Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY 2011-2012 Season

Eighth Annual Theatre Festival in Black & White November 25 - December 4, 2011

(Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, 937 Liberty Ave., 3rd Floor)

Elder Hostages by Ray Werner
Directed by Marci Woodruff
January 28 - February 11, 2012
(Previews January 26 & 27)
(Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, 937 Liberty Ave., 3rd Floor)

The Jonny Gammage Project by Attilio Favorini
Directed by Mark Clayton Southers
March 2 - 4, 2012
(August Wilson Center, 980 Liberty Ave.)

Gem of the Ocean by August Wilson
Directed by Mark Clayton Southers
June 2 - June 10, 2012
(August Wilson Center, 980 Liberty Ave.)

For tickets & information, visit pghplaywrights.com

Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY

Eighth Annual

Theatre Festival



November 25-December 4, 2011
Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre
937 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

From the Festival Coordinator



When asked if I would coordinate the 8th annual Theatre Festival in Black and White, I jumped at the opportunity. The ground on which the festival stands is deep and important to me. Bringing a community together to accomplish a common goal are values that I embrace everyday. Hearing the story of Mark Southers' dream of having a combined 'Black' and 'White' audience being able to be entertained while possibly learning at the same time has always stayed with me. I really see it happening with the festival. The wonderful, talented

and passionate team that came together to make the festival happen are the true heroes. While the eight directors put life into the eight playwrights' words through the numerous actors who dedicated their time to this, we had a passionate team who worked countless hours on building this beautiful theatre you sit in. Two months ago a vision was born and now it has grown for all to see. Thank you for coming out.

Eric A. Smith Festival Coordinator

Major funding by:

Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Fund,

a partnership of

The Heinz Endowments &
The Pittsburgh Foundation

Additional funding by:





Production & Artistic Staff

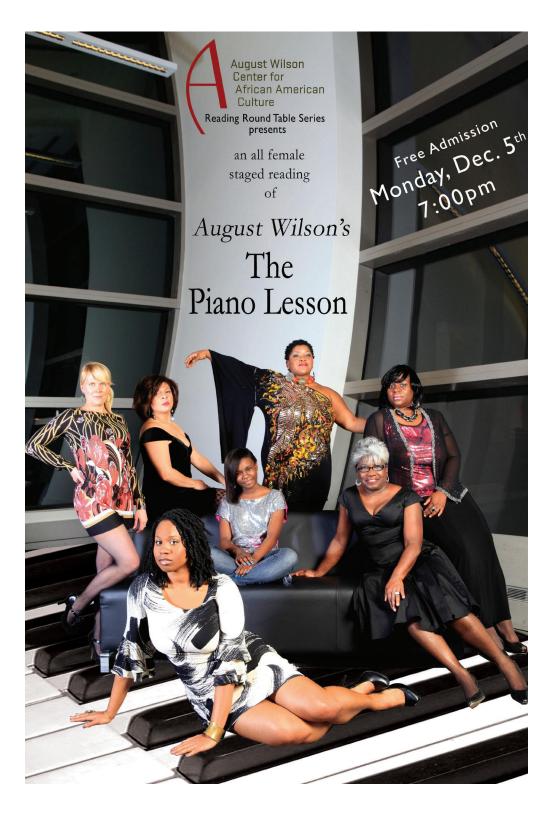
Producing Artistic Director	·
Festival Coordinator	
Technical Director	J.R. Shaw
Directors	Randy Kovitz, Hallie Donner
	Lonzo Green, Myneesha Miller-King
	Todd Betker
	Ja'Sonta Roberts-Deen
	Michael Jackson, Vince Ventura
Stage Managers	Kaitlinlin Mausser, Alyse Hogan
	Vendell Nasir
Costume Designer	
Lighting Designer	
Lighting Tech	W. Roger Randolph III
Makeup	
Sound Design	Mark Whitehead
Sound Tech	Eric A. Smith
Crew	Mont Jones, David Conley

