BONUS PRODUCTION

HADESTOWN
Music, Lyrics & Book by Anais Mitchell (she/her)
Developed with & Directed by Rachel Chavkin (she/her)

OCTOBER 3–15, 2023

A CHRISTMAS STORY, THE MUSICAL
Book by Joseph Robinette
Music and Lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul
Original Direction on Broadway by John Rando
Choreography by Warren Carlyle
Directed by Matt Lenz

DECEMBER 5–31, 2023

MATTHEW BOURNE’S ROMEO AND JULIET
North American Premiere

JANUARY 28 – FEBRUARY 25, 2024

FUNNY GIRL
Music by Jule Styne
Lyrics by Bob Merrill
Book by Isobel Lennart
Revised Book by Harvey Fierstein

APRIL 2–28, 2024

A STRANGE LOOP
Book, Music, And Lyrics by Michael R. Jackson
Choreography by Raja Feather Kelly
Directed by Stephen Brackett
A co-production with American Conservatory Theater

JUNE 5–30, 2024

CLUE
Written by Sandy Rustin
Additional Material by Hunter Foster and Eric Price
Based on the screenplay by Jonathan Lynn
Original Music by Michael Holland
Based on the 1985 Paramount movie
and the classic Hasbro board game

JULY 30 – AUGUST 25, 2024
As a not-for-profit organization, Center Theatre Group relies on the support of generous theatre lovers like you. Your support ensures that Los Angeles audiences and the arts will continue to have a home in our community.

For their leadership in fundraising efforts and contributions in support of A Strange Loop, CTG would like to thank the following Host Committee members:


For their contributions in support of A Strange Loop, CTG would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts:

Chiedu Egbanuwe  Robert Greenblatt  Robert & Claire Heron  Patrick Moran  Marsha J. Naify  The Louis and Harold Price Foundation

As of 4/22/2024 with gifts exceeding $2,500.

Are you invested in the future of theatre? Become a member with a tax-deductible contribution of $100—or just $10 per month—and make a vital difference for our future. Center Theatre Group’s history. Your gift will enable us to continue to produce and present the highest caliber theatre, nurture new artists, and provide transformative arts education programs.

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Choreography by Raja Feather Kelly
Directed by Stephen Brackett

Lead Production Sponsor

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Original Broadway Production produced by Barbara Whitman.

Playwrights Horizons, Inc. in association with Page 73 Productions produced the World Premiere of A Strange Loop in New York City in 2019.

Subsequently produced by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington D.C.

A Strange Loop is presented by special arrangement with Concord Theatricals, concordtheatricals.com
A STRANGE LOOP WILL BE PERFORMED WITH NO INTERMISSION.

CAST

Jared Barbour ......................................................................................................................Thought 5
J. Cameron Barnett ...............................................................................................................Thought 3
Carl Shane Clark ..................................................................................................................Thought 6
Alvis Green, Jr. ......................................................................................................................Usher Alternate*
Avionce Hoyles ..................................................................................................................Thought 2
Tarra Conner Jones..............................................................................................................Thought 1
Malachi McCaskill .............................................................................................................Usher
John-Andrew Morrison ........................................................................................................Thought 4

*At select performances

UNDERSTUDIES

Dave J. Abrams ..................................................................................................................Thoughts 2/3
Angela Alise .........................................................................................................................Thought 1
Albert Hodge .......................................................................................................................Thought 1
Tristan J Shuler ....................................................................................................................Thoughts 5/6

DANCE CAPTAIN

Dave J. Abrams

STAGE MANAGERS

Camella Coopilton
Julia Formanek

ORCHESTRA

CONDUCTOR / KEYS 1: SEAN KANA
KEYS 2 / GUITAR / AMD: DAVID MÖSCHLER
GUITAR: WILLY YANEZ
DRUMS: ALEX BAILEY
BASS: JENNIFER LEITHAM
REEDS: SAL LOZANO
KEYS 2/GUITAR SUBS: TORY DEXTER, CHRIS HORBATH
CONTRACTOR: ROBERT PAYNE

