

Northwestern | WIRTZ CENTER



The SNOWY DAY

and other stories
by Ezra Jack Keats

FEBRUARY 24 - MARCH 5, 2023

Northwestern University's
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts
proudly presents

THE SNOWY DAY

AND OTHER STORIES BY EZRA JACK KEATS

Adapted for the stage by JEROME HAIRSTON

Based on the book by EZRA JACK KEATS

Produced through special arrangement with Plays for New Audiences.

Director
DETRA PAYNE

Stage Manager
MORGAN FROST

Production Stage Manager
MADY KRISE

Assistant Director
KARA TOLL

Set Designer
HAYLEY WALLENFELDT

Lighting Designer
GABRIELLE STRONG

Costume Designer
JESSICA VAN WINKLE

Sound Designer
DANIEL ETTI-WILLIAMS

Choreographer
BRENNAN PRINGLE

Music Director
TED DEDDENS

Northwestern
arts circle
The Arts Together



NAMT
NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
MUSICAL THEATRE

Northwestern
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

The Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts is a member of
Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for
the American Theatre.

Program Editors: Haley Groth and Kiara Hill

Northwestern University
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts
10 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, IL 60208
Box Office Phone: 847-491-7282
wirtz.northwestern.edu

The Snowy Day is approximately 40 minutes with no intermission.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are on sacred ground. Northwestern University is on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires—the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa—as well as the Menominee, Miami, and Ho-Chunk nations. Before it was stolen from them through colonization and forced removal, this land was a site of trade, travel, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen other native tribes. The state of Illinois is still home to more than 100,000 tribal members. In the spirit of healing and making amends for the harm that was done, we acknowledge the native and indigenous peoples who called this land home. And we pledge ourselves as members of the Northwestern School of Communication to turn our statements into action and build better relationships with native and indigenous communities in Evanston, in Chicago, and throughout the region.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A child's imagination, independence, and growth are central themes in this story adapted from the beautiful books written by Ezra Jack Keats. We follow Peter, a young African American boy, from the age of 3 to the tender age of 8 years old. The audience joins Peter on a day-to-day variety of fun and unexpected journeys. We begin with his celebration of the first real winter snowfall and all that this brings to his imagination and his adventures during play. Next, we watch Peter overcome his inability to whistle for his beloved dog Willie; this becomes a milestone in his growth. We then follow Peter and his friend as they find a pair of goggles and begin to imagine all sorts of uses for them, their fascination and curiosity expanding as they play with the found object and ward off bigger kids who also want in on the action. The last story within this journey takes place at Peter's 8th birthday party, often a time when children begin to recognize the social constructs and differences between each of us, including boys vs girls. While Peter decides to invite all his friends to his birthday party, one friend in particular is special to him: Amy. I hope this production brings out the child in everyone watching it and guides the viewer to tap into their imagination and seek the joy of play. After having survived the traumatic experiences we've collectively shared these past few years, through this production I hope people are able to recall/relive the times when they were fearless, open hearted, curious, selfless, free to love who they loved and simply wanted to have fun, without thought or concern of race, gender, religion, sexuality, or politics. We all need to remember what really matters.... being good humans.

DETRA PAYNE, Director

CAST

Jordan Muhammad.....	Peter
Nathan LoPinto.....	Narrator #1 / Dad / Shadow Peter
Madeline Oberle	Narrator #2 / Mom
Garraway Nance.....	Child #1 / Archie
Baz Holifield	Child #2 / Buster / Pepe / Bully #1
Sarah Welford.....	Child #3 / Willie
Miracle Idowu	Child #4 / Bully #2 / Amy
Alexander Morgan	U/S Child #1 / Archie / Child #2 / Buster / Pepe
Liam Jeninga.....	U/S Narrator #1 / Child #3 / Willie
Veronica Szafoni.....	U/S Narrator #2 / Bully #2 / Amy

PRODUCTION TEAM

Detra Payne.....	Director
Kara Toll.....	Assistant Director
Mady Krise	Production Stage Manager
Morgan Frost.....	Stage Manager
Brennan Pringle.....	Choreographer
Hayley Wallenfeldt.....	Set Designer
Gabrielle Strong	Lighting Designer
Sam Baum.....	Asst. Lighting Designer
Jessica Van Winkle	Costume Designer
Daniel Etti-Williams	Sound Designer
Michael Turner.....	Asst. Sound Designer
Will Hughes	Technical Director
Devin Sullivan.....	Master Electrician
Tae Heum Yeon.....	Run Crew Head

MUSIC TEAM

Ted Deddens Music Director / Piano / Conductor
Liam Jeninga Asst. Music Director
Nicholas Ziminski Bass
Seth Lauver Drums

