

THE WILMA



THE AMERICA PLAY

BY SUZAN-LORI PARKS
DIRECTED BY LINDSAY SMILING
CO-DIRECTED BY MARK WADE

MAY 19-31

WILMA
THEATER



Co-Artistic Directors Morgan Green Lindsay Smiling Yury Urnov
 Managing Director Leigh Goldenberg

HONORARY PRODUCER
 Dr. R. J. Wallner

THE AMERICA PLAY

BY SUZAN-LORI PARKS
 DIRECTED BY LINDSAY SMILING
 CO-DIRECTED BY MARK WADE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ross Beschler*.....Actor 1
 Kimberly S. Fairbanks*..... Lucy
 Campbell O'Hare*..... Actor 2
 Brandon J. Pierce*.....Brazil
 Lindsay Smiling*..... Foundling Father

Dramaturg Mariah Ghant
Costume Designer Leigh Ivory Clark Paradise
Lighting Designer Krista Smith
Sound Designer Larry Fowler
Set Designer Matthew J. Zumbo
Care Consultant Anthony Martinez-Briggs
Resident Stage Manager Patreshettarlina Adams*
Assistant Stage Manager Sloane Duzy
Production Manager Matthew J. Zumbo
Technical Director Benny Henry

* Member of AEA

CONTENT INFORMATION

This performance includes repetitive reenacted gun violence, gunshot sound effects, themes of death and familial absence.

SEASON SPONSOR



DIRECTOR'S NOTE by Lindsay Smiling

Suzan-Lori Parks calls it “rep and rev” repeat and revise. It’s a musical instruction as much as it is a philosophy. Return to a phrase, a moment, a wound, a myth. Play it again, differently. With this lens, the reexamination of history becomes more than a collection of facts. It is Parks’ insistence that history is not a fixed record so much as a performance we keep staging, sometimes faithfully, often carelessly, and too frequently, as she suggests by setting this play at a replica of “The Great Hole of History” with whole people missing from the scene.

The America Play lives inside that problem and turns it inside out. It asks what it means to love a country whose story is full of gaps, substitutions, and deliberate omissions. It asks who gets remembered accurately, who gets remembered inaccurately, and who is forced into the cruelest category of all, unremembered. But absence is not quiet. It is loud, echoing, and theatrical.

My interest in this piece is a journey to break open ideas of who we are, who we think we are, who we’ve been told we are, and what parts of ourselves we’ve learned to hide in order to survive the story we inherited. Parks doesn’t offer the comfort of a single narrative. She offers a field of fragments, doubling, looping, ritual, and interruption. The play repeats images and gestures the way a nation repeats its myths until the repetition reveals the seams. Then the revision becomes an act of possibility.

To revise history is not to deny it. It is to refuse its staticness. It is to look directly at what has been edited out and to ask why. It is to admit that “America” has always been a construction, built and rebuilt through language, labor, violence, longing, and imagination. It is to recognize that we, too, are constructions, continually revised by memory, by family, by what we’re taught in school, by what we’re allowed to mourn, and by what we’re told to celebrate.

This production leans into Parks’ theatricality, her humor, her argument with time, her insistence that form itself can be a kind of excavation. “the past is not was, it is.” It keeps happening. The work of visualizing a fuller picture of who we are, individually and as Americans, is continual. It is urgent. It is creative. It is imaginative.

So we return. We repeat. We revise. Not to perfect the story but to widen it. To make room. To listen for the voices in the gaps. To see what else becomes possible when we refuse to accept an incomplete representation of America as the only America.



The Actors and Stage Manager employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The scenic, costume, lighting and sound designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, local USA-829 of the IATSE.

This Theatre operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The Director and Choreographer are members of the STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

**ROSS BESCHLER** (he/him) **ACTOR 1**

Ross is a founding member of the Wilma HotHouse Resident Acting Company, and a member of the site-specific performance collective Die-Cast. Select credits: *The Snow Queen*, *A Summer Day*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Minor Character*, *Describe the Night*, *There, Mr. Burns*, *Blood Wedding*, *The Hard Problem*, *Bootycandy*, *Our Class* (Wilma); *Cost of Living* (PTC); *Indecent* (Arden); *Maple & Vine* (City Theatre); *End Days* (People's Light); *Hunter Gatherers* (Exile); *Delirium* (EgoPo); *Baal & Dix* (Die-Cast); *Eat Your Young* (Boston Playwrights Theatre); *Kate Crackernuts* (The Flea); *The Germans in Paris* (Verse Theatre Manhattan). TV: *Blue Bloods*. Film: *Flight of the Cardinal*. MFA: Temple University. Ross teaches Voice and Acting at Rowan University. www.RossBeschler.com.

