

# theREP★

**"SOUL-STIRRING"**

*- Sarasota Herald-Tribune*

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**ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE**

**SPARRROW**

**BY LARRY PARR**

**"A MUST SEE"**

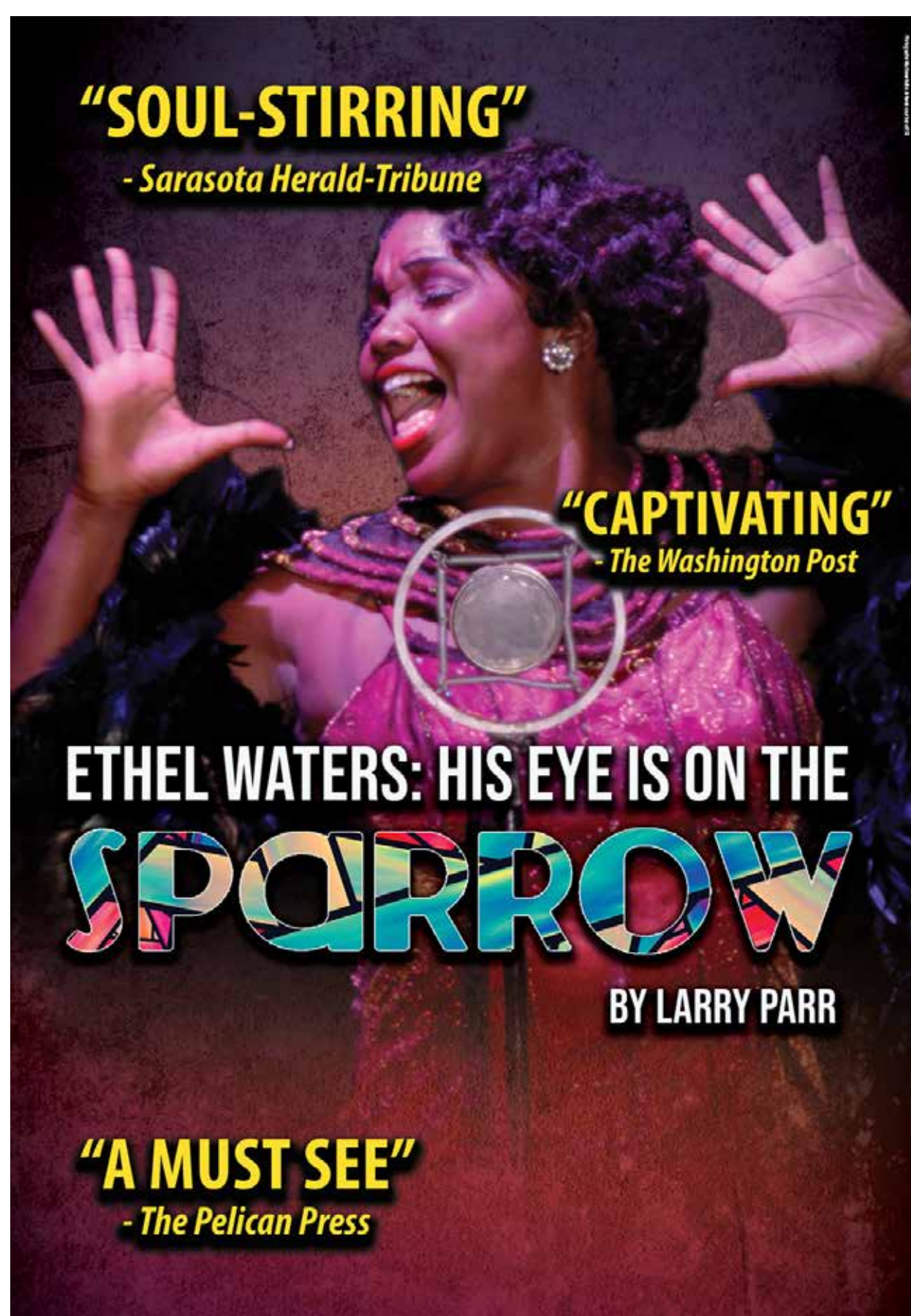
*- The Pelican Press*

Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill  
Producing Artistic Director