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. Staff

Artistic Director Artistic Associate Technical Director Resident Costumer/Make-up Artist Resident Sound Designer Resident Lighting Designer Master Carpenter Director of Funding Business Manager Box Office Concessions Literary Manager Program Design/Editor	Ja'Sonta Roberts-DeenJR. ShawCheryl El-WalkerMark WhiteheadJR ShawDiane MelchitzkyElizabeth ReissLorill "Neicy" ReadieLorill "Neicy" Readie, Judy MeiksinAlexandria DorsetteWali Jamal
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Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. Board

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PROGRAM A

Felled Family Tree

By Ray Werner Directed by Lonzo Green Stage Manager: Vendell Nasir

Amanda	Jennifer Marcin
Paul	Darren Shrager
Lee	Jeffrey Prebeg Jr.
Joanne	
Charles	Joseph A. Root

In My Sistah's Closet

By Aasiyah El Kirk Directed by Vince Ventura Stage Manager: Sara Fisher-Ventura

Shahada	Camille Lowman
Sadiqua	Tonita Davidson
Kevonna	
Juliana/Ju-Ju	Tara Lyn Zynel
Waitress/Slave Owner	

Runcible Spoon

By Constance Humphrey Egan Directed by Myneesha Miller-King Stage Manager: Alyse Hogan

Bev	Sharon Liotus
Celeste	Jamilah Muhammad
Jeremy	Randy Dicks (Week 1)
•	Keller Lowman (Week 2)

Just Fishin'

By Kim El Directed by Hal

Directed by Hallie Donner Stage Manager: Kim El

Pop-Pop	Wali Jamal
Dwayne	Emmanuel Walker
Carmen	Nia Washington
Tay	Katherine Logan

PROGRAM B

Apple Says Yes

By Andre Kimo Stone Guess Directed by Randy Kovitz

Stage Manager: Kaitlinlin Mausser Video Production: Joseph Hollabaugh Video Production Assistant: Selina Breiner

Special thanks to Nancy Mosser, our friend and benefactor

Sally Sue	Jaime Slavinsky
Herb	
Harlan	Kenny Champion
Sheriff	
Doug	Don DiGiulio

I Said Goodnight

By Tameka Cage Directed by Todd Betker

Video Segments: Michael J. Maraden

Noah Peck	Angelo Bruni
Sondra Peck	Danielle Thomas
Rebecca	Valentina Benrexi

The Balancing of the Budget

By Matt Henderson Directed by Michael Jackson

Max	Connor McCanlus
Willy	Lamont Robinson
Joan Flat	Xazrianna Walker

Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots

By FJ Hartland

Directed by Ja'Sonta Roberts-Deen Stage Manager: Vendell Nasir II

Son	lan Pesarchik
Dad	Michael E. Moats
Mom	Ja'Sonta Ann

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Nover	mber-	Decem	iber 2	011	Nov. 25 Preview (A) 3pm (B) 7pm	Nov. 26 Opening (A) 3pm (B) 7pm
Nov. 27 (B) 3pm (A) 7pm				Dec. 1 (B) 7pm	Dec. 2 (A) 7pm	Dec. 3 (B) 3pm (A) 7pm
Dec. 4 Closing (A) 3pm (B) 7pm						

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company is a 501(c) nonprofit organization.

Please consider making a year-end donation to support the renovation of our new space.

Checks can be made out to
Pittsburgh Playwrights and mailed to:
The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company
937 Liberty Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or you can charge your donation to a credit card by visiting pghplaywrights.com and clicking "Donations."



Mark Clayton Southers (Founder & Producing Artistic Director) and his family live in the Schenley Heights section of Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. He is the Founder and Producing Artistic Director for The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, which is in its ninth season. After Mark attended a master class in playwriting conducted by August Wilson at the Grahamstown Arts Festival in South Africa, he attended the Edward Albee Theatre Festival later that summer in Valdez, Alaska where he did seated readings with Mr. Wilson of all of Wilson's plays. These encounters encouraged Mark to take up playwriting and devote more time to theatre arts. In

2003, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company was born, producing *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* by August Wilson, which received critical acclaim and high praise from the playwright himself.

Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company has continued to grow and thrive, moving to the Cultural District in 2005, and moving to its current location at 937 Penn Avenue just in time for this year's Theatre Festival in Black & White. In December 2010, Mark became the Artistic Director for Theatre Initiatives for the August Wilson Center for African American Culture.

Special Thanks

As you may know, Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company just moved into this space at 937 Liberty Ave. and we would like to express a great deal of thanks to the people who made it possible:

Site Selection and Moving Support:

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Construction and Buildout:

Diane Melchitzky David Conley Lonzo Green Eric A. Smith Lamont Robinson Michael Jackson

Ayisha Morgan-Lee Chrystal Bates Aaron McClendon Biographies

Valentina Benrexi (Rebecca, I Said Goodnight) is happy to be making her second appearance with PPTCO after performing in The Revenants. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, she has worked locally with Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre, Bricolage, Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks, and the Future Ten play festival.

Todd Betker (Director, I Said Goodnight) winds down on a busy 2011 which includes acting roles in *Out of This Furnace* (Unseam'd), *The Mistakes Madeline Made* (No Name Players), and *Looking For Magic* (Pitt Men's Study and Actors Coop). 2011 directing credits include *Strutting and Fretting* (PNWF), *The Telephone* and *The Interview* (Future Ten). He also directed *Managing Marcellus*, which was filmed at WQED studios and will be airing this fall. Todd is neither black, nor white... he just is.

Angelo Bruni (Noah Peck, I Said Goodnight)

Tameka Cage-Conley (Playwright, I Said Goodnight) Tameka Cage Conley, PhD, is a fiction writer, poet, and playwright. In 2010, she received the August Wilson Center Fellowship in Literary Arts. She was recently awarded the Advancing Black Arts Grant by The Heinz Endowments and The Pittsburgh Foundation for two community-based theatre projects. She is completing her first novel.

Kenny Champion (Harlan, Apple Says Yes) Over the past decade, Kenny's unusual but interesting work experiences have afforded him opportunities to perform from the theatre to stand up comedy. His most recent lead role of Kerry Rapp in the film "Since I Don't Have You" has been his most rewarding to date. Look for its premiere in Spring 2012.

Tonita Davidson (Sadiqua, In My Sistah's Closet) is a PR specialist, actor & singer. She was last seen at PPTCO in the 2010 Theatre Festival in Black & White as Lee Lee in *The Powder Room*. Her most recent performance was in *I Hate Hamlet* with Stage Right Theatre. Tonita has also performed with Kuntu Repertory Theatre, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Bricolage, and the August Wilson Center. "Thank you - God for continued favor, Mom/Dad, family & friends for your support!"

Randy Dicks (Jeremy, *Runcible Spoon***)** is happy to be making his debut performance with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. He was last seen playing "Lenny" with Sharon (Bev) in *Rumors* at the Grand Theater where his monologue was reviewed as "a piece of theatre not to be missed."

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Don DiGiulio (Doug, *Apple Says Yes)* is the Artistic Director of No Name Players (www.nonameplayers.org).

Hallie Donner (Director, Just Fishin') is a leading educator, director, instructor and producer in Pittsburgh's arts education and youth theatre communities, providing highly creative, challenging, and supportive environments that teach Pittsburgh's youth the values of self-expression and the pursuit of excellence. Hallie founded the drama program at the Urban League of Pittsburgh Charter School in 2001, and the Alumni Theater Company in 2008 for youth in grades 6-12.

Constance Humphrey Egan (Playwright, Runcible Spoon) Ms. Egan's plays have appeared at Wingspan Arts in NYC, The Eclectic Theatre in Los Angeles, and The Actors' Rep in Vermont. A 2010 semi-finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Playwriting Conference with her play Genetic Funk, The Bad Habit has been published by Original Works Publishing. A graduate of theatre arts from Bennington College, Connie worked as an actor in New York City before relocating to Pittsburgh, PA to raise her family.

