clean*, *The Only Good Indian*, *Last Ounce of Courage*, *Suspension*. **TV:** *Gone in the Night* (CBS), *The Only Witness* (Lifetime), *A Deadly Vision* (ABC), *All Roads Lead Home* (Showtime), *Truman* (HBO).

NEDRA DIXON (*Mrs. Johnson*)

KCRep: debut.

Broadway/Off-Broadway/National Tours: *Bubblin' Brown Sugar*; *Tintypes*; *Hair*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Godspell*; *By Strouse*. **Regional:** *Into The Woods*; *Children of Eden*; *Anything Goes*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Annie*; *The King and I*; *Oklahoma*; *Music Man*; *South Pacific*; *Songs for a New World*; *And The World Goes 'Round*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Jerry's Girls*; *All Night Strut*; *Let's Call The Whole Thing Gershwin*; *Having Our Say*; *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **Local:** *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Black Pearl Sings!* (Spinning Tree Theatre); *Gumbo House* (Keion Jackson-Creator); *The Wiz* (The Coterie); *Ruined*, *bare: A Pop Opera*, *And Her Hair Went*

With Her, The Women of Brewster Place (The Unicorn Theatre); *Menopause the Musical* (American Heartland Theatre); *Jesus Christ Superstar, They're Playing Our Song* (Starlight Theatre); *A...My Name Is Alice* (Theatre League). **Special Event Performances:** The White House; The Kennedy Center Honors; Carnegie Hall; Madison Square Garden. **Music Videos:** Tech N9ne's Fear. **Radio:** Featured Vocalist on NPR's 12th Street Jump. **Directing:** *Once On This Island; Grey Gardens; Sophisticated Ladies.*
AEA Member

GARY NEAL JOHNSON (*Karl Lindner*)

KC Rep (Associate Artist): *A Christmas Carol* (Ebenezer Scrooge), *Death of a Salesman* (Willy Loman), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Mushnik), *August: Osage County* (Charlie), *Cabaret* (Herr Schultz), *Bus Stop* (Virgil Blessing), *The Fantasticks* (Hucklebee), *The Drawer Boy* (Morgan), *Oleanna* (John), *M. Butterfly* (Gallimard), *King Lear* (Gloucester), *Give 'Em Hell, Harry* (Harry Truman), *Royal Hunt of the Sun* (Pizarro), *Treasure Island* (Long John Silver), *A Delicate Balance* (Harry), *The Foreigner* (Owen Musser), *Saint Joan* (Archbishop), *Julius Caesar* (Caesar), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon), *Nicholas Nickleby* (Squeers), *Of Mice and Men* (George), among others. **Local:** *King Lear* (Lear), *Merchant of Venice* (Shylock), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oberon) (Heart of America Shakespeare Festival); *A Number, The Mousetrap, The Real Inspector Hound, A Lesson from Aloes* (Kansas City Actors Theatre); *Hello, Dolly* (Musical Theatre Heritage), among others. **Regional:** Goodman Theatre, (Chicago), American Conservatory Theatre (San Francisco), Shakespeare Theatre Company (D.C.), Utah Shakespeare Festival, Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre. **Awards:** Dean Goodman Award for best supporting actor (San Francisco). AEA Member

TOSIN MOROHUNFOLA (*Walter Lee Younger*)

KC Rep: debut. **Off-Broadway:** *Lucky Duck* (New Victory Theatre). **Regional:** *Pullman Porter Blues* (The Goodman), *Native Son* (Court Theatre), *The Gospel of Lovingkindness* (Victory Gardens); *The Drowsy Chaperone, Is He Dead?, Harry The Great and The Presidents!* (Creede Repertory Theatre). **Local:** *The Wiz, Shrek* (The Coterie); *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark, BlackTop Sky, Ruined, Speech & Debate* (Unicorn Theatre); *This is How It Goes* (The Living Room); *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo, Heart of America Shakespeare Festival tour). **Awards:** Best Supporting Actor award for *The Gospel of Lovingkindness* from the Black Theatre Alliance. **Directing:** *Geek Mythology, Zeus on the Loose and The Presidents!* (The Coterie). **TV & Film:** "Empire" (FOX), "APB" (FOX), "Chicago Fire" (NBC), "Chicago Med" (recurring role NBC); *Destination Planet Negro, If Night Comes, On Sight* (writer and director, OnSightFilm.com. Tosin is also a member of "Those People" Comedy, and "Boomtown! Improv". TosinMorohunfola.com
AEA Member

REONANS NELSON II (*Travis Younger*)

KC Rep: debut. **Local:** "Toon Time" (monologue, Festival of Theater Showcase, Arrowhead Middle School); Debate Championship (2017). **Education:** 6th grade, Arrowhead Middle School. Reonans holds a strong 3.90 GPA and enjoys completing Khan Academy exercises, reading, drawing, and playing video games like Minecraft.

