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Full casting announced for ***JELLY'S LAST JAM***

**Karole Foreman, Wilkie Ferguson III, Grasan Kingsberry, Summer Nicole Greer,
Doran Butler, Cyd Charisse Glover-Hill, Naomi C. Walley, Janaya Jones,
Hannah Yosef, Joe Aaron Reid, Eric B. Anthony, Davon Rashawn,
Amber Liekhus, and Chante Carmel
join previously announced
John Clarence Stewart, Cress Williams, and Jasmine Amy Rogers**

**Wednesday, May 29, 2024 to Sunday, June 23, 2024
Press Opening June 2, 2024
Tickets at pasadenaplayhouse.org**

PASADENA, CA (April 30, 2024) – Danny Feldman, Producing Artistic Director of Pasadena Playhouse, the State Theater of California and recipient of the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award, announces full casting for its new production of the Tony Award winning musical *Jelly's Last Jam* (May 29 to June 23), featuring a book by George C. Wolfe, music by Jelly Roll Morton, and lyrics by Susan Birkenhead with musical adaptation and additional music composed by Luther Henderson.

The cast of *Jelly's Last Jam* is led by previously announced John Clarence Stewart (*P-Valley*, Netflix's *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist*) as Jelly Roll Morton, Cress Williams (*Living Single*, CW's *Black Lightning*) as Chimney Man, and Jasmine Amy Rogers (star of Broadway's upcoming *BOOP! The Musical*) as Anita.

The production will also include Karole Foreman (*1776 National Tour*) as Gran Mimi/Ensemble, Wilkie Ferguson III (Broadway's *Motown the Musical*) as Jack the Bear, Grasan Kingsberry (Broadway's *The Color Purple*) as Buddy Bolden/Ensemble, Summer Nicole Greer (MTW's *Million Dollar Quartet*) as Miss Mamie, Doran Butler (*La La Land*) as Young Jelly/Ensemble, Cyd Charisse Glover-Hill (Broadway's *Black and Blue*) as Hunnie, Naomi C. Walley (*West Side Story International Tour*) as Hunnie, Janaya Jones (MTW's *Grease*) as Hunnie, Hannah Yosef (La Mirada Theatre's *Puttin' On The Ritz*) as Too Tight Nora/Ensemble, Joe Aaron Reid (Broadway's *If/Then*) as Foot-In-Yo-Ass Sam/Ensemble, and Eric B. Anthony (Broadway's *Mary Poppins*) as Three Finger Jake/Ensemble.

The cast is rounded out by Davon Rashawn, Amber Liekhus, and Chante Carmel as Ensemble.

Jelly's Last Jam will be directed by Kent Gash, with music direction by Darryl Archibald, and choreography by Dell Howlett.

The creative team includes Edward E. Haynes, Jr. (Scenic Designer), Samantha Jones (Costume Designer), Rui Rita (Lighting Designer), Danny Erdberg and Ursula Kwong Brown (Sound Designers), Kendrick Lawson-Knight (Assistant Scenic Designer), Caylyn Dabney (Assistant Costume Designer), Omar Madkour (Assistant Lighting Designer) with Casting by RBT Casting (Ryan Bernard Tymensky, CSA). The Stage Management team includes Iark Hackshaw (Production Stage Manager) and David S. Franklin (Assistant Stage Manager).

When legendary musician Jelly Roll Morton's soul is forced to face the music, the self-proclaimed "inventor of jazz" is left at the ultimate crossroads. Follow Jelly from the back alleys of New Orleans to the sparkling stages of New York, as his remarkable journey unfolds in a stunning display of song, dance, and music. With soulful melodies, electrifying tap dancing, and fiery tunes that will leave you breathless, get your groove on with this dazzling musical masterpiece.

