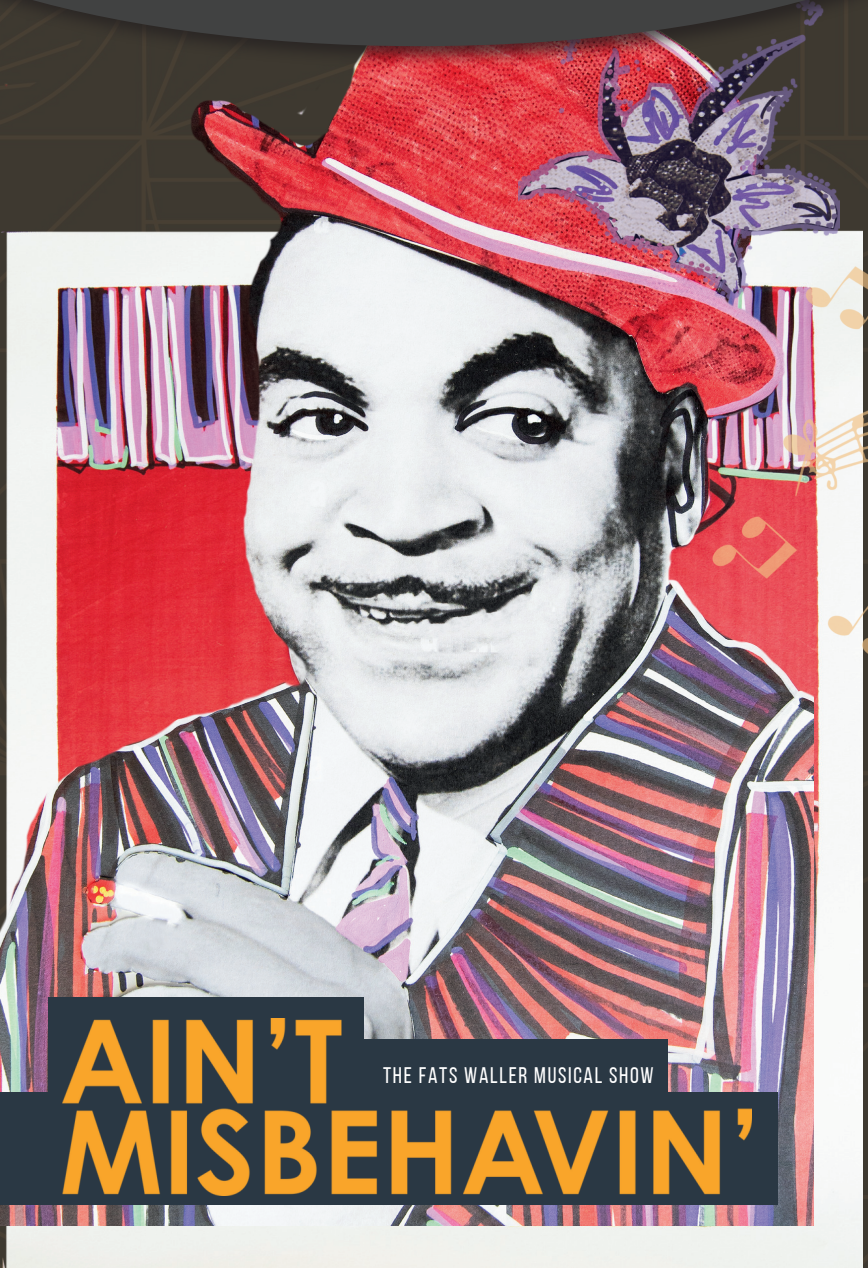


CIRCLE
THEATRE
PRESENTS



AIN'T THE FATS WALLER MUSICAL SHOW
MISBEHAVIN'

MARCH 6 - 22, 2025

SEASON 2025: IGNITE



Funding for this production is provided by
The Rea Charitable Trust

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'

THE FATS WALLER MUSICAL SHOW

Directed by Khira Hailey
Music Directed by Cherish Love Robinson*
Choreographed by Kiandra Brooks

