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Beauty and the Beast, For 200

At this Philadelphia school, the annual production involves everybody.

By Dylan Parent

Welcome to PLAYBILLDER Spotlight, where Playbill highlights shows from educational institutions or regional theatres and special events around the country (who have used Playbill's program-building service). By welcoming these PLAYBILLDERs center stage, we hope to give our readers a more in-depth look at theatre programs that are fostering the love of the performing arts in the next generation and the way theatre lovers are bringing Playbill along for life's big moments.

Below, we spotlight Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and their production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. Instrumental Music teacher Kim Kelter Neu shared with Playbill just how many children came together to put up the show.

Tell us a little about yourself.

How many years have you been teaching?

Kim Kelter Neu: I've been teaching for 25 years and our musical is certainly the highlight each year.

How does your school's performing arts program impact your community?

Our school musical brings together our community, involving over 200 students from both middle and high school. Students make the sets and the props as well as run the sound control, the lights, play in the orchestra, and, of course, star in the show! Families leave our show amazed at what the students have achieved.

How do you choose shows for your students?

When we choose our show, we always pick something that involves all the students. It must have a chorus and a full orchestra. This limits our choices but allows us to include the most students. We also must keep in mind that our school is grades five through 12, so



PHOTO COURTESY OF MASTERMAN HIGH SCHOOL

whatever show we pick must work for fifth and 12th graders alike. *Beauty and the Beast* was an easy and perfect choice this year!

What reactions do you expect to see in students when they see their name printed in this Playbill for the first time?

Students love seeing the finished Playbill, especially the ads their family and friends put in for them.

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Dear Theatregoer,

Happy New Year! We are thrilled that you have joined us as we embark on another thrilling year of live performances, and we eagerly anticipate what 2025 has in store for America's Oldest Theatre!

When spring is just around the corner, we'll welcome Noël Coward's *HAY FEVER*, where misjudged liaisons, secret seductions, and scandalous revelations run riot at the most outrageous of all house parties. This season will culminate with *DREAMGIRLS*, the sensational Broadway musical inspired by Diana Ross and the Supremes.

I am also thrilled to announce the lineup for our 217th season: *MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET*, *A CHRISTMAS STORY* the musical, *SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE GREAT DETECTIVE*, Edward Albee's *A DELICATE BALANCE*, and *1776* the musical. Secure the best seats in the house for this historic season by renewing and subscribing today!

In addition to our unforgettable Mainstage Season, we're overjoyed that The Theatre School at Walnut Street Theatre is in session for the spring semester, welcoming students of all ages. I encourage anyone with a passion for life to explore our class offerings. I'm also pleased to announce the return of Walnut Street Theatre for Kids this season, featuring the soaring musical adventure Disney's *ALADDIN JR.* in the spring.

For now, sit back and let us take the wheel with our production of *DRIVING MISS DAISY*. We're beyond thrilled to welcome you to the theatre and look forward to seeing you again soon!

Sincerely,

Bernard Havard,
President and Producing Artistic Director



Photo: Mark Garvin

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BERNARD HAVARD

President and Producing Artistic Director

January 7 – February 2, 2025

DRIVING MISS DAISY

by Alfred Uhry

Set Design

ROMAN TATAROWICZ

Lighting Design

RYAN O'GARA

Sound Design

CHRISTOPHER COLUCCI

Wig Design

AMARI CALLAWAY

Director of
Production

SIOBHÁN RUANE

Stage Managers

ELIZABETH HAROIAN
ABIGAIL STURGIS

Associate

Artistic Director
BRIAN KURTAS

Directed by

BERNARD HAVARD

DRIVING MISS DAISY was first produced Off-Broadway by
Playwrights Horizons, New York City, in 1987.

It was subsequently produced by Jane Harmon/Nina Keneally,
Ivy Properties, Ltd./Richard Frankel, Gene Wolsk/Alan M. Shore and Susan S. Myerberg
in association with Playwrights Horizons, Off-Broadway in 1987.

