

The Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company proudly presents:

# **EAST TEXAS** *Hot Links*

**SEPT 29 -  
NOV 5 2017**



**WRITTEN BY**  
*Eugene Lee*

**DIRECTED BY**  
*Montae Russell*

# WELCOME



Welcome to the Pittsburgh premiere of Eugene Lee's ***East Texas Hot Links***. This production represents our first guest playwright in a series of "Friends of the Pittsburgh Playwrights." The idea is to expose our local playwrights and audiences to national playwrights through a production and a playwriting workshop. These playwrights are individuals who have a connection with our small company in some way.

Eugene Lee is a Wilsonian actor, television and film actor as well as an accomplished playwright. Most will remember Mr. Lee as an actor in our productions of ***Two Trains Running*** (as the Hill District undertaker "West") and *The Piano Lesson* (as the preacher "Avery"). He returns now as a playwright.

I've been a fan of his work through the years: on Broadway, television, in movies and countless stages across the country. We're fortunate to have the opportunity to stage his Pulitzer-nominated play ***East Texas Hot Links***. I hope you enjoy this performance and thank you for your continued support.

Mark Clayton Southers  
Founder & Producing Artistic Director

# SPECIAL THANKS

## THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Howard Heinz Endowment • Vira I. Heinz Endowment

Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh



# ABOUT THE PLAY

## EAST TEXAS HOT LINKS

by Eugene Lee  
directed by Montae Russell

<b>COLUMBUS</b>	Kevin Brown
<b>XL</b>	Jonathan Berry
<b>ROY</b>	Monteze Freelend*
<b>CHARLESETTA</b>	Cheryl El-Walker
<b>ADOLPH</b>	Leslie Howard
<b>DELMUS</b>	Taylor Martin Moss
<b>BUCKSHOT</b>	Sam Lothard
<b>BOOCHIE</b>	Charles Timbers

\*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

This play is presented in one act without an intermission.  
Cover photo by Gail Manker

## SPECIAL THANKS

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Hazel Leroy

Christy L. McGuire  
Rachel Meyers  
Jan Ripper  
Sharon Simpson  
Michele Sweeney

Current as of September 22, 2017

# BIOGRAPHIES



**PLAYWRIGHT | EUGENE LEE** In 1972, while in college, Lee acted in a command performance of *A Raisin in the Sun* for President Lyndon B. Johnson at his Texas ranch. Forty-plus years later, he has gone on to appear and work in over 200 television movies, films and series and has long since lost count of the number of plays he's been involved with.

On stage, Lee is considered a “Wilsonian Warrior” for his work in the plays of August Wilson, on Broadway and regional theatres across the country, including August’s final autobiographical one-man piece, *How I Learned What I Learned*. His stage credits include New York’s Negro Ensemble Company and Public

Theatre, Crossroads Theatre Company, Mark Taper Forum, Chicago’s Goodman Theatre, Boston’s Huntington Theatre, Alliance and True Colors Theatre Company in Atlanta, Arena Stage and Kennedy Center in D.C., Baltimore’s Center Stage and then some. His television writing credits include, *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, *Walker, Texas Ranger*, *Michael Hayes*, *The Journey of Allen Strange*, *The Turks* and the television movie, *Port Chicago*.

His own characters come to life through his plays: *East Texas Hot Links*, *Fear Itself*, *Somebody Called: A Tale of Two Preachers*, *Killingsworth*, *Lyin’ Ass* and the musical, *Twist*. Mr. Lee is Artistic Director of the Texas State Black and Latino Playwrights Conference. [www.eugeneleeonline.com](http://www.eugeneleeonline.com)

# BIOGRAPHIES



**DIRECTOR | MONTAE RUSSELL** is a nationally recognized theatre, television and film actor, who hails from Pittsburgh (Homestead), and is based in Los Angeles. He was seen on NBC's *ER* for fifteen seasons as Paramedic Dwight Zadro and won the SAG Award for Best Dramatic Ensemble four times. Credits include: *The Player's Club*, HBO's *Laurel Avenue*, TNT's *Lily in Winter* opposite Natalie Cole, three years *One Life to Live*, countless television appearances. He's graced stages on/off Broadway and theatres across the country. Credits range from Broadway's *King Hedley II*, *A Few Good Men*, *Prelude to a Kiss* to *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Fences* at Kennedy Center, NY Public Theatre's *East Texas* *Hot Links*, Cleveland Playhouse's African-American production of

*The Glass Menagerie*.

Recent productions include an acclaimed performance in LA as the legendary Charlie "Bird" Parker in *BIRD LIVES!* Under his belt, he has 132 performances of *Thurgood*, which was a hit at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Florida, and Philadelphia. Montae has performed in all 10 August Wilson plays. In LA, he has directed/produced 3 episodes of the upcoming YouTube web series *29th Place*, as well as several award-winning shorts.