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Chief Operating Officer

# theREP★

Proudly presents



## ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

Written by  
Larry Parr

Featuring  
Jannie Jones\*

and  
Josh D. Smith\*

Set Design  
S. Anthony Panfilli

Lighting Design  
Travis McHale+

Costume Design  
Florida Studio Theatre  
and  
Andrea Adamczyk

Projection Design  
Nathan Scheuer+

Sound Design  
Rider Q. Stanton

Choreography  
Sue Caputo

Additional Music Arrangements  
Josh D. Smith

Production Stage Manager  
Laura Ann Crawford\*

Musical Director  
Josh D. Smith

Directed by  
Maggie Mancinelli-Cahill

*Ethel Waters: His Eye Is On the Sparrow* was developed by Florida Studio Theatre, Sarasota, Florida, where it received its world premiere production in 2005

*The play is presented by special arrangement from the author.*

# ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

## DRAMATURGY

### Ethel Waters: Queen of 'The Firsts'



History Maker Ethel Waters (1896-1977) was a brilliant blues singer and actress who, despite a very rough start in life, became the first Black woman to sing on American Radio, the first African American to star in her own television show, the first African American to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award (and the second to be nominated for an Academy Award), and holds the title as the first ever crossover artist! Waters was also the first Black woman to receive equal billing with white stars on Broadway and would become known as the first Black woman to establish herself as a major American dramatic actress in Hollywood.

A singer from age five, where her talents shone in a children's church program and a variety of church functions in and around Chester, PA, Waters would start singing at the amateur level in 1911 on her 15th Birthday. Renowned for her "hip shimmy shake," Waters was hired on the spot – after her performance at a nightclub in Philadelphia (on her 15th birthday) – and made her vaudeville debut in 1917 at the Lincoln Theater in Baltimore, MD.

Waters became known as "Sweet Mama Stringbean" – for her tall, glamorous, lithe build – on the Black Vaudeville circuit and set herself apart from other singers of her time by performing songs, like her rendition of "St. Louis Blues," in a softer and subtler style than her rivals, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. She could sing the blues beyond compare. And with her signature shimmy, soft and refined voice, and her theatrical style, Waters captivated black – and white – audiences alike.





She worked the southern vaudeville circuit until 1919 when she became one of the first Black artists hired by Black Swan Records. She gained commercial success with two of her 1921 recordings, “Down Home Blues” and “Oh, Daddy,” and landed her first professional touring gig with Fletcher Henderson and the Black Swan Troubadours.

In the late 20s, with her appearances in Harlem nightclubs and then on the lucrative “white time” vaudeville circuit, Waters became one of America’s most celebrated and highest-paid entertainers. A woman who would make history time and again, Waters garnered many laurels and many “firsts”:

April 21, 1922, she became the first Black woman to appear on radio.

In 1925 Waters was the first Black woman to star on her own at the Palace Theater in NYC.

In 1927 she made her Broadway debut in *Africana*.

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*George Dewey* WASHINGTON

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COTTON CLUB ADVERTISEMENT  
1937

1933 was a busy year for Waters. She was the first Black woman to star in a commercial network radio show as well as the first singer to introduce 50-songs that would become hits. That same year Waters became the first singer to confront racism in a popular song -- “Supper Time” -- and introduced audiences to “Stormy Weather” at the Cotton Club, a song written expressly for her by Harold Arlen.

It was also in 1933 that Waters became the first African American woman to

integrate Broadway when composer Irving Berlin cast her in a starring role in his Broadway musical *As Thousands Cheer*, a decision he made after seeing her sing “Stormy Weather.” When Berlin's show toured the South, Waters secured top billing alongside her white cast members – another first for Black actresses.



In 1939, she was the first Black singer to appear on television in *The Ethel Waters Show* a one-hour variety special that ran on NBC on June 14 - Waters was the host. Waters also grabbed the title of the first Black woman to star on Broadway in a dramatic play – *Mamba's Daughters* in '39.