**KIMBERLY S. FAIRBANKS** (she/her) **LUCY**

Kimberly's credits include - Off-Broadway: *The Sheen Center*, *59E59*, & *The Mint Theatre*. Regionally: *Miami New Drama*, *The Eugene O'Neill Foundation*, *Crossroads Theater Company*, *Voyage Theater Company*, *Delaware Theatre Company*, *Walnut Street Theater*, *Wilma Theater*, *Philadelphia Theatre Company*, *InterAct Theatre Company*, *Theatre Exile*, *Azuka Theatre*, *Arden Theatre Company* and *Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival*. Internationally: *Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2024 & 2016*. TV/Film: *Glass*, *The Upside*, *Brave the Dark*; Recurring roles: *Random Acts of Flyness*, *Law & Order*, *The Looming Tower*, *House of Cards*, *Do No Harm*, and *Cross*. Guest star: *FBI*, *Instinct*, *Elementary*, and *Madam Secretary*. Much love to my family & FOM. Learn more at: kimberlysfairbanks.com

**CAMPBELL O'HARE** (she/her) **ACTOR 2**

Campbell is a member of the Wilma HotHouse Resident Acting Company where past productions include: *The Cherry Orchard*, *Minor Character*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Drama League Nomination for Outstanding Digital Theater, Individual Production), *Describe the Night*, *Dance Nation*, *Mr. Burns: A Post-Electric Play*, *Blood Wedding* (Barrymore Nomination, Leading Performance) and *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn* (Barrymore Award, Supporting Performance). Philadelphia credits: *Athena* (Theatre Horizon); *Charlotte's Web*, *Equivocation* (Arden); *Travesties*, *Othello* (Lantern Theater Company); *The Whale* (Barrymore Nomination, Supporting Performance/ Theatre Exile); *Mauritius* (Act II Playhouse); *Romeo and Juliet* (Commonwealth Classic Theatre); *Our Ouija Board*, *Wolfcrush*, *The Bride's a C%\$#@*, *Birdie's Pit Stop* (On the Rocks). Campbell plays Winnie on the D&D actual-play podcast *Critical Faile DM & The Goons: The Strahdcast!* www.campbellohare.com

**BRANDON J. PIERCE** (he/him) **BRAZIL**

Brandon is thrilled to be back at the Wilma! Born in the city of Philadelphia, where he has extensively plied his trade, Brandon has had the pleasure of performing all over the country. Broadway: *Birthday Candles* (Roundabout Theatre) Off-Broadway: *Exit Strategy* (Primary Stages) Regional: *Archduke*, *The Half-God of Rainfall*, *Fat Ham*, *Eternal Life Pt.1*, *Kill Move Paradise* (Wilma Theater); *Incendiary* (Woolly Mammoth); *Don't Dress for Dinner* (Laguna Playhouse); *Ben Butler* (North Coast Repertory); *Native Son* (Playmakers Rep.); *Welcome to Fear City* (Kansas City Rep); *Skeleton Crew* (Portland Stage); *Sweat* (People's Light); *Metamorphoses* (Arden Theatre). Brandon is a member of the Wilma HotHouse Resident Acting Company. Recipient of the 2023 Barrymore Award for Outstanding Supporting Performance in a Play. Love to Alexandra, Mom, and Dad.

**LINDSAY SMILING** (he/him) **FOUNDLING FATHER/DIRECTOR**

Lindsay is an original member of the Wilma's HotHouse Resident Acting Company and is now in his third year as Co-Artistic Director of the Wilma Theater. Directing credits include *The Half-God of Rainfall* (Wilma), *Hamlet* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival), *Florence and Mojo* (Shakespeare Theatre of NJ) *Citizen: An American Lyric* (New Light), *Romeo and Juliet* (Delaware Shakespeare Festival). Acting credits include 23 Wilma productions (*Fat Ham*, *My Mama* and *the Full-Scale Invasion*, *Twelfth Night*, *Kill Move Paradise*) and at over 20 theaters across the country. Lindsay co-founded the Black Theatre Alliance of Philadelphia and is an adjunct professor at Temple University where he earned his MFA in Acting.

