

WallisAnnenberg  
Center for the  
Performing Arts

Paul Crewes  
Artistic Director

Rachel Fine  
Managing Director

PRESENTS

# BLUES IN THE NIGHT

ORIGINAL VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS  
AND MUSICAL DIRECTION BY

CHAPMAN ROBERTS

ORCHESTRATIONS AND ADDITIONAL  
VOCAL ARRANGEMENTS BY

SY JOHNSON

STARRING

Yvette Cason, Bryce Charles, Chester Gregory, Paulette Ivory

SCENIC DESIGN

John Iacovelli

COSTUME DESIGN

Dana Rebecca Woods

LIGHTING DESIGN

Jared A. Sayeg

SOUND DESIGN

Cricket S. Myers

HAIR & WIG DESIGN

Danielle Richter

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Jeffrey Polk

CASTING BY

Telsey + Company  
Ryan Bernard Tymensky, CSA

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Art Brickman

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Tara Sitser

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Abdul Hamid Royal

CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY

## SHELDON EPPS

APRIL 27 - MAY 20, 2018

Lovelace Studio Theater

Running Time: 2 hours and 25 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission

*"Blue, Blue,  
I got a tale to tell you I'm blue.  
Somethin' comes over me,  
Baby and I'm blue about you."*

-Bessie Smith

*"A man is a two face,  
A worrisome thing  
Who'll leave you to sing  
The Blues in the night."*

-Harold Arlen &  
Johnny Mercer

*"Wild women never worry,  
Wild women don't have  
no blues."*

-Ida Cox

*"If I had saved my money  
When I was young  
and doin' well,  
I wouldn't be here singin'  
In this cheap hotel.  
I got the four walls,  
And one dirty window blues."*

-Willard Robinson

TIME: The late 1930's.

PLACE: A cheap hotel in Chicago.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

YVETTE CASON.....THE LADY FROM THE ROAD  
BRYCE CHARLES.....THE GIRL WITH THE DATE  
CHESTER GREGORY.....THE MAN IN THE SALOON  
PAULETTE IVORY.....THE WOMAN OF THE WORLD

Female Standby: Amber Liekhus

The Standby never substitute for players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance.

### THE BAND

CONDUCTOR/PIANIST Lanny Hartley

BASS Kevin O'Neal

REEDS Randall Willis, Louis Van Taylor

PERCUSSION Lance Lee

TRUMPET Fernando Pullum

WARNING: THIS PRODUCTION USES A THEATRICAL HAZE EFFECT  
AND HERBAL CIGARETTES.



\*The actors in this production appear  
courtesy of Actors Equity Association.



The Director is a member of the  
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS  
SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.



The Designers at this Theatre  
are Represented by  
United Scenic Artists • Local USA 829  
of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

# On Blues in the Night

BY CREATOR AND DIRECTOR  
SHELDON EPPS

**Blues In The Night** uses the great blues and jazz songs of the 1920's and 30's to explore the lives of three women and a saloon singer in a cheap hotel during the course of a long, memory-filled evening. The songs have been specifically chosen to accomplish several things, but their most important function is to celebrate a great period and style of American music and to explore the influences and the roots of the jazz idiom as they grew from blues music. It was once said, "Blues is to jazz what yeast is to bread." And so in this celebration, the blues melodies of Bessie Smith, Jimmy Cox, Alberta Hunter and others are mixed and contrasted with the songs of Harold Arlen, Andy Razaf, Johnny Mercer and other legends of the jazz world to paint the full spectrum of this great musical form.

The blues is the music of strength. These songs give the characters a means of survival. It is the very glory of this music that has caused the blues itself to be an ever stronger and exciting survivor in the world's musical life.

## Program

### ACT ONE

#### “Blue Blues”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Four Walls (And One Dirty Window) Blues”

by Willard Robinson; used by permission of The Jewel Music Publishing Co., Inc.

