

2021/2022
SEASON

ST. LOUIS' PREMIER THEATER
FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Hop on board for a heart-thumpin', toe-tappin' joy ride!

LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

A
MOTOWN
-MEETS-
HIP HOP
MUSICAL



FEBRUARY 6-27, 2022

DIRECTED BY Jacqueline Thompson
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY Philip A. Woodmore, Ph.D.
CHOREOGRAPHY BY Christopher Page-Sanders

LIVE AT THE
GRANDEL THEATRE

By Matt de la Peña, Illustrated by Christian Robinson
Adapted for the stage by Cheryl L. West
Music and Lyrics by Lamont Dozier and Paris Ray Dozier

Digital Recording and Underscoring by Paris Ray Dozier
Originally commissioned and produced by Chicago Children's Theatre
And the Children's Theatre Company

VIRTUAL
PRODUCTION
STREAMING AT
metroplays.org

Welcome to
METRO THEATER COMPANY'S
production of
LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

Welcome to the neighborhood!

Metro Theater Company is thrilled to continue our 49th season of serving young people and families with this delightful new adaptation of the multi-award-winning book *Last Stop on Market Street*.

Inspired by Matt de la Peña's beloved story and Christian Robinson's iconic illustrations, playwright Cheryl L. West and the father and son composing team of Lamont and Paris Ray Dozier have created this unforgettable new musical.

We are grateful to the extraordinary team of artists and technicians, all with deep ties to St. Louis, for meeting every challenge set before them during these unique times in order to bring this colorful celebration of community to you today. As CJ rides the bus with his Nana, we who watch their journey unfold are all reminded to appreciate the beauty of our city and the small acts of kindness that make it a place to call home.

Special thanks to our staff, board, and community partners for making every day a day worth celebrating, and to each of you watching at the Grandel, in your classroom, or at home, for being part of the magic of live (and virtual!) theater.

Let's dance to the beat of life!



JULIA FLOOD
Artistic Director



JOE GFALLER
Managing Director



A Note from the Director

There is a sacred bond found in intergenerational connectivity, especially between grandmother and grandchild.

The wisdom, love, and guidance they share are eternally implanted in the tapestry of who we become. Their legacy lives on as we remember the teachings that warned and warmed our hearts about the complexities of the world.

Like CJ, I spent time with my nana as a child. From watching *The Young and The Restless* to Sunday morning service, unbeknownst to me, I was receiving training for my journey. That's their magic, they plant seeds of hope, strength, and comfort for us to find when we need it most.

I dedicate this production to the Nanas of the world... Our truth tellers, safe spaces, warmth, roots to our foundation and light...

I dedicate this production to the memory of my universe, my granny Mildred Thomas. I will forever speak your name.



JACQUELINE THOMPSON
Director

Illustration by Christian Robinson. From the book *Last Stop on Market Street* © 2015. Published by the Penguin Group.



LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET



THE CAST

(in alphabetical order)

**Tatted Man, Softball
Player, Ensemble**
Robert Crenshaw

CJ

Daniel McRath

**M. Butterfly, Softball
Player, Ensemble**
Valentina Silva

Nana

Denise Thimes

Vernon, Jojo, Ensemble
Cameron Tyler

**Mr. Dennis, Posey,
Ensemble**
Tyler White

DIRECTED BY

Jacqueline Thompson

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY

Philip A. Woodmore, Ph.D.

CHOREOGRAPHY BY

Christopher Page-Sanders

MUSICIANS

Courtney J'mell Smith / Philip A. Woodmore, Ph.D.

