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AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

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The
Chattanooga Theatre Centre
presents

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

by
TRACY LETTS

directed by
SUZANNE SMARTT

scenic design
ADAM MIECIELICA

lighting design & technical direction
WILLIAM SPRATT

sound design
WESLEY LEON

wardrobe assistance
CRIS KING

stage managers
RODNEY STRONG
SADIE COLLINS

crew
DAKOTA & JESS ORTIZ
LYNN STRONG

Cover photography & headshots by **BRAD CANSLER**

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY *is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service*

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY premiered in June 2007 at Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, IL, Martha Lavey, Artistic Director; David Hawkanson, Executive Director. Steppenwolf's production of AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY opened on Broadway at the Imperial Theatre on December 4, 2007. It was produced by Jeffrey Richards, Jean Doumanian, Steve Traxler, Jerry Frankel, Ostar Productions, Jennifer Manocherian, The Weinstein Company, Debra Black/Daryl Roth, Ronald & Marc Frankel/Barbara Freitag, and Rick Steiner/Staton Bell Group.

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CAST

in order of appearance

Beverly Weston ..... STAN LANE

Johnna Monevata ..... TRACY HOFFMAN

Violet Weston ..... WENDY TIPPENS

Mattie Fae Aiken ..... BECKI JORDAN

Ivy Weston ..... ASHLEY LARSEN-RATCHFORD

Charlie Aiken ..... ROB INMAN

Barbara Fordham ..... APRIL BOLTON

Bill Fordham ..... JAMES LAWSON

Jean Fordham ..... LILLY WRIGHT

Sheriff Gilbeau ..... CHRISTIAN SMITH

Karen Weston ..... JOANNA LEWIS

Steve Heidebrecht ..... JAMIE LOPEZ*

Little Charles Aiken ..... JAY ECHOLS**

* Fight Choreographer
** Composer of "Little Ivy"

SETTING

A large country home outside
Pawhuska, Oklahoma,
sixty miles northwest of Tulsa

August 2007

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY will be presented in three acts
with two 10-minute intermissions.

"Lay Down Sally" (Eric Clapton, Marcy Levy and George E. Terry)
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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Suzanne Smartt

Before it even hit the Broadway stage, *August: Osage County* won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, catapulting into the halls of the Greatest American Dramas of all time – placing the name of author Tracy Letts next to Arthur Miller, Eugene O'Neil, and that notorious writer of strong wicked women, Tennessee Williams; all famous for the melodramatic sturm and drang of their characters.

August won five Broadway Tony Awards including Best Play, Best Actress, and Best Featured Actress – which tells the story of how magnificently those roles are written.

Violet Weston is right up there and has been counted as one of the greatest roles ever written – being compared to King Lear for range, scope, and savagery of character. In that scope, Violet Weston is a bellowing Lear equivalent, rampaging over the family, presiding over dark secrets, terrorizing all as she blasts her way through lives and the dear hearts of those who try to love her. And try again.

The year after opening *August: Osage County,* author Tracy Letts won Tony's brightest award for Leading Actor in a Play for portraying another American great, "George" in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe*. Awarded at the end of a long Tony evening, the orchestra already zinging play-off music even as Letts stepped to the microphone for that career pinnacle award – and knowing he had less than 30 seconds to make a statement – with that scant invaluable moment he leaned into the microphone with this single sentence: "In theatre they let you say it to their faces."

That sums up the entirety of *August: Osage County.* A family reunion wherein the raging matriarchal beast of the family slams everybody, then gets what's coming to her – right to the face.

For those with arduous family dynamics, you might find *August: Osage County* to be wildly hysterical, tragically-comedic, laugh-out-loud while you-cry-to-yourself, and righteously cathartic.

Beware – the language is as raw as the emotions – and then brace yourself.

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FIRST HORIZON

MEET THE CAST

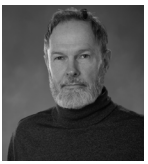
APRIL BOLTON (Barbara Fordham) is a mother of three and a sergeant with the Chattanooga Police Department. She grew up under the direction of Rodney Van Valkenburg in the Youth Theatre. Some of her credits are *The Wizard of Oz, Goldilocks, Peter Rabbit, Velveteen Rabbit,* and *The Prince and the Pauper.* Main-stage credits include Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet, Crazy for You,* and *Beauty and the Beast.* April would like to thank her husband, Michael, and their children, Hunter, Haydn and Hadley, for giving her the time to pursue acting again. Thank you to the wonderful cast and everyone involved for such a wonderful experience.

