



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

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**May 6, 2019**

**Virginia Repertory Theatre Announces the Company of**

***The Wiz***

**Music and Lyrics by Charlie Smalls**

**Book by William F. Brown**

**Direction and Choreography by Kikau Alvaro**

**Richmond, VA** -- Virginia Repertory Theatre announces the opening of *The Wiz* on Friday, June 21, 2019 at the November Theatre/Arenstein Stage, 114 West Broad Street. The show will run through Sunday, August 4, 2019. Previews will be on Wednesday, June 19 and Thursday, June 20, 2019. With music and lyrics by **Charlie Smalls** and book by **William F. Brown**, this R&B pop musical based on L. Frank Baum's classic children's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is a fantastical journey, following the adventures of Dorothy and her friends as they "Ease on Down" the yellow brick road.

Virginia Rep is thrilled to welcome **Mariah Lyttle** to Richmond for her November Theatre debut as Dorothy. A recent graduate of Ithaca College, Lyttle holds a BFA in Musical Theatre. Recent credits include *Hairspray* at Hope Summer Repertory Theatre and Sarah in *Ragtime* at Park Playhouse in Albany, New York. Also newcomers to the November Theatre, Virginia Rep welcomes **Dylan Jackson** as Scarecrow and **Brandon LaReau** as Lion. Jackson is set to graduate from Carnegie Mellon University in 2020 with a degree in Acting and Music Theatre. Recent credits include Miles in *Gloria* at Hatch Arts Collective. LaReau is a two-time Irene Ryan Award nominated actor, with a BA in Musical Theatre from Christopher Newport University, currently pursuing an MFA in Theatre Pedagogy at VCU. Recent credits include Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors* at VCU.

Virginia Rep is delighted to welcome back **Desiree Roots**, who will portray Aunt Em, Addaperle and Evilene. Roots most recently appeared on the November Theatre stage as Effie White in *Dreamgirls*. Other Virginia Rep credits include Sophia in *The Color Purple*, Vera in *Mame* and Caroline in *Caroline, or Change*. Also a veteran to the Virginia Rep stage, **Devonte Jerome Wells** joins the company as Tin Man, after most recently appearing in *Dreamgirls* as Jimmy Early. Rounding out the principal cast, **Jerold Solomon** (*Atlantis; Between Riverside and Crazy*) and **Jessi Johnson** (*The Christians; The Little Engine That Could*) will portray The Wiz/Uncle Henry and Glinda, respectively.

Virginia Rep Associate Artistic Director **Kikau Alvaro** will direct and choreograph the production, after most recently choreographing *Atlantis* and directing *Huck and Tom and the Mighty Mississippi* at the Children's Theatre at Willow Lawn. Originally from San Jose, California, Alvaro joined Virginia Rep as Associate Artistic Director in September of 2017. He also serves as the Head of Musical Theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Anthony Smith** returns to Virginia Rep after musical directing *Atlantis, Sister Act*, and last summer's smash hit, *West Side Story*. Smith also associate musical directed last season's holiday spectacular, *Mary Poppins*, and Cadence Theatre Company's *Fun Home* in partnership with Virginia Rep. Making their Virginia Rep debuts, **Kimberly V. Powers** will serve as Scenic Designer and **Paul Black** will serve as Lighting Designer. **Jeanne Nugent** (*Mr. Popper's Penguins; Mary Poppins*) will design costumes. Virginia Rep Audio Visual Supervisor **Derek Dumais** (*Atlantis; Once*) will Sound Design.

The full creative team and cast list is below.

### **Direction & Design**

Direction/Choreography

Musical Direction

Associate Direction

Associate Choreography

Scenic Design

Lighting Design

Costume Design

Sound Design

Dramaturgy

Production Stage Management

AEA Asst. Stage Management

Asst. Stage Management

**Kikau Alvaro**

**Anthony Smith**

**Rachel Dilliplane**

**Jacob Brent**

**Kimberly V. Powers+**

**Paul Black**

**Jeanne Nugent**

**Derek Dumais**

**Mariah Taghavia-Moghadam**

**Kerri J. Lynch\***

**Jocelyn A. Thompson\***

**Mason Hemphill, Justin Janke**

## **Cast List**

Dorothy	<b>Mariah Lyttle</b>
Scarecrow	<b>Dylan Jackson*</b>
Tin Man	<b>Devonte Jerome Wells*</b>
Lion	<b>Brandon LaReau</b>
Aunt Em/Addaperle/Evilene	<b>Desiree Roots*</b>
Uncle Henry/The Wiz	<b>Jerold Solomon*</b>
Glinda	<b>Jessi Johnson</b>
Ensemble	<b>William Anderson, Terrence Bennett, Anthony Cosby, Joshua James Crawford, Madison Harris, Keaton Hillman, Tyandria Jaaber, Zakiyyah Jackson Nisa Mercado, Michelle Mercedes*, Diontey Michael, Rachel Seeholzer, Ira White Dani Brown</b>
Swing	

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

+Member of USA, United Scenic Artists', local 829

## **Ticket Information**

Box Office: 804-282-2620

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

Full Price Tickets: \$36 - \$63

Discounted Group Rates and Rush tickets available.

U-Tix for college and high school students \$15 are available by phone or in person on the 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

## **Accessibility Programs**

### **Audio Described Performances**

In collaboration with Virginia Voice, Virginia Rep is pleased to offer Audio Described performances, in which actions, expressions and gestures are described during gaps between dialogue throughout the performance for patrons with low vision or blindness. In addition to live audio description during performances, patrons are also invited to participate in a tactile tour before the performance. The Audio Described performance for *The Wiz* will be on Sunday, June 30 at 2:00pm.

### **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.

### **Community Tickets Grant**

Virginia Rep is thrilled to offer a **free** Community Tickets Grant for nonprofit organizations. We encourage all organizations who have a demonstrated need for complimentary tickets to fill out a short application on our website: [bit.ly/CommunityTix](http://bit.ly/CommunityTix)

### **Parking**

Valet parking is available for \$8 at all performances and free self-parking 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. Valet is no longer located in front of the theatre, and has been moved less than one block away to Jefferson Street.

Press Kits will be available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

Pass code accessible Hi Res photos available to media.

username = press password = HiRes121

### **About Virginia Repertory Theatre**

Virginia Repertory Theatre is a regional professional theatre in Richmond, Virginia. With a budget of \$5.5 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.

### **Season Sponsors:**

Altria

The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

The Shubert Foundation

The Virginia Commission for the Arts

National Endowment for the Arts

*Richmond Times-Dispatch*