A Pitt grad, he earned his MFA from Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts. A Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity member, he is active in South Central LA with his non-profit organization Successful Youth Los Angeles. More info: [MontaeRussell.net](http://MontaeRussell.net).

# BIOGRAPHIES



**XL | JONATHAN BERRY** has performed on Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company's stage as Floyd Barton in *Seven Guitars*, Youngblood in the 2016 staged reading of *Jitney* and Citizen Barlow in *Gem of the Ocean*. He won an Onyx Award in 2007 for playing Joe in *Pill Hill*. He has since had the pleasure of working with the Shona Sharif African Dance and Drum Ensemble (Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity* for 15 years), as well as productions for the Theatre Factory, Bricolage, the Organic Theater, the Human Race Theatre Company of Dayton, Ohio, City Theatre, and New Horizon Theater. Jonathan can be seen in the movies *Lightweight* and *The Next Three Days*, as well as two currently running PA Lottery television commercials. Many

thanks to Mark Clayton Southers and this amazingly talented cast.



**COLUMBUS | KEVIN BROWN** has appeared in seven of August Wilson's 10-play American Century Cycle. Brown appeared in New Horizon Theater's world premiere *Queens of the Blues* as Thomas Dorsey, the father of gospel music. He recently filmed a remake of the classic "crying Indian" commercial for PRC's anti-littering campaign. Brown's additional theater credits include *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of The Ocean*, *Radio Golf*, *Comfort Zone*, *Romance*, *Do Lord Remember Me*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Gospel at Colonus*, *Beautiful Dreamers*, *Last of the Line*, *Livin' Fat*, *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, *Flight*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *Mahalia Jackson: Standing on Holy Ground*, *Get Ready*, *Blue*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *The Billie Holiday Story* at the Grahamstown Theater Festival

(South Africa) and *Miss Julie*, *Clarissa and John* (in Pittsburgh twice and at the National Black Theatre Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe).



**CHARLESETTA | CHERYL EL-WALKER** is an award-winning costume designer and makeup artist who is also a veteran stage actor from Pittsburgh. She is the resident costume/makeup artist for the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company and has provided these skills for nine of August Wilson's plays at PPTCO. Her creative work in various theatre companies has earned her several Onyx awards from the African American Council of the Arts (AACTA): Best Make-up Artist (2007); Best Costume for a Musical (*Christmas Is Coming Uptown*, 2008); Best Leading Actress (*Freeman*, New Horizon Theatre, 2008); Best Costume Design for a Play (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012), and the PPTCO 2012 Legacy Award. In

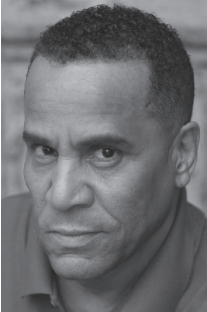
2013, she received PPTCO's Theater Festival in Black And White Award for Best Director (*And to All a Good Night*). Most recently, Cheryl was seen on stage in Monteze Freeland's play *Kalopsia* at the New Hazlett Theater.



# BIOGRAPHIES



**ROY | MONTEZE FREELAND\*** trained at Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts. As an actor he most recently appeared in *Wild With Happy* (City Theatre) and *Dreamgirls* (PMT). Past credits include *The Christians* (Kinetic Theatre), *Aida* and *South Pacific* with Pittsburgh CLO, *The Piano Lesson*, *Congo Square The Musical*, *Christmas Star* (Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Company), *The Electric Baby* (Quantum Theatre), *Fahrenheit 451* and *Of Mice and Men* (Prime Stage Theater Co.), *Angels in America* (Throughline Theater Co.) *JH: Mechanics of a Legend* and *Camino* with The Hiawatha Project, and *Radio Golf* (Kuntu Rep.) to name a few. For Charles "Bootsie" Freeland.



**ADOLPH | LESLIE HOWARD** is an accomplished actor. He began his acting career as a member of the former and prestigious D.C. Black Repertory Company, founded by famous actor Robert Hooks. Les has had many fine performances here in Pittsburgh for such theaters as Pittsburgh Playwrights Theater Co., New Horizon Theater, Gargaro Productions, the August Wilson Center and the former Kuntu Repertory Theater. Les's most recent performance was as "The Great Father" in Pittsburgh Festival Opera's highly acclaimed production of *A Gathering of Sons*, directed by Mark Clayton Southers. Les may be best remembered as "Turnbo" in PPTCO's highly successful production of August Wilson's *Jitney* and more recently as Brooke Benton in Ernest McCarthy's *Dinah*.