#### “I’ve got A Date With A Dream”

by Mack Gordon and Henry Revel; used by permission of SBK/Feist Catalog, Inc.

#### “New Orleans Hop Stop Blues”

by George W. Thomas; used by permission of Jerry Vogel Music Co., Inc.

#### “Stompin At The Savoy”

by Benny Goodman, And Razaf, Edgar Sampson and Cick Webb; used by permission of SBK Robbins Catalogue, Inc. and RYTVOC, Inc.

#### “Taking A Chance On Love”

by Vernon Duke, John LaTouche and Ted Fetter; used by permission by SBK Miller Catalogue, Inc.

#### “It Makes My Love Come Down”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Lush Life”

by Billy Strayhorn; used by permission of Temp Music, Inc.

#### “I’m Just A Lucky So-and-So”

by Duke Ellington and Mack David; used by permission by T.B. Harms Company, a Polygram International Music Publishing Company and Famous Music Publishing Company

#### “Take Me For A Buggy Ride”

by Leola and Wesley Wilson; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Wild Women Don’t Have The Blues”

by Ida Cox; used by permission of Northern Music Company

#### “Lover Man”

by Jimmy Davis; Jimmy Sherman and Roger “Ram” Ramirez; used by permission of MCA Music Publishing

#### “Willow Weep For Me”

by Ann Ronell; used by permission of the Bourne Company

#### “Kitchen Man”

by Andy Razaf and Wesley Wilson; used by permission of MCA Publishing

#### “When Your Lover Has Gone”

by E.A. Swan; used by permission of Warner Bros., Inc.

#### “Take It Right Back”

By H. Grey

### ACT TWO

#### Jam Session (“Wild Women Don’t Have The Blues”)

by Ida Cox; used by permission of Northern Music Company

#### “Blues In The Night”

By Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer; used by permission of Warner Bros., Inc.

#### “Dirty No-Gooder’s Blues”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “When A Woman Loves A Man/ Am I Blue?”

by Johnny Mercer, Gordon Jenkins and Bernard Hanighen  
by Grand Clarke and Harry Akst; used by permission of Chappell & Co.; used by permission of Warner Bros., Inc.

#### “Rough and Ready Man”

by Alberta Hunter; used by permission of Alberta Hunter Music Co.

#### “Reckless Blues”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Wasted Life Blues”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Baby Doll”

by Bessie Smith; used by permission of Frank Music Corp.

#### “Nobody Knows You When You’re Down And Out”

by Jimmy Cox; used by permission of MCA Publishing

#### “I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues”

by Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler; used by permission of Warner Bros., Inc.

#### “Four Walls” (Reprise)

used by permission of The Jewel Music Publishing Co., Inc.



**YVETTE CASON** (The Lady from the Road) recently appeared in *A Miracle on 34th Street* at the Pasadena Playhouse. Her performance as Katie and Mahalia in *Shout Sister Shout* at Pasadena

Playhouse earned her an LA Ovation nomination. In addition, Yvette portrayed Lillie Ann in *Barbecue* at the Geffen Playhouse (NAACP Theatre Award). Other credits include: *A Night With Janis Joplin, Ella The Musical, Dreamgirls, Play On!* (Ovation Award), *Once On This Island, Ain't Misbehavin', St. Louis Woman, Into the Woods* and *Sisterella* (NAACP Theatre Award). Film: *A Wrinkle In Time, Dreamgirls* and *Middle of Nowhere*. She has toured with Whitney Houston, Stevie Wonder, David Foster and Babyface. Education: Berklee College of Music.



**BRYCE CHARLES** (The Girl with a Date) is thrilled to make her Wallis debut with *Blues in the Night*. She holds her BFA in Musical Theatre from AMDA College and Conservatory. National Tour: *The Book of Mormon*. TV: “Encore!” (ABC), “Fuller House” (Netflix), “Black-ish” (ABC).