Soon after, she became one of the highest paid actresses on Broadway regardless of race, and her Broadway acclaim led to a career in film and television. In 1943 she appeared in the all-black film, *Cabin in the Sky*, starring Lena Horne and directed by Vincente Minnelli.



[Click here to see Ethel Waters singing “Taking a Chance on Love” from the film Cabin in the Sky \(1943\).](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ue_jOJ8GfhI) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ue\\_jOJ8GfhI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ue_jOJ8GfhI)

In 1949, Waters became the Second African American to receive an Academy Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress, for her role in the film *Pinky*.

In 1950 she won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Actress for her performance on Broadway as Berenice in Carson McCuller's *The Member of the Wedding* - a role she would reprise on film to further acclaim two years later. It was also in 1950 that Ethel Waters obtained the title of the first African American to star in her own television show, *Beulah*.

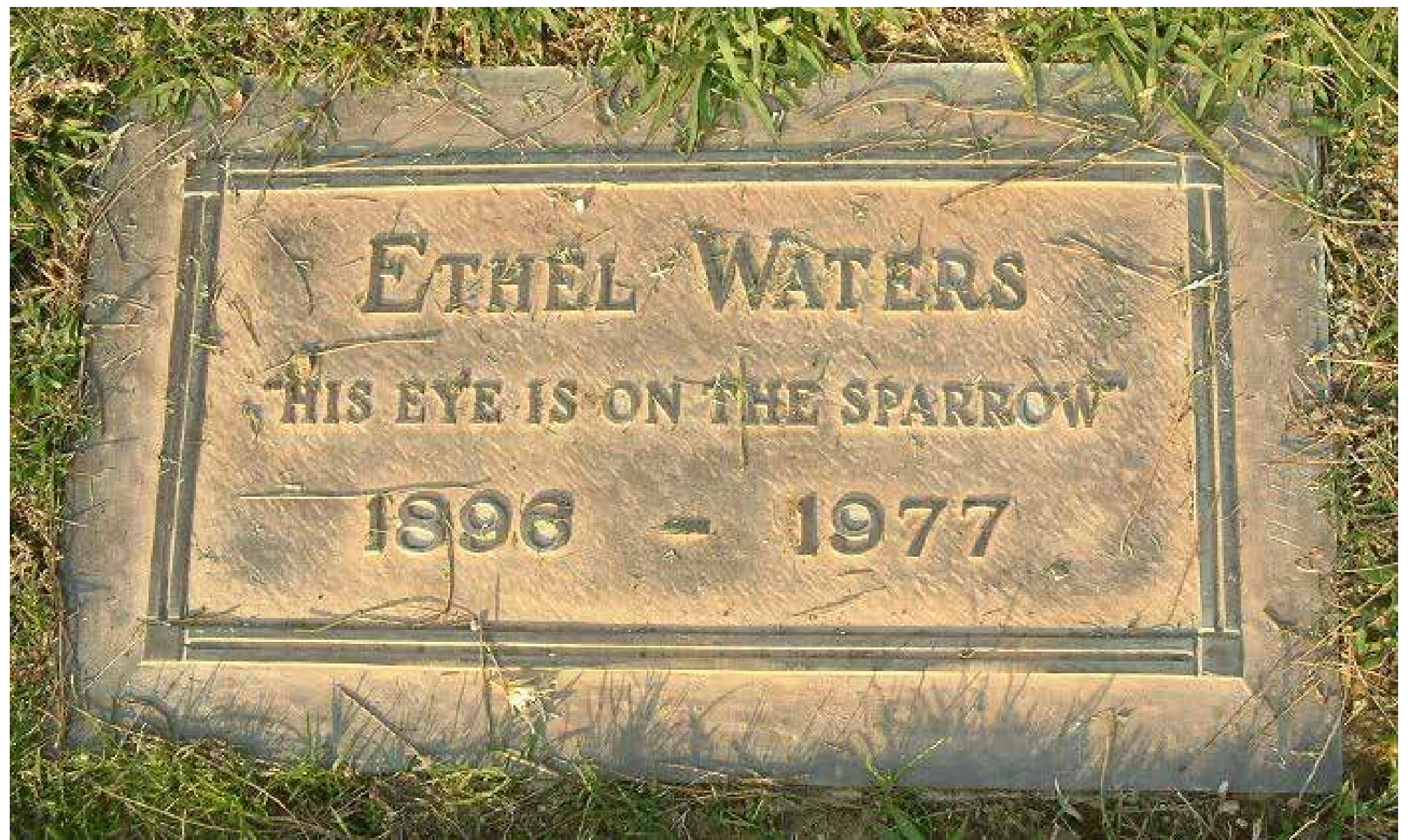
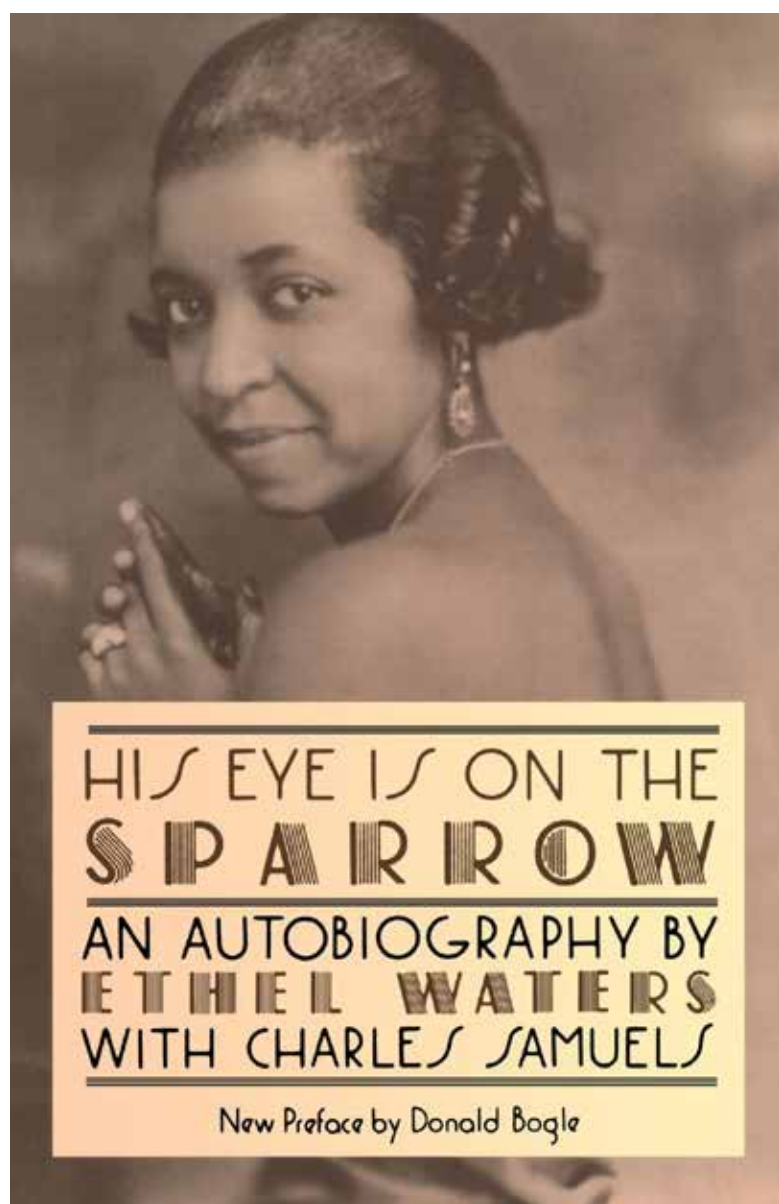
[Click here to watch two Episodes of Beulah.](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ayg\\_hByC0HM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ayg_hByC0HM)

In 1961, for her role in the “Good Night, Sweet Blues” episode of the television series Route 66, Waters became the first African American to earn an Emmy Award Nomination.