Please turn off all electronic devices such as cellular phones and watch alarms. The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, with or without flash, is strictly prohibited.
WHO’S WHO

DAVE ABRAMS (u/s Thought 2, u/s Thought 3; he/him) is exulant to be a part of A Strange Loop! Recent credits include: Hippie Trip – The Soul Train Musical (u/s Tony Cornelius, Ensemble), Center Rep’s In the Heights (Benny), BAMSF’s Hairspay (Seaweed) for which he received a Theater Bay Area Award (TBA) for Outstanding Featured Actor, and Berkeley Playhouse’s Ragtime (Coalhouse) which awarded him another TBA Award for the principal role. Dave holds a BA in Theater and Dance from the University of California, Berkeley. May you all enjoy this big, Black, queer ass American Broadway show! IG: @davecabramps

ANGELA ALISE (u/s Thought 1, she/her) is an actor, writer, and producer making her CTG debut. Some regional credits include: The Wolves (Actors Theatre of Louisville); Nothing To Lose But Our Chains and Black Side of the Moon (Second City @ Woolly Mammmoth Theatre); Most Accurate Guide to America (Second City @ The Kennedy Center); Hairspay (Drury Lane Theatre); The Wolves (Goodman Theatre); The House That Will Not Stand (Victory Gardens Theatre), and Saturday Night/Sunday Morning (2014 Steppenwolf Garage Rep). Her TV credits include American Housewives (UBCO, Pretty Smart (Netflix), As We See It (Amazon), Perry Mason (Max), and South Side (Max)).


J. CAMERON BARNETT (Thought 2, he/him) is best known for his recurring role as Castle on the series PDCE. Other Film/TV credits include Allswell in New York (Tribeca Film Festival Winner) Line of Duty, The Twilight Zone, and Gotham to name a few. He has toured the world in musicals such as Hair (Europe & South America), Smokey Joe’s Cafe (Europe), and The Buddy Holly Story (National). His select Off-Broadway & Regional credits include: F*cking A (Signature Theatre/NYC), The Color Purple (Lortel Award Nominee), and as Black Theatre United. Proud graduate of the Stage Management program at the David Geffen School of Theater and making this Center Theatre Group debut. JAM, as he’s commonly called, is on both the Original Broadway Cast and Original Cast recordings for A Strange Loop. He was an Outer Critics Circle Honoree for his work in Blues for an Alabama Sky Off-Broadway (KEEN Company). His recent work includes Malvolio with The Classical Theater of Harlem and his fourth season with Hartford Stage (Oakville Playhouse), and others. His Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics Circle winning production of 2022. His Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics Circle winning production of A Strange Loop (which had its 2019 world premiere at Playwrights Horizons in association with Page 73 Productions) received 11 Tony nominations in 2022, and was called "a full-on laparoscopy of the heart, soul, and loins" as well as a "gutsy, jubilantly anguished musical with infectious melodies" by Ben Brantley for The New York Times. In The New Yorker, Vinson Cunningham wrote, “To watch this show is to enter, by some urgent, bawdy magic, an ecstatic and infinitely more colorful version of the famous surreal lithograph by M. C. Escher: the hand that lifts from the page, becomes almost real, then draws another hand, which returns the favor." In addition to A Strange Loop, he also wrote book, music and lyrics for White Girl in Danger. Awards and associations include: a New Professional Theatre Festival Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, a Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, an ASCAP Foundation Harold Adamson Award, a Whiting Award, the Helen Desk and Drama League Nominations, and an Audelco Award for her role as Nell Carter Gibbs. Past credits include: The Music Man, Hairspay, The Color Purple, Little Shop of Horrors, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Ain’t Misbehavin’, Shenk The Musical, Chinese The Musical, Dreamgirls, and From Birmingham To Broadway (A one act play with music by Nell Carter, written by Tarra). Tarra forever performs in memory of her mother, Conitra Conner, who cleans from heaven. Much appreciation to her agent, Dave Secor (Daniel Hoff Agency).