Design & Production Team

SCENIC DESIGN

Peter and Margery Spack

COSTUME DESIGNER

Felia Davenport

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jayson M. Lawshee

SOUND DESIGNER

Jackpot Sharp

PROPS MASTER

Emily Frei

STAGE MANAGER

Sarah Rugo

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Erin Renée Roberts

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Isabelle Scheibe

SCENIC PAINTER

Cristie Johnston

SPANISH LANGUAGE COACH

Gaby Rodriguez

COSTUME ASSISTANT

Nathan Lessly

SOUND ENGINEER

Thomas White

Metro Theater Company Production Staff

**PRODUCTION STAGE
MANAGER**

Jimmy Bernatowicz

**TECHNICAL
DIRECTOR**

Erik Kuhn

**PRODUCING
ASSOCIATE**

John Wolbers

Front of House Staff

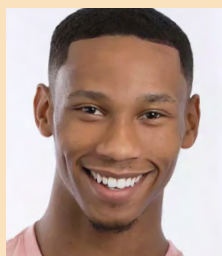
HOUSE MANAGEMENT

Tawaine Noah
Teresa West

Cast Biographies



ROBERT CRENSHAW (Ensemble) is finally back on stage, making his debut with MTC after being away due to the pandemic. The St. Louis native continues to rise in the performing arts world as a versatile entertainer who specializes in singing, dancing, acting, emceeing, hosting, and choreography. He works at Sumner High School as the dance instructor, New Era Production Dance Academy as a hip hop instructor, Utopia Entertainment as an emcee, and COCA as a teaching artist. Robert is a member of Olivet Missionary Baptist Church, where he sings in the youth choir and praise team. His last productions were with The Black Rep in *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope, Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *Spell #7*. Robert was also in the off-Broadway production of *Antigone in Ferguson*, which went on an international tour.



DANIEL McRATH (CJ) makes his MTC debut in *Last Stop on Market Street*. Previous performances include *Antigone in Ferguson* (Theater of War Productions), *Joshua's Boots* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), *Aida* (The Muny), and *Once on This Island* (Spelman College). Film credits include *Pennies for the Boatman*. Daniel is an Eagle Scout, graduate of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis' Artist-in-Training program, and has a Bachelor of Arts in music from Morehouse College.



VALENTINA SILVA (ENSEMBLE) is thrilled to make her debut at Metro Theater Company! Some of Valentina's past roles include Sister Mary Robert in *Sister Act* (Bigfork Summer Playhouse), Emily in *A Christmas Carol* (Broadway Rose Theatre Company), and Olivia in *Miss You Like Hell* (Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University). Originally from Texas, Valentina received a B.F.A. in musical theatre from Webster University in spring 2021.

Cast Biographies



DENISE THIMES (NANA) is a jazz legend whose multifaceted career spans just a little under three decades. Thimes is no stranger to the music world, growing up in a home surrounded by all types of music from her father and radio icon, the late Lou “Fatha” Thimes. Thimes has performed with such jazz notables as Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (St. Louis, MO), the late Clark Terry (The Blue Note-NY), Dr. Billy Taylor, Earl May, Benny Powell (Flushing Town Hall), and James Moody (Blue Note-NY). She has also graced the stage with the likes of Houston Person, Jimmy & Tootie Heath, Bobby McFerrin, and Bucky Pizzarelli. In recent years she has appeared and toured Paris with David Sanborn, sung for the Queen of Thailand (Mandarin Oriental Hotel), Queen Elizabeth II British Embassy in Washington D.C. (during her 2009 visit to the United States), President George W. Bush (White House 2007), and was hand-picked by the “Queen of Soul” Aretha Franklin to perform for her 72nd birthday celebration (Ritz Carlton, NY, 2005). Thimes has received eight Woodie Awards (named after New Federal Theatre Founder Woodie King, Jr.) for her roles as lead and supporting for acting and musical performances.



CAMERON TYLER (ENSEMBLE) joins Metro Theater Company for his onstage debut, though you may have seen him as house manager for *Digging Up Dessa* earlier in the 2021/22 Season. Some of Cameron’s past rolls include Roger in *Grease* (Paul Bunyan Playhouse), Donkey in *Shrek* (MBU Theatre and Larry D. Clark Summer Repertory Theatre), and Billy in *Anything Goes* (Missouri Baptist University). Cameron is a native of southeast Missouri, where he grew up in the Jackson-Cape Girardeau area. He is a recent graduate from Missouri Baptist University, where he received a Bachelor of Music in musical theatre.