STARRING:

J. Dontray Davis* (Fats), Davian Jackson, Janette Robinson,
Crystal Williams, Micaela E. Workman

This production runs 2 hours with an intermission.
Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

STAGE MANAGER KRIS BLACK JASPER*
COSTUME DESIGNER DEZHANE JACKSON
SCENIC + LIGHTING CONSULTANT LEAH MAZUR
MASTER CARPENTER COLIN SCHWARTZ

Ain't Misbehavin' is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com

Created and Originally Directed by Richard Maltby Jr.
Conceived by Richard Maltby Jr. and Murray Horwitz
Original Choreography and Musical Staging by Arthur Faria
Musical Adaptations, Orchestrations & Arrangements by Luther Henderson
Vocal & Musical Concepts by Jeffrey Gutcheon
Musical Arrangements by Jeffrey Gutcheon & William Elliot

Originally Produced by The Manhattan Theatre Club
Originally Produced on Broadway by Emanuel Azenberg, Dasha Epstein, The Shubert Organization, Jane Gaynor & Ron Dante

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors & Stage Managers in the United States (AEA)
+ Member Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC)

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SPECIAL THANKS

Jubilee Theatre, Theatre Wesleyan, Colin Schwartz, Daniel Mardones as this show's Board Representative, Blackland Distillery

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SEASON 2025 up next...

Welcome to IGNITE: An Examination of How Art Impacts Life, a season in which Circle Theatre delves into the transformative power of creating, and its profound effects on our existence.

Scan for information about each of our 2025 shows!

SPECIAL
ENGAGEMENT



MARCH 6 - 22, 2025

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'
THE FATS WALLER MUSICAL SHOW

MUSIC BY FATS WALLER
CONCEIVED BY RICHARD MALTBY, JR. + MURRAY HORWITZ




APRIL 17 - MAY 10, 2025

THE hatmaker's WIFE
REGIONAL PREMIERE | BY LAUREN YEE




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THOMAS WRIGHT "FATS" WALLER

Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller (Composer) (1904-1943) was an American pianist and composer who was one of the few outstanding jazz musicians to win wide commercial fame, though this was achieved at a cost of obscuring his purely musical ability under a cloak of broad comedy.

Overcoming opposition from his clergyman father, Waller became a professional pianist at 15, working in cabarets and theatres, and soon became deeply influenced by James P. Johnson, the founder of the stride school of jazz piano. By the late 1920s he was also an established songwriter whose work often appeared in Broadway revues. From 1934 on he made hundreds of recordings with his own small band, in which excellent jazz was mixed with slapstick in a unique blend.

His best-known songs include "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Honeysuckle Rose," and his first success, "Squeeze Me" (1925), written with Clarence Williams. He was the first jazz musician to master the organ, and he appeared in several films, including *Stormy Weather* (1943). Usually remembered as a genial clown, he is of lasting importance as one of the greatest of all jazz pianists and as a gifted songwriter, whose work in both fields was rhythmically contagious.



Ain't Misbehavin': A Celebration of Fats Waller's Legacy

The Music. The Swing. The Harlem Renaissance.

A BROADWAY SMASH HIT

- *Ain't Misbehavin'* premiered on Broadway in 1978, running for more than 1,600 performances
- Tony Award Winner for Best Musical, along with awards for direction and performance
- Created by Richard Maltby, Jr. who conceived and directed the only two musical revues to win the Tony Award for Best Musical: *Ain't Misbehavin'* ('78) and *Fosse* ('99).
- Originally starring Nell Carter, André De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlayne Woodard

A NIGHT AT THE COTTON CLUB

Step into the world of Harlem's Golden Age, where jazz was bold, swing was king, and the music never stopped. *Ain't Misbehavin'* isn't just a show—it's an experience, bringing to life the sound, humor, and energy of a time when artists like Waller defined the soundtrack of a generation.