With her days as a lean and sexy siren a memory Waters became a symbol of Black dignity. In her later years, she redefined herself as an evangelical Christian, giving her last performances as a member of Billy Graham’s crusade. She had come full circle, singing in the church once again. Before her passing in 1977, Ethel Waters conquered one more art form, the publishing world. She produced two autobiographies: *His Eye is on the Sparrow* and *To Me It’s Wonderful*.

She is remembered for her fine acting, her expressive singing—and even more for her spirit.



[Click here to watch Ethel Waters sing “His Eye is On the Sparrow” on the Billy Graham Show.](#) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo3-p3GDV6w>

### Sources:

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<https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-popular-and-jazz-biographies/ethel-waters>

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[https://roanoke.com/archive/life-of-singer-ethel-waters-simmers-in-heat-wave/article\\_86c3b6b9-b1e9-5e08-b972-31064f6b7d66.html](https://roanoke.com/archive/life-of-singer-ethel-waters-simmers-in-heat-wave/article_86c3b6b9-b1e9-5e08-b972-31064f6b7d66.html)

# ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

## CAST

In order of appearance

The Piano Players.....Josh D. Smith\*

Ethel Waters.....Jannie Jones\*



**JANNIE JONES**



**JOSH D. SMITH**

## TIME AND PLACE

1957

The Billy Graham Crusade and in Ethel's Mind as she remembers her life

## SPECIAL THANKS

Florida Studio Theatre,

Richard Hopkins, Artistic Director; Rebecca Hopkins, Managing Director

Mari Taylor Floyd

## WIG STYLIST

Venus Moultrie

NO PHOTOGRAPHY IS ALLOWED DURING THE PERFORMANCE

PATRONS ARE WELCOME TO TAKE PHOTOS OF THE SET AND THEATRE BEFORE OR AFTER THE SHOW AND WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW contains references to the harsh treatment that Black Americans experienced in the early 1900s through the 1940s, including sexual and racial violence.

The show contains  
. strobe effect  
. haze

# ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

## SONG LIST

1. HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW, 1912, C. D. Martin, Charles H. Gabriel
  2. FRANKIE AND JOHNNY, traditional
  3. HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW, reprise
  4. I DON'T DIG YOU, JACK, Jack Wilson
  5. SWEET GEORGIA BROWN, 1925, Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard, Kenneth Casey
  6. THIS JOINT IS JUMPIN', 1938, J. C. Johnson, Andy Razaf, Thomas Waller, Chappell and Co., Inc.
  7. LITTLE BLACK BOY, 1934, J. C. Johnson, George Whiting, Record Music Publishing Company
  8. OLD MAN HARLEM, 1933, Rudy Vallee, Hoagy Carmichael, Southern Music Company
  9. DINAH, 1925, Sam Lewis, Joe Young, Harry Akst
  10. TAKING A CHANCE ON LOVE, 1940, John La Touche, Vernon Duke, EMI Catalogue
  11. AM I BLUE?, 1929, Grant Clarke, Harry Akst, Warner Chappell Music
  12. STORMY WEATHER, 1933, Ted Koehler, Harold Arlen, S.A. Music Co.
  13. HEAT WAVE, 1933, Irving Berlin, Irving Berlin Music Co.
  14. CABIN IN THE SKY, 1940, John La Touche, Vernon Duke, EMI
  15. BLACK AND BLUE, 1929, Fats Waller, Harry Brooks, Warner Chappell Music
  16. HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW, reprise
- 

