

2008-09



# Caroline, or Change

Book & Lyrics by Tony Kushner

Music by Jeanine Tesori

Directed by David Schweizer

The Pearlstone Theater

Dec 10, 2008–Jan 18, 2009

*Next Stage* Resource Guide

# CENTERSTAGE

## BEST-LAID PLANS

By Irene Lewis



Irene Lewis,  
Artistic Director

As you may know, there is a new choice of play for the final Mainstage show this season. After we lost our original selection to New York producers, it took us over two months to find a replacement that I was happy with and that met our same high standards. I'm thrilled that the incomparable Judy Kaye will be able to join us with *Souvenir*, a jewel of a production that recently had a very successful Broadway engagement. So I thought I'd use this opportunity to give you some insight about how we make our play selections.

Planning a season is a complex process. Among many considerations, we always try to select works that we have strong feelings for. For example, this season I wanted to work on *The Matchmaker*—a play I've never done, by one of my favorite playwrights—and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*—a play I've never even seen, in a style we've never produced. Wildly different in tone, both plays use a large canvas to ask large questions. And (so far, at least) CENTERSTAGE is still fortunate in these difficult financial times to offer you plays of scope—plays that have large casts and big ideas.

The season planning process is an ongoing affair. We—the entire artistic team and I—are constantly thinking about a wide variety of plays. Some are on the wish list for several years before we decide it's time to produce them. When we do narrow down our choices, we try to make sure that the range of theatrical experiences is broad, and that whatever shows we do choose we are able to produce at the highest possible standard. And devoting one-third of our season to plays that in some way deal with the African American experience has also widened our choices and invigorated our entire theater, from staff to audiences. And it's brought us seven out of the top ten best-selling shows in our history.

So it's important for you to know that the same care went into choosing this replacement play as went into selecting the entire original season. Since the first five shows tackle big issues, and four of them—*Virginia Woolf*, *Caroline*, *Fabulation*, and *'Tis Pity*—are pretty hard-hitting, I wanted the last play of the season to be radically different. And it is. *Souvenir* brings a light-hearted lift to close the season. It uses music in unexpected ways; and even though it prompts laughter at the real-life eccentricity of Florence Foster Jenkins, it invites a generous understanding of an urge for excellence that, as you'll see, not everyone can achieve.

We are so grateful for your continued support, and try our best to offer plays that are done with the best artists and artisans in the country, working in our own shops right here in this building. And we hope that, whatever you feel about any individual choice here and there, the name CENTERSTAGE is synonymous with excellence, daring, and curiosity. As I've often mentioned before, Baltimore audiences seem to thrive on meaty, even difficult, material—which is wonderful. Because, as an artist, that's the material you want to spend most of your time on.

Tell us what you think  
about our season:  
[feedback@centerstage.org](mailto:feedback@centerstage.org)

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700 North Calvert Street  
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Editor  
Heather C. Jackson

Contributors  
Heather C. Jackson, Drew  
Lichtenberg, Kathryn Van Winkle

Art Direction/Design  
Bill Geenen

Design  
Jason Gembicki, Raphael Davison

Advertising Sales  
ads@centerstage.org

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
Box Office Phone 410.332.0033  
Box Office Fax 410.727.2522  
Administration 410.986.4000  
www.centerstage.org  
info@centerstage.org

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**  
(during performances only)  
410.986.4080

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## THE ARTISTIC TEAM

**David Schweizer**  
Director

**Wayne Barker**  
Music Director

**Kenneth Lee Roberson**  
Choreographer

**Allen Moyer**  
Set Designer

**David Burdick**  
Costume Designer

**James F. Ingalls**  
Lighting Designer

**Ryan Rumery**  
Sound Designer

**Jon Carter**  
Hair & Wig Designer

**Drew Lichtenberg**  
Production Dramaturg

**Mike Noonan**  
Rehearsal Pianist

**Joshua Luxenberg**  
Assistant Director

## SETTING:

Lake Charles, Louisiana.  
November–December, 1963.

## THE CAST (in order of vocal appearance)

<b>E. Faye Butler*</b> Caroline Thibodeaux	<b>Libya Pugh*</b> Dotty Moffett
<b>Danielle Lee Greaves*</b> The Washing Machine	<b>Renn Woods*</b> The Moon
<b>Ta'Rea Campbell*, Adrienne Muller*, April Nixon*</b> The Radio	<b>Milton Craig Nealy*</b> The Bus
<b>Bradley Bowers or Matthew Demetrides</b> Noah Gellman	<b>Kelly McCreary*</b> Emmie Thibodeaux
<b>Milton Craig Nealy*</b> The Dryer	<b>Aaron Bell</b> Jackie Thibodeaux
<b>Carole Schweid*</b> Grandma Gellman	<b>Roland Haywood or Brett Johnson</b> Joe Thibodeaux
<b>John Ramsey*</b> Grandpa Gellman	<b>Sal Mistretta*</b> Mr. Stopnick
<b>Trisha Rapier*</b> Rose Stopnick Gellman	<b>Mike Schleifer*</b> Stage Manager
<b>Joe Hickey*</b> Stuart Gellman	<b>Jeremy Wilcox*</b> Assistant Stage Manager

\*Member of Actors'  
Equity Association

## THE MUSICIANS

<b>Wayne Barker</b> Piano	<b>Bob LaForce</b> Percussion
<b>Matt Belzer</b> Woodwinds	<b>Phil McCusker</b> Guitar
<b>Chris Hofer</b> Bass	

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