Some of Les's other projects included appearances in New Horizon Theater's *Nothing But The Blues* and *Dance on Widow's Row* and PPTCO's *Sold*, with actress Renn Woods. Les appeared in numerous productions for the former Kuntu Repertory Theater, working alongside Dr. Vernell Lillie. Les has also appeared in feature films and once produced and hosted his own local public access television show entitled *The Howard Entertainment Showcase* which aired for several years on PCTV channel 21. Les is also known locally in jazz circles where he performed for many years with the Roger Barbour Jazz Quartet, where he produced a CD with that band, and also worked with other jazz locals such as Harold Betters and the late Leroy Wolford, among others.

\*Appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

# BIOGRAPHIES



**BUCKSHOT | SAM LOTHARD** has performed in many plays this year, including Sherri Lynn's *The Bold and the Sanctified*; *Findings*, *Lights Out* and *Hercules Didn't Wade in the Water*, all at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company; Monteze Freeman's musical *Kalopsia*; and Dr. Tameka Cage Conley's opera *A Gathering of Sons*. "I can't believe I'm blessed to share the stage with so many legends in the game. I'm thankful for the opportunity and the experience that the director and cast mates have shared with me. Thanks to my God, my family, my friends and especially my big brother Mark Southers for all his help and expertise. Put God First. Shoot your shot. Chase your dreams."



**DELMUS | TAYLOR MARTIN MOSS** is a graduate of The Ohio State University with a B.A. in Arts and Sciences, Theater focus. Taylor has been nominated for Best Supporting Actor in a Musical for *Passing Strange* via Theater Roundtable. He has done modeling and print ads locally and acted in television commercials in Ohio and Pittsburgh. Taylor hopes to continue and make a career on the stage and in film.

**FIGHT DIRECTOR | RANDY KOVITZ** has staged fights for hundreds of stage, film and television productions around the country. His work has been seen in theaters on and off Broadway, and at numerous regional theaters. Career highlights include the world premiere productions of *Angels in America* and *Burn This*, and the Broadway production of *The Kentucky Cycle*.

**SCENIC PAINTER | DIANE MELCHITZKY** has designed and built Pittsburgh Playwrights sets since our 2003 debut. She recently worked as a carpenter on the movie *Fences* directed by Denzel Washington. Most recent projects include set design for the Gateway High School and various exhibits at the Clemente Museum and the August Wilson Center.



# BIOGRAPHIES



**BOOCHIE | CHARLES TIMBERS** has been performing for greater than 30 years. He has appeared in more than 30 theatrical plays in the city of Pittsburgh. He is an active member of SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and AGMA (American Guild of Musical Artists). He has been a featured actor in several student films. He is currently a producer and director of his own show at PCTV (a local cable access channel), a program called “Health Focus with Chuck and Dianne” dealing with current health issues. Charles is a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner when he is not on stage or in front of a camera acting. Charles’ most recent plays have been *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* at the Short North Stage Theater in

Columbus Ohio for which he received the Excellence in Acting Award 2016 from the Theatre Roundtable of Columbus for his role as Cutler. He was recently also seen in *LOTTO* with New Horizon Theater and *The Summer King* with the Pittsburgh Opera. He has appeared in several local and national TV commercials and has worked doing industrial films, and was a featured actor in the movie that was made here in Pittsburgh titled *The Jacksons: An American Dream*, in which he played the role of Dr. Hayes. Charles is thrilled to be able to share the stage in this production with such skilled and talented artists. He would like to dedicate this performance to his daughter Nikki and sister Keona. “To God be the Glory.”

**COSTUME DESIGNER | ANTHONY JAMES SIRK** Is a recent transplant to Pittsburgh from North Carolina. Before settling in Pittsburgh, Anthony designed at the Arvada Center in Denver, Creede Repertory Theatre, West Virginia Public Theater, and Main State Musical Theater. He has also designed for many universities including Ball State University, University of West Florida, Western Carolina University and Carnegie Mellon University. Locally Anthony has designed for Pittsburgh Musical Theater, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and the CLO Cabaret. Upcoming projects include *We Will Rock You* at Pittsburgh Musical Theater and *A Devil Inside* at Point Park University. Anthony is very excited to be part of the amazing production team for *East Texas Hot Links*.

# BIOGRAPHIES

**LIGHTING DESIGN | MADELEINE STEINECK** has been working as a Lighting Designer and Master Electrician professionally since 2011. Companies she has worked with include Pittsburgh Festival Opera, (Master Electrician since 2014, Lighting Designer since 2015), off the WALL Productions, fireWALL dance theatre, Morgantown Dance Studio, Mercyhurst University Theatre Program (resident Lighting Designer since 2013), Lake Erie Ballet, Texture Contemporary Ballet, PICT, Raphael Xavier (toured with), and Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company (a resident LD since 2013). She participated in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2017 with Pittsburgh Playwrights' production of *Miss Julie, Clarissa, and John*. She also designs for local high school and middle school productions in the Greater Pittsburgh area.