IMAGINE U TEAM

Imagine U Artistic Director Lynn Kelso
Education / Engagement Directors Ella Gatlin, Natalie Rarick
Education / Engagement Team Marcel Iam, Clay Lawhead, Yiru Zhang
Sensory Friendly Coordinator Ezra Osburn

TIME: ANYTIME, PLACE: AN URBAN CITY

ACT I: THE SNOWY DAY – WINTER

ACT II: WHISTLE FOR WILLIE – SPRING

ACT III: GOGGLES – SUMMER

ACT IV: A LETTER TO AMY – FALL

MUSICAL NUMBERS

Sliding Sliding Narrator #2, Peter
I Got A Snowball Peter
The Snow Isn't There Narrators, Peter
New Snow Archie, Peter
Down and Up and Round and Round Narrators
I'm Gonna Whistle Peter
You Can Do It Shadow Peter
I Can Whistle Peter
Hide and Seek Peter, Archie
We Got The Goggles Peter, Archie
Go Willie Go! Peter, Archie
Run Run Run Peter, Archie, Willie
Goggles Reprise Peter, Archie
I'm Writing a Letter Peter
I'm Gonna Mail a Letter Peter
Happy Birthday Full Company

DIRECTOR'S CONNECTION

As a very young child I was given two of Ezra Jack Keats' books, *The Snowy Day* and *Whistle for Willie*. I still own those books, they sit squarely on one of the bookshelves my father built that stands in his home. During my early childhood there were not many books that featured children of color as prominently as the ones created by Ezra Jack Keats, and because my parents felt it important/necessary that I knew I was part of the fabric of American life – maybe even the world – they made it a point to introduce me to the few books that did include characters that looked like me and had diversity represented in them – my parents are Sociology/Public Policy/History and Afro-American Studies professors. I am positive that their dedication to education and the subject matter they taught had something to do with ensuring I was aware that I mattered. As a 3-year-old, I saw myself in Peter, our little protagonist in all the stories. I felt I looked like him – I never recognized the gender of this Black child, I just knew I looked like Peter, and Peter was me. My mother, father, and I moved from Los Angeles, California where I was born, to live in Boston, Massachusetts where my father would attend Harvard. As you likely know, Boston receives LOTS of snow in the winter, my mom would wrap me up in so many layers of snow gear that I couldn't move, but like Peter I would go outside and find a way to play in the snow. It was new and exciting to 3-year-old me; I loved it! Ironically here we are many years later and I am teaching at the very university my father had been initially accepted into and planned to attend before Harvard made him an offer he couldn't refuse. And even more ironic is upon my arrival to Northwestern in the fall of 2020 I was asked to record myself reading a favorite children's book, I selected two Ezra Jack Keats books *The Snowy Day* and *Whistle for Willie*. Continuing this wonderful and ironic journey with Ezra Jack Keats stories, this year I was asked if I'd be interested in directing the play *The Snowy Day and Other Stories*, I didn't even know a play existed, and that it happened to feature the delightful books I have cherished all these years. Maybe it is all serendipitous, maybe it is the universe giving me a special gift after the many deep losses I've suffered for the past few years, whatever the reason I am thrilled to have worked on this production with such wonderfully talented collaborators, and I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to experience a beautiful full circle moment.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lynn Kelso for asking me to read a favorite childhood book for ImagineU online in 2020 and for suggesting and believing in me for this project; to Tanya Palmer, first for saying yes to Lynn, next for asking me to direct this production and finally for supporting me through it; to Mady Krise for her leadership keeping us organized and maintaining the running of a smooth production team; to Morgan Frost for her dedication and support also keeping us organized and on schedule; to Deya Friedman and Barbara Butts for being great support and mentors to Morgan; to Valerie Tu for gathering everyone and keeping all of us connected; to John Haas for reminding me to 'do less better' and for always making me laugh out loud; to the entire cast: Jordan Muhammad, Nathan LoPinto, Madeline Oberle, Garraway Nance, Baz Holifield, Sarah Welford, Miracle Idowu, Alexander Morgan, Liam Jeninga, and Veronica Szafoni for going on the journey of Peter and his friends and tapping back into your younger childhood selves to draw upon the memories and feelings of living carefree and curious, I am very proud of each of you; to the production creative team: Kara Toll, Ted Deddens and the Jazz Trio, and Brennan Pringle thank you for lending your wonderful talents to this production; to the entire design team: Hayley Wallenfeldt, Jessica Van Winkle, Gabba Strong, Sam Baum, Daniel Etti-Williams and Michael Turner, for providing your imagination and creative genius, bringing to life a beautiful space and place for all of us and the viewers of this production to enjoy, without you Peter and his friends' adventurous journey would not have been possible; to the entire Wirtz Staff for what you contributed to this production, and all others, will always be recognized and never forgotten by me, there are not enough adjectives to describe how much I appreciate each of you; to Dean E. Patrick Johnson, all my colleagues (especially those in acting), you inspire me every day thank you; to my Cohorts, the Paynesters and the Deetz, you make me a better human just in our interactions, I am blessed to have you in class; and finally to my father Dr. James F. Payne, you are my heart and soul I would not be who I am without you and mommy. You loved me, taught me, and raised me into the woman I am today. The words 'thank you' will never be enough, I am so grateful I get to call you daddy, I owe you everything, this production is our full circle moment and I dedicate it to you, mommy and my beloved sister Niambi Wambui. Love and Light to everyone.

