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Baltimore Center Stage Announces Cast and Creative Team for *The Folks at Home*

Jane Kaczmarek, E. Faye Butler, Eugene Lee, among the star power tapped for R. Eric Thomas' Baltimore Center Stage Debut

Baltimore, MD February 15, 2022— Baltimore Center Stage announced the cast and creative team for the World Premiere of R. Eric Thomas' ***The Folks at Home***. This is the theater's third Mainstage production of the 2021/22 Season and includes an all-star cast and a bold-name creative team.

Set in South Baltimore, Roger and Brandon, an interracial couple, are just doing the best they can. Their mortgage is late, Roger's been laid off for months, and there might be a ghost in the attic— not to mention, some additional house guests. Heartwarming, lively, and full of nostalgic good times, ***The Folks at Home*** is a contemporary take on the Golden Age of family sitcoms. From the hilarious mind of R. Eric Thomas and directed by Obie Award-winner **Stevie Walker-Webb**, the cast features familiar stars of stage and screen including **Jane Kaczmarek**, whose work on *Malcolm in the Middle* earned Golden Globe and Emmy nominations, and stage favorites like longtime Baltimore Center Stage collaborator **E. Faye Butler** and Broadway veteran **Eugene Lee**.

"I could not be happier to have such a powerhouse community of artists in the room for *The Folks at Home*," says Baltimore Center Stage Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra. "Their work has been featured on stages across the country, on screens big and small, and now right here in Baltimore - the fact that they're coming together to breathe life into this brand-new play by a Baltimore writer exemplifies the best of what we do at Baltimore Center Stage."

The cast includes **Alexis Bronkovic*** (Brittany Littlefield/Alice), **Brandon E. Burton*** (Roger Harrison), **Christopher Sears*** (Brandon Littlefield Harrison), **E. Faye Butler*** (Pamela Harrison), **Eugene Lee*** (Vernon Harrison), and **Jane Kaczmarek*** (Maureen Littlefield). Full Bios are included herein. The creative team includes **Stevie Walker- Webb** (Director), **Simean Carpenter** (Scenic Designer), **Harry Nadal** (Costumer Designer), **Sherrice Mojgani** (Lighting Designer), **Frederick Kennedy** (Sound Designer), **Erin McCoy*** (Stage Manager), and **Avery James Evans*** (Assistant Stage Manager). Casting is by **JZ Casting**.

***Member of Actors' Equity Association**

***The Folks at Home* runs from Thursday, March 17 until Sunday, April 10.** It will be simulcast from Wednesday, April 6 through Sunday, April 10.

Tickets for *The Folks at Home* can be purchased at centerstage.org/plays-and-events/the-folks-at-home. Media members may request performance attendance by emailing Director of Brand Marketing, Charisse Nichols at cnichols@centerstage.org.

For other media related inquiries and interview requests please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit www.centerstage.org or call the Box Office at 410.332.0033

The Folks at Home is sponsored by Bank of America and Kramon & Graham.

About Baltimore Center Stage

Baltimore Center Stage is a professional, nonprofit institution committed to entertaining, engaging and enriching audiences through bold, innovative and thought-provoking classical and contemporary theater. Named the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage has steadily grown as a leader in the national regional theater scene. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE and Managing Director Michael Ross, Baltimore Center Stage is committed to creating and presenting a diverse array of world premieres and exhilarating interpretations of established works.

Baltimore Center Stage believes in access for all—creating a welcoming environment for everyone who enters its theater doors and, at the same time, striving to meet audiences where they are. In addition to its Mainstage and Off-Center productions in the historic Mount Vernon neighborhood, Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations among a global audience through digital initiatives, which explore how technology and the arts intersect. The theater also nurtures the next generation of artists and theatergoers through the Young Playwrights Festival, Student Matinee Series and many other educational programs for students, families, and educators.