Recipient of three Tony Awards, six Drama Desk Awards, and three 1992 Outer Critics Circle Awards including Best Broadway Musical, ***Jelly's Last Jam*** "makes the invention of jazz a miraculous, eruptive theatrical event... not merely an impressionistic biography of the man who helped ignite the 20th-century jazz revolution, but also a sophisticated attempt to tell the story of the birth of jazz in general and, through that story, the edgy drama of being black in the tumultuous modern America that percolated to jazz's beat" (*New York Times*)

This production is partially underwritten by our very generous Honorary Producers, Mary Lou Byrne & Gary W. Kearney, David Lee Foundation, and East West Bank.

Tickets and information for ***Jelly's Last Jam*** are available at pasadenaplayhouse.org, by phone at 626-356-7529, and at the box office at 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.

About Pasadena Playhouse

Pasadena Playhouse, the official State Theater of California and recipient of the 2023 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is one of the most prolific theaters in the country. The Playhouse has staged thousands of original productions since its founding in 1917 including premieres of works by Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, Suzan Lori Parks and hundreds more. For decades, its pioneering School for Theater Arts was a training ground for actors and theatermakers who went on to make significant contributions to the entertainment industry. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Danny Feldman since 2016, Pasadena Playhouse's productions and community programs are centered on its founding idea of being a living force in its community, making theater for everyone.

Calendar Listing for *Jelly's Last Jam*

Jelly's Last Jam

Book by George C. Wolfe

Music by Jelly Roll Morton
Lyrics by Susan Birkenhead
Musical Adaptation and Additional Music Composed By Luther Henderson

***“In telling the story of Jelly, the story of jazz,
Ya gotta have grit to go with the gravy.”***

Venue: Pasadena Playhouse, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Dates: Wednesday, May 29 to Sunday, June 23
Press opening Sunday, June 2 at 5:00 pm

Tickets: Prices start at \$44
Online -- PasadenaPlayhouse.org
By phone at 626-356-7529
In person -- Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, located at 39 South El Molino
Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Performance Schedule: Tuesday-Friday evenings at 8:00 pm (no performance Tuesday, May 28)
Saturday at 2:00 pm and 8:00 pm; Sunday at 2:00 pm; Sunday, June 23
at 7:00 pm

BIOGRAPHIES

For a full list of company bios to date, visit
<https://www.pasadenaplayhouse.org/event/jellys-last-jam/>

John Clarence Stewart (Jelly Roll Morton): John was most recently seen as Big Teak in the latest season of *P-Valley*, created by Katori Hall. He moved to New York after performing as Tray in the world premiere of *brownsville song* (b-side for tray) at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. Other TV credits: *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist* on NBC, both Netflix's *What/If* and Marvel's *Luke Cage*, *Gotham*, and *The Mysteries of Laura*. Stewart has performed at 54 Below in NYC, *BroadwayWorld* called him, "the most authentic, the most genuine, the most sincere person an audience could ever hope to find on a stage." John also debuted his one man show, *Soft As It Began*, in the Stripped Bare Arts incubator project with Synchronicity Theatre.

Cress Williams (Chimney Man): Cress is best known for starring as DC's title-character in The CW's critically acclaimed Greg Berlanti drama series, *Black Lightning*. Additionally, he also stars in the murder-mystery film, *What Remains*, alongside Kellan Lutz and Anne Heche. Other film credits include *Two Days in the Valley* opposite James Spader, Jeff Daniels, Teri Hatcher, and Charlize Theron; as well as *Never Been Kissed* with Drew Barrymore, Michael Vartan, and David Arquette. Some theater credits include *Othello*, *Elephant Man*, *Extremities*, and *Red Noses*. Television credits include *ER*, *NYPD Blue*, *The West Wing*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *Friday Night Lights*. TV credits include *Dixie*, in addition to stints on *Prison Break*; *Living Single*; *Nash Bridges*; *Close to Home*; *Code Black*; and *Beverly Hills, 90210*.