Kim El (Playwright/Stage Manager, *Just Fishin'*) is a Pittsburgh actor, poet, playwright and graduate of Duquesne University. Kim was awarded Best Supporting Actress in 2006 and Best Director in 2008 by Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. "Sending my deepest love and pride to my daughter Aasiyah El-Kirk on her play debut!"

Aasiyah El-Kirk (Playwright, In My Sistah's Closet) is a Pittsburgh writer and entrepreneur of her own Islamic clothing line Al Ghurabaa Fashions. She is a devoted member of Masjid Al-Awwal, a wife and a mother of four. She dedicates this performance to her late mother in law, Vivian Chatfield {Grandma Peaches} who passed away earlier this year from cancer.

Cheryl El-Walker (Kevonna, In My Sistah's Closet; Festival Costume Designer) is an award winning actor, make-up artist and costume designer who received the 2007 Best Make-up Artist and 2008 Best Leading Actress at the AACTA Awards. Cheryl is an alumna of Point Park University and is currently working at The August Wilson Center.

Sara Fisher-Ventura (Stage Manager, In My Sistah's Closet) Sara Fisher has previous stage manager experience at Pittsburgh New Works Festival and McKeesport Little Theatre. Sara is currently the Associate Artistic Director of 12 Peers Theater, which will be producing their first show, The Weird, January 19-29 at Grey Box Theatre in Lawrenceville.

Biographies

Vince Ventura (Director, In My Sistah's Closet) is excited to return to The Theatre Festival in Black and White after winning the Best Director Award for last year's *Doo Rag.* Vince is also the Artistic Director of 12 Peers Theater and has acted, directed, and dialect coached for various theatre companies throughout Pittsburgh.

Emmanuel L. Walker (Dwayne, *Just Fishin'***)** is a 9th grader at Obama High School who has been acting since the age of two. In 2007, he received an Onyx Award for Best Up and Coming African American Youth Actor. Manny also enjoys singing, dancing, playing the drums and most athletic sports.

Xazrianna Walker (Joan Flat, The Balancing of the Budget) is a CAPA graduate in Visual Arts. She has been active in the fashion modeling scene in Pittsburgh and abroad, and has worked with photographers including: Makinde Photography, Dale Schiebel, Brian Herman and many others. This production is Xazrianna's professional theatre debut and she is very proud. She would like to send a warm shout out to her mom for all the love and support.

Nia Washington (Carmen, *Just Fishin'***)** is a ninth grade student at CAPA. She is excited to make her debut performance on the Pittsburgh Playwrights stage. She thanks Mark Clayton Southers for providing an artistic venue.

Ray Werner (Playwright, Felled Family Tree) Ray's short play Night Song was produced in 2009 at The Source Festival in Washington, D.C. A staged reading of his trilogy Elder Hostages was produced at the Hazlett Theater in 2010, and he is excited that Elder Hostages will be produced as part of Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre's 2011-2012 season.

Tara Lyn Zynel (Juliana/JuJu, In My Sistah's Closet) is thrilled to once again be a part of the Black and White Festival and has thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with her fellow cast members. Zynel studied Acting at Point Park University and has been seen in various productions around Pittsburgh.

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Vendell Nasir II (Stage Manager, Felled Family Tree and Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots) Vendell's creative experiences include: film executive producer, actor, spoken word artist, vocalist, and drummer. Vendell is a graduate of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, where he studied digital media production, and received his bachelor's degree.

lan Pesarchik (Son, Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots) is a student at the University of Pittsburgh majoring in non-fiction writing. He has a recurring role as Donnie Brascetti in Arrivederci Al A Dinner with the Godfather. Favorite past roles include Oberon (A Midsummer Night's Dream) and Pontius Pilate (Jesus Christ Superstar).