Cast and Creative Team Bios

Alexis Bronkovic (Brittany Littlefield/Alice) Off- Broadway/New York: *The Big Broadcast*, The Barrow Group Theatre Company; *Tiny Geniuses*, Fringe NYC at the Here Arts Center. **Regional:** *Born Yesterday* (Billie Dawn), The Guthrie Theater; *Silent Sky*, earned Best Actress IRNE nomination (Henrietta Leavitt), *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley* (Elizabeth Darcy), Merrimack Repertory Theatre, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* (Elizabeth Darcy), Merrimack Repertory Theatre & Arizona Theatre Company; *Amadeus* (Constanze), Maltz Jupiter Theatre; *A Christmas Carol* (Belle), Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Postwave Spectacular*, *Heist*, Humana Festival ATL. **Web-series:** *2Some*, *Rainbow Ruthie*. **TV:** *Uncoupled*, *Law & Order SVU*, *FBI: Most Wanted*, *Blacklist*, *Younger*, *The Affair*, *Royal Pains*, *Blue Bloods*; **Film:** *Oleander*, *Jimmy & Don*, *Veritaphobia*, *The Reunion*, *On Settling Down*, *Julia*. **Education:** BA Theatre Performance from Marymount Manhattan College, Actors Theatre of Louisville Apprentice Company Alum. **Other:** Alexis is proud to be making her Baltimore Center Stage debut.

Brandon E. Burton (Roger Harrison) Regional: *Merry Wives* (The Public Theater), *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *Antony and Cleopatra* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival). Yale Theater: *Othello* (Othello), *Henry 6 pt. 3* (York, George, Bona), *Marty and the Hands That Could* (Mike Money). Yale Rep: *A Raisin in the Sun* (Bobo). Brandon is a Saint Louis, Missouri Native and former Artistic Director of The Yale Cabaret (2019-2020 Season). MFA: Yale School of Drama '20

E. Faye Butler's (Pamela Harrison) career spans 30 years performing in plays, musicals, concerts, clubs, cabarets nationally and internationally. National and Regional Tours: *Mamma Mia*, *Ain't Misbehavin*, *Dinah Was*, *Cope*, *Nonsense*. International: Performing with Washington Ballet's Blues Until June at Teatro La Habana, Cuba, Hong Kong Ballet's Great Gatsby Performing Arts Center Hong Kong

China and Shanghai Oriental Arts Center Shanghai China. Regional: La Jolla Playhouse, The Goodman Theatre, Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Steppenwolf Theatre, Arena Stage, Court Theatre, Victory Gardens Theater, Peninsula Players, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Milwaukee Rep, Yale Rep., Drury Lane, Asolo Rep., Dallas Theater Center, Paramount Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, Congo Square, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Baltimore Center Stage, Olney Theatre Center, Signature Theatre, Maine State Music Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pasadena Playhouse, Paper Mill Playhouse, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Seattle Rep., The MUNY, St. Louis Rep., Fulton Theatre, Northlight Theatre. Recipient of nine Jeffs, two Helen Hayes, four BTAA, R.A.M.I., Ovation, Sarah Siddons, Excellence in the Arts, Kathy Lampkey, Rosetta LeNoire, Guy Adkins, After Dark, John Barrymore, and two Black Excellence Awards. Inducted into the Women in the Arts Museum, Lunt-Fontanne Fellow. Most recently named Chicagooan of Year 2020. www.e-fayebutler.com

Simean “Sim” Carpenter (Scenic Designer) An award-nominated, African-American set and lighting designer from Baltimore, MD. Sim is a graduate of The Theatre School at DePaul University. He has worked as a freelance teaching artist, as well as a lighting, projection and set designer in Chicago, IL and has toured with theater companies and music groups throughout North America. He currently resides in Dallas, TX where he works as a Technical & Lighting Director for T.D. Jakes Ministries. Sim holds a deep passion for social equality. His goal as a designer is to use his many mediums to tell captivating stories that aid in the empowerment of marginalized groups. Recent credits include: *Queen of the Night*, *When Harry Met Rehab*, *The Last Pair of Earlies*, *Hoodoo Love*, *Middle Passage*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *Native Son*; with upcoming productions at Peninsula Players Theatre and Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival. Simcarpenter.com