CARLIS SHANE CLARK (Thought 6, he/him) is so excited to join this talented company! A performer since age 9, Carlis obtained a BFA from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and has performed on stages in NYC, Edinburgh’s International Fringe Festival, and Los Angeles where he was honored at the LA Drama Critics Circle Awards, Stage, Row, and Ovation Awards. Carlis most recently performed with the Boston Lyric Opera and Long Beach Opera’s The Feast, and episodic series desert in. Other recent television credits include Dear White People (Netflix) and Jean-Claude Van Johnson (Amazon Original). Film: Clemency (2019 Sundance Grand Jury Prize) and Dutch. Thank you Telsey Casting, NOVA, BQ, and family. carlissheane

AUVIS GREEN, JR. (u/s Thunder After) made their west coast debut at A.C.T! Past credits include Once on This Island (Blackfriars Theatre), The Prom (JCC Centerstage), Smokey Joe’s Cafe (Blackfriars Theatre), Uninetown (Gatessingers CO), and Sister Act (OFFCreations).

ALBERT HODGE (u/s Thought 4, he/him). Albert is thrilled to be part of this powerful production. Recent credits: Mr. Bones in The Scottsboro Boys (42nd Street Moon); Pierre Bezukhov in the West Coast premiere of Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet Of 1812 (Shogun Players); Narrator in Passing Strange (Shogun); and Tom Collins in Rent (Landmark Musical Theatre).

ALVONE HOYLES (Thought 3, he/him). Alvone is a Rock Hill, SC native & a graduate from AMDA NY. Some of his credits include (Film/TV) Grayland, FBi: Most Wanted, Orange Is The New Black, (Off Broadway National Tour) Bat Out Of Hell, Titanic, Memphis The Musical, Rent, and Jesus Christ Superstar. Recently, Alvone has been touring the globe with his love letter to the Queen of Rock ‘n Roll entitled Dear Tina. Huge thanks to my Kreativ Artists family, CTG, Kyle Garvin, and this company. Ephesians 3:20 @theavionechyles @deartinashow For Quenton.

TRISTAN J SHULER (Thought 5, u/s Thought 6), a bi-coastal writer/director, is lucky to be back in the theatre and making this Center Theatre Group debut after being highlighted in YesBroadway’s 40Under40. Most recently, Tristan J was seen in the world premiere of Prelude to a Kiss: The Musical at South Coast Repertory. More at: @TristanShuler TristanShuler.com

EDMOND O’NEAL (Production Stage Manager, he/him) is a New York-based freelance stage manager and educator. Broadway credits include Hadestown. National Tour credits include Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations and An Officer and a Gentleman. NYC workshop/teaching credits include The Wrong Man, The Outsiders, and Pal Joey. Selected regional credits include American Conservatory Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Lyric Repertory Company, Guthrie Theatre, and the Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. Edmond also works proudly with Broadway and Beyond as well as Black Theatre United. Proud graduate of the Stage Management program at the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale and the University of Central Florida.

CAMELLA COOPILTON (Assistant Stage Manager, she/her). Camella Coopilton’s stage management credits include: Both/And by Carolyn Ratteray at The Wallis Annenberg/Boston Court, SHE by Martow Wyatt at Antaeus Theatre Company, Blues for an Alabama Sky by Pearl Cleage, and King James by Rajiv Joseph at Center Stage Group.

JULIA FORMANKE (Assistant Stage Manager, she/her) is a Bay Area based stage manager. Recent credits include: A Strange Loop, Hopper (The Soul Train Musical American Conservatory Theater), Let The Right One In, Cambodian Rock Band, Goddess, Culture Clash (Berkeley Repertory Theatre), Sleeping Beauty: Panto in the Presidio (Presidio Theatre), Romeo y Juliet, House of Joy, and Everybody (California Shakespeare Theater).