# ETHEL WATERS: HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

## WHO'S WHO

### JANNIE JONES (Ethel Waters)

most recently received critical acclaim for her role in *Caroline Or Change* (Caroline) at Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, where she also did *Raisin* (Lena Younger). She is delighted to return to Capital Rep. in her 4th production. First of which was *Crowns* (Velma), *Black Pearl Sings* (Pearl) & *A Night With Janis Joplin* (Aretha Franklin & Nina Simone). She & Chaundra Cameron (double cast) created the role of Ethel, in *Larry Parr's Ethel Waters, His Eye Is On The Sparrow* where it premiered in 2005 at Florida Studio Theatre & again in 2018, reprised the role, brought back by popular demand. She performed with The Black Stars Of The Great White Way, that included Tony Award Winners, Norm Lewis & Andre DeShields & Emmy Winner, Obba Babatunde, at the National Black Theatre Festival. Catch her episode of *The Get Down* (Cool Herc's Mom) on Netflix & *POWER* on Startz. BROADWAY: *The Full Monty* (Joanie Lish, understudy Georgie), *HAIR* (Dionne) Carre/Netherlands. OFF BROADWAY: *Mama I Want To Sing* (Sis. Carrie) & *Faith Journey* (Traci). FIRST NAT'L BDWY TOUR: *All Shook Up* (Sylvia). She received an Audelco Award for August Wilson's *Women/Fences* (Rose). Bay Area Theatre Critic Award for *Black Pearl Sings* (Pearl). She can be heard on Broadway's CD of *The Full Monty* & BARRY WHITE's CD, *Practice What You Preach*. She has performed at Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Gardens & Carnegie Hall.



## JOSH D. SMITH (THE PIANO PLAYER)

See musical director bio

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### CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

**MAGGIE MANCINELLI-CAHILL (Director/Producing Artistic Director)** Maggie has directed more than 100 productions and has worked on, off, off-off Broadway and in regional theatres throughout the US. Since 1995, Maggie has served as Producing Artistic Director for the REP, where her favorite productions include *Grand View*, *Nora*, *Taming Of The Shrew*, *Red*, *She Loves Me*, *Outside Mullingar*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Race*, *The Trip To Bountiful*, *Moonlight And Magnolias*, *The Crucible*, *Metamorphoses*, *Terra Nova*, *Ring Of Fire*, *Syncopation* and *The Irish And How...* In addition to her directing work, Maggie has adapted and co-authored plays for the REP's *On the Go* touring productions for young audiences, including *Sleepy Hollow*, *Pure Poe*, *A Christmas Carol*, *They Built America*, *Alice In Wonderland* (with Margaret Hall), *Friend Of A Friend: African American Heroes Of The Underground Railroad* (with Jill Rafferty) and *Henry H: The Perplexing Case Of Henry Hudson* (with Maureen Aumand). Before her tenure at the REP, Maggie served as Producing Director of Urban Stages in NYC, as Artistic Director for Theatre Under Glass in Denver and worked on the staffs of The Women's Project and Ensemble Studio Theatre in NYC. She has taught acting at the National Theatre Institute at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center and master acting seminars for the Capital Region Center for the Arts. Maggie received a Directors Project Fellowship from the Drama League of New York and holds an MFA in directing from Columbia University. She has served on the Boards of the HB Studio, the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District, the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau and is a member of the Forum for Executive Women (Capital Region chapter) and Ensemble Studio Theatre in NYC. She was honored by the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber's Women's Business Council as one of the 100 Women of Excellence, was awarded the "Distinguished Leadership Award," by the Chamber's National Association for Community Leadership and is a recipient of the Norman S. Rice Award for Excellence in Arts, Culture and Education. She is the proud mother of Andrew, who is a film editor in Los Angeles.

**SUE CAPUTO (CHOREOGRAPHER)** Sue Caputo celebrates returning to the REP! Prior credits include *The Full Monty* (Susan), *M. Butterfly* (Helga/ choreographer), *James Joyce's, The Dead* (choreographer), *Syncopation* (choreographer), *Man of La Mancha* (choreographer), *Boston Marriage* (choreographer), *The Sisters Rosenweig* (movement consultant), *33 Variations* (movement consultant) and *Gypsy* (assist. choreographer), as well as various Next Act New Play staged readings including Gino Dilorio's "Crib" (Lisa).

Additional credits include *Forever Plaid* (director/choreographer), *Getting my Act Together* (Cheryl/ choreographer) and *Songs of War and Peace* at the Fort Salem Theater; *Philadelphia Story* (Liz) and *A Tale of Cinderella* (Nistina) at New York State Theater Institute.

Sue is especially grateful to Maggie and Proctors Collaborative for this

amazing experience and to Ralph, who like Ethel Waters, taught her that “Laughter keeps away the wrinkles.”

