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HOBO KING

By: Javon Johnson

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Director

*◇ Anthony Irons

Stage Manager

Razor Wintercastle

Assistant Stage Manager

Kimelia Carter

Production Manager

Catherine Allen

Scenic & Props Design

Andrei Onegin

Costume Designer

Delia Ridenour

Lighting Design

Richard Norwood

Sound Design/Musical Direction

Sean Sykes

Props Design

Jeremiah Barr

***Actor's Equity Association**

◇ Congo Square Ensemble Member

Congo Square Theatre Company (Administrative Offices),
4434 South Lake Park Avenue, Suite 105, Chicago, IL 60653
Office: 773 296-1108 | www.congosquaretheatre.org

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CAST LIST

*Velma Austin	Freda
*Edgar Sanchez	Slim
Ann Delaney	Spirit 2/Cop
Jake Ganzer	Spirit 1/Understudy - Doodlebug
Lionel Gentle	Blind Man
Brian Keys	Toothpick
Lamarr J. Kidd	Doodlebug
Lyle Miller	Preacher Man
*Edgar Sanchez	Slim
Kyle Smith	Lazy Boy
Robyn Durham	Understudy - Freda/Spirit 2
Torrence Murphy	Understudy - Slim/Toothpick

*Member of Actor's Equity Association
◇ Congo Square Ensemble

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* Ann Joseph
*Monifa Sims
* Aaron Todd Douglas
* TaRon Patton
*Aimee K. Bryant
* Javon Johnson
Derrick Sanders
*Anthony Irons

*Bakesta King
*Daniel Bryant
*Ericka Ratcliff
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*Malkia Stampley

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ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



My biggest concern in writing *Hobo King* was how to avoid the depressing world of the downtrodden? How to make this a palatable theatrical experience full of truth and entertainment so that the world *Hobo* doesn't scare the audience away? I leaned heavily on the very thing that inspired these characters and their story; the universal struggle for Liberty and Justice for All. Sparked by a news broadcast of an unarmed homeless man shot and killed mirrored our nations current and all too often crisis of police brutality and lack of trust in those who swore to protect and serve. These victims may spawn a mass protest, civil rights activists may speak on their behalf, families will mourn with outrage, lawyer and eyewitnesses may all speak on behalf of justice. However, when the victim has no family. When the victim's world is reduced to a subway platform, a freeway underpass, a dark alley, an abandoned building; when the victim's home is a moment in time and space filled with hope and fear; when the victim is unarmed, unwanted and in many cases unnoticed and unknown. Who will protest his death? Who will fight for his cause? Who will be the voice that will shout for his life to be remembered? Who will even notice he is gone? Even more, who will protect them against those who attempt to force them into the darkest shadows of this world? It is with this curiosity I began to write *Hobo King* with the hope that we will not only see the forgotten but that we will also see ourselves and remember that...

"... your today can turn into sorrow at the drop of a dime and that same dime you refused to give to somebody else will have you begging for a dime of your own." - Slim

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I'll just say it. Chicago has a homeless problem. Last year, there were about 140,000 homeless Chicagoans (Source: *ABC News*). This includes people living in shelters, as well as on the streets. We're talking about veterans, school children, citizens with mental and physical disabilities, survivors of abuse, and working moms and dads. Every demographic you can imagine is among the homeless. I think Javon has given us a piece that reminds us that the person we walk past everyday is someone's son or daughter. They've had rich history, meaningful relationships and yes, dreams may still burn in them.

So why do this play? Why now? The play offers a look into the lives of a group that has not been seen onstage very often. Their lives and their stories are part of our community. I also believe the things that threaten the characters of *Hobo King* are metastasizing all over the country. There is an overwhelming tide of fear. People are uncertain about their future, about how they're supposed to fit in. There are deep fears of displacement, fears of being the next target of intense backlash. Trust seems to be a waning luxury. People are no longer certain of allies, even among family members. Is there a battery of legislation coming down the pike that will single you out? Will you be criminalized just for being you? And when you're deemed unworthy, will you, and people like you, be pushed further and further into obscurity?

But *Hobo King* is also about resistance. Going quietly into the night would not be the slogan for most of the family of these street dwellers. The play gives us love and laughter. Yes, it shows the pain, but also lets music burst out of that pain. I think *Hobo King* shows us what is possible. Even for a group with so little material wealth or political power, where there is community, there is hope.