Jeffrey Prebeg Jr. (Lee, Felled Family Tree) is a kindly Lord of the Flies. He enjoys scotch and being prepared, as you can tell by this bio. He is currently taking time off from being good looking to focus on his anger management. He would like to thank his three cats for cuddles and running lines.

Ja'Sonta Roberts-Deen (Director, Mom, Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots) has been working with PPTCO for the past 2 years. She studied Theatre Arts and education and founded Kaleidoscope Arts Education for Youth. She was most recently seen in Organic Theater's Dead Man's Cell Phone, and Pittsburgh Musical Theater's Hairspray.

Lamont Robinson (Willy, The Balancing of the Budget)

Joseph A. Root (Charles, Felled Family Tree) is best described by the words "incandescent filament." Joe is taking a break from the zombie apocalypse to assail this role on stage. Joe was most recently seen in the play *The Hamiltons* by Rage of the Stage players. He could thank bobo the monkey boy, but won't.

Jaime Slavinsky (Sally Sue, Apple Says Yes) As Founder & Artistic Director of ORGANIC THEATER PITTSBURGH, Ms. Slavinsky recently produced & starred in Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* to critical acclaim. Jaime also works locally on-camera in commercials, film & television. Favorite credits include Zuska in *Out of this Furnace* (Unseam'd Shakespeare) & Cousin Dolly in the locally-produced film *Lightweight* directed by Randy Kovitz. Godspeed!

Biographies

Lonzo Green (Director, Felled Family Tree) is an award-winning actor. He has been a student of the theatre for over forty years and is a member of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). A few of his film credits include Criminal Justice, Silence of the Lambs, Money for Nothin', and Kill Point. "I would like to thank God for giving me the strength to carry on."

Naomi Grodin (Waitress/Slave Owner, In My Sistah's Closet) Naomi Grodin is thrilled to be working with Vince and Sara again. Naomi is both an actor and director. She was recently in Unseamed Shakespeare's production of Managing Marcellus. She has worked with many theatre companies in Pittsburgh. Naomi will be performing with 12 Peers Theater Company this January in The Weird.

Andre Kimo Stone Guess (Playwright, Apple Says Yes) is originally from Louisville, KY. He moved to Pittsburgh in 2010. He is the proud husband of Cheryl P. Guess and father of Wynton, Kennedy, Morgan and Kenithia. *Apple Says Yes* is his first play.

FJ Hartland (Playwright, Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots) was the 2008 recipient of a Playwriting Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His plays have been seen a record-setting eleven times in the Pittsburgh New Works Festival (winning "Best Play" in 2005, 2010 and 2011). He is also a professional actor and award-winning director.

Matt Henderson (Playwright, *The Balancing of the Budget*) is very excited to be making his Pittsburgh Playwrights debut as a playwright. His play *Strutting and Fretting* was recently produced by Cup-A-Jo Productions as part of the Pittsburgh New Works Festival, and his work has also been seen in Terra Nova Theatre Group's play reading series.

Alyse Hogan (Stage Manager, *Runcible Spoon)* This is Alyse's first time stage managing not just for Playwrights but in her entire theatre career. She is thankful for the opportunity and would like to thank Kim El and Myneesha Miller-King for her first Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. experience.

Michael Jackson (Director, *The Balancing of the Budget***)** a Pittsburgh native is a sought-after director, actor, and singer who has worked both locally and nationally. He is a member of the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and staff member of the Composers Choir in Connecticut. He has worked with various companies throughout the city including: Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Opera, August Wilson Center, Kuntu Repertory Theatre, City Theatre, and The Shona Sharif African Dance Ensemble. "Special thanks to my cast and Mark Clayton Southers."

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Wali Jamal (Pop-Pop, Just Fishin') is an accomplished playwright, actor and director who has been performing with Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Co. since its first production, Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, in 2003. His other playwriting credits include Robert Smalls: Legend of the Black Mariner, Tigger's Tat and The Holding Cell.