Jasmine Amy Rogers (Anita): Jasmine recently wrapped a run in Chicago as the title character in the Broadway bound production of *BOOP! The Musical*, reteaming her with director/choreographer Jerry Mitchell. She played the scene stealing Gretchen Wieners in the National Tour of *Mean Girls*, was seen as Melody Green in Paper Mill Playhouse's production of *The Wanderer* and as Francis Basseby in the world premiere of *Becoming Nancy*, directed by Jerry Mitchell at the Alliance Theatre. TV includes *Evil* on Paramount+. She was a Jimmy Awards' finalist and appeared in *Cabaret* as Sally Bowles at the Manhattan School of Music where she studied musical theater.

Karole Foreman (Gran Mimi/Ensemble): *1776* (National Tour); *Lady Day* (Ovation Award - Cygnet Theatre, freeFall Theatre, International City Theatre, Ebony Repertory Theatre, Pacific Conservatory Theatre); *A Few Good Men* (La Mirada Theatre); *Blues in the Night* (ICT/Ebony Rep); *A Little Night Music* (SD Theatre Critics Nomination) and *Stupid F'ing Bird* (Cygnet Theatre); *Porgy & Bess*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Intimate Apparel* (Ensemble Theatre Company); *Fences* (PCPA/ ICT, NAACP Nomination); *Wedding Band* (Antaeus - Stage Raw Nomination); *Next to Normal* (OC Weekly Award); *Parade*, *Jelly's Last Jam* (Suzi Bass Award, Mark Taper/Alliance Theatre); *Mamma Mia!* (Vegas); and numerous regional theaters. TV: *Days of Our Lives*, *Monster*, *The Connors*, *Good Trouble*, *NCIS*, *Brooklyn 99*, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, *Rebel*. Film: *The Banality*, *42*, *Rebirth*, *Buddy Solitaire*. www.karoleforeman.com

Wilkie Ferguson III (Jack the Bear): Wilkie is thrilled to return to Pasadena Playhouse after performing in *Stormy Weather* and *Ray Charles Live* (Young Ray). A graduate of New World School of the Arts, Wilkie studied mathematics at Morehouse College and classical piano at Eastman School of Music before joining the faculty of the Boys' Choir of Harlem as assistant director/music theory instructor. Broadway: *Porgy and Bess*; *Motown: The Musical*; *Wonderland*. Tours: *In the Heights*; *Hairspray*. Off Broadway/Regional: *Fetch Clay, Make Man* (Kirk Douglas Theatre); *Recorded In Hollywood* (ovation nomination); *Cotton Club Parade* (Encores). Musical Director: *9 to 5* (Musical Theatre West) *Newsies* (5-Star Theatricals); *Kinky Boots* (Moonlight Stage). Composer/Orchestrator: *Show Way* (Kennedy Center); *Parrotheads* (Netflix's Jimmy Buffett documentary). IG: @wilkieferguson, @takeonmemusical.

Grasan Kingsberry (Buddy Bolden/Ensemble): Emmy, Grammy, ACCA, and Regional *BroadwayWorld* Award-winning artist. With a BFA from The Juilliard School, he was featured in 11 Broadway productions including the Tony winning Best Revival of *Once On This Island*. Grasan contributed to the original 2005 Broadway production and the 2015 Tony, Grammy, and Emmy-winning revival of *The Color Purple*. Other Broadway credits: *Motown*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It*, *Leap of Faith*, *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Catch Me If You Can*, and *Aida*. TV: *Mozart in the Jungle* (Ben), *Smash*, *Royal Pains*, *All My Children*, *Today Show*. Film: *The Aerialist* and *I Am Legend*. Currently faculty at USC Kaufman School of Dance and DADA. IG: @gray_sandy