-Anthony Irons

DIRECTOR - ANTHONY IRONS



Anthony is an ensemble member of Congo Square Theatre Company, where his last directing credit was *The Colored Museum*. His acting credits for Congo Square include: *King Hedley II*, *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Brothers of the Dust*, *King of Coons*, *The Fall of Heaven*, *Top Dog / Under Dog* and *True West* (co-produced by American Theatre Company). Anthony has performed at the Goodman, Court, Lookingglass and numerous regional theatres, as well as performed and directed at The Second City. He has garnered a Black Theatre Alliance Award, two African American Arts Alliance Awards and a Jeff nomination. Anthony also wrote and produced *After the Fires*, a musical tribute to the lives affected by the attacks of Sept 11, 2001. A live concert was presented through Congo Square at the Harold Washington Library for the 12-year anniversary of 9/11.

PROFILES



VELMA AUSTIN

(FREDA) Velma is happy to return to Congo Square in *Hobo King*. Her last appearance at Congo Square was in *Brothers*

of the Dust. Velma has appeared at The Artistic Home in the production of *Trouble In Mind*, at The Seattle Repertory Theatre as Birdie in the production of *Birdie Blue* and multiple Chicago theatres including: The Goodman, Victory Gardens Theater and the Steppenwolf. Some of her grand productions include *Intimate Apparel*, *Denmark*, *Joe Turner's Come And Gone*, *God's Trombones*, *UnSpoken Prayers*, *Bourbon At The Border*, *Waiting To Be Invited*, *The Sovereign State of Boogedy Boogedy*, *The Sutherland*, and *Root Causes*, to name a few. You may have also seen Velma at the St. Louis, Madison and Milwaukee Repertory Theatres. Her TV credits include: *Chicago Fire* and most recently, *Empire*. Velma's awards include a Jeff award for Best Actress in a Revue for *The Colored Museum*; a Woodie award for Outstanding Supporting Access in *Screened In Porch*; Black Theatre Alliance award for best Actress in *Intimate Apparel*; and most recently, she was nominated for a Special Recognition Outstanding Award for her performance in *Court-Martial at Fort*

Devens. Velma made her film debut in *Losing Isaiah* with Halle Berry and Jessica Lange, followed by *Light It Up* with Usher and Vanessa Williams. When not on stage, Velma enjoys traveling and cooking. First, giving thanks to God, Velma would also take this time to say thanks to her husband and sons Jeffery and JP for their continued support.



EDGAR SANCHEZ

(SLIM) Edgar Miguel Sanchez is thrilled to be onstage again with Congo Square. He was last seen with Congo in Darren Canady's

Brothers of the Dust. Other Chicago credits include: *Dutchman/Transit* (American Blues); *Stop.Reset* (Goodman); *Water by the Spoonful* and *Native Son* (Court Theatre); *The Wheel* (Steppenwolf); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Twelfth Night* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *This Is Our Youth* (Sankofa Theatre Company); *The Ghost Is Here* (Vitalist); *Fever Chart* (Eclipse); *Sinbad: The Untold Story* (Adventure Stage); *1001* (Collaboraction); *Red Noses Remount* (Strawdog); *Welcome to Arroyo's* (American Theatre Company); *Wilson Wants it All* (The House). Regional Credits: *Fences* (Arizona Theatre Company, IRT, Milwaukee Rep); *Water by the Spoonful* (Theatre Squared);

the title role in *Hamlet* (The Gable Stage); *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *The Admirable Crichton* (American Players Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, and *The Comedy of Errors* (The Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Major television credits: *Sense 8*.



ANN DELANEY (SPIRIT 2/COP) Ann Delaney is from Palatine, Illinois and is a recent graduate of Columbia College Chicago. Her Chicago theater credits

include: *Nice Work if You Can Get It*, *Spamalot*, and *Big Fish* (Theater at the Center); *All Our Tragic*, *The Mikado*, *HMS Pinnaflore*, and *Pirates of Penzance* (The Hypocrites); *Mr. Burns* (Theater Witt) and *Fancy Nancy* (Northbrook Theater). Ann also loves bird watching and her wonderful family!