JAY ECHOLS (Little Charles Aiken) is overjoyed to be back on stage at the Theatre Centre and working with this incredible cast! Jay recently returned to Chattanooga after performing at Dollywood as part of the Gemtones and *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* after touring nationally and internationally with Missoula Children's Theatre and the National Theatre for Children. Some of Jay's favorite roles include Jack *(Into the Woods),* Benny *(Guys and Dolls),* and Kyle *(Legally Blonde).* Outside the theater, you can find Jay spending time with his niece, knitting a blanket, walking his dog Juniper, or laughing with friends. Jay would like to thank his mom and dad for always picking him up when he falls.

TRACY HOFFMAN (Johnna Monevata) is making her theatrical debut in CTC's *August: Osage County.* She has most recently played the Detective in *Dinner Detective: A Murder Mystery Dinner* at the Indigo Hotel here in Chattanooga. She enjoys spending time with friends and family, singing, dancing, reading, writing, and boxing. She dedicates this performance to friends and family for supporting her theatrical aspirations.

ROB INMAN (Charlie Aiken) last appeared as Horace Vandergelder in *Hello Dolly,* his 38th production at the CTC/Little Theatre since 1978. He has appeared in many local productions in the area with the Signal Mountain Playhouse, the Oak Street Playhouse, Yellow Dragon Productions (St. Luke's Church), the Backstage, the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, and local radio and television. Rob wishes to acknowledge his boys, Gordon and David, who inspire him every day.

BECKI JORDAN (Mattie Fae Aiken) has appeared in more than 40 productions at the Chattanooga Theatre Centre, including roles in *The Secret Garden, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Book of Liz, The Laramie Project, Sordid Lives* (Tennessee Theatre Association's Best Actress award), *Rumors, Fiddler on the Roof, Crimes of the Heart, Children of a Lesser God,* and *Showboat.* She has appeared locally and regionally in numerous other productions, including *This Random World, The Three Sisters, That Other Woman's Child, The Heidi Chronicles, Talley's Folly* (TTA Best Actress), and *The Hasty Heart.* You may also have seen her in several local commercials. Many thanks to Suzanne Smartt, the production team, and the cast!



STAN LANE (Beverly Weston) has, over the years, performed in a dozen or more shows. Most recently, he appeared in *Comic Potential* in Chattanooga and the Scopes Trial Play in Dayton, Tennessee. He has studied theatre and acting at the CTC, Chattanooga State, and the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta. Stan would like to thank Sherry Landrum, Rex Knowles, and Suzanne Smartt for encouraging his interests in theatre arts.

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JAMES LAWSON (Bill Fordham) returns to the stage after appearing in the CTC's *Alabama Story* as Senator Higgins. Other performances have included Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park,* in which his role as Victor Velasco won him the Centre Stage Director's Choice Award, and Horton Foote's *Dividing the Estate,* and the independent film *Treasure* by Live to Inspire Productions. He lives with his wife and daughter in Chattanooga. He would like to thank Suzanne Smartt for the opportunity to help tell this story.

JOANNA LEWIS (Karen Weston) is so excited to be back on the Circle stage at CTC. Joanna has performed onstage in the Chattanooga area for 15 years. Some of her favorite CTC credits include *Wonder of the World, Pig Farm, Of Mice and Men, Dark of the Moon, The 39 Steps, Avenue Q,* and *Mary Poppins.* Joanna would like to thank Suzanne for this wonderful opportunity to work with such a talented cast and crew. She would also like to thank her husband and two wonderful daughters for always inspiring and supporting her.

JAMIE LOPEZ (Steve Heidebrecht) is making his debut performance at CTC. He has a theatre degree from Western Kentucky University. He enjoys any chance to climb boulders in the area. He would like to thank his family for their endless support and grace.