Frederick Kennedy (Sound Designer)

Frederick is pleased to be returning to Baltimore Center Stage (*Richard and Jane and Dick and Sally – '19*). Recent work includes *It's a Wonderful Life*, a *Live Radio Play* at Hartford Stage, *Doubt* at Westport Country Playhouse, *The Forbidden City*, an audio play for Lincoln Center Theatre; *Seize the King*, with Classical Theatre of Harlem (*NY Times* Critic's Pick); *Native Son*, produced by the Acting Company at the Duke Theater in New York City; *Twelfth Night*, at Yale Repertory Theatre, with choreography by Byron Easley (CT Critics Circle best sound design nomination); and *Father Comes Home from the Wars, Parts 1, 2, and 3*, at American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco. In addition to theatrical design, he has worked for more than two decades as a jazz drummer, appearing on dozens of recordings and touring throughout North America and Europe, as well as to parts of South America, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. Member United Scenic Artists, Local 829; MFA, Yale School of Drama. www.fredkennedy.org

Avery James Evans (Assistant Stage Manager), a native of Jackson, MS, is currently in his third year of the Graduate Stage Management program at The University of California, Irvine. Recent credits include *A Grand Night for Singing* Musical Theatre West and The West Coast premiere of *Rebecca Oaxaca (Lays Down a Bunt* UCI. Evans has dedicated his career to making a change ethically in the industry primarily focusing on representation and equity, as well as youth and community outreach.

Jane Kaczmarek (Maureen Littlefield) is best known for her role as Lois on *Malcolm in the Middle*, for which she received 7 consecutive nominations for the Emmy Award as well for the Golden Globe and SAG Award. Her television career began with *The Paper Chase*, *St. Elsewhere*, and *Hill Street Blues* after graduating from The University of Wisconsin and the Yale School of Drama.

In New York, Kaczmarek has appeared both On and Off Broadway and has spent 7 seasons at Williamstown Theatre Festival where she and Alfred Molina appeared in *And No More Shall We Part*, *The Roommate* by Jen Silverman and other new plays curated by Artistic Director Mandy

Greenfield. Jane is a frequent host and reader for SELECTED SHORTS both at Symphony Space in NYC and the annual spring event at the Getty Museum in L.A.

Los Angeles credits include *KINDERTRANSPORT* (Ovation Award), the premiere of Pulitzer Prize winning *Dinner With Friends* and *Raise in Captivity* (L.A. Drama Critics Award), *GOOD PEOPLE* (Ovation nomination), at L.A. Theatre Works *Awake and Sing*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Stage Manager* in the Pasadena Playhouse - Deaf West joint production of *OUR TOWN*. She and Alfred Molina recorded *A View From the Bridge* BBC Radio and appeared as James and Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Geffen Playhouse. The production was filmed and is available for viewing on BROADWAY HD.

Kaczmarek is the founder of Clothes Off Our Back, which raised over 4 million dollars for children's charities by selling celebrity finery. She serves on the Board of the Pasadena Educational Foundation, the Pasadena Conservatory of Music and the Pasadena Playhouse. Jane has 3 children and lives in Pasadena.

Originally from Halifax, Nova Scotia, musician, composer, and sound designer **Frederick Kennedy** (Sound Designer) is fascinated by the ways in which improvisation informs design, how physical space shapes our relationship to hearing and storytelling, and how technology can affect the creative act. His primary areas of work and research involve interdisciplinary collaboration with theater, dance, and video artists. Equally at home in the free-jazz avant-garde, contemporary electro-acoustic chamber music, or modern pop music production, Frederick believes in a radical elimination of boundaries between genres. <https://www.fredkennedy.org/about>

Eugene Lee (Vernon Harrison) In 1972, while in college at Southwest Texas State (Now Texas State), Lee acted in a command performance of *A Raisin in the Sun* for President Lyndon B. Johnson at his Texas ranch. Nearly fifty years later years later he has gone on to appear on camera and extensive voice over (ADR) work in over 200 television movies, films and series and long since lost count of the number of plays he's been involved with.