MICHAEL R. JACKSON (Book, Music, and Lyrics; he/him) is one of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people of 2022. His Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics Circle winning A Strange Loop (which had its 2019 world premiere at Playwrights Horizons in association with Page 73 Productions) received 11 Tony nominations in 2022, and was called "a full-on laparoscopy of the heart, soul, and loins" as well as a "gutsy, jubilantly anguished musical with infectious melodies" by Ben Brantley for The New York Times. In The New Yorker, Vinson Cunningham wrote, “To watch this show is to enter, by some urgent, bawdy magic, an ecstatic and infinitely more colorful version of the famous surreal lithograph by M. C. Escher: the hand that lifts from the page, becomes almost real, then draws another hand, which returns the favor.” In addition to A Strange Loop, he also wrote book, music and lyrics for White Girl in Danger. Awards and associations include: a New Professional Theatre Festival Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, a Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, an ASCAP Foundation Harold Adamson Award, a Whiting Award, the Helen
The Comeuppance

In addition, Arnulfo received a Tony nomination, in at Playwrights Horizons and Anna K. Jacob's Award, a Drama Desk Award, an Obie Award, a Fred (Barbican Theater), (Leeds Playhouse), Woolly Mammoth. International Tour: The Magnetic

Playwrights Horizons, Public Theatre, Roundabout, CSC, Lincoln Center, MCC, MTC, New Group, Playwrights Horizons, Public Theatre, Roundabout, Second Stage, Signature, Soho Rep. Regional: Alley Theatre, Berkeley Rep, CTG, Guthrie, Steppenwolf, Wooly Mammoth. International Tour: The Magnetic Fields: 50 Song Memoir. In addition, Arnulfo received an OBIE for Sustained Excellence in Set Design, as well as a Special Citation Obie as part of the Creative Team of the Pulitzer Prize winning A Strange Loop. Arnulfo is a recipient of a Princess Grace Fabege Theater Award, Lucille Lortel Award, and a multiple Henry Hewes Design nominee. arnulfomaldonado.com

MONTANA LEVI BLANCO (Costume Designer, he/him), CTG debut. Broadway: The Skin of Our Teeth, A Strange Loop. Select Off-Broadway: Fairview, Is God Is (Soho Rep); The House That Will Not Stand (NYTW); Ain't No Mo' (Public); Opera: Champion, El Niño (Metropolitan). Honors: Tony, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Henry Hewes, and Obie Awards. Education: Oberlin College & Conservatory of Music, Brown University, and the Yale School of Drama. montanaleiviblanco.com

JEN SCHRIEVER (Lighting Designer, she/her) was lighting designer on Hippie Trip - The Soul Train Musical at A.C.T. Broadway credits include Mother Play, A Strange Loop (Tony nomination), Death of a Salesman (Tony nomination), 1776, Birthday Candles, Lackawanna Blues, What the Constitution Means to Me, Lifespan of a Fact, Eclipse, Ghetto Klown. Jen recently lit A Transparent Musical at the Mark Taper Forum in L.A. Opera credits include The Great Gatsby and The Birthday Party. Recent Broadway productions. Select regional credits include La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, Studio Theatre, Wooly Mammoth Theatre Company, Folger Theatre, and Philadelphia Theatre Company. Her film and television work includes Drive Away Dolls, HARLEM, Glory of the Invisible Man, Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations (Olivier nom.), and a number of Off-Loop, Leopoldstadt, 1776, Birthday Candles, and a number of Off-Loop. Jen has an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence and is an adjunct at Purchase College. Mom to Henry. Jenschriever.com

DREW LEY (Sound Designer, he/him), Broadway: A Strange Loop (Tony nom.), Oklahoma! (Tony nom., Drama Desk nom.), Honeymoon in Vegas (Drama Desk nom.), Chaplin (Drama Desk Award), The Winslow Boy, The Importance of Being Earnest, Present Laughter. West End: A Strange Loop, Oklahoma! (Oliver nom.), Off-Broadway: Brynolf & Lyng's Stalker; Oh Mary!, Judgment Day (Park Avenue Armory); Oklahoma! (St. Ann’s); and others. Regional: The Old Globe, ART, Williamstown, Huntington, Two River Theater, and others. Other: Reconfiguration: An Evening with Other Lives at BAM; Metropolitan Opera 125th Anniversary Gala, annual holiday installations for Saks 5th Avenue, Carter, and others.