Cast Biographies



TYLER WHITE (ENSEMBLE) is a full-time artist who is elated to continue to work with Metro Theater Company. She is currently facilitating the 21/22 Season of *Say Something, Do Something*. The St. Louis native is a theatre artist both on and off the stage. Her credits on stage include Teaspoon in *Sarafina*, Talisha in *Like Sugar*, Yolanda in *Crowns*, the ensemble in *The Black Nativity*, Lillie Mae in *The Me Nobody Knows*, the ensemble in *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope* (The Black Rep), Ermina in *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* (Mustard Seed Theatre), Woman in Yellow in *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf* (Washington University in St. Louis), and Knight/Ensemble in *King Lear* (St. Louis Shakespeare Festival). Stage manager credits include *The Barber of Seville* (Union Opera) and *Hairspray, JR.* (COCA). Assistant stage manager credits include *Canfield Drive*, *Two Trains Running*, and *Nina Simone: Four Women* (The Black Rep).

Tyler served as the education/community director for three years at The Black Rep. She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with a Bachelor of Science in human environmental science.



Illustrations by Christian Robinson. From the book *Last Stop on Market Street* © 2015. Published by the Penguin Group.

Design & Production Biographies

JACQUELINE THOMPSON (Director) is an accomplished actor, director, educator, and MTC associate artist. As an assistant professor of theater at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, she is passionate about providing students opportunities to explore their creativity and embrace their individuality. She recently directed MTC's production of Idris Goodwin's *Ghost* and *Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963* at COCA. She also directed MTC's *Games Dad Didn't Play* and performed in *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*. As an actor she has performed with the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, The Black Rep, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Upstream Theater, Mustard Seed Theatre, and New Jewish Theatre. In March 2018, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* recognized Jacqueline not only as one of St. Louis' most versatile performers, but also as one of six women shaping the arts and entertainment in St. Louis. She received a St. Louis Theater Circle Award for Outstanding Actress in a Drama as well as an artist fellowship from the Regional Arts Commission. In 2019, she received a Saint Louis Visionary Award. She was also selected by Theatre Communications Group (TCG) to participate in the Rising Leaders of Color program.

PHILIP A. WOODMORE, PH.D. (Musical Director/Musician) has been an active member of the St. Louis music community for many years. The St. Louis native received a bachelor's degree from Saint Louis University in business marketing and music vocal performance, a master's degree from Webster University in music education, and a Ph.D. in music education from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Phil was the coordinator of the Voice Program at the Center of Creative Arts (COCA), the artist director of the Allegro Music Company from 2008-2017, the director of the Saint Louis Metropolitan Police Department Choir from 2009-2017, the director of the Northern Arizona University Gospel Choir from 2014-2017, Artist in Residency for the State of Arizona for a two-year term from 2016-2018, and minister of music at Trinity Community Church from 1992-2018. Phil composed the original score for *Antigone in Ferguson*, which has been traveling the country for the past five years including a national university tour, off-Broadway premiere, and international premiere in Athens, Greece. Phil has written original scores for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last sermon "Drum Major Instinct" and a speech by Frederick Douglass—both of which premiered in New York. Phil serves as the music director for Muncy Kids, and is the author of the book, *Antigone in Ferguson: A Journey Through the Transformative Power of Music*. In an effort to create a space for the St. Louis community to mourn the loss of life during the pandemic, Phil, as artistic director, collaborated with Rebecca Messbarger, director of medical humanities in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, on "Requiem of Light," a public memorial event that featured several of his original compositions. philipawoodmore.com

CHRISTOPHER PAGE-SANDERS (Choreographer) is originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and is happy to return to Metro Theater Company after previously being a teaching artist for MTC's summer program ARTS INTERSECTION for many years. He is the co-founder and co-artistic director of NU-World Contemporary Dance Theatre (Denver, Colorado). As a director and choreographer, some of his favorite credits include *Billy Elliot* (COCA Presents), *Black Nativity* (Aurora Fox Arts Center), *Five Guys Named Moe* (Vintage Theatre Productions), *The Gringo* (Fly North Theatricals), *Polkadots! The Cool Kids Musical* (The Rep's Imaginary Theatre Company), and *The Scottsboro Boys* (Vintage Theatre Productions). In the span of his career, he has been grateful to dance around the world, teach and inspire young artists, and create alongside some extraordinary human beings. He is a recipient of the Colorado Henry Award, receiving Best Choreography for his choreography in *The Scottsboro Boys* (Vintage Theatre Productions). On the shoulders of my ancestors and mentors... I Dance! **INSTAGRAM: [chrispagesanders0203](#)**