**CHESTER GREGORY** (The Man in the Saloon) is thrilled to be making his Wallis debut in *Blues In the Night*. Broadway credits include: *Motown the Musical* (Berry Gordy), *Hairspray* (Seaweed), *Sister Act* (Eddie), *Tarzan* (Terk), and *Cry-Baby* (Dupree). National tour: *Motown* (Berry Gordy), *Sister Act* (Eddie), *Dreamgirls* (James “Thunder” Early), and the title role in *The Jackie Wilson Story*. Regional: August Wilson’s *Fences* and *Two Trains Running* at the Goodman Theatre and Kansas City Rep, respectively. Television: Performances on “The Daily Show,” “The View,” and The Tony Awards. Chester is the recipient of numerous accolades including Chicago’s Jeff Award, the NAACP Theatre Award, and the key to the city of his hometown of Gary, Indiana, as well as an honorary Doctorate Degree from Columbia College Chicago. He’s currently producing his one-man show, *The Eve of Jackie Wilson*, and has just released two albums. ChesterGregory.com



**PAULETTE IVORY** (The Woman of the World) is one of London’s acclaimed performers. After originating the role of Nala in *The Lion King* in the West End, she was cast in the title role of Aida in the US national tour of Elton John and Disney’s *Aida*

(Carbonell Award, Helen Hayes Award nom). Other theatre credits: *Fela* (Broadway, National Theater UK and world tour; NAACP nom), *Purlie* (NAACP nom), *Ragtime*, *Blues in the Night* (US & London), *A Woman of No Importance* (Royal Shakespeare Co.), *Baby It’s You*, *Smokey Joe’s Cafe*, and *The Hot Mikado*. TV/film credits include: “Criminal Minds,” “The Young and the Restless,” “Numb3rs,” “Girlfriends,” “Strong Medicine,” “Doctors,” “Eastenders” and “Lords of Dogtown.” Paulette also opened “The Royal Variety Show” in London and performed at Kensington Palace at the request of Prince Charles. Also, Paulette wrote and starred in the short film *In Destiny’s Hands*, as well as the web series “My Life Lesson.” @Paulettelvory

**SHELDON EPPS** (Conceived By & Director) was honored to be Artistic Director of the renowned Pasadena Playhouse for twenty years (1997-2017). Before beginning his tenure at the Playhouse he served as Associate Artistic Director of the Old Globe Theatre for four years. He was also a co-founder of the Off Broadway theatre, The Production Company. Currently he continues to serve Pasadena Playhouse as Artistic Director Emeritus. Mr. Epps has directed both plays and musicals at many of the country’s major theatres including the Roundabout, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Guthrie, Playwrights Horizons, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage, and the Goodman Theatre and Houston’s Theatre Under the Stars in Houston. He conceived the highly acclaimed musicals *Play On!* and *Blues In the Night*, which both received Tony Award nominations. He directed productions of both of those shows on Broadway, in London, and at theatres throughout the world. He also co-directed the Broadway production of *Baby It’s You!*, which had its world premiere at The Pasadena Playhouse. He also has had a busy career as a television director helming episodes of shows such as “Frasier,” “Friends,” “Everybody Loves Raymond,” “Girlfriends” and many others. Mr. Epps received the James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award for his efforts and accomplishments at the Pasadena Playhouse. Under his leadership the Playhouse has earned distinction for productions of artistic excellence, critical and box office success, and highly praised theatrical diversity.

