



presents

KING JAMES

by Rajiv Joseph

APRIL 24 – MAY 18, 2025

Directed by **Charlie Flynn-McIver**

— STARRING —

Philip Kershaw*

Ken Sandberg*

Production Stage Manager Lindsey A. Moss*

Assistant Stage Manager Emily Grimes

Scenic Design Michael Amico

Costume Design Madisyn Craig

Lighting Design CJ Barnwell

Sound Design Charlie Flynn-McIver

Props Artist Sylvia J. Pierce

King James was co-commissioned by Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Anna D. Shapiro, Artistic Director, David Schmitz, Executive Director, and Center Theatre Group, Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director, Douglas C. Baker Producing Director, and recieved its world premiere in 2022 in co-productions at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, and Center Theatre Group/ Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles.

*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, North Carolina Stage Company, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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here

KING JAMES

by Rajiv Joseph



Philip Kershaw*

SHAWN



Ken Sandberg*

MATT

SETTING

Cleveland Heights, Ohio

TIME

1ST QUARTER

February 2004

Rookie of the Year

2ND QUARTER

July 2010

6 1/2 Years Later

The Decision

HALFTIME (15 minutes)

3RD QUARTER

July 2014

4 Years Later

Return of the King

4TH QUARTER

July 2016

2 Years Later

The Parade

COACH'S NOTES

I have been a University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Men's Basketball fan since before I could crawl. My dad has had season tickets to Tar Heels basketball games my entire life. We are diehard. We got to cheer for one of the winningest coaches in NCAA history and got to know some amazing players as we watched them develop over their years at Carolina. We saw star players in person before they were household names, Vince Carter and Michael Jordan among others. One of my strongest childhood memories is being around 9 years old shooting basketball with my siblings in our backyard court while listening to the games on an AM radio. We'd pretend we were the players (Phil Ford was who I always pretended to be!) and make the winning shot as we counted down the last 5 seconds of the clock.

When Angie and I founded NC Stage and started having kids it became difficult to follow the games with our schedule and taking care of little ones. But I followed as best I could, catching the occasional game on TV, always listening to the radio broadcast on the Tar Heel Sports Network (by this point on a streaming service) synced up with the television broadcast like we did when I was a kid. When my son became a little older he would watch the games with me; I think he was curious why I was screaming in the other room! One day, when my son was around 9 years old, I came home to find him shooting baskets in our driveway while listening to the game on the radio broadcast on his iPod. The technology had changed since I was a kid but the thrill of being a fan had not.

Fandom binds me and my family together. It's a calling card to people I meet at the games – people of different backgrounds bonding over the success and failure of our team. Fandom has a particular way of connecting people with some of the best attributes of community. It also has a dark side when the fans feel entitled to certain behavior from these young athletes.

When I first read *King James* I fell in love with the idea of directing a play about being a fan and about exploring Matt and Shawn's relationship as it's forged through their love of LeBron and the Cavs. But it's a story about much more than that. I hope you end up being a fan of *King James*. (And maybe watch a playoff game while you're at it and see what the hype is all about!)

— *Charlie Flynn-McIver, Director*

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Rajiv Joseph's play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* has been awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. Rajiv's New York productions include *Animals Out Of Paper* (Second Stage Theatre, summer 2008), *the leopard and the Fox* (alter ego, fall 2007), *Huck & Holden* (Cherry Lane Theatre, 2006), and *all This Intimacy* (Second Stage Theatre, 2006). In Los Angeles *Huck & Holden* was produced by the Black Dahlia

Theatre in 2006. Through the Lark Play Development Center, Rajiv has travelled to Mexico and Romania, where *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* was translated into Spanish and Romanian, respectively, and performed in staged readings. Rajiv has been awarded the Paula Vogel award by the Vineyard Theatre and the 2009 Kesselring Fellowship. Rajiv is a Founding Member of the New York based Theatre company the Fire Department and was a contributing writer on their first two theatrical events, *speakeasy* and *at war: American playwrights respond to the war in Iraq*. He is a former Lark Playwriting Fellow and Dramatists Guild Fellow. His plays have been published by Samuel French, Dramatists Play Service, and Smith & Kraus. He received his B.A. in Creative Writing from Miami University and his M.F.A. in Playwriting from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and he is currently a Language Lecturer at NYU with the School of art and Public Policy and the expository Writing Program. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa.

CAST BIOS

Philip Kershaw* (*Shawn*) is a multi-disciplinary artist who graduated from the University of Houston MFA Acting program after earning his undergraduate degrees at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is incredibly honored to be back at North Carolina Stage Company after appearing in this season's production of *The Lehman Trilogy*. Other NC Stage Co. credits include: *A Case for the Existence of God*, *Be Here Now*, *Witch* and directing last season's production of *Thurgood*. He has worked on regional productions for Peterborough Players, ZACH Theatre, Theatre Under the Stars, Rec Room Arts, Kitchen Theatre Company, Lean Ensemble Theater, the Houston Shakespeare Festival, A.D. Players, Adventure Theatre MTC, The Wheel Theatre Company, Unity Theatre, Dirt Dogs Theatre Co., The Ensemble Theatre, Penobscot Theatre Company, and Round House Theatre. More information about his work can be found on his website: www.philipkershaw.com.

Ken Sandberg* (*Matt*) is delighted to be making his NC Stage debut with *King James*. He is a graduate of Temple University and the University of Missouri - Kansas City. In recent years, he has been fortunate enough to work as a musician and actor in regional theatres including The Walnut Street Theatre, South Camden Theatre, The New London Barn Playhouse, Quintessence Theatre Company, Maine State Music Theatre, Music Theatre of Connecticut, Florida Studio Theatre, