



## Press Release

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For immediate release:

### ***Broadway Musical “Violet”***

### ***Opens the Clarence Brown Theatre’s 2016/2017 Season***

The Clarence Brown Theatre opens the 2016/2017 Season with the inspirational Broadway musical “Violet” August 31 to September 18 on the CBT mainstage. A Pay What You Wish Preview performance will be held Wednesday, August 31. The second Preview will take place on Friday, September 2 and Opening Night will take place on Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Talk Back with the cast will take place Sunday, September 11 following the matinee and, the Open Captioned performance is Sunday, September 18 at 2:00 pm. The production is recommended for children ages 13 and up. Sponsors are Schaad Companies and The Clayton Foundation. Media sponsors are WUOT, WUTK, B97.5, The Daily Beacon, the Knoxville Mercury, WBIR, and the Knoxville News Sentinel.

Based on the short story “The Ugliest Pilgrim” by Doris Betts and with music by Jeanine Tesori, one of the most vibrant composers in modern musical theatre, “Violet” tells the story of a young disfigured woman who embarks on a journey by bus from her farm in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, through Tennessee and all the way to Tulsa, Oklahoma in order to be healed. On the way, she learns the real meaning of love, courage, and beauty.

“The production is a musical about shame and forgiveness, tolerance and fear; getting past appearances toward deeper understanding. Its score draws from “roots” music deeply familiar to this area: Appalachian folk, Gospel, Rhythm and Blues. Its message is one of courage and respect. It is funny, joyful, poetic; a musically rich, moving, and spiritual journey. Audiences will love it,” said Calvin MacLean, CBT Producing Artistic Director and UT Theatre Department Head.

**Bill Jenkins** (Director) returns to The Clarence Brown Theatre where he previously directed “Monty Python's Spamalot” and two versions of “It’s A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play.” His past directorial credits include: Drury Lane Oakbrook Theatre, Noble Fool Theatricals and Famous Door Theatre Company; Actor’s Theatre of Indiana; Illinois Shakespeare Festival; Summer Studio Theatre Company at the Krannert Center; and Nebraska Repertory Theatre. He is the Chair of Ball State University’s Department of Theatre and Dance. He received his Master of Fine Arts degree in directing from Illinois State University, and also holds a Masters and Bachelor’s degree from Ball State University in Speech Communications and Acting.

Terry Silver-Alford (Musical Director) is a member of the UT Theatre faculty and teaches Musical Theatre Performance, Introduction to the Theatre and Acting. He has worked professionally as a director, musical director, performer and composer at theaters across the country, including the California Theatre Center, Madison Repertory, Madison Children's Theatre, University of Madison Theatre and Opera Programs, Omaha Playhouse, Nebraska Caravan, Augusta Barn-Michigan, Fireside Theatre-Wisconsin, Light Opera of Oklahoma and the Clarence Brown Theatre. Terry has directed or musically directed over 100 productions and has created the scores for four original musicals and a variety of chamber and vocal music pieces. CBT directing credits include: "A Shayna Maidel," "CTRL+ALT+DELETE," "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," "The Little Shop of Horrors," "Guys and Dolls," "Assassins," "Into the Woods," and "South Pacific." CBT musical direction credits include: "Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play," "Monty Python's Spamalot," "Kiss Me, Kate," "The Music Man," "Man of La Mancha," "The Who's Tommy," "A Christmas Carol," "A Year with Frog and Toad" and "Big River."

The cast is comprised of visiting guest artists, UT Theatre faculty and graduate and undergraduate students, as well as community actors.

Visiting guest artist **Jelani Alladin's** (Flick) NYC credits include Park Avenue Armory and the York Theatre. Regional credits include the Asolo Rep, PalmBeach Dramaworks, Marin Theatre Company and Studio Theatre in Washington DC. He won the San Francisco Critics Circle Award for Best Leading Actor. TV and Film credits: "Most Evil" (Discovery) and "High Maintenance" (Vimeo). He also has developed new works at the NYTW, Lark Development, Acting Company, and York Theatre. He is a graduate of NYU Tisch New Studio on Broadway.