Summer Nicole Greer (Miss Mamie): Summer, a Southern California native, is thrilled to be making her Pasadena Playhouse debut. Some of her most recent credits include: Dyanne in *Million Dollar Quartet* (Musical Theater West/5-Star Theatricals), Armelia in *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Laguna Playhouse), and The Voice of the People and Michelle Obama understudy in *44: The Unofficial Unsanctioned Obama Musical* (Bourbon Room). Additionally, she's been featured on FOX'S *I Can See Your Voice*, and plays a number of roles as a live vocalist at the Disneyland Resort. She is also an accredited Los Angeles session vocalist for many acts, including world-renown K-POP group BTS. IG: @summersometimes

Doran Butler (Young Jelly/Ensemble): Doran first fell in love with tap dance after meeting Debbie Allen at the age of thirteen. He asked her if he could be the understudy for the lead role of Alex in Debbie Allen's *Alex in Wonderland* at the Kennedy Center. He also played Young Charley to Wayne Brady's Charley in Michael Arden's *Merrily We Roll Along* at the Wallis Annenberg Center. His television credits include ABC's *Single Parents*, HBO's *The Comeback* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, two of Ryan Murphy's series, Netflix's, and FX's *American Crime Story: Impeachment*. Most recently he's reoccurring in the final season of Freeform's *Good Trouble*. He can also be seen in Damien Chazelle's film *La La Land*.

Cyd Charisse Glover-Hill (Hunnie): A bona fide worshiper, Cyd has been dancing professionally since the age of seven and made her Broadway debut in the Tony award winning musical, *Black and Blue*, at the age of 12. Additional credits: *A Gala for the President*, *Cool Women*, Jazz-Tap/Hip Hop Tour (Jacob's Pillow), *The Gregory Hines Show*. Graduate of USC (BS) and CBU (MA), entrepreneur, choreographer, grant recipient (Irvine Dance in California), and sought after dance instructor. Greatest accomplishment: being Jhalen and Karina's mom. Cyd is grateful to her Lord and Savior Jesus for the opportunity to return to the stage, and thanks her supportive husband, Prentice, her mom, and dance instructors for nurturing her gifts. "A City on a Hill can't be hidden."

Naomi C. Walley (Hunnie): Naomi hails from Chicago, IL. Pasadena Playhouse debut! Broadway: *Chicago* (Velma Kelly). Off Broadway: *A Chorus Line* (Bebe, NY City Center). National Tour: *The Bodyguard* (Rachel/Nikki Marron alternate). International Tour: *West Side Story* (Anita) as well as numerous regional productions. TV/Film: *Winning Time* (HBO), *Deadly D*lf* (Tubi), *In The Heights* (Warner Brothers Studios), and *The Get Down* (Netflix). Naomi has also had the privilege of developing various new works and Broadway productions, including the 2020 Broadway revival of *West Side Story* and most notably *MJ: The Musical*. She wishes to thank God, Kent and Dell, Innovative Artists, and of course, all of her friends and family for their undying love and support! Follow @naomicwalley

Janaya Jones (Hunnie): Regional Credits: Della/Belle in Team Starkid's *VHS Christmas Carols*; Felicia Farrell in *Memphis*, Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and Linda in *The Wedding Singer* (Moonlight Amphitheatre); Lady of the Lake in *Spamalot* (Theatre at the Welk); Featured Performer in *R-E-S-P-E-C-T* (Lamb's Players Theatre); Marty in *Grease* (Musical Theatre)

West); and Stanley Uris/Henry Bowers in the Rockwell musical *Stephen King's It: A Musical Parody*. Other credits include shows at The Old Globe Theatre, Performance Riverside, San Diego Music Theatre, and 5 Star Theatricals. Disneyland Credits: *Queenie and The Jambalaya Jazz Band*, Five and Dime Jazz Band, *The Disney Junior Dance Party*, *Frozen: Live at the Hyperion*. To My Love, Will and My Rock, Mom. @Esmerelduhh_

Hannah Yosef (Too Tight Nora/Ensemble): Hannah is a dancer, singer, and actor based in Los Angeles, California. This Texas native decided to follow her dreams by moving to LA to receive a BFA in Performing Arts from The American Musical & Dramatic Academy. Her first steps in front of the camera became reality in music videos such as Tinashe X Griffin "Scandalous" and Candy Lover Ft. Ken-Y "Maldita Locura". Other credits include commercials for Volkswagen "Made By America" and for Outshine "Joy Inside Out". Above anything else, Hannah is inspired by people and their stories and she is incredibly grateful for her mom, brother, mentors, and all that have shed light and love in her life.