JAKE GANZER (SPIRIT 1/UNDERSTUDY - DOODLEBUG) Previous credits include *Applause*, *Side Show* (Porchlight Music Theatre), *Mame* (Light

Opera Works), *Young Frankenstein* (Lake Forest Theatre), *Oklahoma!*, *The Photographer* (Columbia College Chicago), *Cabaret* (Brightside Theatre). Choreography and direction credits include *Urinetown*, *The Addams Family*, *Millie*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Victor J. Andrew High School), *Mary Poppins* (The Drama Group) and *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Summer Place Theatre). "Much love to my teachers, friends, and most importantly family for the love and support."



LIONEL GENTLE (BLIND MAN) Lionel Gentle is honored to make his Congo Square debut. Lionel would like to thank the cast and crew for being

loving, trusting, caring and unselfish through this wonderful process. Lionel has been a professional actor in Chicago and New York for over 10 years. He's been in productions of *Anna In The Afterlife*, *The Whaleship Essex*, *The Electric Baby*, *Broken Thread*, *Two Trains Running*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *Native Son*, *Cut Flowers*, and *Stage Directions*, to name a few. He has worked with Shattered Globe Theatre, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, Urban Theatre Company, Illinois Theatre Center, Harassing Chicago, Stage Actors Ensemble, and Chicago Theater Company. His film credits include *Black Butterfly*, *The Dress*, *Message Received*, *Three Little Trees*, *Pontification*, *1-800-Rent-A-White-Folk*, and *Love Shorts*. Lionel studied at Parkland College and The Neighborhood Playhouse, School of Theater in New York City. His mission as an actor is to live.



BRIAN KEYS (TOOTHPICK) Brian Keys is an actor, singer and multi-instrument musician born and raised on the south side of Chicago. Brian is

beyond thrilled to be taking the stage at Congo Square. Regional Theatre Credits include: Olney Theatre Center, Asolo Rep Theatre, Northlight Theatre and Lookingglass Theatre. Additional Chicago Theatre Credits include: The Hypocrites Theatre, The Gift Theatre, Profiles Theatre, Eclipse Theatre, Collaboration Theatre, Court Theatre, Raven Theatre, MPAACT

Theatre and ETA Creative Arts Foundation. Television Credits include: Chicago Fire (NBC Universal), Chicago Justice (NBC Universal), A.P.B. (FOX Television Studios) and Project Afterlife (Discovery Networks).



LAMARR J. KIDD (DOODLEBUG) Jerry LaMarr Kidd, Jr. is from the westside of Chicago. He has been acting since 2006 in stage plays and

features films such as *"The Falls"*, *"Hustle Reloaded"*, *"Prodigal Thug"* and *"One Dream Away"*, among others. He found the passion for theatre after taking a class during his last semester as a senior, not knowing that this craft would shape his future. It is such a honor to be a part of this production and I look forward to riding the wave.



LYLE MILLER (PREACHER MAN) Lyle Miller has been featured in over 50 stage productions over the last 25 years, including *The Jackie*

Wilson Story, *Men Of Soul* and *The Marvin Gaye Story* (Black Ensemble Theater). He was the star of *I Gotcha*, *The Story of Joe Tex*, for which he won the Black Excellence (AAAA of Chicago) Best Actor Award in 2009. Lyle was the Vocal Arranger for The Black Ensemble Theater from 1999 - 2016. He has also performed with The Lyric Opera of Chicago, The African American Drama Company (San Francisco) The Apollo Theater (NYC), and The National Black Theatre Festival (Winston-Salem, NC). Lyle is a lead vocalist in Chicago's Second Hand Soul Band. "Kat, you are my world!"



KYLE SMITH (LAZY BOY) Kyle Smith is thrilled to return to Congo Square where he was last seen in *Nativity: More Than A Miracle*. A Chicago

native, born and raised, he's had a love for the arts his entire life. Smith enjoys singing, dancing, and also taking on crew work behind the scenes. A few Chicago credits include *A Raisin In The Sun* (Harper College), *Zooman And The Sign* (Harlem Theater Company), *Men Of Soul* (Black Ensemble Theater) -Prince (BTAA Award for Most Promising Actor), and *The Other Cinderella* (Black Ensemble Theater). Smith was also recognized as one of Chicago Tribune's Top 10 Fresh New Faces of 2015. He thanks God first and foremost for the endless blessings, and friends and family for their love and support. This one is for you Uncle D!