Mont Jones (Festival Crew) has been a major part of Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company for the past five years. He was recently seen in the McKeesport Little Theatre's production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and as the Ice Man in Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre's *Seven Guitars* by August Wilson.

Randy Kovitz (Director, Apple Says Yes) Directed August Wilson's *The Janitor* for last year's Theatre Festival in Black & White. He has staged fights for many Playwrights productions, including *Seven Guitars, Jitney* and *Corps Values*. He directed the short films *Lightweight, The Specials, Subway Jazz* and most recently 17 Days, an interactive educational web site/DVD.

Adam Kroloff (Herb, *Apple Says Yes)* studied acting at The Theatre School at De Paul University. He's worked in film, TV, radio, web, stage, and puppet theatre. He's also a guitar player, singer, and music instructor. Born a marionette, Adam was granted his wish and is now a real boy.

Sharon Liotus (Bev, Runcible Spoon) is pleased to be performing the character of Bev in this captivating play with a talented cast and excellent director, Myneesha. She thanks the playwright Connie Egan for her complete honesty and openness in developing this challenging character.

Katherine Logan (Tay, Just Fishin') is a CAPA student making her Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company debut.

Camille Lowman (Shahada, My Sistah's Closet) was last seen at PPTCO as Kayla in the Black and White Festival's The Sunday God Gave Me, and as Bilaliah in New Horizon Theatre's I Gotcha! The Story of Joe Texx and the Soul Clan, which earned her the 2010 AACTA Onyx Award for Best Leading Actress in a Musical. Camille dedicates this performance to her fiance Mark, her true love, and to her five loving children. Thank you Vince, Amber and Kim for seeing and using my gift.

Biographies

Keller Lowman (Jeremy, Runcible Spoon) This is Keller's first performance with Pittsburgh Playwrights and he's thrilled to be here working with this fantastic cast and director. Recent local credits include John Utterson in *Jekyll and Hyde: The Musical.*

Jennifer Marcin (Amanda, *Felled Family Tree)* is thrilled to be a part of the Theatre Festival in Black and White. Not only does she enjoy acting but she is a crafter of fine art out of laundry lint. In her spare time she enjoys singing and making jewelry. She would like to thank Donna Perkins, the cast, and crew.

Kaitlin Mausser (Joanne, Felled Family Tree; Stage Manager, Apple Says Yes) Kaitlin Mausser is a cheerful hobbit from the Northern Hills who enjoys multitasking. Her numerous credits have prepared her with a level head and furry feet during this whirlwind of an adventure. She would like to thank her friends and family for their support and food. (nose taps).

Connor McCanlus (Max, The Balancing of the Budget) is graduating with a B.F.A. in Acting from Clarion University where he performed roles such as Karl in *Skin Deep* (Collegiate Premiere). Connor will be playing Claudius in Three Rivers Theater Company's *Hamlet* and can be seen performing with the musical improv group The LuPones at Steel City Improv Theater.

Myneesha Miller-King (Director, Runcible Spoon) is a native of Pittsburgh, PA. She has performed with Pittsburgh Public, Gemini, Penn and Kuntu Repertory Theatres. Myneesha received a BFA in Professional Theatre at North Carolina A&T State University with a concentration in Acting/Directing. She has recently served as Stage Manager at the August Wilson Center.

Michael E. Moats (Dad, Shaving Lessons and Half-Windsor Knots) has acted, directed, and designed for more than 30 theatre companies in the Pittsburgh area over the past 15 years. Some favorites roles include Ben in *The Mercy Seat*, Gordon in *Dead Man's Cell Phone* and Bernie in *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*. Follow him on twitter @seemyplay.

Jamilah Muhammad (Celeste, Runcible Spoon) is a Baltimore native. She attended Baltimore School for the Arts and is currently a sophmore acting major at Point Park University. She is very thankful for her performance opportunities. She would also like to thank her best friend and biggest supporter, her mother Georgia.