



**News Release**  
**Virginia Repertory Theatre**

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**December 15, 2017**

**Virginia Repertory Theatre Announces the Cast and Creative Team of**  
***A Raisin in the Sun***

**Direction by Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates**

**Starring Tony Award-Winner Trazana Beverley as Lena ‘Mama’ Younger**  
**Jerold Solomon as Walter Lee Younger**  
**Katrinah Carol Lewis as Ruth Younger**  
**And Jasmine Coles as Beneatha Younger**

**Richmond, VA** -- “The play that changed American theatre forever” (New York Times) comes to Virginia Rep’s November Theatre (114 West Broad Street) this February. Lorraine Hansberry’s seminal masterpiece opens Friday, **February 16th, 2018**, and runs **through March 11th**, with two preview performances on Wednesday, February 14th and Thursday, February 15th.

Hansberry’s Tony Award-nominated domestic drama takes place in the suburbs of Chicago in 1959, and follows the Younger family, as they discover the dangers of dreaming big and the heartbreak of reality. Considered the first authentic portrayal of black American life onstage, *A Raisin in the Sun* was met with critical acclaim for its groundbreaking exploration of racial conflicts such as poverty, discrimination, and segregation. Hansberry was the first black female playwright to be produced on Broadway in 1959, and her work still resonates strongly today.

Virginia Rep is delighted to welcome back **Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates** to direct *A Raisin in the Sun*. Pettiford-Wates is on faculty in Virginia Commonwealth University’s Theatre Department, and is the artistic director and conceptualist for The Conciliation Project, a non-profit social justice theatre company. She also directed Virginia Rep’s 2010 production of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Firehouse Theatre.

Making her Richmond debut, Virginia Rep is thrilled to welcome American stage and film actress, **Trazana Beverley**, who will star as Lena 'Mama' Younger. Beverley was the first African-American actress to receive a Tony Award for "Best Featured Actress in a Play" for the 1977 Broadway production of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, having previously won a Theatre World Award for the Off-Broadway production. Beverley also shares an Obie award with the Off-Broadway cast, and was awarded a Drama Desk Award for the Broadway production. Film credits include *Never Again*, *Beloved* and *Resurrection*.

**Jerold Solomon** returns to the Virginia Rep stage after starring in past productions of *Dreamgirls* (RTCC Nomination for Best Actor in a Musical), *The Whipping Man* and *The Mountaintop* (co-produced with Cadence Theatre Company, RTCC Nomination for Best Actor in a Play). Solomon was featured in the Broadway cast of *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center, and the Off-Broadway production of *Bare* at New World Stages.

RTCC Award-winner **Katrinah Carol Lewis** returns to the November Theatre as Ruth Younger. Recent Virginia Rep credits include *Dreamgirls*, *The Mountaintop* (co-produced with Cadence Theatre Company, RTCC Nomination for Best Actress in a Play), and *The Color Purple*. **Jasmine Coles** rounds out the Younger family as Beneatha, making her Virginia Rep debut.

Set Designer **Kate Field**, Costume Designer **Emily Tappan**, and Lighting Designer **Lynne Hartman** last collaborated on Virginia Rep's production of *Airline Highway*, where both Field and Tappan received Richmond Theatre Critics Circle Award nominations for their work. Hartman is also known for her RTCC Award-nominated work, including Virginia Rep's recent productions of *Gypsy* and *Mame*.

The full creative team and cast list is below.

### **Ticket Information**

Box Office 804-282-2620

[www.virginiarep.org](http://www.virginiarep.org)

Full Price Tickets: \$30 - \$50

Discounted Group Rates and Rush tickets available.

U-Tix for college and high school students \$15. Available by phone or in person, day of show only. Valid Student ID required.

### **Performance Schedule**

Evening performances at 7:00 p.m. on select Wednesdays and every Thursday

Evening performances at 8:00 p.m. every Friday and Saturday

Matinee performances at 2:00 p.m. on select Wednesdays and Saturdays and every Sunday

## **Induction Loop**

The Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre is equipped with a state-of-the-art induction loop hearing system that is compatible with all telecoil-equipped hearing aids and cochlear implants. A handheld receiver and headphone system is also available free of charge for anyone who is hearing impaired.

## **Parking**

Valet parking is available for \$8 at all performances and free self-park is available for patrons within blocks of the theatre. Valet is complimentary for patrons who dine at Max's on Broad or Tarrant's Cafe before the show. Due to construction on Broad Street, valet will no longer be located in front of the theatre, and has been moved to Jefferson Street.

Press Kits Available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

Pass code accessible Hi Res photos available to media.

username = press password = HiRes121

## **Direction & Design**

|                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Direction                   | <b>Tawnya Pettiford-Wates</b> |
| Set Design                  | <b>Kate Field</b>             |
| Lighting Design             | <b>Lynne Hartman</b>          |
| Sound Design                | <b>Derek Dumais</b>           |
| Costume Design              | <b>Emily Tappan</b>           |
| Dramaturgy                  | <b>Vanessa Jackson</b>        |
| Costume Assistant           | <b>Jessica Moreno</b>         |
| Production Stage Management | <b>Jocelyn Thompson*</b>      |

## **Cast List** (in order of appearance)

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Ruth Younger                  | <b>Katrinah Carol Lewis</b>                  |
| Travis Younger                | <b>Matthias Williams/Caleb Brown McWhite</b> |
| Walter Lee Younger            | <b>Jerold Solomon*</b>                       |
| Beneatha Younger              | <b>Jasmine Coles</b>                         |
| Lena 'Mama' Younger           | <b>Trazana Beverley*</b>                     |
| Joseph Asagai                 | <b>Bru Ajueyitsi</b>                         |
| George Murchison              | <b>Kevin Minor</b>                           |
| Bobo                          | <b>Joseph Marshall</b>                       |
| Karl Lindner                  | <b>Doug Blackburn</b>                        |
| Moving Man, George/Joseph u/s | <b>Solomon Dixon</b>                         |
| Moving Man, Walter/Bobo u/s   | <b>Arthur B. Muhammad</b>                    |
| Lena 'Mama' u/s               | <b>Margarette Joyner</b>                     |

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the U.S.A.

**About Virginia Repertory Theatre**

Virginia Repertory Theatre is the regional professional theatre in Richmond, Virginia. With a budget of \$5 million, four distinct venues, an educational touring arm, and an annual audience over 530,000, Virginia Rep is one of the largest performing arts organizations in Central Virginia. Virginia Rep stages four seasons annually: the Signature Season at the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, Theatre Gym Season in partnership with Cadence Theatre Company, Virginia Rep's Children's Season at Willow Lawn, and the Hanover Tavern Season.

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Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia

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Richmond Times-Dispatch