GRETA OGLESBY (*Lena Younger*)

KC Rep: debut. **Broadway:** *Marian Anderson Story* (title role), *A Raisin in the Sun* (standby for Phylicia Rashad), *American Songbook* (A Night with Jeanine Tesori). **Regional:** *The Crucible, Sunshine Boys, Burial at Thebes, Caroline or Change, Crowns* (The Guthrie Theatre); *Caroline or Change* (Syracuse Stage); *Hamlet, The Tempest, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Winter's Tale* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Milwaukee Repertory Theatre); *Dreams of Sarah Breedlove* (Alabama Shakespeare); *Gem of the Ocean, The Amen Corner* (The Goodman

Theatre); *Goodbye Stranger* (Steppenwolf); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Timeline Theatre); *Shakin' the Mess Out of Misery, Do Lord Remember Me* (Chicago Theatre Company); *1940s Radio Hour* (Dreamstreet Theatre). **TV & Film:** *Into Temptation, Conversations with God, Time Served, Four Way Stop*; "Chicago PD", "Betrayal", among others. **Awards:** 2009 McKnight Theatre Artist Fellowship, 2009 Ivey Award (Best Actress in Musical), Joseph Jefferson Award (Best Actress in a Play), Black Theatre Alliance Award (Best Actress in a Play and Best Actress in a Musical). **Education:** BS, Rust College. AEA Member

LANISE ANTOINE SHELLEY (*Ruth Younger*)

KC Rep: debut. **International:** *Macbeth, All My Sons, Aeneid* (Stratford Shakespeare Festival). **Regional:** *Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Comedy of Errors* (Short Shakespeare!, Chicago Shakespeare Theater); Favorite roles as Milwaukee Rep's resident company member for five years: *Eurydice, The Glass Menagerie, Gem of the Ocean, King Lear, ...Young Lady From Rwanda, The Crucible*; Goodman Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, Backroom Shakespeare, Outside the Wire, American Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theater, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Book-It Repertory Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre. **TV & Film:** "Chicago Fire", Goodman Theatre's *Stop. Reset.*, Discovery World. **Awards:** Chicago Fellow for Stratford Shakespeare Festival, 2016. **Education:** MFA, ART/MXAT at Harvard University; BFA, Cornish College of the Arts, certificate from BADA in Oxford, England. **Upcoming:** *King Liz* (title role, Windy City Playhouse) and *Macbeth* (HD summer 2017 release, Stratford Shakespeare Festival). @lantoines AEA Member

BRIANNA WOODS (*Beneatha Younger*)

KC Rep: *A Christmas Carol* (2015, 2016). **Local:** *Harvey* (Kansas Classical Rep); *Big River* (Musical Theatre Heritage). **Awards:** Recipient of the Jon T. Eicholtz and Barbara Eden Full-Ride Performance Scholarship 2016-2017. **Additional:** Performer at KC Rep's annual Gala with Nathan Tysen and Joe's Pet Project. **Education:** University of Kansas, Theatre and Voice. **Upcoming:** *Garfield the Musical* (The Coterie).

DONOVAN WOODS (*George Younger*)

KC Rep: *A Christmas Carol*. **Local:** Marty the Zebra in *Madagascar The Musical, Snoopy in A Charlie Brown Christmas, and Boy in The Cat in the Hat* (The Coterie). *The Brothers Size* (Unicorn Theatre); *West Side Story* (Spinning Tree Theatre); *Hairspray* and *Leap of Faith* (Tent Theatre); *Footloose, Shrek the Musical, and Almost, Maine* (Crane River Theatre). AEA member

CHIP MILLER (*Co-Director*) Assistant Artistic Director at KCRep. **Acting:** *The Fantasticks* **Directing:** *4:48 Psychosis* (The Buffalo Room); *David George's Christmas Ain't A Drag* (The Madrid). **Assistant Directing:** *Evita, Roof of the World, Sunday in the Park with George, Stillwater, Hair, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Romeo & Juliet, The Tallest Tree in the Forest, American Buffalo, Waiting for You (on the Corner of 13th and Walnut), Death of a Salesman* (KC Rep); *Justice in the Embers* (The Living Room); *600 Highwaymen's Empire City* (University Settlement); *Reporting Live* (NYMF 2012); *Venice* (Public Theatre); *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (Baltimore Centerstage). **Education:** BFA: New York University.