SEAN KANA (Music Director/Keys 1, he/him), Kana is an award-winning music director known for his recent work on Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical, as well as being the associate music director for the show run and pre-Broadway tour of Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Sean just finished a world premiere new musical at Brava Theatre, Larry the Musical, where he served as co-composer, orchestrator, and music director. Kana has been involved with BRT as music director on Swifted Away: A New Musical Tale. Sean has worked extensively with TheatreWorks and CenterREP and has toured around the globe in varying capacities. seankana.com

CHELSEA PACE (Intimacy, she/her) returns to A.C.T. following her work on Big Data. Pace’s credits include the Broadway productions of A Strange Loop, Ain’t Too Proud, and K-POP, and a number of Off-Loop, Leopoldstadt, A Strange Loop, 1776, Birthday Candles, and a number of Off-Loop. Jen has an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence and is an adjunct at Purchase College. Mom to Henry. Jenschriever.com

KATIE CRADDOCK (Casting, she/her) is the literary manager and casting associate at A.C.T. Her favorite casting processes here so far include The Headlands, The Wizard of Oz, Big Data, and workshops of commissions by Aleshea Harris, Ensa Davis, Craig Lucas, Ryan/Nicole Austin & Adesha Adelefa & Beau Lewis, Anne Washburn, and Kate Atwell. Previously, she was the artistic associate at Berkeley Rep, where she supported season planning, casting, and dramaturgy; mentored artistic fellows; moderated post-show discussions; taught playwrighting and dramaturgy to teens; served on the board/staff anti-racism taskforce; and facilitated the making of new plays at The Play Floor.

NAILAH HARPER-MALEVUX (Associate Director, she/her) is a director and a member of the Shared Leadership Team at Crowded Fire Theater. Directing credits include the West Coast premiere of Edit Annie by Mary Glen Fredrick and the world premiere of Getting There by Dipika Guha. She has worked at Wooly Mammoth, Pasadena Playhouse, Williamstown Theater Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and Baltimore Center Stage. Yale University: BA in American Studies and Theatre Studies.

AUDREY YADAV (Associate Casting Director, she/her) is a multi-passionate, Dream Lisha; whose work exists at the intersection of coaching, consulting, personal empowerment, and creative expression. She has had the honor of working on A Strange Loop since 2019 helping to bring to life the Playwrights Horizon production and has had the pleasure to reimagine the piece with every production since! @candacehedreamdoula

ARON TACY (Associate Lighting Designer, he/him) is a lighting designer who primarily works as an associate on a wide variety of creative projects. With Jen Schriever on Broadway: A Strange Loop, 1776, Birthday Candles, Lackawanna Blues, Off-Broadway: White Girl In Danger (25T/Vineyard); Regional & Touring Includes: Hippest Trip – The Soul Train Musical (A.C.T.), A Transparent Musical (CTG), and Blue Man Group (North American Tour). Activist for equitable practices in the arts, eliminating uncompensated labor, and a union-strong entertainment industry. Proud member of Union Scenic Artists, Local USA 829, IATSE. aarontacy.com