Joe Aaron Reid (Foot-In-Yo-Ass Sam/Ensemble): Joe is thrilled to be making his Pasadena Playhouse debut. Internationally acclaimed for originating the role of Curtis Taylor Jr. in the West End smash hit musical *Dreamgirls*, opposite Pasadena Playhouse and Glee alum, Amber Riley. His additional West End credits include originating Benny in Lin Manuel Miranda's Tony and Olivier Award-winning, *In The Heights*, and Stephen in the European premiere of Mark Gerrard's, *Steve*. His Broadway credits include *If/Then*, *Ghost*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Finian's Rainbow*, *Chicago*, and *Curtains*. TV/film: *Smash*, *The Homemade Sketch Show*, *Robozuna*, *Pretty Little Liars: Summer School* (2024), and *The Holiday Exchange* (2024). Many thanks to 44 West Entertainment. Love to A & D. @Joeaaronreid

Eric B. Anthony (Three Finger Jake/Ensemble): *Stage Raw*, Ovation, NAACP Theatre, *BroadwayWorld*, Eddon, Scenie, YoungArts, and ACT-SO Award recipient. Proud AEA, SAG-AFTRA, and NAACP member. Broadway: *Mary Poppins*; *Hairspray*; *The Lion King*. Off-Broadway/Regional: *THREE*; *For the Love of a Glove*; *Bronco Billy – The Musical*; *Five Guys Named Moe*; *Merrily We Roll Along*; *Midsummer Night*; *Recorded in Hollywood*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Dreamgirls*; *The Producers*; *The Wiz*; *Rent*; *Sophisticated Ladies*; *Jelly's Last Jam*; *Damn Yankees*; *Grand Hotel*; *Bye Bye Birdie*; *Golden Boy*; *Fame*; *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field*; *bonded*; *Something Happened*. Film: *I'll Be Watching*; *Coffee House Chronicles*; *Waiting in the Wings*. TV: *Encore!*; *The Affair*; *Tosh.0*. "Gratitude to my supportive family and friends, for the unconditional love. Glory to GOD for everything!" @EricBAnthony #IlluminatingHumanity

Davon Rashawn (Ensemble): Davon has been exploring the intricacies of dance since he was a child. His environment instilled a constant search for diversity in the arts. He took his studies to the University of Southern California where he earned his BFA in dance. Since then, he's danced works by Jiri Kylian, William Forsythe, and Jermaine Spivey. Professionally he's also worked in shows like *Hairspray*, *Catch Me If You Can*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Tarzan*, and Graffiti Pete in *In the Heights*. Presently he's been splitting his time between the concert and commercial world. He's

appeared on Nickelodeon, New York Fashion Week, Snapchat and commercials with Gal Gadot, Hozier, and Zendaya. He's really excited to be making his debut at the Pasadena Playhouse!

Amber Liekhus (Ensemble): Described as a "versatile singer, whose voice is at once regal and affectionate" (*LA Times*), Amber has had a thrilling career in the US and abroad. Favorites include: Beggar Woman in *Sweeney Todd* and U/S for Ruby in *King Hedley II* at A Noise Within, *Annie* at The Hollywood Bowl, *Sweet Charity* with Reprise 2.0, *Blues in the Night* at the Wallis, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Rent* with McCoy Rigby. Accomplished operatic soprano, Amber appeared as Queen of El Dorado in *Candide* at LA Opera, the title role in *Suor Angelica* with Opera di Roma, and Lily in *Porgy and Bess* at San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Opera. Love to husband Justin and their kids, Julien and Jasper.