He went on to appear in a lot of episodic television shows and movies, including: *The Women of Brewster Place* with Oprah Winfrey, *Dallas*, *Good Times*, *The White Shadow*, and *The District*, and the title character in *Wolf*, an award winning independent film, and recently after performing in the Broadway production of *American Son* he recreated his role in the Emmy nominated Netflix film adaptation, to name a few. He has appeared on stage across the country and across the globe. He has worked and traveled with New York's renowned Negro Theatre Ensemble, performing in the Pulitzer Prize winning *A Soldier's Play* and numerous other works. He is considered a "Wilsonian Warrior" for his many appearances in the works of August Wilson, including the Broadway production of *Gem of the Ocean*. He performed in six of Wilson's 10 plays at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and in the taped PBS recordings of all ten plays in the Century Cycle as well as in August Wilson's final autobiographical one-man piece, *How I Learned What I Learned*.

His writing credits include *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, (Episode: "Every Mother's Son") which is among a Writer's Guild designation as one of the top 100 television series, *Walker, Texas Ranger*, *Michael Hayes*, *The Journey of Allen Strange*, *The Turks* and the TV movie *Port Chicago*. His own characters come to life through his plays, one of which is *East Texas Hot Links*, which has been produced on stages from Los Angeles to New York and London's Royal Court and is published by Samuel French play publishers. His other plays include *Fear Itself*, *Somebody Called: A Tale of Two Preachers*, *Ode to Juneteenth*, *Killingsworth*, the book to the musical, *Twist* and, *Lyin' Ass* about a fictional first Black female Texas Ranger. Lee is Artist in Residence and Artistic Director of the Black and Latino Playwright's

Celebration at Texas State University which celebrated its 18th year in 2021. Through this venue, Lee has brought playwrights and students, together with professional directors and performers to work on developing new plays with those aspiring to have their voices heard. Lee was inducted into the prestigious Texas Institute of Letters in 2018. www.eugeneleeonline.com

Erin McCoy (Production Stage Manager) Broadway: *Bernhardt/Hamlet*. Broadway Tour: *Hamilton*. Off-Broadway: *Ain't No Mo*, *#BARS*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Dry Powder*, *Buzzer*, *Fidelis*; The Public Theater; *Twelfth Night*, Public Works; *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, Public Theater Shakespeare in the Park. *Sugar In Our Wounds*, MTC. Lincoln Center Directing Labs, Lincoln Center Theater. PLAY ON! Festival, Classic Stage Company/Oregon Shakespeare Festival. *Invisible Thread*, Second Stage Theater. Regional: *Shakespeare in Love*, *Jazz*, Baltimore Center Stage; *Moby-Dick*, American Repertory Theater; *Appropriate*, Westport Country Playhouse; *A View From The Bridge*, Center Theatre Group. Education: Otterbein University

Sherrice Mojgani (Lighting Designer) recently designed *The Garden* (Baltimore Center Stage), *The Heiress* and *Two Trains Running* (Arena Stage), *Spunk*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *The Scottsboro Boys* (Signature Theatre Company), *A Few Good Men*, *Sweat* (Pittsburgh Public Theater), *Trouble in Mind*, *What You Are* and *Skeleton Crew* (The Old Globe) *Roz and Ray*, *Black Pearl Sings*, and *Outside Mullingar* (San Diego Repertory Theatre), *Blue Door* and *Mud Blue Sky* (MOXIE Theatre). Sherrice is an Assistant Professor at George Mason University in Northern Virginia. She holds a BA in Theater Arts from UC Santa Cruz and an MFA in Lighting Design from UC San Diego. Smojgani.com