**MARK WADE** (he/him) **CO-DIRECTOR**

Mark is a graduate of The Yale School of Drama in Acting, and The Neighborhood Playhouse (where he studied with Sanford Meisner). Acting and directing credits include work for The Westport Country Playhouse, The Long Wharf Theater, and Trinity Repertory Theater. He spent five years as a creative consultant for Joanne Woodward, produced with her two television movies for the "Hallmark Hall of Fame." Mark served as assistant director to Lloyd Richards on the Hallmark Hall of Fame's television adaptation of *The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson. Mark taught at The University of the Arts, spent 18 years as the Artistic Director and head of the theater program at Arcadia University and 10 years at Wesleyan University. He is the recipient of the Kennedy Center Bronze Medallion for Excellence in Educational Theater. Mark is featured in Ethan Hawke's 6 part documentary about Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, *The Last Movie Stars*, streaming on HBO Max.

**MARIAH GHANT** (she/her) **DRAMATURG**

Mariah is thrilled to be returning to the Wilma for *The America Play* after previously serving as the dramaturg on *Fairview* and *Eternal Life Pt. 1*, as well as Assistant Directing for *Fat Ham*. Mariah is currently the Producing Artistic Director of Delaware Shakespeare, along with being a member of Theatre Contra and an improviser with ComedySportz Philly. Mariah also enjoys acting, dancing, teaching, writing poetry, and watching terrible reality TV. She continues to pursue her passion for creating art that is accessible for all and provides opportunities for those otherwise underrepresented to have a voice. Love to Adrian, always.

**ANTHONY MARTINEZ-BRIGGS** (they/them) **CARE CONSULTANT**

Anthony enjoys fashionable sneakers, well-cultivated herbs, and dynamic art that combats oppressive ideologies. They are a Wilma HotHouse Resident Acting Company member, Bearded Ladies Associate Artist, and recipient of the 2023 F. Otto Haas Award for Emerging Artist. They wear many hats, including but not limited to writing, teaching, facilitating, music-making, and creating theater. They are also known as "Us": the emcee and member of the award-winning band ILL DOOTS. Their album, *Divine Transmission*, is available on all major platforms. The LOVE received from the many communities that have welcomed them has remained a constant source of inspiration and gratitude. Their mission is to pay that love forward. They stand on the shoulders of many. They love their family, their tribe, and their wife, Tess.



LEIGH IVORY CLARK PARADISE (she/her) **COSTUME DESIGNER**

Leigh is a freelance costumer and custom clothier based in southeastern Pennsylvania. Leigh's custom creations have been seen on this and many stages in and around Philadelphia and beyond. Her recent costume design credits include: *Plantation Black* (InterAct Theatre Company), *Macbeth* (Lantern Theater Company), *Falsettos*, *Holy Grail of Memphis*, and *Intimate Apparel* (Arden Theatre Company); *Amsterdam* (Theatre Ariel); *Once Upon a Bridge* (Inis Nua); and, *A Case for the Existence of God* (Theatre Exile). She is thrilled to join the Wilma Theater for this production, and wishes to thank the costume shop for their hard work and her family for their love and support.



KRISTA SMITH (she/her) **LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Past Wilma productions: *Pig Iron's Poor Judge*, & *The Good Person Of Setzuan*. Recent projects include: Emily Coates's: *Tell Me Where It Comes From* (The Guggenheim, Wadsworth, Yale Schwarzman Center), KrymovLab NYC: *Uncle Vanya*, *Metamorphoses*, *Big Trip: Onegin In Our Own Words* and *The Americans* (La MaMa), and VagaMundo Productions' *Ni Mi Madre* (Edinburgh Fringe OFFIE Winner 2024). Locally at: Arden Theatre Co., The Drake, Fringe Arts, Theatre Horizon, The Icebox, People's Light, and Theatre Exile. Regionally: La MaMa, Ars Nova, New York Theater Workshop, The Public Theater, Hartford Stage, Rattlestick Theater, Dorset Theater, Weston Theater, California Shakespeare Theater, and Yale Repertory Theater. BA San Francisco State University, MFA Yale School of Drama. Member USA 829 www.KristaSmithLD.com



LARRY FOWLER (he/him) **SOUND DESIGNER**

Larry is a Philadelphia-based theater sound designer, radio imaging producer, and music producer whose work spans 20+ years. Larry is excited to be back at the Wilma for this production. Theater companies Larry has designed for include Azuka Theatre (Current Board Member), InterAct Theatre, Theatre Horizon, People's Light, Theatre Exile, The Lantern Theatre, Denver Center, Trinity Rep, Playmakers Rep, Steppenwolf Theater, A Contemporary Theatre (ACT), Roundhouse Theatre Company, Camden Rep, Rennie Harris Puremovement (DJ for *Rome And Jewels*), Eleon Dance, Danse4Nia, and Khaleah London Dance. He is a 3-time Barrymore Award nominee. In broadcast radio, Larry has been an in-studio producer and board operator for Radio One, Inc. in Philadelphia and is currently an imaging producer, voice over talent, and content editor for Healthcare Now Radio.com. He was also an adjunct associate professor at The University of the Arts.