**JOHN IACOVELLI** (Scenic Design) received an Emmy Award for “Peter Pan” starring Cathy Rigby on A&E and a LA Drama Critics Circle for Lifetime Achievement in Scenic Design. Other Broadway: *The Twilight of The Golds*, National Tour: *Camelot*. Regional: over 300 productions at theatres including: The Mark Taper Forum, Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, GeVa, Pasadena Playhouse, The Globe, Berkeley Rep, Magic, Dallas Theatre Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival,

Portland Stage, San Jose Rep, San Diego Rep, Walnut Street Theatre, La Mirada Theatre, Philadelphia Theatre Company. Iacovelli designed the world premiere of Wole Soyinka’s adaptation of *Oedipus* at Colonus for The Cultural Olympiad in Greece and the world premiere of a full-length dance based on the Warner Bros. classic film *Casablanca* at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Film: Production Designer on *Ruby in Paradise* starring Ashley Judd in her film debut. Art Director on *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids!* TV Production Design: “Beckett Directs Beckett: Endgame” with The San Quentin Drama Workshop, “The Old Settler” starring Phylicia Rashad & Debbie Allen, “The Gin Game” starring Mary Tyler Moore & Dick Van Dyke, “Ed” on NBC, “Babylon 5,” “Resurrection Blvd.,” “Lincoln Heights”. He is on the Design Faculty, Department of Theatre & Dance, UC Davis and is a visiting professor at the Shanghai Drama Academy.

**DANA REBECCA WOODS** (Costume Designer) is happy to be collaborating once again with Sheldon Epps and proud to be part of the design team assembled for *Blues in the Night*. Her design work includes *Blues in the Night* at San Francisco’s Post Street Theater; *In the Red and Brown Water* at UC Santa Barbara; *Shout Sister Shout*, *Stop Kiss*, *Above The Fold*, *Fences*, and others for The Pasadena Playhouse; *Jitney* and *Fences* at South Coast Repertory. Her film and television designs include *Go For Sisters* for John Sayles and “Watch Over Me” for Fox Television. Dana taught at the University of Central Florida and is a member of USA Local 829; Costume Designers Guild Local; and Motion Picture Costumers. She is also IATSE Delegate to the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. When not designing productions or involved with labor activities, Dana creates teaching artist curriculum for after school programs.

**JARED A. SAYEG** (Lighting Design) is a four-time Ovation Award Nominee and winner of the Ovation, StageRaw & Garland Award as well as a recipient of the LADDC Kinetic Lighting Award. He recently provided the lighting design for the world premiere of *Jackie Unveiled* at The Wallis. His designs have been seen throughout the U.S., Broadway, Off-Broadway, West-End, Canada, Spain, Edinburgh & Las Vegas. National Tours include *Blithe Spirit* starring Angela Lansbury, The Who’s *Tommy* with Alice Ripley, *Queen of Spades* starring Placido Domingo (Madrid) and *Rolling with Laughter* at Her Majesty’s Theatre (West-End). Broadway: *The Illusionists* (Neil Simon & National Tour) *Bravo Bernstein*, *Gotham Glory* (Carnegie Hall) and was on the design teams for: *PRIMO*, Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *The Woman in White* and the *Radio City Christmas Spectacular*. Regional: Center Theatre Group, Pasadena Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, Sacramento Music Circus, International City Theatre, Reprise, Ensemble Theatre

### BLUES IN THE NIGHT

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www.MTIShows.com



Company, Cabrillo Music Theatre, Laguna Playhouse, Virginia Stage Company, The Colony, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey & CLO of South Bay. Jared is Principal Designer for the USA International Ballet Competitions held every four years. Jared became the youngest member of the United Scenic Artists-Local 829 and serves as a trustee to the executive board. [Jaslighting.com](http://Jaslighting.com)

**CRICKET S. MYERS** (Sound Design) On Broadway, Cricket earned a Tony Nomination and a Drama Desk Award for her design of *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. Her designs Off Broadway include the 16 month run of *The Marvelous Wonderettes* (Westside Arts, Upstairs). She has also designed regionally at the Geffen Playhouse, The Mark Taper Forum (including *Bent*, with Moises Kaufman), La Jolla Playhouse, South Coast Rep, The Kirk Douglas Theater, Pasadena Playhouse, Berkeley Rep, and Arena Stage. Other selected L.A. theaters include The Rubicon, Ghost Road Theater Company, The Ricardo Montalban Theater (*I Only Have Eyes for You*), and The Celebration Theater. Cricket has earned 20 Ovation Nominations, as well as winning The League of Professional Theater Woman's Ruth Morley Award and The Kinetic Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatrical Design, an LADCC and a Garland Award in Los Angeles. [cricketmysers.com](http://cricketmysers.com)

**DANIELLE RICHTER** (Hair & Wig Design) is blessed and thrilled to be working on her third show with The Wallis. Previous productions at The Wallis have been *Guys and Dolls* and *The City of Conversation*. Other Los Angeles design credits include the LA Phil, A Noise Within and Valley Performing Arts Center. Regionally she has worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre.

**JEFFREY POLK** (Associate Director) is honored to work with The Spectacular Sheldon Epps who conceived and created this fabulous show and also the amazing Abdul Hamid Royal's musical direction on this exciting production and this stellar family/team here at The Wallis. Credits: *Aint' Misbehavin'* (La Mirada); *Dreamgirls* (T.U.T.S.); *Porgy & Bess* (ETC Santa Barbara); *Kiss Me, Kate* (Pasadena Playhouse). Polk directed and choreographed *Smokey Joe's Café* at Pasadena Playhouse and the El Portal, and choreographed the production at La Mirada. He has been the Guest Director with The Young Americans Outreach World Tours for the past 5 years. A grateful thank you, Sheldon. Thank you Mother, Sister, Family, friends and Philip. Member of SDC. #nothingbutloveforeveryone

**ABDUL HAMID ROYAL** (Music Director) received the Ovation Award; Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and SAGE Award as Best Music Direction for The Gospel at Colonus. He received the NAACP Image Award for the Tony-nominated Broadway musical *5 Guys Named Moe*, and the NAACP Image Award and Stage Scene LA Award for Outstanding Musical Direction on the Los Angeles production of *Recorded in Hollywood*. Broadway/International/National: Music Director: *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Twist*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *The Wiz*, *Truly Blessed*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Betsy Brown*, *Concerts for the Earth*, *Colors of Christmas*, *Smokey Joe's Café*, *The Life*. Composer/Arranger: *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Truly Blessed*, *Body and Soul*, *Twist*, *Cole Porter Festival*, *Colors of Christmas*. Recording Artists: Natalie Cole, Peabo Bryson, Melissa Manchester, Cy Coleman, Al Jarreau, The Pointer Sisters, Liza Minnelli, Ashford & Simpson, Martha Wash, Jennifer Holliday, Jeffrey Osborne, Maurice Hines, Melba Moore, Patti Austin, Grover Washington Jr., Masashi Sada, Patti LaBelle, Christina Aguilera, Jason Mraz, Stevie Wonder, David Foster, Doc Powell, The LA Philharmonic, Ty Herndon, Freddie Waites, Brenda Russell, and Phil Collins.

**TELSEY + COMPANY** (Casting) Broadway/ Tours: *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Once on This Island*, *The Parisian Woman*, *M. Butterfly*, *Anastasia*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Come from Away*, *Waitress*, *Hamilton*, *Kinky Boots*, *Wicked*, *On Your Feet!*, *Something Rotten!*, *The King and I*, *An American in Paris*. Off-Broadway: *Sweeney Todd*, *Atlantic*, *Classic Stage*, *MCC*, *St. Ann's Warehouse*, *Second Stage*. Regional: *Alley Theatre*, *Deaf West Theatre*, *Goodman Theatre*, *Hartford Stage*, *La Jolla Playhouse*, *McCarter Theatre*, *New York Stage and Film*, *Paper Mill Playhouse*, *Pasadena Playhouse*, *Williamstown Theatre Festival*. Film: *Miss Sloane*, *Into the Woods*, *Margin Call*, *Rachel Getting Married*, *Across the Universe*, *Camp*, *Pieces of April*. TV: "This Is Us," "NCIS: New Orleans," "House of Cards," "Rise," "I'm Dying Up Here," "One Day at a Time," "Graves," "Atypical," commercials. [telseyandco.com](http://telseyandco.com)