ROBYN DURHAM (UNDERSTUDY - FREDA/SPIRIT 2)

Robyn was trained at the Chicago Actors Studio, under the artistic direction of Edward Dennis Fogell; teachers Richard Alphert and Sarah Clark. Dance is a huge part of Robyn's life, she has danced and performed with several companies and dance productions. She was trained under Deeply Rooted Dance Theater Artistic Directors Iega Kevin Jeff, and Gary Abbott, as well as Artistic Director Joel Hall. Additionally, Robyn has the lead role in an upcoming production based around plus size women called, *Womanifesto*.



TORRENCE MURPHY
**(UNDERSTUDY - SLIM/
TOOTHPICK)** Torrence

W. Murphy is an experienced actor in stage, and screen. Film credits include: *Losing*

Isaiah, The Deal, The Misanthrope, The Age of Othello, Running Fox, In Through the Out Door, Black Korea and *Dualmania*. Theatre

credits include: *Hellcab* (Famous Door Theatre Co), *The Foreigner* (Village Players Theatre), *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Amen Corner* (Hidden Stages Theatre), *Purlie Victorious* (Zion Productions), *Nightwatch* (Trinity Players Productions) and *Elvira and the Lost Prince* (ETA Creative Arts), among others. He studied at Second City, Sarantos Studios and Chicago Actors Studio.

PRODUCTION TEAM

RAZOR WINTERCASTLE (Stage Manager)

Razor has worked in the Chicago area for quite some time with various theatre, dance, and production companies.

Razor has also worked in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, South America, Central America, Canada and all over the place doing everything from theatre, film dance, concerts, bands, you name it. It is a pleasure to work with Congo Square. Stay Sharp.

KIMELIA CARTER (Assistant Stage Manager)

Kimelia R. Carter is a college student who lives in Chicago studying Theater Arts and Creative Writing. She is a recent alumni of South Shore International College Prep High School. She is new to the Congo Square; but she has worked with the South Shore Opera company as an assistant stage manager, and hopes to get as much experience as possible.

CATHERINE ALLEN (Production Manager)

Catherine is an Artistic Associate and resident production manager at Step Up Productions where she has worked since 2013. As a production manager, she has worked with Steep Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Pegasus Theatre Chicago, Haven Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre Youth Ensemble, and Pine Box Theater Company (where she was also an ensemble member). She served as associate producer at The Mission Theater,

founded by Chicago improv talents TJ Jagodowski and David Pasquesi, during its inaugural year. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she received a BFA in Acting.

ANDREI ONEGIN (Scenic Design)

Andrei is an award winning set designer with almost 35 years in theater, covering more than 120 productions, and has worked for such legendary companies as Moscow Art Theater, Kabuki and Comédie-Française. He received his MFA in 1992 from The Moscow Art Theater School with a concentration on set design, engineering and production. Andrei has been successfully designing and fabricating as a general contractor, developer, scene shop foreman and project manager in the Chicagoland since 1998. With Congo Square Theatre Company, where he is resident set designer and Artistic Associate, Andrei has created design for *The Colored Museum, The Nativity, Brothers of the Dust, Bulrusher, The Fall of Heaven, King Hedley II, Twisted Melodies, What I Learned in Paris* and most recently, *A Small Oak Tree Runs Red*. Andrei has been nominated and has won multiple awards for his set design with Congo Square, including: 2016 BTA Award for set design on *What I Learned in Paris*; 2011 BTA Award nominee for Best Set Design for *Brothers of the Dust*; 2013 & 2014 Equity Wing Jeff Award nominee for

Best Midsize Set Design for *Bulrusher and King Hedley II*; 2013 & 2014 Black Excellence Award winner for Outstanding Technical Support (set) , 2013, 2014 and 2015 BTA Award winner for Best Set Design; 2014 Non-Equity Wing Jeff Award recipient for best set design.

