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Lantern Theater Company Continues 2025/26 Season with *BLUES FOR AN ALABAMA SKY* by Pearl Cleage, Directed by Brett Ashley Robison, February 12 – March 15, 2026

PHILADELPHIA (January 27, 2026) – **Lantern Theater Company** continues its 2025/26 season with the Philadelphia premiere of *Blues for an Alabama Sky* by Pearl Cleage. Guest director **Brett Ashley Robinson** leads an ensemble cast including **Kash Goins**, **Taylor Mitchell**, and **Ebony Pullum**, as well as Lantern newcomers **Tariq Kanu** and **Cookie Diorio**. *Blues for an Alabama Sky* runs **Thursday, February 12 through Sunday, March 15, 2026**, at St. Stephen's Theater in Center City Philadelphia; a complete schedule of performances and audience enrichment events is included in the fact sheet below. Theater critics and members of the press planning coverage are invited to request press tickets for **opening night on Wednesday, February 18 at 7 p.m.** by contacting Emily Wilson at ewilson@lanterntheater.org.

Harlem, 1930. The music is hot, and change is in the air. Angel is a talented singer looking for her big break, and her friend Guy wants to design costumes for Josephine Baker. When a southern stranger enters their lives, will he help them reach their dreams or destroy them? Pearl Cleage's drama of the Harlem Renaissance is mesmerizing, inventive, and soulful.

"Blues for an Alabama Sky is a play about the resilience of dreams and the gift chosen family," said director **Brett Ashley Robinson**. "I am excited to direct this hilarious heartbreaking play about friendship and hope that takes place during arguably America's most glamorous period: Harlem Renaissance."

Lantern Theater Company will explore the multiple worlds of *Blues for an Alabama Sky* on its **Lantern Searchlight on Medium**, available online at lanterntheater.org/searchlight. Articles will be published throughout the production's run, including background on the play, its themes, and behind-the-scenes conversations with the artists.

Tickets for *Blues for an Alabama Sky* are \$31 – \$48 and are available online at www.lanterntheater.org or by calling the Lantern Box Office at **(215) 829-0395**. Discounts are available for students, seniors 65 and up, U.S. military personnel, and groups of 10 or more. All performances will take place at **St. Stephen's Theater**, located at 923 Ludlow Street in Center City Philadelphia.

About the Playwright

Pearl Cleage is an award-winning playwright, novelist, journalist, educator, and former speechwriter who has been based in Atlanta for most of her career. Along with *Flyin' West*; *Bourbon at the Border*; and 2019's *Angry, Raucous, and Shamelessly Gorgeous*, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* was commissioned by Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, where Cleage frequently collaborated with director Kenny Leon. She was named playwright in residence in 2013, and she is now the theater's Distinguished Artist in Residence. She has also written many novels, including *I Wish I had a Red Dress*, *Baby Brother's Blues*, and *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*, which was an Oprah Book Club selection and a *New York Times* bestseller.

Blues for an Alabama Sky was first produced at Alliance 1995; in 1996, it was performed during the Atlanta Summer Olympic Games as part of the Cultural Olympiad. Cleage's work spans both format and genres, with her plays ranging from tender drama to sharp comedy to theater for young audiences. Cleage was Atlanta's first poet laureate and is a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dramatists Guild.

About the Lantern Artists

Blues for an Alabama Sky will mark Brett Ashley Robinson's Lantern directorial debut, although she has recently appeared on the Lantern stage in *The Real Thing* and *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*. As a director, she has worked with Arden Theatre Company, 1812 Productions, Inis Nua Theatre Company, Theatre Exile, The Bearded Ladies, Theatre Horizon, UArts, Drexel, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the Philly Goat Project. She is a company member of Applied Mechanics, an immersive theater company based in Philadelphia, and a member of The Wilma Theater's HotHouse resident acting company. Robinson is a Pew Fellow, Barrymore Award winner, and the 2021 winner of the PEN America/Jean Stein Oral History Grant for her original work *Re-Enactment*.

Blues for an Alabama Sky's ensemble cast includes Lantern veterans **Kash Goins** as Sam (Lantern credits include *American Moor* and *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine*), **Taylor J. Mitchell** as Delia (*The Wanderers*), and **Ebony Pullum** as Angel (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Fabulation*, *Red Velvet*). Making their Lantern debuts with *Blues for an Alabama Sky* are **Cookie Diorio** as Guy (Opera Philadelphia, Bearded Ladies Cabaret, The Public Theater's Joe's Pub, Kraine Theater) and **Tariq Kanu** as Leland (Arden Theatre Company, Walnut Street Theatre, Theatre in the X, Shakespeare in Clark Park, others).