Visiting guest artist **Johnna Allen** (Old Lady/Hotel Hooker/Ensemble) is an Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre at Ball State University, where she teaches voice and is music director for Ball State cabaret and for The Discovery New Musical Theatre Festival, produced by Ball State.

Visiting Guest artist **David Kortemeier** (Father) returns for his eleventh season. Selected CBT credits include: "The 39 Steps," "Sweeney Todd," "Moonlight & Magnolias," "The Music Man," "Man of La Mancha," "Amadeus," "Oedipus the King," "Little Shop of Horrors," and "Love's Labour's Lost." His work also has been seen at the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, the Great Lakes Theatre Festival in Cleveland, Drury Lane Theatre and Noble Fool Theatricals in Chicago and 13 seasons with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in Bloomington. He holds an MFA in Acting from the University of Louisville.

Visiting guest artist **Christopher Ramirez** (Monty) recently participated in The New York Musical Festival: ICON. Regional credits include: Barrington Stage, Pioneer Theater, Speakeasy Stage, and the New York reading of "Empire." He is a recent graduate of the Boston Conservatory and studied at The William Esper Studio.

UT Theatre professional, local professional and community actors include: **Micah-Shane Brewer** (Preacher/Radio Singer/Bus Driver 1 and 4/Ensemble); **Tracey Copeland Halter** (Music Hall Singer/Bus Passenger/Ensemble); **Robert Parker Jenkins** (Man 3); **Presley Keith** (Young Violet) and **Yolanda Treece** (Landlady/Lula Buffington/Bus Passenger/Ensemble).

UT Theatre graduate and undergraduate actors include **Charlotte Munson** (Violet) and **Benjamin Pratt** (Virgil/Billy Dean/Bus Driver 2/Radio Singer/Bus Passenger/Ensemble).

The musicians include: **Melony Dodson** (keyboard); **Bery Filsaim** (cello); **Bethany Hankins** (violin); **Barry Po Hannah** (guitar); **Casey Maxwell** (keyboard); **J. Miller** (drums); **Jessica Watson** (guitar); and **Will Yager** (bass).

The creative team for this production includes: visiting guest designers **Miwa Ishii** (Costume Designer) and **Matthew Tibbs** (Sound Designer); UT MFA candidates **Maranda DeBusk** (Projections Designer), **Tannis Kapell** (Lighting Designer); UT Theatre faculty **Chris Pickart** (Scenic Designer); **Patrick Lanczki** (Production Stage Manager). Also assisting are **Christie Zimmerman** (Choreographer), **Tyler Smith** (Dramaturg), **Charles Miller** (Dialect Coach), **Julia Stark** (Asst. Stage Manager) and **Kara Trusty** (Asst. Stage Manager).

Two Previews for "Violet" are Wednesday, August 31 and Friday, September 2 followed by Opening Night Saturday, September 3. The production runs through September 18. UT faculty/staff, senior citizens, military personnel, children and students receive discounts. For tickets, call the Clarence Brown Theatre box office at 865-974-5161, Tickets Unlimited at 865-656-4444 or order online 24/7 at [www.clarencebrowntheatre.com](http://www.clarencebrowntheatre.com)

With a dual mission to train the next generation of theatre artists and to provide top quality professional theatre, the Clarence

Brown Theatre at the University of Tennessee Knoxville is one of only 13 academic LORT (League of Resident Theatre) institutions in the nation. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Calvin MacLean and Managing Director David B. Byrd, the CBT season runs from September through May and features eight productions ranging from musicals to drama.

For more information, tickets or accessibility accommodation requests including Open Captioning, American Sign Language, and assistive technologies, please call the CBT Box Office at 865-974-5161 or visit us online at [clarencebrowntheatre.com/access](http://clarencebrowntheatre.com/access). Stay Connected to the Clarence Brown Theatre on Facebook (Clarence Brown Theatre), follow us on Twitter (@ClarenceBrown) (#CBT1617Season) and view Clarence Brown videos on YouTube (Clarence Bro).

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