**JOSH D. SMITH (MUSICAL DIRECTOR)** is a Musical Director, Arranger, Orchestrator, Pianist and Actor. He is currently an Associate Artist and resident Music Director at Capital Repertory Theatre in Albany, NY where he has worked on many productions including *The Full Monty*, *Ring Of Fire*, *She Loves Me*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Camelot*, and *The Secret Garden*. He has performed, music directed and/or accompanied numerous productions throughout the US—from Arizona to Maine. Josh was formerly long-time resident Musical Director at the Mac-Haydn Theatre in Chatham, NY. He currently serves as Artistic Director for the ArtisTree Music Theatre Festival in Woodstock, VT. His musical arrangements can be heard regularly in venues across the country including Feinstien's/54 Below, The Green Room 42 and The Laurie Beechman Theatre in Manhattan. Recordings of his arrangements can be heard Broadway Records. Josh is originally from Syracuse, NY where he received his Masters of Music. Proud member of Actors' Equity and American Federation of Musicians Local 802.

**ANDREA ADAMCZYK (COSTUME DESIGNER)** – Received a BA in Musical Theatre from the University of New Hampshire. She freelanced as a costume technician in New York City, working on productions for New York City Opera Company, Virginia Opera Company, NYU and Dollywood as well as Specialty Events and Industrials. She has designed locally for the Bethlehem Central School District and is thrilled to be back in the costume shop at theRep.

**TRAVIS MCHALE (LIGHTING DESIGNER)** Capital Rep: *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Camelot*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Trip to Bountiful*, *How Water Behaves*. Regional Theatre: Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Bucks County Playhouse, Cape Playhouse, Colorado Festival of World Theatre, Guild Hall, Northern Stage, Weston Playhouse, Westport Country Playhouse. Off-Broadway: 59E59, Primary Stages, 3 Legged Dog, Abingdon, Theatre Row, The Barrow Group. Broadway: Associate designer for *Something Rotten!*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *War Paint* and others. Other: *Zaide* (Carnegie Hall), *BenDeLaCreme's Inferno A-Go-Go* (UK Tour), *Chita Rivera: Legendary Celebration* (International Tour) and 7 seasons with IMCD Lighting for NY Fashion Week. Awards: Connecticut Critics' Circle, NY Innovative Theatre. Member: United Scenic Artists [www.travismchale.com](http://www.travismchale.com)

**RIDER Q. STANTON (SOUND DESIGNER)** Theatre credits include: The Shubert Theatre, The Alice Griffin Jewel Box Theatre and The Acorn Theatre in NYC; Arizona Broadway Theatre in Phoenix, AZ; Weston Playhouse in Weston, VT; Berkshire Theatre Group in Pittsfield, MA; ArtisTree Music Theatre Festival in South Pomfret, VT; Playhouse on Park in West Hartford, CT; Briggs Opera House in White River Junction, VT; Pentangle Arts in Woodstock, VT; The Mac-Haydn Theatre in Chatham, NY; d'Arts et de Rêves in Sutton, Québec; and Cirque Starlight in Porruntruy, Switzerland. Many thanks to Maggie for the opportunity to design Capital Rep's first show in their beautiful new home!

**NATHAN W. SCHEUER (PROJECTION DESIGNER)** is a lighting and projection designer who is thrilled to be back at Capital Rep. Other select credits include Mandy Patinkin's Diaries, Patti Lupone's Don't Monkey With Broadway, Count of Monte Cristo (Tuacahn), Kinky Boots, Singing in the Rain, Jesus Christ Superstar, Aida, Mamma Mia, Les Misérables (The Muny), A Taste of Things to Come (Broadway in Chicago), Oslo, Heisenberg, Admissions (The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis) After the Curtain (Travis Wall's Shaping Sound), E/Space, Pretty Peculiar Things, Within Without (Barak Ballet), Jerome Robbins' Broadway, Seussical (TUTS), The Evolution of Mann (the cell), Upon This Handful of Earth, Tosca (NYOS), Water by the Spoonful (TheatreSquared), Beneath One's Dignity, The Sleeping Beauty (LA Ballet), Spamalot (Arkansas Rep). Nathan has had the pleasure of working with Barry Manilow, Selena Gomez, Alice Cooper, and Toby Keith, as well as having worked with companies such as Second Stage, NYC Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Lincoln Center Festival, Center Theatre Group, and San Francisco Opera. Proud member of USA-829.