The creative team for *Blues for an Alabama Sky* includes scenic designer **Dirk Durossette** (*The 39 Steps*, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*), costume designer **LeVonne Lindsay** (*The 39 Steps*, *Betrayal*), lighting designer **Tydell Williams** (*Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *Tartuffe*, *Twelfth Night*), and sound designer **Elizabeth Atkinson** (*Faith Healer*). Lantern Apprentice **Rasheda Sesay** will serve as assistant director, alongside Stage Manager **Maya Nguyen-Haberneski**.

About Lantern Theater Company

Founded in 1994 and now in its 32nd season, Lantern Theater Company's mission is to produce plays that investigate and illuminate what is essential in the human spirit and the spirit of the times. The Lantern serves the Greater Philadelphia region with award-winning productions and education programming, notably partnering with middle schools and high schools in the Philadelphia School District to provide in-classroom residencies in support of curricular learning. The Lantern became a national leader in streaming theater during the Covid health crisis, producing ten fully designed plays that were created and filmed in the company's resident home at St. Stephen's Theater, garnering coverage in national media including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, and reaching more than 30,000 people in 15 countries and all 50 states.

The Lantern's 2025/26 season will conclude with the Philadelphia premiere of *Franklinland*, **Lloyd Suh**'s new play about Benjamin Franklin, directed by **Charles McMahon** and just in time to celebrate our nation's 250th birthday in 2026 (**Press Opening: Wednesday, May 23, 2026, at 7 p.m.**). More information is available online at [**www.lanterntheater.org**](http://www.lanterntheater.org).

Lantern Theater Company – 2025/26 Season

FACT SHEET

Blues for an Alabama Sky

WRITTEN BY:

Pearl Cleage

DIRECTED BY:

Brett Ashley Robinson

CAST:

Cookie Diorio as Guy

Kash Goins as Sam

Tariq Kanu as Leland

Taylor J. Mitchell as Delia

Ebony Pullum as Angel

CREATIVE TEAM:

Dirk Durossette, Scenic Designer

LeVonne Lindsay, Costume Designer

Tydell Williams, Lighting Designer

Liz Atkinson, Sound Designer

Maya Nguyen-Haberneski, Stage Manager

Rasheda Sesay, Assistant Director

PRESS INFORMATION:

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TICKET INFORMATION:

Online: www.lanterntheater.org

By Phone: (215) 829-0395

TICKET PRICING:

\$31 – \$48 / Students: \$25

PERFORMANCES:

Thursday, February 12 – Sunday, March 15, 2026

PREVIEWS:

Thursday, February 12 at 7 p.m.

Friday, February 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 14 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, February 15 at 2 p.m.

Tuesday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT PERFORMANCE:

Wednesday, February 18 at 7 p.m.

REGULAR RUN:

Wednesday at 2 p.m. on February 25, March 4, and March 11

Wednesday at 7 p.m. on February 25, March 4, and March 11
Thursday at 7 p.m. on February 19, February 26, March 5, and March 12
Friday at 7:30 p.m. on February 20, February 27, and March 6
Saturday at 2 p.m. on February 21, February 28, March 7, and March 14
Saturday at 8 p.m. on February 21, February 28, March 7, and March 14
Sunday at 2 p.m. on February 22 [AIC], March 1 [AIC], March 8, and March 15

CLOSING PERFORMANCE:

Sunday, March 15 at 2 p.m.

ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION [AIC]

Moderated post-show discussions with the cast immediately follow 2 p.m. performances on Sunday, February 22, and Sunday, March 1. Lantern Resident Dramaturg **Meghan Winch** will lead the discussions.

PLAY SYNOPSIS:

Set in Harlem in 1930, *Blues for an Alabama Sky* follows Angel, a struggling jazz singer whose career and personal life are unraveling. After losing both her job and her gangster lover, she moves in with her friend Guy, a costume designer dreaming of a new life in Paris. Their apartment becomes a gathering place for chosen family, including Delia, a social worker advocating for birth control, and Sam, a compassionate doctor. Seeking stability, Angel soon begins a relationship with Leland, a Southern newcomer who offers her security but demands conformity. As Guy's prospects rise and Angel's options narrow, an unplanned pregnancy forces Angel into a desperate choice that shatters the group and leads to devastating consequences. Pearl Cleage's mesmerizing drama explores love, ambition, and survival during the Harlem Renaissance.

PERFORMANCE VENUE:

St. Stephen's Theater at 10th and Ludlow Streets (923 Ludlow Street) in Center City Philadelphia