Chante Carmel (Ensemble): Chante is humbled and honored to be able to grace the stage once again. Broadway: *Motown*. National Tours: *The Lion King*, *Waitress* (first national tour), *Motown* (first national tour), *Dirty Dancing*, *Rent*. Regional Theater: *Dreamgirls*. TV/Film: *Baby Blue*, *Beauty and the Baller*, *New Girl*, *ER*, *A Different World*, *Buppies*, *A Beautiful Soul*, *Boston Public*, *Where I Live*. Songwriter: "Live Your Dreams," *Save the Last Dance*. Chante is also an accomplished author with her acclaimed book *Sh!t I Learned On Tour* (available on Amazon). This show is for my beautiful son DJ, "you are my dream come true." Thank you God, my husband, amazing parents, family/friends, Fire Starter Entertainment, and The Talent Connect Management. IG: @iamchantecarmel

Kent Gash (Director): Co-Author and Director, *Something to Live For* at Pittsburgh Public (*BroadwayWorld* Best New Musical), *The Three Musketeers* at Oregon Shakespeare and The Acting Co. Tarell McCraney's *Choir Boy*, Steppenwolf, Studio Theatre (Jeff & Bay Area Critics Awards). LA: August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* at South Coast Rep, *Harriet's Return* at Geffen Playhouse. NYC: *Barbecue* at the Public, *Lockdown* at Rattlestick, *Miss Evers' Boys* (NYC premiere) at Melting Pot. Select from 100+ Award winning Regional: *Guys and Dolls* at the Guthrie; *The Wiz* at Ford's Theatre; "*Master Harold*"...and the Boys at Arizona Theatre Company; Tarell McCraney's *Wig Out!* at Studio Theatre DC and Sundance; *Jelly's Last Jam*; *Pacific Overtures*; *Topdog/Underdog* (Norton Award); *God of Carnage*; *Five Guys Named Moe*; Quiara Hudes' *Elliot, a Soldier's Fugue*; and 26 MILES, as the Associate Artistic Director at Alliance Theatre (2001-2009). *Troilus and Cressida*, *Godspell*, *Twelfth Night*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Beehive*, as Associate Artistic Director at Alabama Shakespeare Festival (1999-2001). Kent is the current Artistic Director at The Acting Company (2021-present) and Founding Director of New Studio on Broadway, Tisch, NYU. BFA: Carnegie-Mellon. MFA: UCLA.

Darryl Archibald (Music Director): *Some Like It Hot* (Broadway – Shubert Theatre); *Motown: The Musical* (Broadway – Nederlander Theatre); *Yemandja* the new Angelique Kidjo musical (music supervisor – world tour); *Jelly's Last Jam* (guest conductor – New York City Center); Bob Fosse's *Dancin'* (Pre Broadway engagement – The Old Globe); *Encore!* on Disney+ (*Ragtime* episode); *The Color Purple* (Broadway tour and Paper Mill Playhouse); *Wicked* (substitute conductor –

Pantages Theater); *Memphis* (Broadway tour); *A Little Night Music*, *Ragtime*, *Little Shop of Horrors* with M.J. Rodriguez (Pasadena Playhouse); *Dear World* with Tyne Daly (VPAC); *Two By Two* with Jason Alexander (Reprise); *Passion* (Boston Court); Jonathan Dove's *Innocence* (Banff Centre). Full bio at darrylarchibald.com.