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General
Manager

JESSICA DOHENY

Director of
Development

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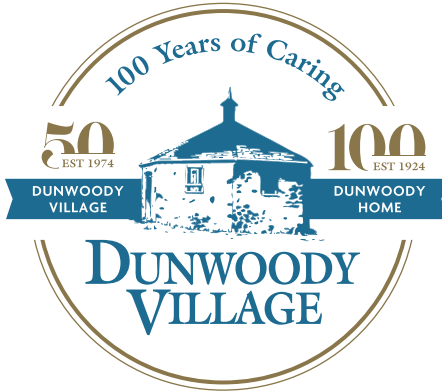
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CAST

(in order of appearance)

Hoke Colburn.....Johnnie Hobbs, Jr.*
Daisy WerthanWendy Scharfman*
Boolie Werthan.....Scott Greer*

UNDERSTUDIES

DEB ASHMORE (Daisy Werthan), DAVE POLGAR (Boolie Werthan),
CHARLES WASHINGTON (Hoke Colburn)

Place:

Atlanta, Georgia

Time:

1948-1973

Driving Miss Daisy will be performed without an intermission.

DRIVING MISS DAISY

is presented through special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC,
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* The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the theatre union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The videotaping or other video or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

“Santa Baby” (Written by Joan Jauits, Tony Springer, Phil Springer) is licensed through Tamir Music.

Artwork by BWJ Enterprises LLC

Pictured: Johnnie Hobbs, Jr. and Wendy Scharfman. Photo by Mark Garvin.

CAST



Scott Greer



Johnnie Hobbs, Jr.



Wendy Scharfman

WHO'S WHO

SCOTT GREER (*Boolie Werthan*) is thrilled to be back at the Walnut, where he last appeared in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. He is a 32-year veteran of Philadelphia theatre, and has worked for Arden Theatre Company, 1812 Productions, Theatre Exile, InterAct Theatre Company, The Wilma Theater, People's Light, Delaware Theatre Company, Act II Playhouse and many more. Regionally, he has worked for Actors Theatre of Louisville, Round House, and the Pearl Theatre in New York. He has won six Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre, including the F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Theatre Artist. He was named "Best Theatre Talent" by *Philadelphia Magazine*. Thanks to Mark and Bernard. Love to Jen, Lily & Rita.

JOHNNIE HOBBS, JR. (*Hoke Colburn*) was an Emeritus Associate Professor at The University of the Arts and received the 2015 Barrymore Lifetime Achievement Award and is a four-time Barrymore nominee. Walnut Street Theatre credits: *Oleanna*; *Driving Miss Daisy* (National Tour); *The Other Place*; *Thurgood*; *The Best Man* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

WENDY SCHARFMAN (*Daisy Werthan*) OFF-BROADWAY: *Through Darkest Ohio* (Public Theater); *Sorrento* (2nd Stage); *Bird House* (Mint); *Betrayal* (Image). REGIONAL: *Driving Miss Daisy*; *The Glass Menagerie* (National Tour); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; *And Then There Were None*; *An Ideal Husband*; *Enchanted*

April; *Natural History*; *Quartet* (Walnut Street Theatre); *Other Desert Cities* (Fulton); *Scotland Road* (TheaterWorks); *Misalliance*; *Hot L Baltimore* (Asolo); *Marvin's Room* (Centenary Stage); *Rumors* (Colonial Theater). FILM: *People Like Us*; *The Suit*; *Going Under* (with Roger Rees); *The Perfect Dress*. With deepest thanks to the entire Walnut Family.

ALFRED UHRY (*Author*) Alfred Uhry is the only playwright ever to win the Triple Crown: an Oscar, a Tony, and a Pulitzer Prize. He began his career as a lyric writer under contract to the late Frank Loesser. In that capacity he made his Broadway debut in 1968 with *Here's Where I Belong*. He then wrote the book and lyrics for *The Robber Bridegroom* and was nominated for a Tony Award. He followed that with five re-created musicals at the Goodspeed Opera House. In 1987 his first play, *Driving Miss Daisy*, opened at Playwrights Horizons Theatre in New York. It was subsequently moved to the John Houseman Theatre, where it ran for over 1300 performances. The play earned many awards, including the Outer Critics Circle Award and the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. For the film version, he won an Academy Award and the film itself was voted Best Picture of the Year. Other films include *Mystic Pizza* and *Rich in Love*. Mr. Uhry's second play, *Last Night of Ballyhoo*, which was commissioned by the Cultural Olympiad for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, opened on Broadway in