DAVID MÖSCHLER (Associate Music Director) is an award-winning conductor based in Oakland and is thrilled to make his debut at CTG and return to A.C.T. where he was last seen music directing The Wizard of Oz and Mr. Burns: A Post Electric Play. Since then, he has music-directed over 135 professional theatre productions and toured with bands like The Dear Hunter and Pop Up Magazine throughout North America. Möschler has worked as Resident Music Director for YMTC since 2010 and has served on the music staff at College Light Opera Company since 2005. In 2013 he founded Awesome Orchestra Collective, which he conducts every month. davidmoschler.com
AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER is an essential gathering place bringing artists and communities together. Now in its sixth year under the leadership of Tony Award-winning Artistic Director Pam MacKinnon and Executive Director Jennifer Bielstein, A.C.T. is charged with fulfilling its mission to engage the spirit of the San Francisco Bay Area, activate stories that resonate, promote a diversity of voices and points of view, and empower theater makers and audiences to celebrate liveness. A.C.T. is a Tony Award-winning nonprofit theater serving almost 200,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area annually through theater, training, education, and community programs.

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

SNEHAL DESAI (Artistic Director, he/him) was appointed Center Theatre Group’s third artistic director in 2023. As an artistic leader, Snehal has sought to raise awareness on social issues that affect Angelenos through impactful and empowering storytelling. Previously, he was the Producing Artistic Director of East West Players. A Soros Fellow and the recipient of a Tanne Award, Snehal was the Inaugural Recipient of the Drama League’s Classical Directing Fellowship. He has served on the boards of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists (Caata), Theatre Communications Group (TCG), and currently serves on the board of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT). Snehal was on the faculty of USC’s graduate program in Arts Leadership and is a proud member of the Broadway League. 

MEGHAN PRESSMAN (Managing Director/CEO, she/her) joined Center Theatre Group in 2019. Previously, she served as Managing Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company (D.C.), Director of Development for Signature Theatre (N.Y.), and Associate Managing Director of Berkeley Rep. She is a graduate of Yale School of Drama/Yale School of Drama and serves as a mentor in the Theater Management program. Meghan has served as the Vice-Chair for the Theatre Communications Group Board of Directors and is a member of the Broadway League.

DOUGLAS C. BAKER (Producing Director, he/him) joined Center Theatre Group in 1990. Doug is an active member of the Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network (IPN), and is a proud member of the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers (ATPAM). In 2013, Doug received the Broadway League’s prestigious Outstanding Achievement in Presenter Management Award.

LINDSAY ALLBAUGH (Associate Artistic Director, she/her) is a member of Center Theatre Group’s artistic staff and has served in varying capacities for the past 15 years. Selected producing credits include—Mark Taper Forum: Archduke, Bent, What the Butler Saw, Steward of Christendom, Waiting for Godot; Kirk Douglas Theatre: Block Party, Big Night, Good Grief, Vicki, Throw Me on the Burn pile and Light Me Up, Endgame, Women Laughing Alone With Salad, Chavez Ravine, Race, different words for the same thing, The Nether. Co-Artistic Director of the Elephant Theatre 2004–2014.

GORDON DAVIDSON (Founding Artistic Director) led the Taper throughout its first 38 seasons, guiding over 300 productions to its stage and winning countless awards for himself and the theatre—including the Tony Award for theatrical excellence, Margo Jones Award, The Governor’s Award for the Arts, and a Guggenheim fellowship. The Kentucky Cycle and Angels in America (Part One) won the Pulitzer in consecutive years and, in 1994, three of the four plays nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play were from the Taper (Angels in America won). In 1989, Gordon took over the Ahmanson and, in 2004, he produced the inaugural season in the Kirk Douglas Theatre.

CENTER THEATRE GROUP, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading not-for-profit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director, Snehal Desai, Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman, and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs the Mark Taper Forum and the Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. Center Theatre Group is one of the country’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics, and circumstances to serve Los Angeles. Founded in 1967, Center Theatre Group has produced more than 700 productions across its three stages, including such iconic shows as Zoot Suit; Angels in America; The Kentucky Cycle; Biloxi Blues; Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992; Children of a Lesser God; Curtains; The Drowsy Chaperone; 9 to 5: The Musical; and Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo. CenterTheatreGroup.org
Come Together: Creating Community

By Zach Stafford

In 2019, I was living in New York City, and one day my phone rang. It was a call from a dear friend and collaborator, songwriter Benj Pasek, who could not stop gushing over a show he’d just seen Off-Broadway called A Strange Loop.