MARGERY AND PETER SPACK (Scenic Design) are scenery and video designers and are delighted to make their debut with Metro Theater Company. Recently they designed scenery for *The Play that Goes Wrong*, *Heisenberg*, and *Safe House* at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; *Canfield Drive*, *Home*, and *Two Trains Running* at The Black Rep; *Life Sucks*, *New Jerusalem*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (2020 Theatre Circle Award Winner) and *Intimate Apparel* (2018 Theatre Circle Award Winner) at The New Jewish Theatre; and *Romeo & Juliet* for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis in Forest Park. As Studio Spack Environment Design, Margery and Peter also design corporate theater, product reveals, broadcast news, trade show environments, and private events. They both have Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees from Webster University and reside in their hometown of St. Louis.

FELIA K. DAVENPORT (Costume Designer) is a familiar name in the St. Louis theater community. She has created costumes for countless productions, ranging from theater to opera and dance. She last worked with Metro Theater Company as costume designer for *Ghost* and *Games Dad Didn't Play*. Most recently Felia was named an artist in residence with the Kranzberg Arts Foundation. She will create an exhibition titled *Torn Mixology*. Felia is an associate professor in the Department of Communication & Media at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The Virginia native has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master of Fine Arts from University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Design & Production Biographies

JAYSON M. LAWSHEE (Lighting Designer) last worked with Metro Theater Company as master electrician for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* and lighting designer for *Ghost* and *The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus*. Other recent designs include *By the Way*, *Meet Vera Stark* (Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University) and *Love at the River's Edge* (Shakespeare Festival Saint Louis). Jayson holds a B.F.A. from the Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University.

JACKPOT SHARP (Sound Designer) is a St. Louis-based music producer, sound designer, and percussionist. He recently worked with Metro Theater Company as soundtrack and musical director for Idris Goodwin's *Jacked!* and sound designer for Idris Goodwin's *Ghost*. He has several sound design credits from productions at University of Missouri-St. Louis, including *How We Got On*, *L-vis Lives!*, *Chasing the White Rabbit*, and *In The Red and Brown Water*. He was also the percussionist for *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf* (University of Missouri-St. Louis). Jackpot attended St. Louis Community College – Forest Park and St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley.

EMILY FREI (Props Master) returns to Metro Theater Company after serving as props master for *And in This Corner: Cassius Clay*, *Battledrum*, and *Jackie and Me*. She also served as props master and scenic artist for *New Kid*. She currently serves as the charge scenic artist and props master for Washington University's Performing Arts Department, scenic artist for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, and scenic artist for The Muny in Forest Park. She is a proud member of United Scenic Artists Local 829 and the Society of Prop Artisan Managers.

SARAH RUGO (Stage Manager) is so happy to be working in the theatre again as well as with Metro Theater Company. She has missed theatre so much during the pandemic hiatus! After serving as production manager for MTC from fall 2004 to spring 2017, Sarah took some time off to raise her young son. She returned to MTC in fall 2021 to stage manage *Digging Up Dessa*, and prior to that stage managed *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Ghost* in the 2019-20 Season. Sarah earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theatre from Shenandoah Conservatory in Virginia, followed by a stage management internship with Lexington Children's Theatre before moving to St. Louis to work for MTC. In addition to taking MTC's touring productions to hundreds of local and regional schools and community centers, Sarah has overseen its mainstage productions in venues such as the Grandel Theatre (*Digging Up Dessa*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Ghost*), Missouri History Museum (*And In This Corner: Cassius Clay*, *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*, *Battledrum*), Wydown Middle School (*The Boy Who Loved Monsters* and *the Girl Who Loved Peas*), Clayton High School (*Interrupting Vanessa*), the West County YMCA (*Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse*), COCA (*Go, Dog. Go!*),

continued next page

Design & Production Biographies

and the Edison Theatre (*Hana's Suitcase*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Giver*, and *Jackie and Me*). Her other favorites include *Earth Songs*, *New Kid*, and *Delilah's Wish*. In past years, Sarah spent her summers stage managing for Union Avenue Opera. She has also worked for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Shenandoah Summer Music Theatre.