WHO'S WHO

February 1997. It has been chosen Best Play by the American Theatre Critics Association, The Outer Critics Circle, and the Drama League, and the 1997 Tony Award. He worked on *Parade*, a musical play about the Leo Frank case, with music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown and directed by Harold Prince. His film projects include a new adaptation of *Dodsworth* for Time Warner, *Cut Flowers* for Miramax, and *Taft*, commissioned by Morgan Freeman

BERNARD HAVARD (*Director*) It's a great privilege to once again direct Alfred Uhry's timeless play, *Driving Miss Daisy*. Having previously directed a production of this play in Studio 3 with several of these same cast members, this story is one I hold dear. This drama is about unlikely friendship that is both timely and touching. I am blessed with a magnificent cast and designers with whom I am privileged to collaborate. Love to Judy and Brandon. For information about Bernard's background, directing credits, and bio, kindly refer to the WST website. Walnutstreettheatre.org

ROMAN TATAROWICZ (*Set Design*) Walnut: *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical*; Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*; *Elvis – A Musical Revolution*; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; *Rocky, the Musical*; *Blithe Spirit*; *The Best Man*; *A Woman of No Importance*; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; *The Humans*, in addition to many in the studio space. Selected Off-B'way: *The Banana Monologues* (Acorn Theatre); *Honky* (Urban Stages); *Mother Courage*; *Dames at Sea*; *The Threepenny Opera* (Jean Cocteau Rep.). Many Off-Off-B'way including *Bee-Luther-Hatchee* (Audelco Award nom). Regional credits: Capital Rep., Merrimack Rep., Florida Studio Theatre, Azuka Theatre, Act II, InterAct, Bristol Riverside, People's Light, Pa. Shakespeare Festival, Delaware Theatre Company and ETC (Santa Barbara). Member United Scenic Artists Local 829. tatarowicz.com

RYAN O'GARA (*Lighting Design*) Broadway—*The Wiz*, *Thoughts of a Colored Man*. Select—Cirque, Norwegian Cruise Line, Tokyo DisneySea, NYC Opera, Paper Mill Playhouse, Walnut Street Theatre, Drury Lane, TUTS, Baltimore Center Stage, Syracuse Stage, Signature DC, Lincoln Center Festival, Capital Repertory and Bristol Riverside Theatre. Associate Lighting Designer for 29 Broadway productions. www.ryanogara.com

CHRISTOPHER COLUCCI (*Sound Design*) Recent work: *Red* (Theatre Exile); *The Lehman Trilogy* (Arden Theater Company); *The Last Yiddish Speaker* (InterAct); *The Comedy of Errors* (Lantern Theater Company) and both Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *Groucho: A Life in Revue* here at the Walnut! 2016 Pew Fellowship in the Arts; 8 Barrymore Awards for Outstanding Original Music and Sound Design; Independence Fellowship in the Arts (2012, 2019); MA in Philosophy from Western Kentucky University. BA in Philosophy/Theology from Eastern University. <https://soundcloud.com/cmsound> https://www.instagram.com/christopherm_colucci/

AMARI CALLAWAY (*Wig Design*) is a freelance wig and costume designer who hails from Las Vegas, NV. They moved to Philadelphia in 2017 for the wig and wardrobe apprenticeship right here at the Walnut Street Theatre, and they've been working in the area ever since! You may have seen Amari's wig designs on the Walnut stage in *The Winter Wonderettes* and *Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of The Speckled Band*, and more of their work can be seen in the upcoming show Noël Coward's *Hay Fever*.

