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For immediate release:

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For Immediate Release:

***“Alabama Story” to Play***

***On the Clarence Brown Mainstage Jan. 31 – Feb. 18***

The Clarence Brown Theatre kicks off the second half of the season with Kenneth Jones’ “Alabama Story,” January 31 – February 18, 2018 on the CBT mainstage. The production is sponsored by Schaad Companies with additional support from the City of Knoxville, Humanities Tennessee, the Knox County Public Library, and the Knoxville and Tennessee Valley YWCA. Media sponsors are WBIR, WUOT, WUTK, B97.5, the Daily Beacon, and the Knoxville News Sentinel.

A Pay What You Wish Preview performance, where patrons can name their own price, will be Wednesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>. Tickets available for purchase from 4:00 to 7:30 pm at the theatre. A Talk Back with the actors will take place Sunday, February 11 following the matinee. The Open Captioned performance is Sunday, February 18 at 2:00 pm. In addition, several community engagement events will take place in conjunction with this production. On Sunday, Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>, a free panel discussion on this issue of censorship will take place from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Lawson McGhee Library. On Tuesday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> a reception with playwright Kenneth Jones will take place on the CBT Mainstage from 6:30 -7:00 pm, followed by a free staged reading of select censored children’s books. On Tuesday, February 13 from 6:00 – 7:00 pm, a CBT Family Feast will take place from 6:00-7:00 pm prior to the 7:30 production of “Alabama Story.”

A gentle children’s book that stirs the passions of a segregationist senator and a no-nonsense state librarian in 1959 Montgomery, just as the Civil Rights Movement is flowering. Inspired by true events, “Alabama Story” puts politicians, star-crossed childhood friends, and one feisty author in a struggle for the soul of the Deep South.

“I view “Alabama Story” as a mash-up of some of my favorite kinds of plays — courtroom thriller, memory play, romance, historical drama — but underneath all of that is a script about how character is tested in a time of great social change. How will you behave toward others when your world is turned upside down?” said playwright Kenneth Jones.

Kenneth Jones is a New York City-based playwright, librettist and lyricist. “Alabama Story” was a 2016 nominee for the Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Association New Play Award and 2014 Finalist in the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwrights Conference. It had its world premiere by Pioneer Theatre Company in Salt Lake City in 2015, where it set a box office record, following readings by Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Pioneer and Off-Broadway’s TACT/The Actors Company Theatre. By May 2018, it will have been produced in at least seventeen cities around the U.S.

**Kate Buckley (Director)** is an associate professor in the UT Theatre Department. Some previous CBT productions include: “Outside Mullingar,” “The 39 Steps,” “The Miracle Worker,” “The Trip to Bountiful,” “Antigone,” “Copenhagen,” “Charley’s Aunt,” “Merry Wives of Windsor,” “Moonlight and Magnolias” and “Black Pearl Sings.” She was a founding member of Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and served as Artistic Director of The Next Theatre in Evanston, Illinois. She has guest lectured on Shakespeare at universities and arts organizations abroad, including The National Theatre of Slovakia and Colla Marionette Company, Milan, Italy. Directing credits include productions at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, American Players Theatre, Utah Shakespearean Festival, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, New Victory Theatre – NY, Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Writer’s Theatre, and The Next Theatre. She received four Best Director nominations from the Joseph Jefferson Committee, her productions have won four consecutive Jefferson Awards for Best Ensemble and she has won two After Dark Awards for Outstanding Direction. She has received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Aurora University, a UT Creative Research Award and is currently holding the Paul Soper Professorship in the Theatre department, where she serves as an Associate Professor.

The production features UT faculty and graduate students and visiting professional guest actors.