ISABELLE SCHEIBE (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to make her Metro Theater Company debut working on *Last Stop on Market Street*! Isabelle graduated from Stephens College with a B.F.A. and is currently studying for a master's in art management at Colorado State University. When she is not studying, you can find Isabelle working at Missouri Baptist University (MBU) as theatre assistant/shop manager, along with mentoring student stage managers. Isabelle's recent stage management work includes *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Big Fish*, *Peter & the Star Catcher*, *A Doll's House*, and *Into the Woods* (MBU).

Follow her on **FACEBOOK**: [isabelle.scheibe](#) and **INSTAGRAM**: [thered_shybee](#)

GABY RODRIGUEZ (Spanish Language Coach) returns to Metro Theater Company after making her debut in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show*. She has several directing credits to her name, including *Suffer the Children* (COCA), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Theatre Nuevo), *Refuge* (Campfire Theatre Festival), *Miss You Like Hell* (Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University), and *Dear Kitty... Querida Ana...* (In The Margin Theatre Company). Recently, she associate directed *Seussical™* through Theatre Under The Stars' Public Works Houston initiative. She is also an ensemble member with In The Margin Theatre Company and a teaching artist at COCA and Asolo Repertory Theatre. Gaby is a native of Santiago de Cuba, Cuba and Houston, Texas, and holds a B.A. in directing from Sargent Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University.

NATHAN LESSLY (Costume Assistant) is a recent St. Louis transplant and is excited to be a part of his first Metro Theater Company production! He spent his childhood in Spearfish, South Dakota, where he was involved in multiple productions at the historic Matthews Opera House, including *Clue: The Musical*, *Red*, and *Deadeye's Wild West*. He went on to study costuming and musical theatre at the University of Central Oklahoma, where he worked on *The Pirates of Penzance* and (appropriately) *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Currently, he utilizes his sewing skills by stitching for local clients and designers and sewing clothes for himself.

Metro Theater Company Production Staff

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Jimmy Bernatowicz

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Erik Kuhn

PRODUCING ASSOCIATE

John Wolbers

Meet the Author and Illustrator

ABOUT the author | Matt de la Peña



MATT DE LA PEÑA is the *New York Times* bestselling, Newbery Medal-winning author of seven young adult novels (including *Mexican WhiteBoy*, *We Were Here*, and *Superman: Dawnbreaker*) and five picture books (including *Last Stop on Market Street* and *Love*). Matt received his M.F.A. in creative writing from San Diego State University and his B.A. from the University of the Pacific, where he attended school on a full athletic scholarship for basketball. In 2019 Matt was given an honorary doctorate from UOP. De la Peña currently lives in San Diego, California with his family. He teaches creative writing and visits schools and colleges throughout the country. Read more at mattdelapena.com

Source: mattdelapena.com

ABOUT the illustrator | Christian Robinson



CHRISTIAN ROBINSON was born in Hollywood, California. He grew up in a small one-bedroom apartment with his brother, two cousins, aunt, and grandmother. Drawing became a way to make space for himself and to create the kind of world he wanted to see. He studied animation at the California Institute of the Arts and would later work with the Sesame Workshop and Pixar Animation Studios before becoming an illustrator of books for children. His books include *Gaston* and *Antoinette*, written by Kelly DiPucchio, and the #1 *New York Times* best-seller *Last Stop on Market Street*, written by Matt de la Peña, which was awarded a Caldecott Honor, a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor, and the Newbery Medal. He presently lives in northern California with his rescue greyhound Baldwin and several house plants. He looks forward to one day seeing the aurora borealis. Visit him online at TheArtofFun.com