MORE THAN A MUSICAL—A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

Thomas "Fats" Waller (1904-1943) was a jazz pianist, composer, and entertainer who became one of the most influential artists of the swing era. His hits, including *Ain't Misbehavin'*, Honeysuckle Rose, and The Joint is Jumpin', were staples of the 1920s and 30s jazz scene. Waller's music bridged the worlds of jazz and popular music, influencing artists like Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie. The revue's title song, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, was written in 1929 and debuted at the Cotton Club, later becoming Waller's signature tune.

FROM BROADWAY TO POP CULTURE

The original production was directed by Richard Maltby, Jr., who shaped the revue to feel like a live jazz club performance rather than a traditional musical. Following its Broadway success, *Ain't Misbehavin'* toured extensively, was adapted for television, and saw a successful 1988 Broadway revival. The show's impact helped revive interest in Waller's music and cemented his legacy in American musical history.



KHIRA HAILEY

Khira Hailey (Director) - Dallas native, storyteller, and lover of life, I'm thrilled to be directing with Circle Theatre for the first time, marking my fifth production with them overall. A graduate of the University of North Texas (BA in Radio-Television and Film, Minor in Theatre), my journey has taken me from stage to screen, including serving as the 2nd Associate Director for *Ain't No Mo'* on Broadway in 2022. I've directed productions like *Sister Act* (Recipient of a 2025 Irma P. Hall award for Best Musical), *How I Got Over*, *Godspell*, *For Colored Girls...*, *The Piano Lesson*, *North Star*, *Stick Fly*, *Five Guys Named Moe*, and more, and I previously served as Artistic Director for Mission Waco's Jubilee Theatre. Whether directing, traveling, or picking up my next hobby, I'm always in pursuit of great stories and unforgettable moments—this production being one of them! @khirahailey



from the Director

WELCOME TO OUR PRODUCTION OF AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'!

More than just a musical revue, this show is a love letter to the Harlem Renaissance—an era of Black excellence, resilience, and artistic innovation that still echoes in our culture today. The music of Fats Waller wasn't just entertainment; it was a powerful form of self-expression, joy, and resistance in a world that often sought to silence Black voices.

As we bring this production to life in 2025, we recognize that the themes of *Ain't Misbehavin'*—community, perseverance, and the unbreakable spirit of Black artistry—are more relevant than ever. In a time when conversations about racial justice, cultural identity, and creative freedom continue to shape our society, Waller's music reminds us that joy is an act of defiance, and celebration is a form of resilience.

Our cast and creative team have poured their hearts into capturing not only the infectious energy of Waller's songs but also the deeper significance behind them. This music, born in the jazz clubs and rent parties of Harlem, paved the way for today's artists who continue to redefine and push the boundaries of Black music and storytelling.

Tonight, we invite you to be part of that legacy. Let the music move you, let the stories inspire you, and most of all, let yourself feel the joy and freedom that Waller's music is meant to bring. Because in a world that still needs more love, laughter, and light—this music matters.

Thank you for joining us. Enjoy the show!

Khira Hailey
Director



J. DONTRAY DAVIS (Fats) (*he/him*) J is glad to be gracing the Circle Theatre stage again, he was last seen as Blind Lemon Jefferson in *Lonesome Blues*. J is a native of Mexia, TX by way of Waco, TX, he moved to Dallas in 2012 and has had the pleasure of working not only as an actor but also as a scenic and costume designer all over the DFW metroplex. Some of his credits include Shrek in *Shrek the Musical* (GPAC), Mister in *The Color Purple* and Tom Collins in *Rent* (DCT), Tiny Joe Dixon in *Dreamgirls* (Dallas Theatre Center), Ghost of Christmas Present in *A Christmas Carol* and Snyder in *Newsies* (Casa Manana) and many more. J is a proud Circle Theatre board member, he's also the Geographical Based Communities (GBC) co-chair for Actors' Equity Association and the co-producer of Broadway on a Tuesday (BOAT) "I'm THRILLED to be portraying Fats, I first fell in love with this show in 2003 and have waited twenty-three long years! This is literally a dream come true, I would like to thank my mother Rhonda Davis, my family and friends for their continuous love and support." J would like to dedicate his performance in the run of this show to his granny in heaven Wilma Brewer Smith. @jerebear1987