**LAURA ANN CRAWFORD (PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER)** is a PNW native. She fell in love with stage management while working in community theatre back in her hometown. She began working for Capital Repertory in 2019 as an Assistant Stage Manager. Laura is thrilled to be opening their new space and season in her new role! Between rehearsals and shows, Laura enjoys hiking in the ADK and sipping gourmet teas.

**LARRY PARR (PLAYWRIGHT)** has had hundreds of regional productions. Dramatist Guild and Sarasota Area Playwrights Society member. Awards include: HI-HAT HATTIE Kansas City's Drama Desk Award for Best Musical, Florida Individual Artist Recipient, American Cinema Foundation's First Prize for Screenwriting; MY CASTLE'S ROCKIN' Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre's ScriptFest, produced at the National Black Theatre Festival; *Invasion Of Privacy* 1999 Gold Coast Players best-play award, The National Arts Club's Playwrights First Award in Manhattan, Ashland New Play Festival, Theatre Conspiracy's New Play Competition, Florida Individual Artist Recipient, and Dezart Performs Audience Favorite, Best Actresses, Best Actor, Best Director, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress in Palm Springs; SUNDEW Southern Appalachian Repertory Theater's Annual Play Competition, Judith Chapman Best Director Desert Theater League Awards; *His Eye Is On The Sparrow* Florida Individual Artist Recipient, The Sarasota County Arts Council's John Ringling Fellowship Grant, Daytony Award (Dayton's Tony Award) Best Overall Production; *Shunned* Southern Appalachian Repertory Theater's ScriptFest Winner, Utah Shakespeare Festival, New American Playwrights Project, Julie Harris Playwright Award Finalist. *Shunned* was published by Stage Rights. <https://www.stagerights.com/allshows/shunned/> . He was a winner of Florida Studio Theatre's Short Play Competition nine years in a row. He won STAGES '93, the 1994 Porter Fleming Playwriting Competition, The Arion Award For Music Excellence, Civic Recognition Award, and the Broome Agency's Best-Novel Award. In 2000, and in 2010, Florida Studio Theatre presented him with the Barbara Anton Playwriting Award. In 2002, he was chosen as a participant in The Floridian Project with a play about Harry T. Moore.

[www.larryparr.info](http://www.larryparr.info)

**CAPITAL REPERTORY THEATRE** has a rich history of creating excellent entertainment and strong community relationships. Established in 1981, “theREP” came into existence through the dedication and perseverance of a group of artists from The League of Theatre Artists working together with Albany business, community and civic leaders. Donated labor, materials and expertise transformed the Grand Cash Market, an abandoned supermarket at 111 North Pearl Street, into what was to become the home of Albany’s first professional resident theatre. Forty years later, the National Biscuit Company building at 251 N. Pearl Street was transformed into a new home for the theatre. Once again, leaders from business and government, along with hundreds of generous individuals, joined forces to create the \$13.5 million project that includes a 303-seat main stage theatre, a smaller flexible studio space, costume and prop shops and administrative offices.

These investments of time and resources created the highly acclaimed, award-winning Capital Repertory Theatre with an annual operating budget of \$3.5 million, and a history of producing more than 6,000 performances, employing more than 1,600 professional artists. In addition to the work on theREP’s stages, the theatre reaches thousands of students every year through On the Go school tours, Story Hours and the Young Playwrights Contest.

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Kevin McGuire\*, Associate Artist

Yvonne Perry\*, Associate Artist

Freddy Ramirez\*, Associate Artist

Josh D. Smith\*, Associate Artist

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Laura Crawford\*, Production Stage Manager

Rose Biggerstaff, Assistant Stage Manager

Megan Maynard, Run Crew

## **Production Shop**

Tony Panfili, Technical Director

Andrew Hasselbach Robin McDuffie, Carpenters

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