**ART BRICKMAN** (Production Stage Manager) The Wallis: *Baseball Swing*; *Gene Kelly, the Legacy*. Other theatres: *Hit Song!* (El Portal); *Sister Act* (Cabrillo); *I Only Have Eyes For You* (Ricardo Montalban); *White Christmas* (SDMT); *South Pacific* and *Les Miserables* (MTW); *Les Miserables* and *My Fair Lady* (Anchorage, AK); *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *The Lion King* (Pantages); *Les Miserables* (Hollywood Bowl) and numerous benefits for The Actors' Fund of America. Art is proud to be "Roadie" for John Zipperer and the Current Band, the Resident PSM for Musical Theatre Guild

(more than 40 shows since 2004) and an active member of Actors' Equity (1982) and the Stage Managers' Association (1983).

**TARA SITSER** (Assistant Stage Manager) Tara's twenty year career as a performer in musical theater led to her first contract as a Stage Manager while working at the Huntington Hartford Theater in 1983 on an original musical starring Faith Prince. For the past 5 years she has been the resident stage manager for the Pacific Festival Ballet Company at the Kavli Theater overseeing several original ballets each year as well as their annual *Nutcracker Ballet* (2012-2017). Other production credits include *I Only Have Eyes For You* at the Montalban Theater (2016), the Jerry Herman Awards at the Pantages Theater (2013-2015), *Les Miserables* for the Anchorage Concert Assoc. (2014), Actor's Fund *Musical Mondays* (2011-2013) starring Betty Buckley, Frank Wildhorn, Joanne Worley and Carol Channing, two Thalian's Galas (2011 and 2014) and numerous productions for the Musical Theater Guild at the Alex, Scherr Forum and Moss Theaters.

**THE WALLIS** (Producer) is located within the historic Beverly Hills Post Office, an award-winning architectural gem designed by Ralph C. Frewelling in the Italian Renaissance Revival style with WPA project murals by Charles Kessler, which was in operation from 1934 to 1998. The campus that once delivered the mail, now delivers the performing arts. Since opening its doors in October 2013, The Wallis has produced or presented more than 150 dance, music and theater programs that are local, national and international in scope. The Wallis campus includes the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater, the 500-seat Bram Goldsmith Theater, the Promenade Terrace (featuring Dance Sundays with Debbie Allen and Friends, and other free public programming) and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education and outreach classrooms. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Paul Crewes and Managing Director Rachel Fine, The Wallis remains a vital community and cultural hub for the city of Beverly Hills.