DAVIAN JACKSON (*he/him*) is thrilled to join the cast of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Davian is a talented singer and actor in the Dallas/Fort Worth area! Davian has worked with Play Now studios, where former Cowboy player Greg Ellis is the owner. Davian had a role in his Hit Stage Play, *Juneteenth & Watch Night*. He enjoyed his time at Theatre Three with *I love you, You're Perfect, Now Change*. You may also recognize him from Jubilee Theatres' productions of *How I Got Over*, *Southern Boys*, *Lil & Satchmo*, *Over 40* (Assistant Director), *Dreamgirls*, *Praise the Lord*, and *Raise the Roof*, *The Color Purple*, *Bread N Gravy* (Assistant Director), *Thoughts of a Colored Man*, *The Movement* (Assistant Director). Now he is joining Circle Theatre for the first time! @Theatreprince



JANETTE ROBINSON (*she/her*) is delighted to make her Circle Theatre debut in *Ain't Misbehavin'*! A vibrant performer with a passion for jazz, musical theatre, opera and storytelling, she has had the joy of singing as a guest artist with symphonies, fronting legendary bands, performing alongside Broadway legends and bringing unforgettable characters to life onstage. Recently, she has been seen as the Woman in Blue in *For Colored Girls* (Theater Arlington), Uhura in *Khan!!! The Musical*

(Musical Writers), and in *Auntie Explains Christmas* (Jubilee Theatre). Some of her favorite past roles include Shug Avery in *The Color Purple*, Motormouth Maybelle in *Hairspray*, and Sarah in *Ragtime*. Janette is beyond grateful for the love and support of her friends, family, and fellow artists; she can't wait to take audiences on this toe-tapping, swingin' ride. Let's misbehave! @itsjustjanette



CRYSTAL WILLIAMS (*she/her*) is thrilled to return to Circle Theatre! Regional credits include: *This Random World* (Circle Theatre), *Cabin in the Sky*, *Abyssinia* (Lyric Stage), *Porgy and Bess* (Fort Worth Opera-Bass Hall), *Sister Act* (Watertower Theater), *Auntie Explains Christmas*, *The Color Purple*, *Alice Wonder*, *Harlem Blues*, *God's Trombones*, *Lysistrata* (Jubilee Theater), *Origin of the Specifics* (Hip Pocket Theater), *The King and I* (Casa Manana), *The View Upstairs*, *Chicken and Biscuits* (Uptown Players), *Sam Shade* (DVA Productions). Crystal would like to thank her amazing family: the 4 Js! (Joseph III, Joseph IV, Jordyn and Jonah!) And to my Mother, though I know that you are still here with us... We miss you every second of every day. Crystal holds a B.A, B.F.A and an M.Ed from Texas Wesleyan University.



MICAELA E. WORKMAN (*she/her*) is elated to be making her Circle Theatre debut! A graduate of the University of North Texas with a BA in Theatre, Micaela has recently been seen on many stages across the DFW such as Jimmy "Thunder" Early in *Dreamgirls* (Theatre Denton), Seasons of Love Soloist in *Rent* (Lakeside Community Theatre), Chiffon in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Repertory Theatre Company), and Deb in *Elf the Musical* (Centerstage Theatre Works)." This show holds a special place in my heart. This is the same show my late mother performed in and from this show, she met my father. I would not be here if it weren't for their union. Even though they are no longer with me, I hope I am making them proud." She sends love and gratitude to her family, friends, and mentors for their endless support. @MicaelaWorkmanTX @Mikkiw__ Enjoy The Show!