Source: simonandschuster.com

Meet the Playwright

ABOUT the playwright | Cheryl L. West



Cheryl L. West's plays include *Last Stop on Market Street*, *FANNIE: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Shout Sister Shout*, *Akeelah and the Bee*, *Pullman Porter Blues*, and *Jar the Floor*. Her plays have been produced in England, off-Broadway, on Broadway (Play On!), and in numerous regional theaters around the country, including Seattle Rep, Arena Stage, Old Globe, The Goodman, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Indiana Rep, Asolo Rep, Merrimack, Arkansas Rep,

St. Louis Black Rep, Bay Street Theatre Festival, Syracuse Stage, Cleveland Play House, South Coast Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and Off-Broadway's Manhattan Theatre Club, and Second Stage. She has written TV and film projects at Disney, Paramount, MTV Films, Showtime, TNT, HBO, CBS, BET, and is the Webby-nominated writer for the original web series *Diary of a Single Mom*.

Ms. West is the recipient of several awards: American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE) Distinguished Play Award (2016), the 2016 Charlotte B. Chorpenning Playwright Award, the Helen Hayes/Charles McArthur award for Outstanding New Play, the Susan Smith Blackburn prize, an international playwriting award for distinguished new plays, the National Endowment Playwriting Award, and the Beverly Hills/Hollywood NAACP Best Playwright Award.

Ms. West is currently preparing a revival of Broadway-bound *Jar the Floor*, and working on commissions for Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Minneapolis Children's Theater, Goodman Theatre, and Seattle Rep.

As said by *The L Magazine*, "Cheryl L. West writes plays that often trump those of master playwright August Wilson — not only meticulous neo-realist slices of African-American life but dense, ethereal explorations of language and the inner regions of her character's souls. They are vigorously expressionistic, and yet remain grounded, entertaining theater."

Read more at cheryllwest.com

Source: cheryllwest.com

Meet the Composers

ABOUT the co-composer | Lamont Dozier



LAMONT DOZIER has written and produced over 54 #1 hits for The Supremes, Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, and a host of others crediting Lamont as one of the primary Architects of the Motown Sound. A BMI ICON Award winner, Lamont was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and The Songwriter's Hall of Fame, where he also received the 2009 Johnny Mercer Award. As a solo artist, he has earned platinum albums and also written songs for Alison Moyet, Simply Red, Boy George, Eric Clapton, and Phil Collins, earning a Grammy Award, Brit Award, Ivor Novello Award, Golden Globe Award, and Oscar nomination for the song "Two Hearts."

Source: childrenstheatre.org

ABOUT the co-composer | Paris Ray Dozier



PARIS RAY DOZIER is a composer, lyricist, and recording artist from Encino, California whose works span across hip hop, R'n'B, pop, and musical theater genres. Born into a musical family, he became accustomed to creative expression at a very young age. Dozier's career began when he was 15, after attending the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in West Hollywood, California, where he performed in Shakespearean productions. Paris went on to write songs for artists on Disney Music Group's Hollywood Records, where he was also signed as a singer-songwriter and producer. Soon after his tenure at Hollywood Records, Paris became the musical theme writer and co-host for B InTune TV, which aired on the UPN Network, ABC Television, NBC, and Fox.

Source: broadwayworld.com

Metro Theater Company Leadership

JULIA FLOOD (Artistic Director) has directed *Digging Up Dessa*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus*, *The Hundred Dresses*, *Frida Libre*, *Bud*, *Not Buddy*, *Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates*, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, and *In This Corner: Cassius Clay*, *Out of the Box*, *Talkin' Trash*, *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*, *Unsorted*, and *Say Something, Do Something!* for Metro Theater Company since she moved to St. Louis to become artistic director in February 2014. Previously, Julia spent 16 years as artistic director of Eckerd Theater Company in Clearwater, Florida where she commissioned such plays as *Vote?*, by Eric Coble, provoked by Florida's role in the 2000 presidential election, and *Battledrum* by Doug Cooney with Lee Ahlin, a musical about the effects of war on young people through the lens of Civil War drummer boys, subsequently produced at Metro Theater Company. A graduate of Northwestern University, Julia spent seven years as a resident member of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble in Pennsylvania, a unique artist-led ensemble founded under the guidance of legendary acting teacher Alvina Krause, before following a freelance career as actor/director/playwright/teacher. Julia served on the national board of directors of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA from 2011 to 2019, and brings more than 40 years of experience to her role as artistic director of Metro Theater Company.