Soon after this call, the show would win a Pulitzer and become a darling within the New York theatre scene as people began to see more and more how brilliant Michael R. Jackson was and continues to be. And Benj, a friend of Michael’s already, was making sure everyone in town—even outside the theatre world—knew how amazing it was.

With every call he made, he was not just able to talk a lot of us into seeing the show who may have missed it otherwise. And eventually many of us finally got to meet producer Barbara Whitman who was then able to create an incredible tapestry of people to join her in bringing this show to life on Broadway. People including luminaries like Jennifer Hudson, RuPaul, Billy Porter (and many others) who all stood up as co-producers during a global pandemic to make sure the world got to see how incredible A Strange Loop is on Broadway.

If you’re reading this right now, it means you are probably seated for a production of the show as it continues to live a life way past the streets of New York City—and even London—here in California. And how it got here to you is through very similar efforts of community, friendship, and people stepping up for Broadway to make sure art like this can be seen by as many people as possible.

The incredible communities that make up both the American Conservatory Theater of San Francisco and Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles, came together and worked tirelessly to find a path for this show to make its West Coast premiere. Through their partnership, this show was able to dream a California dream with the original creative team coming in to help shape it with a brand-new cast plus our original Thought 4 (Tony nominee John-Andrew Morrison) returning.

In the midst of all these heroic efforts, our friends at Gilead—who had always been so supportive of the show since Broadway—raised their hands to do something many companies would never do: sponsor a piece of theatre. But they didn’t stop there and neither did our two theatres presenting this amazing show for you now.

As A Strange Loop makes its California debut, A.C.T. and CTG will be doing deep community engagement work—thanks to our producing partner, Gilead—to ensure communities that are rarely seen in theatre are not only welcomed to these performances, but celebrated while they are here. This will be done through amazing nights like a Black Out Night and Pride celebrations.

They have also chosen community partners who do the real work every day in many communities to make sure they have tickets to join our ever growing Strange family—among many other initiatives all in the hopes that people are as changed by this piece as many of us were back in NYC a few years ago.

All of this—everything from the initiatives to just the act of presenting this performance you’re about to witness—are being done as ways to build bridges for us all to come together. And it couldn’t happen at a better time.

We are all currently living in a country where LGBTQ+ folks, people of color, and those that live on the intersections of these two identities face so many hurdles in front of us. And a lot of the vitriol or hate we face across this country begins with people not truly knowing our stories, which is what makes A Strange Loop so important today—even every day.

Because, at the end of the day, the act of bringing people together from all walks of life to witness a story is still radical and art can still touch each and everyone of us if we let it. It is why all of us involved in theatre making keep getting up every single day and fighting to keep doing it over and over again—like our own beautiful and strange…loop.

And it is through this act of you sitting here in this theatre that we can all begin to peer through a window into someone else’s life, someone else’s story, and realize the world is big enough for all of us.

Zach Stafford is a journalist, editor, and a Tony Award-winning producer. He is the co-host of the SiriusXM podcast Vibe Check, which The New York Times named one of the best podcasts of 2022. Prior, he was the first Black editor-in-chief of The Advocate, served as the chief content officer of Grindr, and was a journalist at The Guardian. Zach is also the author of two books titled Boys and When Dogs Heal. In 2019, he was included in the Forbes 30 Under 30 list and named as one of the most influential Black people living today by The Root.
“FAST, FURIOUS, FUNNY”
  —The Philadelphia Inquirer

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THANK YOU for being a part of these moments and for being a part of our community.
JOIN US for a year of special programs and events to celebrate this milestone.
Learn more: @CTGCommunity