Director	Khira Hailey
Music Director	Cherish Love Robinson*
Choreographer	Kiandra Brooks
Stage Manager	Kris Black Jasper*
Costume Designer	DeZhané Jackson
Scenic + Lighting Consultant	Leah Mazur
Master Carpenter	Colin Schwartz
Wardrobe	Saul Ortiz
Production Manager	Reagan Fitzgerald*



KRIS BLACK JASPER* (Stage Manager) is making her Circle Theatre debut. She is currently attending Southern New Hampshire University where she's working towards a Bachelor's degree in Creative Writing so she can keep fulfilling her dream of being an actress, author, playwright and director. She's been in nearly 20 productions including *Fabulation* (Jubilee Theatre), *Lil & Satchmo* (Jubilee Theatre), *The Color Purple* (W.E. Scott Theatre/Jubilee

Theatre), *Sister Act* as Mother Superior (Bass Hall/Jubilee Theatre) which earned her a 2025 Irma P. Hall award for Lead Actress in a Musical. Kris' acting roles also include stage readings at Sammons Center for the Arts, Amphibian Stage, Plague Mask Players, The Black Academy of Arts & Letters, and Theatre Arlington. Production credits include: Assistant Stage Manager: *Dreamgirls* (Bass Hall/Jubilee Theatre); Stage Manager: *Take the Soul Train to Christmas* (Jubilee Theatre), *1619 Project* (Bishop Arts Theatre Center), *Bread 'N' Gravy: The Life of Ethel Waters* (The Modern Museum/Jubilee Theatre); directing credits include: Assistant Director: *Thoughts of a Colored Man* (Jubilee Theatre); Director: *Home* (Jubilee Theatre), *Black Nativity* (Bishop Art Theatre Center). She is excited to support the cast and crew of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. @iamkblackjazz



CHERISH LOVE ROBINSON* (Music Director) is a versatile artist with a career spanning more than two decades in music, theatre, and production. She has worked with iconic artists like Erykah Badu and Elle King, and her work has appeared on TV shows such as *Grey's Anatomy*, *Big Little Lies*, and the movie, *My Spy*. A celebrated theatre performer, Cherish has earned accolades for roles in productions like *Into the Woods* and *Sister Act*. Her debut Christmas album, *Love's Holiday*, released on November 26, 2024, created in collaboration with top Dallas-Fort Worth musicians. The album offers a unique holiday experience across different genres. In addition to her music, Cherish teaches voice lessons and is working on her forthcoming book, *The Artist's Parallel*, set for release this year.

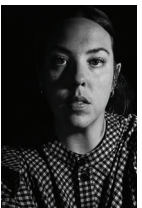




KIANDRA BROOKS (Choreographer) is a multi-hyphenate artist from Miami, FL. Her choreographic style reflects a rich and diverse foundation, shaped by the teachings of Sylvia Padron and Bernadette Toussaint-Pierre. While earning her BA in English at Florida State University, she was a member of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University's Mahogany Dance Theatre, where she served as rehearsal director under the leadership of Shepiro Hardemon. She has choreographed many productions such as *The Color Purple* (Jubilee Theatre at W.E. Scott Theatre), *Thoughts of a Colored Man* (Jubilee Theatre), *Bread and Gravy* (Jubilee Theatre), and *Sister Act* (Jubilee Theatre at Bass Hall)—a production that not only marked her debut as Assistant Director but also earned her the 2025 Irma P. Hall Award for Best Choreography. Most recently, she choreographed *The Movement* (Jubilee Theatre). Kiandra is excited to make her Circle Theatre debut with this production. Committed to cultivating the next generation of artists, she strives to transform the world through movement and the power of artistic storytelling.