RICHARD NORWOOD (Light Designer)

Past designs for Congo Square are *Twisted Melodies*, *King Hedley II* and most recently, *A Small Oak Tree Runs Red*, for which Rich was nominated for a Jeff award and was named a winner of a BTA award for lighting design. Other recent designs include *In the Time of Butterflies* for Teatro Vista, *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*, *Jamaica Farewell* and *Louis and Keely 'Live' at the Sahara* for Hershey Felder Presents at the Royal George Theatre. Richard is the resident light designer for Trap Door Theatre, recent designs there include *How to Explain the History of Communism to Mental Patients*, and *The Fairytale Lives of Russian Girls*. Richard is the production manager for the theatre at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

SEAN SYKES (Sound Designer/Musical Direction)

Sean Sykes returns to Congo Square this season after last working as Musical Director for *The Colored Museum*. He got his start with Comedy Sportz in '05, and has since Musical Directed, played piano, or written music for iO, sketch group Johnny's Regret, Second City at Sea, Girl's Night Out, and has recently signed on for his fourth consecutive Outreach and Diversity, known as Brown Co., for the Second City. Musically educated at home and in school, Sean has played piano for nearly fifteen years. After receiving a Bachelors in Music Education from the University of Mississippi, and moving to Chicago, he has taught pre-k, 3-8th grade and general music for 5 years at St. Edmund school in Oak Park.

JEREMIAH BARR (Props Designer)

Jeremiah Barr-technically inclined. Jeremiah is general jack of all trades, from technical direction, scenic design, props, carpentry, rigging, stage and production management. He works with some of the best people around including Promethean theater ensemble, City Lit Theater, Northlight Theater, and Aston Rep. which he is founding member of. He wishes to send warm wishes to everyone with PTE and to his lovely and most talented wife, Samantha.



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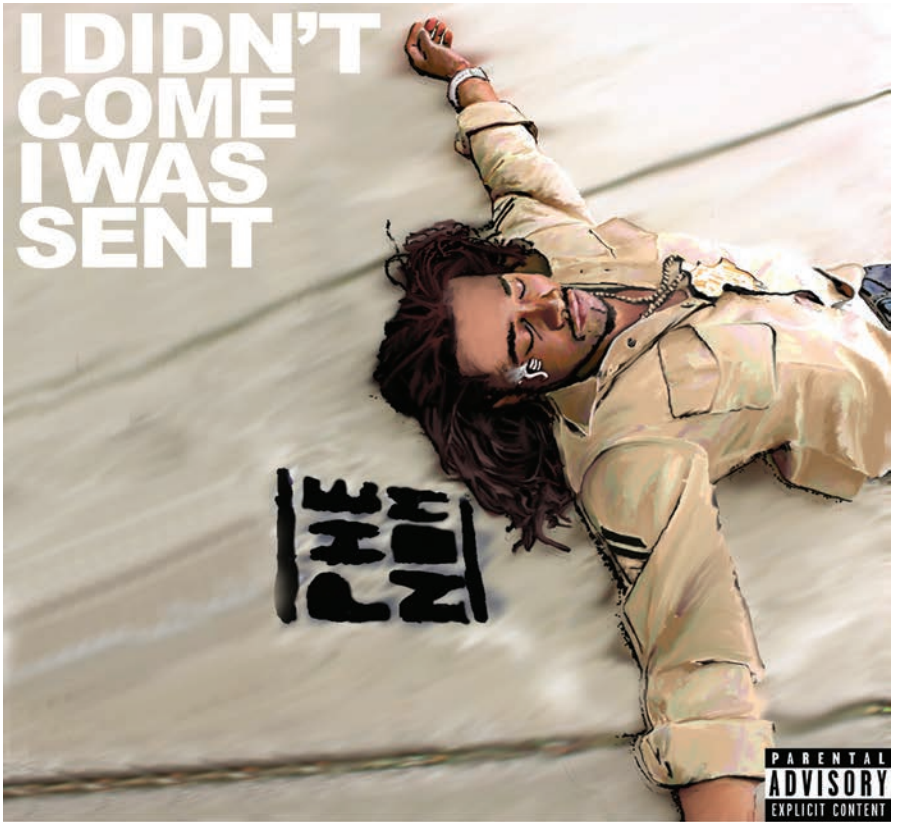


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twisted Melodies



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Directed by Derrick Sanders

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