MATTHEW J. ZUMBO (he/him) **SET DESIGNER**

Zumbo is a writer and theater artist/administrator, drawn to stories where evolution and entropy share breath. Though this is his design debut at the Wilma, he has worked on and gleefully scrutinized the production designs of more than 80 productions on this stage. A 20-year vegan and animal-welfare advocate, Zumbo carries a lived compassion that shapes both his work and worldview. At home in any room you'd dare call a theater, he prefers honesty over hypocrisy. Whether helping develop new work, managing overwrought productions, or building a humble life with any remaining time, Zumbo is fascinated by making meaning from the mess and finding truth in the toil. He is forever grateful to the many artists who don't take curtain calls. Whaddaya say, Joe?



PATRESHETTARLINI ADAMS (she/her) **RESIDENT STAGE MANAGER**

Pat is the Resident Stage Manager at the Wilma Theater. She has been with the organization since 1996. This season (2025-26) will be her 30th and she has recently celebrated over 100 productions with them! She has been a member of Actor's Equity for over 31 years. Pat's almost 40-year career encompasses work with the Crossroads Theatre Company, New Brunswick, NJ; Freedom Theatre, Philadelphia, PA; New Victory Theater, NYC; Ford's Theater, Washington, DC; The National Black Theater Festival, Winston-Salem, NC; The National Black Arts Festival, Atlanta, GA.; the Standard Bank National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, South Africa. She has traveled internationally with the dance company, Noche Flamenca! Pat serves as a Board Member for Theatre Philadelphia; the Lay Leader of Emmanuel UMC; Lifetime member of the SMA and Board member for the Foundation for Stage Managers; a Board member-at-Large for the National Theatre Conference. She has received the Bonaly Recognition for Stage Management (2017); the IUP Alumni Award of Distinction (2018); a 2020 recipient of the Del Hughes Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Art of Stage Management. In memory of 'Miss Thomi', for Love and Faith.



SLOANE DUZY (she/they) **ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**

Sloane is a non-union freelance stage manager born and raised in the Greater Philadelphia Area and a graduate of West Chester University. Her recent credits include Assistant Stage Manager of *Miz Martha*, *The Snow Queen*, *A Summer Day*, (Wilma Theater), *A Raisin In The Sun*, and *Peter Pan* (People's Light). Sloane is eternally grateful for the home she has found at the Wilma and is excited to return for the 2026-2027 season! Xoxo to Mom, Dad, Reagan &

Garrett <3 www.sloaneduzy.com

**The Wilma welcomes
The Fathering Circle
as a Community Partner
for The America Play**



The Fathering Circle aims to build fathers' connections with each other to sustain us in more fully engaging with our children, challenging the effects of our limiting socialization as males and better supporting our parenting partners, in particular, mothers in their liberation as women. Through listening circles, collaborative art projects, play dates and family gatherings, we are building a community of fathers, children and families.

**Join us for two Community Partner Appearances
in support of the production:**

POST SHOW TALKBACK
Sunday, May 24th - after 2pm show

OPEN MIC NIGHT
Monday, June 1st - 7pm

thefatheringcircle.com

The Accessible Productions Initiative, supported by the William Penn Foundation, seeks to build new and authentic relationships by inviting community partners into meaningful exchange with the Wilma Theater.

HOTHOUSE RESIDENT ACTING COMPANY

Founded by Artistic Director Emeritus Blanka Zizka, the HotHouse Company is the Wilma's acclaimed, award-winning resident actors. The company meets weekly to train, read plays, and develop their artistry.

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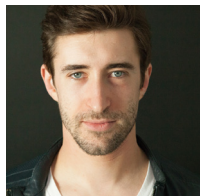
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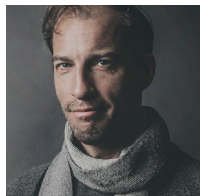
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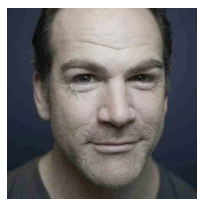
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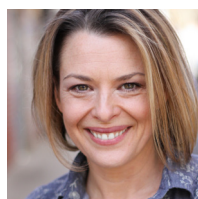
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2026 marks the Wilma's 30th year in our home on Broad Street, right at the center of the Avenue of the Arts - and right in the center of Philadelphia. At the Wilma, our goal is welcome our audiences with thought-provoking, striking productions you can't see anywhere else - and also to welcome students and community members alike to join us in making art, much like our work with The Fathering Circle for THE AMERICA PLAY.