– Detra Payne

COMPANY BIOS

JORDAN MUHAMMAD (Peter, ki/ki/kis) is thrilled to perform in his first Wirtz Production. Ki is from South Orange, New Jersey, double majors in Theatre and American Studies, and is in the Civic Engagement Certificate program. On campus, his credits include: *Much A Do About Nothing* (Leonato), *back in a storm* (dance film (lead)) and the second known production of *Theatre: a love story* (Director). Additionally, Jordan organizes with Fossil Free Northwestern, PB Evanston, and Books & Breakfast.

NATHAN LOPINTO (Narrator #1/Dad/Shadow Peter, he/him/his) is a Senior Theatre and Economics Major. He is thrilled to share his last college performance with ImagineU and the future of theatregoers. He also is a proud member of Playing With Fire, Northwestern's playback theatre improv group. A huge thank you to all of the brilliant people involved in this production - it was a joy and privilege to work with you.

MADELINE OBERLE (Narrator #2/Mom, she/her/hers) is a Senior Theatre and Psychology major with a Dance minor and a module in Theatre for Young Audiences. She is thrilled to be making her Northwestern acting debut after directing a variety of productions, including *Red*, *Abandon All Hope*, and *Godspell*. She is the executive director of Spectrum Theatre Company, co-chair of The Waa-Mu Show *Romance en Route*, and director of the upcoming Edinburgh Fringe premiere production of *My So-Called Haunting*.

GARRAWAY NANCE (Child #1/Archie, he/him/his) is from Oklahoma, and he is making his Northwestern acting debut in *The Snowy Day*. He is a dual-degree student studying both Theatre and Engineering. Before coming to Northwestern he trained at Interlochen Arts Academy and was in shows such as *As You Like It*, *String*, *The Birds*, and *The Penelopiad*.

BAZ HOLIFIELD (Child #2/Buster/Pepe/Bully #1, he/him/his) is a former child majoring in Theatre and Linguistics. He is very passionate about snow, and grateful to be involved with it.

SARAH WELFORD (Child #3/Willie, she/her/hers) is so excited to be making her Wirtz debut this snowy winter! Past Northwestern performances include *Holy Virgins* (Jesse), *Assassins* (Sam Byck), and *9 to 5*. A senior here at NU, Sarah is also a student director (*Shakespeare's R&J*, *She Kills Monsters*, and

others), renaissance faire performer, and avid dog lover.

MIRACLE IDOWU (Child #4/Bully #2/Amy, she/her/hers) is thrilled to be a part of *The Snowy Day*, her first Wirtz production. She is a first-year Theatre and Psychology major from California. She is also pursuing the Acting for the Screen module. She is ecstatic to perform in this unique TYA production because she believes that children have an active imagination that can be used to create their own vivid worlds. Miracle is excited to work on a team full of like-minded artists.

ALEXANDER MORGAN (U/S Child #1/ Archie/Child #2/Buster/Pepe, he/him/his) is a freshman theatre major from Scotland, United Kingdom who is thrilled to be making his Northwestern Theatre debut in *The Snowy Day*. Most recently, before going on to pursue further training at Northwestern, he was a student on an acting course at The Junior Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Alexander would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire cast and crew, and those who have shown him continuous support.

LIAM JENINGA (U/S Narrator #1/Child #3/ Willie/Asst. Music Director, he/him/his) is excited to make his Wirtz debut! He was last in *The Compass* as Jury Foreman with The Milwaukee Repertory Theater, in the premiere of *The Amazing Lemonade Girl* as Brother, and in *Macbeth* as Macbeth with First Stage - Milwaukee. Liam is attending Northwestern University as a Theater Major. He would like to thank his mother and father for supporting him on this journey.