**David Brian Alley** (Garth Williams, Others) “Alabama Story” marks a special anniversary for David, as it is his 50th production as a CBT Artist-in-Residence! He appeared in the 2017-2018 season opener as Smee in “Peter and the Starcatcher,” and “A Christmas Carol,” reprising his role as Jacob Marley. Audiences may recall seeing him last season in “Around the World in 80 Days” as Detective Fix, “A Christmas Carol” as Marley/Old Joe, and as Reverend John Hale in “The Crucible.” Other favorite CBT productions include: “The SantaLand Diaries;” “The 39 Steps;” “The Trip to Bountiful;” “Noises Off;” “Kiss Me, Kate;” “Fuddy Meers;” “It’s A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play;” “Moonlight and Magnolias;” “The Merry Wives of Windsor;” “Amadeus;” “Copenhagen;” “Major Barbara;” “A Flea in Her Ear;” “Stones in His Pockets;” “Metamorphoses;” “ART;” “The Rainmaker;” and “The Glass Menagerie.” Regional: The Mark Taper Forum; Playmaker’s Repertory; Hollywood Actors’ Theatre; The iO Theatre, Chicago; and Chicago TheatreWorks. Film and TV: “Something, Anything;” “Prison Break-In;” “The Heart is Deceitful;” “Gina: An Actress, Age 29;” “The Sleep Seeker;” “Unsolved Mysteries;” “It’s a Miracle.”

**Jade Arnold** (Joshua Moore) is a first-year UT Theatre MFA Acting candidate and graduate of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, where he earned his BA in Theatre.

**Katie Cunningham** (Emily Wheelock Reed) is honored to return to Clarence Brown Theatre as an Artist-in-Residence this season. “Alabama Story” marks her fifth production over four seasons, having previously appeared in “Outside Mullingar,” “The 39 Steps,” “Monty Python’s Spamalot,” and “Noises Off.” She has performed at a host of regional theaters throughout the country and in NYC with TACT (The Actors’ Company Theatre); NY International Fringe Festival; American Place Theatre; The Night Shift (co-founder); and Drunken Shakespeare (co-founder). Teaching: McCarter Theatre Center; Florida State University. Training: B.A., UNC Chapel Hill; M.F.A. Acting, FSU/Asolo Conservatory; the Gaiety School (National Theatre School of Ireland).

Visiting guest artist **Chris Klopatek** (Thomas Franklin) is excited to be performing in his first show at the Clarence Brown Theatre. He has been seen on stages across the country, most recently as Koko in “The Hot Mikado” at The Skylight Music Theater, Boyet in “Love’s Labour’s Lost” at Lake Tahoe Shakespeare, Robert in “Boeing, Boeing” at Indiana Repertory, Jeff in “Lobby Hero” at Milwaukee Chamber Theater, and Mr. Collins in “Pride and Prejudice” at American Players Theater. Other theaters include: Utah Shakespeare, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, First Stage, Next Act Theater, Texas Shakespeare, The Chance Theater and more. He also received an MFA and taught undergraduate courses at the University of California - Irvine.

**Visiting guest artist, Brian Mani** (Senator E. W. Higgins) is pleased to make his second appearance at the Clarence Brown Theatre. Last spring he performed in “The Busybody.” He is entering his 19<sup>th</sup> season at American Players Theatre, his artistic home in Spring Green, Wisconsin, where he is a Core Company member. Performances there have included major roles in “A View from the Bridge,” “The Unexpected Man,” “Death of a Salesman,” “Endgame,” “Merry

Wives of Windsor,” “Othello,” “The Doctor’s Dilemma,” “American Buffalo,” “Much Ado About Nothing” “Skylight,” “Twelfth Night,” “Of Mice and Men” (directed by Kate Buckley) and dozens more.

**Brittany Marie Pirozzoli** (Lily Whitfield) is a first-year UT Theatre MFA Acting candidate. She is making her debut at the Clarence Brown Theatre in this production of “Alabama Story.” Her latest work at home in Cleveland, OH was with Great Lakes Theatre Company in their production of “Hamlet” and Baldwin Wallace University’s productions of “Quality Street,” “Big Love,” and “The Two Noble Kinsman.”

The creative team for this production includes: **Kyle Andrew Schellinger** (Costume Designer); UT MFA candidate **Becca Johnson** (Scenic Designer); visiting guest designers **Joe Cerqua** (Sound Designer and Original Music) and **Kate Bashore** (Lighting Designer). Also contributing to the production is **Laura Wendt** (Stage Manager).

The Previews for “Alabama Story” are Wednesday, January 31 and Thursday, February 1 followed by Opening Night Friday, February 2. The production runs through February 18. UT faculty/staff, senior citizens, children and students receive discounts. The Clarence Brown Theatre only sells tickets online through Knoxville Tickets. For tickets, call the Clarence Brown Theatre Box Office at 865-974-5161 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 Tom Cervone, 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) (#CBT1718Season), Instagram (@clarencebrowntheatre) and view Clarence Brown videos on YouTube (Clarence Bro).

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