The Wilma is a theater for everyone; keeping our art affordable is part of our mission. Ticket prices cover just 30% of productions costs. Your donation makes everything we do possible, from new play development to education programs to our plays.

Whether you give a one-time gift, become a monthly donor, or fund us on Venmo, the Wilma is grateful for your support.

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Wilma Website



Wilma Venmo

2026 HOTHOUSE SUMMER INSTITUTE

JULY 6-24

The HotHouse Summer Institute invites professional and emerging actors (current college and graduate students welcome) to train on stage at the Wilma in the HotHouse Company's practice of embodied acting.



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Kellie Mecleary

Associate Producer:

Brittany Onukwugha

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Finister, Sarah Gliko, Suli Holum, Justin Jain, Anthony Martinez-Briggs, Jered McLenigan, Kishia Nixon,
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Robinson, Matteo Scammell, Lindsay Smiling

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HotHouse Head of Professional Training:

Suli Holum

Artistic Intern:

Juliette Nero Eddings

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Mieke D

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Lee Minora

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Rebecca Posner, Devon Sinclair

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Tamara Hobbs

Suli Holum

Micah Mahdi

Kinohi Nishikawa

Don Parman

David Scranton

Mark Stewart

Lansie Sylvia

Emeritus

Harvey Kimmel

Sissie Lipton

James F. McGillin

John Rollins

Dianne Semingson

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Evelyn G. Spritz

Dr. R. J. Wallner

Jeanne P. Wrobleksi

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<https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>

2026/ 2027

WILMA THEATER SEASON



Celebrating
30 YEARS
ON BROAD ST.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

EARLY BIRD SUBSCRIPTIONS

- Go to wilmatheater.org and click on "2026/2027 Season" or scan the QR code and choose your package.
- Select your show dates and enter your seating preferences.
- Tickets with seat assignments will be sent in August.



CONTACT THE BOX OFFICE

- Contact our box office team at 215-546-7824 or email us at tickets@wilmatheater.org.



Horsegirl & Cowdaddy

By DJ Hills
Directed by Adil Mansoor
A co-production with Soho Rep

SEPT 22 - OCT 4, 2026

A story of love and self-determination about a 30-something Trans woman named Horsegirl.



The Little Prince

By Rick Cummins and John Scoullar
Adapted from the book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
Directed by Yuri Urnov

NOV 17 - 29, 2026

Whimsical adventures of love and friendship are recounted by a little prince from a faraway planet. Bring your kids, cousins, grandmas, and grown-ups.

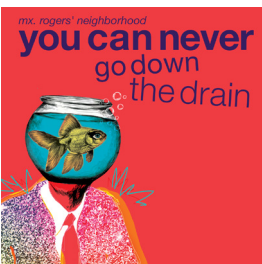


The Animal Farm Project

Lead Artist Justin Jain
Directed by Eva Steinmetz
Supported by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

MAR 30 - APR 11, 2027

A reflection on the production of Animal Farm that launched the Wilma in 1979, we'll explore questions of power, corruption, resistance, and hope.



WILMA WELCOMES

Mx. Rogers' Neighborhood

You Can Never Go Down The Drain

Created by The Bearded Ladies Cabaret
Written by Rose Jarboe
Directed by Suli Holum

JUNE 2 - 13, 2027

An irreverently tender musical parody that asks: Would it kill you to be my neighbor?

4-Show Whenever

4 tickets, used
however you want,
all season long.

~~\$200~~

\$180

4-Show Weekend

4 tickets, one to
each production
Friday-Sunday.

~~\$180~~

\$140

4-Show Weekday/ Preview

4 tickets, one to
each production,
Tuesday-Thursday.

~~\$160~~

\$120

4-Show Opening Night

Tickets to opening
night and post-show
reception.

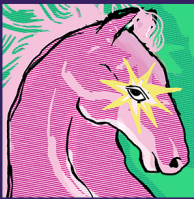
~~\$300~~

\$250

(Early bird pricing ends 6/1)

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**Show and Subscription
Information Inside**

wilmatheater.org

WILMA
THEATER