VERONICA SZAFONI (U/S Narrator #2/Bully #2/Amy, she/her/hers) is ecstatic to be on the *The Snowy Day* team! Veronica is a junior studying Theatre and Film Acting, and she has just recently returned from a quarter abroad at Prague Film School. She has a passion for dogs, pasta, her friends (thank you) and her family (double thank you). She's excited to do this acting thing for the rest of her life, and she can't wait for you to love this show!

DETRA PAYNE (Director, she/her/hers) has an MFA from the Actor's Studio Drama School, some of her acting credits include performances

in Theatre: *Slideby*, *She-Wolf*, *Babettes Feast*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Some of These Days*, *Fabulation or The Re-Education of Undine*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Miss Edna Lewis*, *The Mountaintop* – for which she was nominated for the Memphis Theatre award, *The Ostrander* for Best Actress In A Play– Joe Turner's *Come and Gone*, 'Who Will Bell the Cat', 'Prophet', 'It's Gulliani Time', and 'Baby Talk'; Television: 'The Big Leap', 'The Price of Fame: Robin Williams', '24', 'The Parkers,' and 'Moesha,,'; Film: "Tempestad", "Forced Move", "Kudzu Killers", "Imbroglia", "Long Black Limousine", and "S is For Sally." Detra has produced and directed plays for theatres in California, Mississippi and Texas. Her recent work as a director include; *Open House: A Weekend for the Arts at Wirtz* which returned live performance to Northwestern after it's hiatus during the pandemic; *And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens* by Tennessee Williams, *Ladies in Waiting* by Michele Palermo both for Maverick Theatre Company at UT Arlington, and *Red Cotton: The Birth of Black America*, a play she was instrumental in developing that was performed at Theatre Three in Dallas, Texas. Detra was an assistant director on a production of *The Darker Face of The Earth* by Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and Poet Laureate Rita Dove, which featured future star Taraji P. Henson performed at the Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles. She assistant directed August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* at Hattiloo Theatre in Memphis, Tennessee. Detra was the MavLab Coordinator, an experimental production arm that was part of the Maverick Theatre Company at the University of Texas at Arlington. The MavLab produced devised work, performance art, contemporary plays and new plays created by faculty and students. Detra is a founding member and board member of Los Angeles theatre company Sacred Fools and has worked on films and in television not only as an actor but as a production and talent coordinator. Ms. Payne has also worked as a personal assistant to actresses Lela Rochon and Sheryl Lee Ralph, and as the Executive Assistant for the Tavis Smiley Foundation. She is a member of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation for Television and Radio Artist, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Black Theatre Association, Black Theatre Network, and National Alliance of Acting Teachers. Her article titled *WHY I AM NECESSARY* has been published in the National Alliance of Acting Teachers Newsletter

and her written play and book reviews can be found in Theatre Journal, and Studies in Theatre and Performance Journal. Detra is an Assistant Professor of Instruction in Acting at Northwestern.

KARA TOLL (Assistant Director, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs) is a senior Theatre and Global Health Studies double major, and is also part of the Musical Theatre Certificate Program. She is excited to be assistant directing at the Wirtz Center for the first time. Previously, they directed *Sunrise Coven* for Lipstick Theatre Company and a devised Performance Hour project in the Alvina Krause Studio. Kara is often drawn to theatre that evokes a sense of play and magic, and hopes that audience members see their inner child reflected onstage.

MADY KRISE (Production Stage Manager, she/her/hers, they/them/theirs) is a non-equity Stage Manager currently working in Chicago. Thank you to Heather and Valerie for trusting me with another show, Mom and Dad for their unending support, and Jazmyn for being my rock, always <3

MORGAN FROST (Stage Manager, she/her/hers) is a Junior Theatre major with a concentration in Theatre Management. Favorite past productions include *Late*, *A Cowboy Song* (PSM), AMTP's *Escapeland* (PSM), and *Collabaret* (Director). She is thrilled to have an opportunity to get young people excited about theatre magic! Thanks to Barbara and Deya for the wisdom and S&L for the spark.

BRENNAN PRINGLE (Choreographer, she/her/hers) is so excited to be a part of *The Snowy Day!* Brennan is a third-year studying Theatre and is the Director of Internal Education/Co-Chair of Lipstick Theatre. Recent Northwestern credits include: *Men on Boats* (Assistant Choreographer), *Water by the Spoonful* (U/S Chutes and Ladders), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Watchman/Co-Choreographer) and she is currently playing Grace in *Catholic School Token*. She would like to thank everyone involved for making this experience so special!