JOE GFALLER (Managing Director) joined the Metro Theater Company team in 2019. During his tenure to date, Metro Theater Company has seen dramatic growth in both its audience base and its donor base. In partnership with Artistic Director Julia Flood, he has co-led the company through its recent evolutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, from its virtual programming to its safe return to live performances. Prior to joining the MTC team, Joe received national recognition for his work in building young, diverse, and national audiences for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis during his tenure as director of marketing and public relations – and for expanding OTSL's civic footprint as the producer of the company's Opera Tastings series, through artist community tours, and the creation and growth of its Engagement + Inclusion Task Force. His career has also included roles with the American Repertory Theater, the Alliance Theater, and 7 Stages, and consulting projects for the National Blues Museum, the Utah Symphony, and the documentary film *Flint: The Poisoning of an American City*. He has directed over two dozen professional or university productions, including regional premieres by David Mamet, Caryl Churchill, and others. A graduate of Harvard University, he also serves as adjunct faculty at Webster University in the Arts Management and Leadership MFA program.





LAST STOP ON MARKET STREET

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We are grateful for the generous support of so many in our community.

Without you, Metro Theater Company's work would not be possible.

We include a list of all supporters who have made contributions or pledges between January 1, 2021 and February 1, 2022 or prior gifts in support of activities during that timeframe.

We regret any inadvertent omissions from this list. If you made a pledge or a gift and do not see your name listed here, please contact Managing Director Joe Gfaller at joe@metroplays.org.

THE CAROL NORTH NICHOLAS KRYAH SOCIETY

The Carol North and Nicholas Kryah Benefactor Society was established to honor four decades of leadership by Artistic Director Carol North and Resident Artist Nicholas Kryah.

Members of the Benefactor Society contribute a minimum of \$1000 annually to ensure that Carol and Nicholas' legacy of meaningful artistic work for young audiences continues to grow.

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Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

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Metro Theater Company is St. Louis' premier professional theater for youth and families and St. Louis' third-oldest theater company. Since 1973, Metro Theater Company has been creating productions that respect young people's intelligence, tell compelling stories, stimulate curiosity and provoke thoughtful reflection. The Company has reached a total audience of more than two million and has a national reputation for excellence in the field of professional theater for young audiences. Metro Theater Company has received major honors and awards, both locally and nationally. The Company is not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization and is a proud member of the Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for non-profit professional theaters), Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (the U.S. chapter of the international association of theaters for young people), and Missouri Citizens for the Arts.

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Discussion Questions

These questions are great to use on the ride home or any time after you have watched the performance!

1. Why do you think Nana took away CJ's devices?
2. When CJ first gets to the city, he finds the noise to be too much. He is overwhelmed and homesick. **Have you ever felt homesick? What made you feel better?**
3. CJ loves animals and wants to be a zoologist when he grows up. **What is something that you love learning about and might want to explore as a career one day?**
4. As CJ and Nana ride the bus, lots of different people get on and off. They are all a part of Nana's community. **Who is someone special in your community?**
5. **Why did CJ give Jojo his special turtle pillow? Have you ever given away something that was special to you?**
6. When CJ and Jojo first meet, they don't understand one another or get along. **Have you ever made a judgement about someone else but then changed your mind? How did that make you feel?**
7. **Have you ever taken public transportation in your home town or while traveling? What was your experience like?**
8. **Who was your favorite person that CJ met on the bus and why?**
9. **What was your favorite song in the show? Did it remind you of any other songs you know?**
10. Nana gives back by working at the soup kitchen and brings CJ with her. **What are ways you have given back, or ways you could be of service to your community?**