ELIZABETH HAROIAN (*Stage Manager*) Thrilled to be back with WST for a fourth season! You'll see her work this season on *Jersey Boys*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *Dreamgirls*. Select stage management credits: WST: *Elvis – A Musical Revolution*; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; Disney's *Beauty & the Beast*; *Rocky, the Musical*; Music Circus: *Waitress*; *42nd Street*; Basil Twist: *Symphonie Fantastique*; ATC: *The Pirate La Dee Da*; NYU Steinhardt: *The Secret Garden*; *Sister Act*; Juilliard: *Richard III*. A few years ago, Liz was in Saudi Arabia managing a truly magical show with five international illusionists. She has worked with many academic programs including NYU Tisch, The Juilliard School, NYU Steinhardt, Atlantic, and ART/Harvard. Amid all the chaos, remember to have fun!

ABIGAIL STURGIS (*Assistant Stage Manager*) This is Abigail's second season at WST. Select stage management credits: WST: *Jersey Boys*; *Groucho: A Life in Revue*; Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*; *Moana, Jr.*; Media Theatre: *Rent*; Quintessence Theatre Group: *Flyin' West*; *The Skin of Our Teeth*; Opera Philadelphia: *10 Days in a Madhouse*; Act II Playhouse: *A Couple of*

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WHO'S WHO

Swells; Really Good Tidings. Proud graduate of Temple University. Love to Jon and Minnie.

SIOBHÁN RUANE (*Director of Production*) This is Siobhán's 11th season at WST. With over 20 years in the business, Siobhán has worked internationally as a Production Manager and Stage Manager. Previously, Siobhán held the faculty position of Stage Management Advisor at Florida State University's School of Theatre. Additional credits include Cirque du Soleil, Norwegian Cruise Line, Cirque Productions, and various regional theatres. Siobhán holds an undergraduate degree from Rutgers University, an MFA from the University of Delaware, and is (proudly!) originally from the Jersey Shore.

BRIAN KURTAS, CSA (*Associate Artistic Director*) has been associated with WST since 2007. He began his career here as a performer and in the professional apprenticeship program and has since dedicated himself to bringing artists together. He now serves our artists and audiences in the various capacities of casting, directing, programming, and literary management, as his function is to identify the highest quality of artists for our historic theatre. His vision behind unforgettable live experiences and storytelling has become a creative solution from the stage to the screen - he spent 4 seasons as the Executive Producer of Gretna Theatre, has worked on television networks and films including TLC and HGTV, and helped create events and entertainment for brands such as T-Mobile and Walmart while at Live Nation. Originally from Lancaster, Brian is a proud Temple alum and a member of the Casting Society of America.

MARK D. SYLVESTER (*Managing Director*) Mark is proud to be celebrating his 30th season at WST. His extensive career has spanned Summer Stock to Broadway as an actor, stage manager, box office treasurer, theatre manager, marketing and public relations director and general manager. After several years working

with commercial theatre, he has devoted his career to non-profit theatre companies since 1987. To date, Mark has been associated with more than 500 stage productions. An avid collector of musical theatre recordings, his collection contains over 3,500 cast albums from around the world. Widely regarded as a theatrical marketing expert, Mark lectures and consults with organizations internationally. He has served on several boards including seven years with the National Alliance for Musical Theatre where he now holds the honorary position of Board Emeritus and the Advisory Committee of Samuel French, the international play publisher and licensing company. With Bernard Havard he co-authored the book *Walnut Street Theatre*. Since he joined WST in 1994, it became the most subscribed theatre company in the world.

BERNARD HAVARD (*President and Executive Producing/Artistic Director*) Vox Populi (*The Voice of the People*) was written on WST Playbills in the 1800s. Whenever WST has strayed from a populist program, the theatre has gone bankrupt. When I came here 42 years ago, we had no programs and no audience. Today we enjoy one of the largest subscription bases of any theatre in the world. So, my thanks to our loyal audience and a warm welcome to newcomers who enjoy and believe in what we do. I admire the artists who dedicated their lives to the theatre and WST, particularly. Our theatre is a non-profit 501-C3 institution, and we rely on contributed income to extend our reach into the community. Last season we reached more than 41,000 students in our city schools. We have 19 esteemed trustees who give their time, wisdom, and contributions to help guide this historical treasure. I came to WST in 1982, and I am as excited now about our future as I was in the beginning. My heartfelt thanks to all who enter this theatre. For my biography, go to About Us on our website at WalnutStreetTheatre.org

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