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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**TWO RIVER THEATER LAUNCHES ITS 2017/18 SEASON WITH LORRAINE HANSBERRY'S  
A RAISIN IN THE SUN, DIRECTED BY CARL COFIELD**

**FEATURED IN THE CAST ARE JASMINE BATCHELOR, ANDREW BINGER, NAT DEWOLF,  
CRYSTAL A. DICKINSON, BRANDON J. DIRDEN, WILLIE DIRDEN, CHARLIE HUDSON III,  
BRENDA PRESSLEY, DAVID JOEL RIVERA, OWEN TABAKA, AND YORK WALKER**

**Performances: Saturday, September 9 - Sunday, October 8, 2017**

**Opening: Friday, September 15, 2017 at 7pm**

RED BANK, NJ — Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, launches its 2017/18 Season with Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, directed by Carl Cofield. Performances will begin in Two River's Rechnitz Theater, 21 Bridge Avenue, on **Saturday, September 9** and continue for an extended four-week run, through **Sunday, October 8**. The opening night performance is **Friday, September 15 at 7pm**. Tickets are available from 732.345.1400 or [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org). The lead production sponsor is Riverview Medical Center and the media partner is WBGO Jazz 88.3 FM.

The cast of *A Raisin in the Sun* includes **Jasmine Batchelor** (Beneatha Younger), **Nat DeWolf** (Karl Lindner), **Crystal A. Dickinson** (Ruth Younger), **Brandon J. Dirden** (Walter Lee Younger), **Willie Dirden** (Bobo), **Charlie Hudson III** (Joseph Asagai), **Brenda Pressley** (Lena Younger), **Owen Tabaka** (Travis Younger), and **York Walker** (George Murchison). **Andrew Binger** and **David Joel Rivera** play the Moving Men.

The creative team includes scenic designers **Christopher & Justin Swader**, costume designer **Elivia Bovenzi**, lighting designer **Kathy A. Perkins**, sound designer **Karin Graybash**, and wigs designer

**Valerie Gladstone.** The casting is by **Jack Doulin + Sharky**, and the stage manager is **Lloyd Davis, Jr.**

In this landmark drama, Hansberry—drawing on her own family’s experience with housing discrimination—dramatizes the story of the Younger family, headed by matriarch Lena Younger, her son Walter Lee, and his wife, Ruth, who live (with other family members) in poverty on Chicago’s south side. As the play begins, we see that Walter Lee, a chauffeur, dreams of what he might do with a long-promised life-insurance check, a legacy left to them to them by Lena’s late husband. We meet the Younger family on the day that their lives could change forever. Taking its title from a poem by Langston Hughes—“What happens to a dream deferred/Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?”—Hansberry’s play explores the different hopes and aspirations of each member of the Younger family as they fight for their piece of the American Dream.

*A Raisin in the Sun* debuted in 1959 and was the first play by a black woman to be produced on Broadway. Produced at Two River for the first time in the theater’s 24-year history, the play is Lorraine Hansberry’s seminal masterpiece about race, social justice, and history—American history in the largest sense, and the personal histories of ordinary African-Americans.

“*A Raisin in the Sun* is not only one of America’s greatest plays,” says Artistic Director John Dias, “it is in fact one of the greatest works of art ever created. Lorraine Hansberry uses the metaphor of the family to illuminate something profound about who we are as Americans. We have built this production around the talents of an extraordinary family of Two River actors: Brenda Pressley as Lena Younger; Brandon J. Dirden as Walter Lee younger; and Brandon’s wife, Crystal A. Dickinson, as Ruth Younger. Joining them will be Brandon’s father, Willie Dirden, as Bobo, making this the first time that father and son have acted together. Carl Cofield’s production will resonate today as a story of how courage, hope and love trump our ongoing history of inequity and injustice.”

### **Ticket Information**

Ticket prices range from \$40 to \$70, with discounts available for groups, seniors, and U.S. military personnel, their families, and veterans. A limited number of \$20 tickets are available for every performance; \$20 tickets may be partial view. Tickets for patrons under 30 are \$20 and include the best available seats at every performance. Tickets are available from [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org) or 732.345.1400.

### **Inside Two River**

*Inside Two River* is a series of events specially curated for each Two River Theater production. For more information or to reserve seats, patrons should visit [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org) or call 732.345.1400.