DEZHANÉ JACKSON (Costume Design) is a lover of all things fashion. She graduated from the University of North Texas with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Fashion Design. Her work has been featured in Season 6 of the acclaimed drama television series, *The Chi* (Paramount+ with Showtime), created by Lena Waithe. She has also contributed as a wardrobe assistant for *Sister Act* (Jubilee Theatre). She has earned recognition from industry professionals and received an honorable mention in Fashion Group International's Scholarship Competition. With a collection showcased at New York Fashion Week, DeZhané continues to push creative boundaries, striving to leave a lasting impact on the fashion industry. @_dezhaja_



LEAH MAZUR (Scenic + Lighting Consultant) she/her is a scenographer (scenic/lighting/costume design) and visual artist based in the DFW metroplex. Her research explores the blurring of lines between experiencing and becoming performance, the intersections of interactive installation and performance art, as well as the integration of XR (extended reality) into the performing arts as a means of accessibility and expanded storytelling. Upcoming projects include work with Amphibian Stage, Undermain Theatre, and Dallas Theatre Center. Select national credits include productions at Spinning Tree Theatre, Unicorn Theatre, Kansas Repertory Theatre (Kansas City), Lake Dillon Theatre Company (Colorado), Cape May Stage (New Jersey), Anacostia Playhouse, Scena Theatre

(Washington D.C.), Amphibian Stage, Theatre Three, Circle Theatre, & Altar'd Playhouse (DFW). She is currently the head of the Theatre Design & Technology BFA program at the University of Texas at Arlington | MFA University of Kansas. lmazurdesign.com | [@lmazur](https://www.instagram.com/lmazur)



COLIN SCHWARTZ (Master Carpenter) is a Fort Worth based carpenter, technical director, and lighting designer. He holds a BFA in Theatre Design and Technology from Texas Wesleyan University. He is currently pursuing his MFA from the University of Idaho. Colin works at Wesleyan as the Technical Director for the Theatre Department. He also works with Jubilee Theatre and is excited to work with Circle as Master Carpenter.



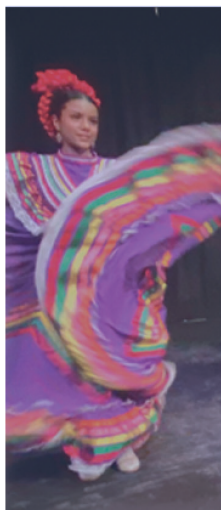
REAGAN FITZGERALD* (Production Manager) *they/she*, is the Production Manager at Circle Theatre and an Equity Stage Manager in DFW. Stage Management credits include: *Destroying David* (Circle Theatre); *Khan!!! A New Musical* (Presented by MusicalWriters.com); *Exit, Pursued By A Bear* (Texas Wesleyan University); *Christmas at the Southern Palace* (Six Flags Over Texas with WOW! Entertainment); *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Oklahoma City University). Other Assistant Stage Management credits include: *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* (Theatre Three); *Hundred Days* (Circle Theatre); *High School Musical Theatre Awards* (Broadway Dallas); *Head Over Heels* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma). She sends love and thanks to her family, friends, and dog Lemonade!

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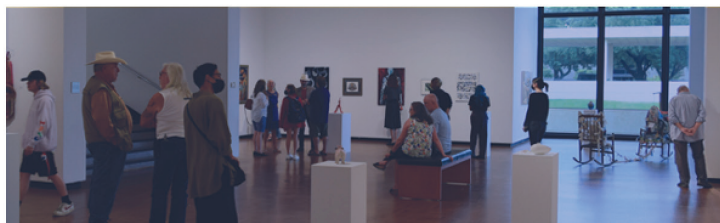
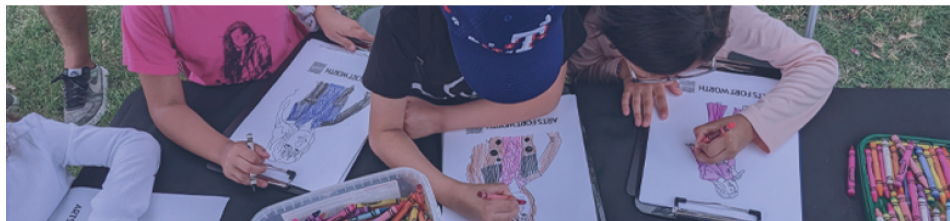




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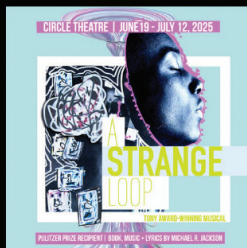
Attend *A Strange Loop* at **Circle Theatre** and receive 20% off tickets to *Ain't No Mo'* at **Soul Rep** and *Fat Ham* at **Stage West**!