**STAGE MANAGER | TASHIA SCOTT TERRY** is happy to be returning to the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre, where her previous productions include *Ubuntu Holiday*, *Black and White Festival '15*, and *Fences* for both runs at the Playwrights Theatre and CCAC South. She is a mother of three wonderfully gifted sons and enjoys the process of building a show. "Thank you to Mr. Eugene Lee for the gift of his words! To the amazing cast and phenomenal crew: thank you for living with the words and giving me a treat every night. Thank you to Mark and Monteze for always giving me an opportunity to live in the arts. A special thank you to our director for his patience and kindness throughout this process. It has been a true pleasure."

**SOUND DESIGN | MARK WHITEHEAD** is the founder of Saints & Poets Theater, for which he produced and directed the world premiere of Christiane D's *Saffronia*, and the local premieres of Sam Shepard's *The Late Henry Moss* and Donald Freed's *Secret Honor: The Last Testament of Richard M. Nixon*. He was a member of timespace, for which he produced *hamletmachine* and directed *4-H Club* and *Insignificance*. Additional directing credits include *Comfort Zone*, *The Revenants* for PPTCO, *Cry Havoc*, *Taking Sides*, and *Fool for Love*. Mark is Resident Sound Designer for PPTCO and The Unseam'd Shakespeare Company, and has designed for numerous local theaters. Mark has won Onyx awards for best sound design three years in a row for his work on PPTCO's annual August Wilson productions. He was named best sound designer and listed among the best directors in City Paper's 2001 theater round-up, and was named best sound designer of 2000 by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. Mark was a founding producer of The Dark Night Cabaret performance series. He has also produced and directed music videos for several local bands.

# EAST TEXAS HOT LINKS STAFF

PLAYWRIGHT	Eugene Lee
DIRECTOR	Montae Russell
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Dennis Robinson
STAGE MANAGER	Tashia Scott Terry
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER	Shanita Bivins
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR	Mark Clayton Southers
SCENIC DESIGNER	Mark Clayton Southers
SOUND DESIGNER	Mark Whitehead
LIGHTING DESIGNER	Madeleine Steineck
COSTUME DESIGNER	Anthony James Sirk
HAIR & MAKEUP DESIGNER	Cheryl El-Walker
FIGHT DIRECTOR	Randy Kovitz
SCENIC PAINTING	Diane Melchitzky
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN	Ashley Southers
SOUND TECHNICIAN	Tashia Scott Terry
SET CONSTRUCTION	David Powdrill, Dennis Robinson LaMar Cheston, Mark C. Southers
PROPS	Austin Sills, Marcus Carl Southers

## Pittsburgh Playwrights Staff & Board

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# Pittsburgh Playwrights THEATRE COMPANY

**It's not too late to subscribe to the 2017-2018 Season!**



February 16-March 25, 2018

In the Heat of the Night, produced by Shattered Globe Theatre, Photo by Michael Brosilow

## *In the Heat of the Night*

by Matt Pelfrey (based on John Ball's novel)  
Directed by Mark Clayton Southers

Acclaimed playwright Matt Pelfrey's adaptation of John Ball's *In the Heat of the Night*, the award-winning book that inspired the Oscar-winning film and the Emmy-winning television series.

It's 1962, a hot August night in the small town of Argo, Alabama. A dead white man is discovered and the local police arrest a black stranger named Virgil Tibbs. But their prime suspect is in fact a California homicide detective who becomes the racially-tense community's single hope in solving a brutal murder that is turning up no witnesses, no motives, and no clues.



April 27-June 3, 2018

Joe Turner's Come and Gone, produced by Mark Taper Forum, Photo by Craig Schwartz

## *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*

by August Wilson  
Directed by Monteze Freeland

An installment in the author's series chronicling black life in each decade of the last century. Each denizen of a Pittsburgh boarding house circa 1911 has a different relationship to a past of slavery and to the urban present. They include the proprietors, an eccentric clairvoyant with a penchant for old country voodoo, a young homeboy up from the South, and a mysterious stranger searching for his wife.

Presented outdoors at the historic August Wilson House.

## **ALSO COMING IN 2018...**



## *13th Annual* **THEATRE FESTIVAL IN BLACK & WHITE**

MAY 31-JUNE 10, 2018

Festival Coordinator Cheryl El-Walker

Our signature one-act theatre festival returns for its thirteenth year with another selection of entertaining short plays.

We hope you enjoyed this production of Eugene Lee's *East Texas Hot Links*. See the other two productions this season by subscribing for only an additional \$50. To take advantage of this special offer, visit [pghplaywrights.org/sub23](http://pghplaywrights.org/sub23). And of course, please consider a tax-deductible donation to support our mission. **Thank you for your support.**

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