### **WBGO JAZZ 88.3 FM Live Interview: Thursday, August 17 at 7pm in Two River's Rechnitz Theater**

In this free event, Doug Doyle, the award-winning News Director at WBGO, will conduct a live interview with director Carl Cofield and cast members Crystal A. Dickinson, Brandon J. Dirden and Brenda Pressley. The interview will be taped for later broadcast on WBGO. Following the discussion, audience members are invited to join the artists in the Two River Lobby for coffee and dessert.

### **Raisin' the Roof Block Party: Thursday, August 31 at 6pm on the Two River Theater Plaza (rain location: Theater Lobby)**

In this free community event, Two River will host an outdoor block party featuring live music by Gary Wright Roots & Blues, dancing on the plaza, and a sampling of food from local restaurants including M+J Texas BBQ. Participants will have the opportunity to meet the company of *A Raisin in the Sun* and enter a raffle to win free tickets. Reservations are strongly recommended; call 732.345.1400.

### **Audience Extras**

#### **Before Play and Lobby Display**

Audiences will learn about Lorraine Hansberry and *A Raisin in the Sun* in Two River's Before Play lecture series, which takes place 45 minutes prior to every performance, and Lobby Display.

#### **Post-Play Conversations**

Discussions with the cast and a member of Two River's Artistic staff will take place on Sunday, September 24 at 3pm; Wednesday, September 27 at 1pm; and Wednesday, October 4 at 7pm.

### **Accessibility**

Working with Google, Two River has created and launched a virtual tour of its facility, which lives on Google Maps and [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org). This virtual tour provides an additional level of support and benefit for patrons who use wheelchairs or require other assistance by allowing them to virtually come through the theater's front doors and view the space in detail in advance of their visit.

**An audio-described performance** is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27 at 1pm, and an **open-captioned performance** is scheduled for Saturday, September 30 at 3pm. Tickets are available at a discounted rate of \$25 for patrons using these services. To reserve wheelchair-accessible seating or tickets to a performance listed above, patrons should call 732.345.1400 or e-mail [boxoffice@trtc.org](mailto:boxoffice@trtc.org).

### **Calendar**

Saturday, September 9 at 8pm  
Sunday, September 10 at 3pm  
Wednesday, September 13 at 1 pm and 7pm  
Thursday, September 14 at 8pm  
Friday, September 15 at 7pm (**Opening Night**)

Saturday, September 16 at 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, September 17 at 3pm  
Wednesday, September 20 at 1pm and 7pm  
Thursday, September 21 at 8pm  
Friday, September 22 at 1pm and 8pm  
Saturday, September 23 at 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, September 24 at 3pm  
Wednesday, September 27 at 1pm and 7pm  
Thursday, September 28 at 10 am (student matinee) and 8pm  
Friday, September 29 at 8pm  
Saturday, September 30 at 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, October 1 at 3pm  
Tuesday, October 3 at 10am (student matinee)  
Wednesday, October 4 at 1pm and 7pm  
Thursday, October 5 at 10 am (student matinee) and 8pm  
Friday, October 6 at 8pm  
Saturday, October 7 at 3pm and 8pm  
Sunday, October 8 at 3pm

### Sponsorship

The lead production sponsor for *A Raisin in the Sun* is Riverview Medical Center and the media partner is WBGO Jazz 88.3 FM. Inside Two River is sponsored by The William T. Morris Foundation.

Two River Theater is supported in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Monmouth University, The Shubert Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Riverview Medical Center, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, Springpoint Senior Living Foundation at the Atrium at Navesink Harbor, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Jorgensen Foundation, Wells Fargo, William T. Morris Foundation, Investors Foundation, Brookdale Community College, and many other generous foundations, corporations and individuals.

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Since its founding in 1994, Two River Theater has been committed to creating great American theater by developing and producing work by some of the country's leading artists. We are proud to be viewed as a vital cultural resource in the community of Red Bank, New Jersey. Through 10 theatrical productions each year (including world premieres, musicals, classics and theater for young audiences) and 50+ annual events happening around Monmouth County, we produce exceptional theater and cultivate engaged audiences. Two River celebrates and honors our core values of Artistic Excellence; Education and Community Engagement; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Operational Excellence. Two River Theater is under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst. For more information, visit [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org) or call 732.345.1400.