MARISSA WOLF (*Co-Director*) Director of New Works Associate Artist at KCRep. **KCRep:** *The Diary of Anne Frank*. **Regional:** Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Francisco Playhouse, Shotgun Players, Cutting Ball Theatre, The Magic Theatre, and Berkeley Playhouse. Ms. Wolf previously served as the Artistic Director of Crowded Fire Theater in San Francisco for six seasons, where she developed and produced work by a vanguard of top emerging playwrights including Christina Anderson

(Kansas City born and raised playwright), Lauren Gunderson, Young Jean Lee, Christopher Chen, Aditi Brennan Kapil, Caridad Svich, Thomas Bradshaw, and Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig. In her first year as Director of New Works/Associate Artist at Kansas City Rep, Ms. Wolf has launched **OriginKC**, a program that supports the creation, development, and production of new work from a diverse body of major national playwrights. **Awards:** Best Director (nomination, Broadway World San Francisco); the Bay Area Critics Circle Award; the Bret C. Harte Directing Internship at Berkeley Repertory Theatre for two years. **Education:** BA, Vassar College, additional training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. **Upcoming:** Ms. Wolf will co-direct *A Raisin in the Sun* with Chip Miller in the 2016-2017 season, as well as the world premiere of *Man in Love* by Christina Anderson in the 2017 **OriginKC: New Works Festival**.

LORRAINE HANSBERRY (*Playwright*)

When Lorraine Hansberry's (1930-1965) *A Raisin in the Sun* appeared on Broadway in 1959, the artist became at twenty-nine the youngest American playwright, the fifth woman, and the only African American to date to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play of the Year. The play represented a landmark. In its authentic depiction of Black American life, and the vivid demonstration of so gifted a creator, cast, and director, it made it possible for the American stage to ignore African American creativity and subject matter thereafter. In 1961, the film version won a special award at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for a Screen Writer's Guild Award for Hansberry's screenplay. In 1965, Lorraine Hansberry died of cancer at age 34. As if prescient, in the six years she had between the triumph of her first play and her death, she was extraordinarily prolific. Her second play to be produced on Broadway, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, was in its early run to mixed reviews, when Hansberry died; the curtain came down on that date. *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black*, an autobiographical portrait in her own words adapted by her former husband and literary executor Robert Nemiroff, was posthumously produced in 1969 and toured across the country. In 1970, *Les Blancs*, her play about the inevitability of struggle between colonizers and colonized in Africa, and the impending crisis that would surely grow out of it, ran on Broadway to critical acclaim. During her career as a playwright, Hansberry wrote many articles and essays on literary criticism, racism, sexism, homophobia, world peace and other social and political issues. At her death, she left behind file cabinets holding her public and private correspondence, speeches and journals, and various manuscripts in several genres: plays for stage and screen, essays, poetry, and an almost complete novel. (*Courtesy, Lorraine Hansberry Literary Trust*)

The design and production team includes:

Mary Honour (Production Stage Manager), Kelsey Brennan York (Asst. Production Stage Manager), Antje Ellermann (Scenic Design), Jessica Jahn (Costume Design), Donna Ruzika (Lighting Design), Justin Ellington (Sound Design), Alison Hanks (Wig Design), Ellen Hayek (Research & Dramaturgy) and John Wilson (Fight Choreographer.)

A Raisin in the Sun begins March 24 at KC Rep's Spencer Theatre on the UMKC campus and runs through April 16. For tickets and information contact the KCRep Box Office at 816.235.2700 or <http://kcrep.org/show/a-raisin-in-the-sun>.

About Kansas City Repertory Theatre

Kansas City Repertory Theatre, one of the nation's oldest and most respected regional theaters, is the center of a great theatre town. KCREp produces theatrical excellence, creating and sharing stories at the center of our nation's creative crossroads. KCREp's mission is to advance the art form while cultivating passionate audiences, artists, and advocates to invest in our region's creative future. We build community by connecting people through productions and outreach that educate, entertain, challenge and inspire. Lauded by *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME magazine*, *Variety* and *The Toronto Sun*, KCREp produces mainstage plays and special events at Spencer Theatre, where it serves as the professional theatre in residence at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), and Copaken Stage located in downtown Kansas City. KCREp employs more than 250 professional artists, technicians and administrators, and serves more than 100,000 patrons and 12,000 school children annually. Kansas City Repertory Theatre is led by Artistic Director Eric Rosen and Executive Director Angela Lee Gieras.

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Please direct all media inquiries to: Tammy Cunningham tc@tlcmktgconsultants.com

For further information, please visit our website at www.kcrep.org.

For Tickets: 816.235.2700 or www.kcrep.org.