HAYLEY E WALLENFELDT (Set Designer, any) is finishing their final year at Northwestern with a BA in World History & Theater concentrating in Scenic Design. They are so grateful to be a part of this show as their final undergraduate design at Northwestern and want to thank the Wirtz Center shop staff for being the heart of their degree and

home for the past 4 years. Recent credits include: *Be Mean to Me* (Northwestern University); the 91st Waa-Mu Show- *A Peculiar Inheritance* (Northwestern University); *Electra* (University College London); and *RENT* (University College London). hayleyewallenfeldt.com

GABRIELLE STRONG (Lighting Designer, she/her/hers) is a multi-disciplinary queer artist. Her work has included but is not limited to theatre, dance, opera, art installations, generative work, and film. She has designed domestically and internationally. In 2019, she was awarded the John Woodbridge Award from Northwestern University and was a 2020 Hemsley Award Finalist. Gabrielle was awarded her MFA at Northwestern University in 2020. She currently serves as the Adjunct Faculty for Lighting Design at University of Illinois-Chicago. You can view more of her work at www.gabriellestrongartist.com or on instagram @gabriellestrongartist.

JESSICA VAN WINKLE (Costume Designer, she/her/hers) is thrilled to be working with Northwestern University for the first time! Chicago: *The Locusts* (The Gift Theatre), *Cloud 9* (Governors State University), *Title X* (Artemisia Theatre), *The HOA* (The Factory Theatre), *After the Blast* and *This Is Only a Test* (Broken Nose Theatre Company). Bloomington, Indiana: *The Rocky Horror Show*; *Spring Awakening*; *Marat/Sade*; *Evil Dead the Musical*; *Next to Normal*; *Lovedly*; *Constellations*; *Triassic Parq*; *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*; *Leipzig*.

DANIEL ETTI-WILLIAMS (Sound Designer, they/them/theirs, he/him/his) is an up-and-coming Sound Designer and Engineer local to Chicago. After Studying Acting at Oklahoma City University, they moved to Chicago to participate in Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Apprenticeship Program. Since then, they have had the opportunity to work all over Chicago making theatre and telling stories and expressing their passion through design. Chicago design credits include *Run The Beast Down* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *Beatrix Potter's Holiday Tea Party* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Haus of Atreus* (Mudlark Theater); *Peerless* (Northwestern University Graduate Directing Program); *On The Greenbelt* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *At The Vanishing Point* (The Gift Theatre); *Paris* (Steep Theatre); *Light Falls* (Steep Theatre); *Private Lives* (Raven Theatre);

The Island (Court Theatre)

TED DEDDENS (Music Director, he/him/his) is a fourth-year undergraduate at Northwestern University, studying Piano Performance and Choral Music Education in the Bienen School. He is also a singer, participating in the Bienen Contemporary and Early Vocal Ensemble, and acting as Co-Music Director of Bienen's Renaissance Singers a capella ensemble and Production Manager of Opera Projects for Undergraduate Singers. Ted is incredibly excited and grateful to be a part of this fantastic production.

EZRA JACK KEATS (1916-1983) was a pioneering American author-illustrator. In *The Snowy Day* and 20 other books, including *Goggles!*, *Pet Show!*, and *Hi, Cat!*, he opened up the world of children's books to include racially diverse characters who share the joys and problems of



ABOUT EZRA AND THE EZRA JACK KEATS FOUNDATION

About Ezra & the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation



The 1962 publication of *The Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats, was a watershed event: The beautifully illustrated picture book had an African American child as the protagonist, and it was universally embraced. *The Snowy Day* remains a beloved American classic, acclaimed by the Library of Congress as a “book that shaped America.”

Keats wrote and illustrated over 20 children's books. His best-known characters are a diverse group of friends in an inner-city neighborhood—which was a prototype for “Sesame Street”! He is considered a pioneer in American children’s literature for his realistic, multicultural portrayal of childhood. Keats wanted no child to be an outsider: “If we could see each other exactly as the other is,” he wrote, “this would be a different world.”



The mission of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation is to bring the multicultural, creative spirit of Ezra Jack Keats into children’s lives and literature. Set up by Keats in 1964, the EJK Foundation has established itself as an advocate for inclusivity, diversity and public education.

The annual Ezra Jack Keats Book Award is given to new illustrators and writers of outstanding picture books that reflect our cultural diversity and “the spirit of Keats.” The EJK Bookmaking Competition, currently in four cities, is open to public school students to write, illustrate and construct their own books. EJK Mini-Grants of up to \$500 are awarded to public school teachers and public librarians to fund a wide range of imaginative programs.

Learn more at www.ezra-jack-keats.org.



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