#### ADDITIONAL STAFF

##### COSTUME SUPERVISOR

Deborah Hartwell

##### PROPERTIES SUPERVISOR

Carissa Huizenga

##### LIGHTING PROGRAMMER

Bo Tindell

##### MUSIC COPYIST

Juan A. Matos

##### MUSIC CONTRACTOR

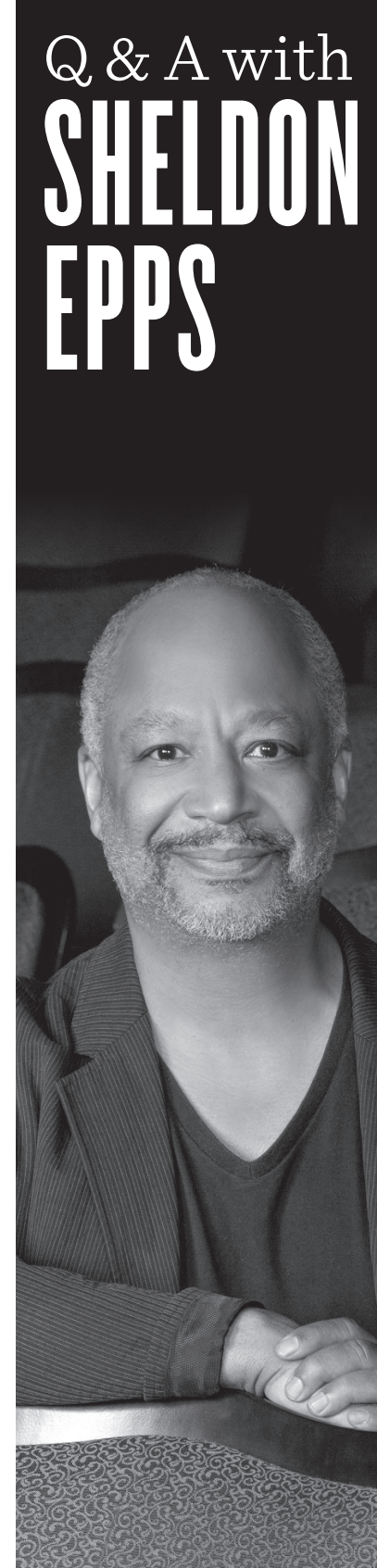
Dan Savant

##### SCENERY CONSTRUCTION

Sets To Go

##### ADDITIONAL LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

PRG Lighting



Los Angeles theater luminary Sheldon Epps sat down with The Wallis Post to discuss his break-out hit *Blues in the Night*, which is being revived later this month in the Lovelace Studio Theater.

**Q:** What was the genesis of *Blues in the Night*?

**EPPS:** The show started way back in my Off-Off Broadway theater days. I worked for the production company at Playhouse 46 in the late '70's. One of our ideas was to do late night cabaret shows on the weekend that reflected whatever play we were doing at the time. In the spring of 1980, we were doing a play about a blind jazz musician on the mainstage. I had the thought of doing something about jazz. In my research, I came upon a Billie Holiday quote in which she said, "Blues is to jazz what yeast is to bread." I then became excited about exploring the influence the blues had on jazz writers, and *Blues in the Night* was born.

**Q:** What did that early production look like?

**EPPS:** The show was always a revue, not a book musical. But I never wanted singers just standing at a microphone in a club. We always had four actors who performed from a sense of character. The songs were chosen to not only entertain and explore the music, but to reveal specific characters in a particular place and time. That specificity was recognized in an early review from *The New York Times*, and the show was produced on Broadway, where it was Tony-nominated for Best Musical.

**Q:** *Blues* was then produced all over the country, with tours that starred Della Reese and Eartha Kitt. There was also an acclaimed London production. That's where Wallis Artistic Director Paul Crewes first experienced your work.

**EPPS:** Yes, there was a West End production in 1987 at the Donmar Warehouse, which then moved to the Piccadilly Theatre for nearly a year. And I've just found out that it will be revived in London next year.

**Q:** How are you approaching this new production in the Lovelace?

**EPPS:** On the theatrical side, I'm intrigued by returning the show to its roots in a smaller space. I love intimate theater experiences, when the cast and the audience are really sharing the same room together. Although I've done this show many times, it's always new and different with each cast.

**Q:** And you have a great cast at The Wallis: Yvette Cason, Bryce Charles, Paulette Ivory and Chester Gregory.

**EPPS:** We have a tremendous cast, many of whom I've worked with before and know their strengths. I've never wanted to tell any actor, "This is how so-and-so did this before," even though I've worked with many great actors in the roles. It's always about creating the show anew with the four people.

**Q:** How do you feel *Blues in the Night* speaks to audiences in 2018?

**EPPS:** It's always been a show about female empowerment. Many people think the blues is about lying down on the bed and complaining about how badly you feel, but it's really about survival and fighting back. The show itself is chiefly authored by women, and serves as a showcase for lyricists such as Bessie Smith, Ida Cox and Ann Ronell. A number of things have transpired in our culture since Paul and I first discussed this revival, and it's an opportune time to hear from these women and their stories.