ASHLEY LARSEN-RATCHFORD (Ivy Weston) This is Ashley's CTC debut and she couldn't be more excited! Since earning her MFA in acting, Ashley has worked in various roles on the stage and screen. These roles include co-writing and acting in films directed by her husband, Zachary, Catherine in *Suddenly Last Summer,* and the host of the daytime TV show, "Morning Beats". Ashley is honored to be a part of this play and the CTC family, hoping for more opportunities with such great talent! "There is nothing more artistic than to love people."- Van Gogh

CHRISTIAN SMITH (Sheriff Deon Gilbeau) is a native of East Ridge after moving from his hometown of Trenton, GA. He is currently employed as an electrical engineer for Mesa Associates, Inc. in downtown Chattanooga. His recent credits include *The Hollow* as Edward Angkatell (CTC, 2021), *Almost, Maine* as Steve/Dave (CTC, 2021), *Assassins* as Lee Harvey Oswald (ETC, 2020), *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* as a Visitor (Ringgold Playhouse, 2019), *The Pirates of Penzance* as Frederic (EBCT, 2019), and *Avenue Q* as Princeton (CTC, 2019). He is excited to perform with good friends and new friends alike. Enjoy the show!

WENDY TIPPENS (Violet Weston) first appeared on stage at 14 years old, in the Little Theatre's production of *The Princess and the Swineherd.* That show marked the beginning of an enduring love affair with the stage. Now, forty-six years and many shows later, that love is still going strong! Some CTC productions that you may recognize Wendy from include *Sordid Lives* (LaVonda), *Misery* (Annie Wilkes), and *Hairspray* (Mrs. Pingleton). Wendy would like to dedicate this show to her fellow cast member and three-time "stage sister," the amazingly talented Becki Jordan.

LILLY WRIGHT (Jean Fordham) This is Lilly's first performance with the Theatre Centre, but definitely not her first show. You may have seen her onstage at Cleveland High School and at Chattanooga State Community College, where she recently graduated from the Professional Actor's Training Program. You can also catch her in *Fisher* on Amazon Prime and in *CamGirl,* coming soon to

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YouTube. She is thankful to have gotten to work with such an amazing cast and crew, who each taught her new things about theatre and life. She would like to thank her supportive parents, her many siblings, her incredible friends, and the best girl in the world, Jada Pham.

MEET THE CREATIVE TEAM

SADIE COLLINS (Co-Stage Manager) is excited to be making her first venture into stage management at CTC. Sadie is a senior theatre major at UTC, where she has extensively studied directing, acting, and costuming. She recently directed *Twelfth Night* and was the Assistant Director of *Cry It Out* with the UTC Theatre Company. Some of her acting credits include Lucy Brown in *The Threepenny Opera,* Doctor Morse in *The Outsiders,* and Voice Over in *The Bald Soprano.* Her screenwriting debut for the short film *Damned Spot* is set for release in December. Sadie would like to thank her family and friends for their endless and unconditional support.

ADAM MIECIELICA (Scenic Designer) most recently was an Assistant Professor in the Performing Arts Division of Theatre at UTC. He received his M.F.A. in Scenic Design and Technical Production from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He has worked professionally for many theatres across the country including The Santa Fe Opera, Northern Stage in White River Junction, Vermont, and The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Adam was previously Visiting Professor of Scenic Design at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

SUZANNE SMARTT (Director) *August: Osage County* is Suzanne's 29th collaboration with the Chattanooga Theatre Centre. She directed several award winners, including *Rumors, Smoke on the Mountain, Sanders Family Christmas,* and *Always… Patsy Cline.* A winner of multiple Miss Annie Awards; two of her favorite roles: Nancy in *Oliver!* and Sister Robert Anne in *Nunsense!* She is a retired high school teacher (American History, Theatre, Graphic Design.) Zanne was Artistic Director at Oak Street Playhouse for ten years. Being a founding member of the improvisational comedy troupe "Chattanoodle," directed by Rex Knowles and Sherry Landrum, and working on the creative panel for the Center for Concept Development in New York City were favorite, fun times. A special hello to my former improv group in New York, "Play-by-Play," and to my co-director for 30 years, Catherine Bolden. Many thanks to our talented and dedicated cast, our stage managers Rodney Strong and Sadie Collins, and the CTC production staff teams and techies.

WILLIAM SPRATT (Lighting Design & Technical Direction) recently joined the CTC team after serving as Technical Director and in-house Scenic Designer at the Ocala (FL) Civic Center. Prior to that experience, he was a staff carpenter and welder with the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta. He has also performed carpentry, electrical, audio, and properties work with Rhino Staging in Las Vegas, Las Vegas Entertainment Productions, Jefferson Performing Arts Society in New Orleans, Jenny Wiley Summer Theatre in Prestonsburg, KY, and Peach Stage Summer Theatre in Valdosta, GA.