Dell Howlett (Choreographer): Dell is a New York based Virginia born choreographer/director. Selected credits: *Forsyth County Is Flooding* (Atlanta Opera), *Malvolio* (Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Billy Strayhorn: Something to Live For* (Pittsburgh Public Theatre), *Toni Stone* (Alliance Theatre and Milwaukee Repertory) *It Came From Outer Space* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater and TheatreSquared), Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival), *Guys and Dolls* (Guthrie Theatre), *Paradise Square* (Associate to Bill T. Jones, Berkeley Repertory Theatre), *The Wiz* (Ford's Theater), *WigOut* (Studio Theater), *The C.A. Lyons Project* (Alliance Theater). Head of Dance at NYU/Tisch School of the Arts in the Department of Drama's New Studio on Broadway. Upcoming: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Summer 2024, Classical Theatre of Harlem), *Mandela the Musical* (Fall 2024), and *Furlough's Paradise* (Spring 2025, Geffen Playhouse). IG: @aristotlejr

George C. Wolfe (Book): Theatre directing credits include *The Iceman Cometh*, *Shuffle Along*, or the *Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921* and *All That Followed* (NY Drama Critics' Circle Award and Drama Desk Award for Best Musical); *Lucky Guy*; *The Normal Heart* (Drama Desk); *Jelly's Last Jam* (Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Award); *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Tony Award and Drama Desk) and *Perestroika* (Drama Desk); *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk* (Tony and Drama League Award); *Topdog/Underdog* (Obie Award); *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Drama Desk); Elaine Stritch at Liberty (Tony for Special Theatrical Event); *The Tempest*; *Caroline, or Change* (Olivier Award Best Musical); and *A Free Man of Color*. From 1993-2005 Wolfe was the Producer of The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival. He is the writer of the award-winning *The Colored Museum*, *Shuffle Along...*, he directed/adapted *Spunk* (Obie Award), and *Harlem Song*.

Ferdinand La Menthe "Jelly Roll" Morton (Music): Morton was born in the Creole gentry of New Orleans in 1891, but was irresistibly drawn to the excitement of the infamous Storyville district where he made his reputation as a pianist. At a young age he left New Orleans to travel the country, landing in Chicago in the 1920s. He and his band, The Red Hot Peppers, became the top black recording artists for RCA Records in 1927-1928. Morton's music integrated the sounds of ragtime, blues, African rhythms and French opera, establishing him as one of the great jazz pioneers. But by 1930 his music was considered old hat. He died in Los Angeles in 1941.

Susan Birkenhead (Lyrics): Susan Birkenhead received a Tony Nomination, a Grammy nomination and a Drama Desk Award for her lyrics for *Jelly's Last Jam*, which she wrote with George C. Wolfe. She was nominated for a Tony award for *Working*, and a Drama Desk Award for *Triumph of Love*. She won an Outer Critics Circle Award for *What About Luv?* and a Los Angeles Drama Critics Award for *Minsky's*. She wrote additional lyrics for *High Society* on Broadway, and was one of several writers of *A My Name Is Alice* and *Stars of David* off Broadway. *The Secret Life of Bees*, which she's written with Lynn Nottage and Duncan Sheik, just finished a run in London and will open in New York in 2025. *Boop*, which she's written with

David Foster and Bob Martin, directed and choreographed by Jerry Mitchell, will go into rehearsals in January and will open on Broadway in April of 2025.

Luther Henderson (Musical Adaptation and Additional Music Composition): Luther Henderson was a composer, arranger, orchestrator, music director, and performer with a long and impressive career spanning multiple genres. Henderson worked on more than 50 Broadway productions. He served as the original pianist and orchestrator, arranger, and musical supervisor for *Ain't Misbehavin'*. For *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*, he was the musical consultant and arranged several selections. He orchestrated the Tony Award-winning *Raisin* and *Play On!* As a dance arranger, Henderson's credits included *Flower Drum Song*, *Do Re Mi*, *Funny Girl*, and *No, No Nanette*. He also had a robust recording career, featuring albums with the Canadian Brass Quintet, Eileen Farrell, Columbia Records, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, the Andre Kostelanetz Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, Mandy Patinkin, Polly Bergen, Anita Ellis, and others. (Sources: *National Endowment for the Arts*, *Playbill.com*)