Harry Nadal (Costume Designer) Originally from San Juan, PR. Baltimore Center Stage: *Miss You Like Hell*. New York credits include Lincoln Center Institute, Atlantic Theater Company, Brooklyn Academy of Music, LAByrnth Theater Company, Juilliard, INTAR, HOME for Contemporary Theater and Art, Pregones/PRTT, HERE Arts Center and Theater for the New City among many. Regional credits include the 2020 world premier of *Freedom Ride* at Chicago Opera Theater, *Seven Guitars* and *A Raisin in the Sun* at Arena Stage, George Street Playhouse, TheaterWorks Hartford, UrbanArias, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, Boise Contemporary Theater and People's Light, among others. Upcoming: *Zoey's Perfect Wedding* at TheaterWorks Hartford, *Porgy and Bess* at Des Moines Metro Opera and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* at ZACH Theatre. MFA from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. www.harrynadal.com

Christopher Sears (Brandon Littlefield Harrison) Off-Broadway: *Gently Down the Stream* (The Public Theater), *The Harvest* (LCT3), *Stupid Fu**ing Bird* (The Pearl Theatre Company), *London Wall* (Mint Theater), *how I learned to become a Superhero* (Apothecary Theatre Company). Regional: *Sister Sorry* (Barrington Stage Company), *Only Yesterday* (Northern Stage), *One Man, Two Guvnors* (Pioneer Theatre Company); *Third* (Two River Theater Company); *Lord of the Flies* (Barrington Stage Company). Film: *Bruised Fruit Tastes Sweeter*, *The Wisdom Tooth*, *The ADK*. Television: *Royal Pains*, *The Michael J. Fox Show*, *Law & Order: SVU*. Proud member of Edie's Fairytale Theatre. Christopher is also a musician and painter. He has three albums available everywhere online and is currently working on an opera. Instagram @christophersart.

R. Eric Thomas (Playwright) is a Baltimore native, a national bestselling author and playwright, winner of the 2016 Barrymore Award for Best New Play and the 2018 Dramatist Guild Lanford Wilson Award. Thomas was a finalist for the 2017 Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award and two 2021 Lambda Literary Awards. He was on the writing staff for the Peabody Award-winning series *Dickinson* (AppleTV+) and

Better Things (FX) and has been commissioned or produced on stage by not only Baltimore Center Stage, but Everyman Theatre, Arden Theatre Company, Theatre Exile, Simpatico Theatre, Azuka Theatre, Single Carrot Theatre, About Face Theatre, City Theatre Miami, Act II Playhouse and more. Thomas has been the long-running host of *The Moth* in Philadelphia and D.C., and for four years was a Senior Staff Writer for *Elle.com* where he wrote “Eric Reads the News,” a daily current events and culture column with hundreds of thousands of monthly readers. In 2020 he released two books: *Here For It*, a debut memoir-in-essays that was a Read with Jenna book club pick featured on *Today*, and *Reclaiming Her Time*, a biography of Rep. Maxine Waters co-authored with Helena Andrews. Thomas is also an alumnus of The Foundry, the Lambda Literary Fellowship, and the Ingram New Works Fellowship.

Stevie Walker-Webb (Director) is an award-winning Director, Writer, and Cultural Worker, who believes in the transformational power of art. As a survivor of poverty, and the associative violence that comes with growing up black and poor in America, he creates work that liberates and reframes the narratives of marginalized groups. He is a co-founder and Executive Director of *HUNDREDSofTHOUSANDS*, an arts and advocacy non-profit that makes visual the suffering and inhumane treatment of incarcerated, mentally ill people and the policies that adversely impact their lives. Walker-Webb has received an Obie Award for Directing- *Ain't No Mo* (The Public Theater). He is a recipient of the Princess Grace Award for Theatre, The Lily Award, in honor of Lorraine Hansberry awarded by the Dramatists Guild of America, a 2050 Fellow at New York Theatre Workshop and a Wellspring Scholar. Stevie Walker-Webb is The Founding Artistic Director of the Jubilee Theatre in Waco, Texas, and has created art and theatre in Madagascar, South Africa, Mexico, Mississippi and across America. His work has been produced by: The Public Theater, American Civil Liberties Union, The New Group, Cherry Lane, Zara Aina, Woolly Mammoth, Baltimore Center Stage, La Mama, and Theatre of the Oppressed-NYC. Along with his art and advocacy work, Stevie currently teaches and creates art at Harvard University and New York University's Tisch School for the Arts.