AIN'T NO MO' | JUNE 5 - 8 WRITTEN BY JORDAN E. COOPER | SOUL REP THEATRE COMPANY



Premiering on Broadway in 2022 and nominated for six Tony Awards, *Ain't No Mo'* blends sketch, satire, avant-garde theatre, and drag to explore a bold question: What if the U.S. offered Black Americans one-way tickets to Africa? This unpredictable comedy keeps audiences laughing—and thinking through the tears.

A STRANGE LOOP | JUNE 19 - JULY 12 BY MICHAEL R. JACKSON | CIRCLE THEATRE



Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and 2022 Tony Award for Best Musical, *A Strange Loop* is a bold, exhilarating dive into the mind of Usher, a Black queer writer crafting a show about his own journey. With raw themes, sharp storytelling, and an electric score, this groundbreaking musical is unforgettable.

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In this Tony-nominated, Pulitzer-winning play, Juicy, a queer Black man, grapples with family, fate, and his father's ghost at a backyard barbecue. A bold, hilarious reinvention of *Hamlet* that breaks cycles of violence in pursuit of joy.

LEARN MORE HERE

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 Ashley H. White
 Mary M. Williams
 Marianne Wilson
 Ricki Wilson
 Lexi Wolf
 Evan Woods
 Greta Zeimetz
 Mark Zeitlin
 Riki Zide



TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

Check in on
Facebook & Twitter
and tag us on
Instagram @circletheatre
so we can share the fun!



Please leave some
encouraging words
to our performers &
theater—scan our QR
code!

THANK YOU

TO THE FORT WORTH KIWANIS CLUB

For sponsoring Circle Theatre's High School Playwriting Project—an educational outreach which serves young artists in the DFW metroplex. Due to their generous support — we are able to offer scholarships to our writers totally more than \$14,000



Performance Schedule and Pricing

Thursday evening.....	7:30pm	\$40-\$55
Friday evening.....	8:00pm	\$40-\$55
Saturday matinee.....	3:00pm	\$40-\$55
Saturday evening.....	8:00pm	\$40-\$55

Box Office

When a play is in performance, the box office opens one hour before show time.

Phone.....	817.877.3040
Online.....	<i>CircleTheatre.com</i>
Hours.....	T-F 10:00am - 4:00pm

Ticket Policies for Main Season Shows

ALL TICKET SALES ARE FINAL AND NON-REFUNDABLE.

Reservations must be paid in advance. Only one discount may be applied to each ticket. Discounts or special offers may NOT be used for opening night performances.

Season ticket-holders receive a \$10 VIP discount when purchasing additional guest tickets.

Student Rush: In addition to Friday Night School Nights, students and staff may also purchase tickets for half price at half-hour before show time, with valid school ID.

(Subject to availability)

Seniors (65+) and Military: 10% off all performances.

Groups: Discount varies based on size — check *circletheatre.com* or call our box office.

Parking and Safety Policies

Due to changes in Sundance Square, Circle is no longer able to validate valet parking. **There is a FREE parking garage under the skybridge between Taylor St. and Lamar St. (The Tower Garage) on weekends and on weekdays after 6pm.**

We can still validate up to 2.5 hours of parking in Sundance Square Garage #3 (corner of Taylor St. and 3rd St.), just ask for a validation code from staff. Visit *sundancesquare.com/parking* for further information regarding parking updates. Please note, we encourage all guests to be vaccinated when attending a show.

Questions? Email boxoffice@circletheatre.com | Call 817.877.3040

ARE YOU ON OUR EMAIL LIST?

Sign up at the box office or go online to CircleTheatre.com to receive information about upcoming shows or events.