RODNEY STRONG (Co-Stage Manager) has been active with CTC since 1990. He has been both on stage and backstage as stage manager. A three-time winner of the Outstanding Stage Manager Award, Rodney is glad to return after a brief hiatus. His favorite acting roles include Norman in *The Boys Next Door,* Arvide in *Guys and Dolls,* Mr. Carn in *Oklahoma,* Van Helsing in *Dracula,* and three times as Maurice in *Beauty and the Beast.* Rodney also serves on the CTC Board of Directors. Rodney thanks his wife, Lynn, for her support of his theatre hobby.

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MEET THE STAFF

RODNEY VAN VALKENBURG (Executive Director) started his career at the Little Theatre in 1983 as the first full-time Youth Theatre director. He served for more than 18 years as Director of Programs and as Director of Education. Before coming back to the CTC in 2020, he was Vice President of ArtsBuild. Highlights at the CTC include the Youth Theatre representing the U.S. at the International Theatre Camp in Zelenograd, Russia. Rodney also served as Artistic Director of the camp in Narva, Estonia. He has directed over 80 plays at the CTC, including many Youth Theatre productions, *Vintage Hitchcock, Boeing, Boeing,* and *Annie.* He has also been seen onstage in *It's a Wonderful Life, Newsies, A Room with a View, Les Misérables, The Producers,* and *Anything Goes.* Rodney has been a participant in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Partners in Education program since 2003 and served on the program's Advisory Committee. He served as the coordinator for the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child site, also through the Kennedy Center. Rodney has also served as a grant panelist with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Tennessee Arts Commission. He serves as Tennessee State Captain for the Americans for the Arts' National Arts Action Summit in Washington, D.C. He is a past president of the Tennessee Theatre Association and served on the executive committee of the Southeastern Theatre Conference. He received his MFA in Acting and Directing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Rodney shares his passion for theatre with his wife, Julie, and son, Jake, who lives in Atlanta.

R. SCOTT DUNLAP (Director of Productions) is an alumnus of CTC's Youth Theatre program, graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1996, and was a member of their 1997 Acting Company. This season marks his 26th with the CTC. He was Youth Theatre Designer from 1997 until 2000. He has been onstage in numerous CTC productions, including Miss Hannigan in *Annie*, Roger DeBris in *The Producers,* and the Baker in *Into the Woods.* In 2008, he received the Best Actor award for Estrogon in *Waiting for Godot* at the Tennessee Theatre Association Community Theatre Competition. He would later return to receive the 2012 Best Director and Best Production awards for *The 39 Steps.* His long history of directing CTC shows often includes designing his own productions. Some of his favorites include *Almost Maine, The Best Man, Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson, Camelot, Dark of the Moon, Dividing the Estate, Hair, Love/Sick, Mr. & Mrs. M, Peter and the Starcatcher, Pig Farm, Ring Round the Moon, A Room with a View, The Importance of Being Earnest, Xanadu,* and *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* in 2005, 2009, and 2018.

JASON DUPEE (Scene Shop Manager) is a recent addition to the CTC team and brings experience as the technical director at both Ringgold High School and Berean Academy. At Ringgold High, he worked with two other educators to create a successful theatre program that has received multiple accolades from the Georgia High School Association. In the past three years the program has won, for the first time in the school's history, three overall state championships in theatre-related competitions. He previously worked as lead carpenter at Southeastern Theatrical Supply. Jason has a Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Productions from the Academy of Arts and a Master of Arts in Theatre Studies from Regent University. He has a passion for the arts and the impact of art on the lives of the community.

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JEFF HILL (Business Manager), a long-time volunteer, has been involved at the Chattanooga Theatre Centre for nearly four decades. He has appeared in numerous productions. In addition to his on-stage performance experience, he has also volunteered backstage, stage managed shows, coordinated special events, run sound and lights, and worked in the scene shop, costume shop and front of house. Jeff attended Mercer University, where he studied music theatre performance and accounting. He also has a freelance event planning company and produces unique cakes, food, and floral designs. He is very delighted to become part of the staff here at the Theatre Centre, a place so near and dear to his heart.

BECKI JORDAN (Volunteer Coordinator) joined the CTC staff in September 2019, but has been associated with the CTC since 1975, when she first performed in *An Evening with the Other Sex.* Since then, she has appeared in dozens of shows, both here and on other stages. As a volunteer, she has worked onstage and backstage and has served on CTC's Board of Directors. A ten-time CTC Award winner, Becki appeared most recently at CTC in *Sordid Lives.* Other favorite roles include *The Laramie Project, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Importance of Being Earnest, The Book of Liz, Rumors, That Other Woman's Child, Fiddler on the Roof, Crimes of the Heart,* and *Children of a Lesser God.*

CRIS KING (Costume Shop Manager) is thrilled to begin as CTC's costume shop manager! Cris joined the CTC family performing in the 2021 production of *Vintage Hitchcock* and later volunteered in the costume shop. She joined the team officially just in time to help with *Aladdin Jr.* Cris hails from Birmingham, AL, and moved to Chattanooga with her beautiful girlfriend Ramsay in 2019. Together they raise two rowdy black cats, Finn and Poe.

RICARDO C. MORRIS (Group Sales & Events Manager) is a native of Chattanooga and a 1980 graduate of Howard High School. Ric attended Tennessee State University where he received his B.S. degree in Speech Communication and Theatre. After graduation Ric taught theatre, English, and dance at Hixson High. He left teaching to attend Yale University where he earned an M.F.A. in Arts Administration. This school year Ric has taken on a full-time position as the Theatre Arts teacher at his alma mater The Howard School. He is the founder and CEO of Chattanooga Neighborhoods Arts Partnership (ChattaNAP), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for Chattanoogans one neighborhood at a time. To date the Chattanooga Festival of Black Arts & Ideas: Juneteenth Commemoration Day is the organization's largest and most successful program. Ric has appeared in several productions at CTC, including *The Wiz, Hello Dolly, A Chorus Line, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, The Boys Next Door, Dreamgirls* and *The Names of the Dead.* At CTC he has directed *A Streetcar Named Desire, Blues for an Alabama Sky, Bourbon at the Board,* August Wilson's *Fences* in 1997 and 2019, *The Amen Corner,* and *Having Our Say.*

KITTY MURAKAMI (Box Office Assistant) is a relative newcomer to Chattanooga, having moved here from Ocala, Florida, in 2015. She was raised in upstate New York, graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, and has lived in great places like Denver and Maui. Her first and only experience with theatre (other than high school plays) started as a costume shop volunteer at Ocala Civic Theatre for two years. After retiring as a pharmacist and moving to Chattanooga, she continued volunteering at CTC in the costume shop. After finally being offered a part-time Box Office Assistant position in 2016, she was thrilled to become a part of the CTC family. "It has been an honor and a privilege as well as a wonderful learning ex-

perience to be involved with this organization. CTC is blessed to have such an amazing facility, talented dedicated staff and volunteers, and such supportive patrons."

CHUCK TUTTLE (Director of Education & Innovation) holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Children's Theatre and Creative Drama from the University of Texas at Austin and has over 30 years of experience doing theatre with and for young people. His professional background includes serving as Director of Education at Austin Theatre for Youth in Austin, Texas, and Children's Theatre Workshop in Pleasanton, California. Chuck has taught theatre classes to all ages in acting, playwriting, technical theatre, Shakespeare, voice, movement, improvisation, and comedy, among others. As an actor, he has taken on the roles of Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol,* Joaquin in *El Californio,* Simon in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle,* and Billy Crocker in *Anything Goes,* which he performed in Hokkaido, Japan. His directing credits include *Waiting for Godot, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, The Nightingale, The Crucible, Once on This Island, God of Carnage, A Year With Frog and Toad,* and *Go, Dog, Go!* Chuck has written several stage adaptations, including *Plant, Grow, Pick* for CTC's Theatre for the Very Young program. He has collaborated with composer Michael Huseman to create short musicals for CTC's Summer Musical Performance Training Academy. As sponsor and advisor of CTC's teen interest group, TheatreQuest, he contributes to and directs The Alphabet Plays, an ongoing series of plays for young children.

JULIE VAN VALKENBURG (Marketing Director) has been a member of the CTC team since 2017, transitioning her 30 years of volunteer experience at the theatre into her dream job at her home away from home. She brings over 35 years of experience in marketing and communications to the role. As a volunteer, she has worked onstage and backstage, including lending a hand as a stage manager and as a box office, costume shop, scene shop, and special events volunteer. Appearing most recently in last fall's *Barefoot in the Park,* she is honored to have received CTC awards for performances in *Dearly Departed, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (also Audience Favorite Actress), and *A Room with a View.* Julie has appeared on other stages in *August: Osage County, The Laramie Project, Hamlet*, and others. She shares her love of theatre with her husband, Rodney, and son, Jake.

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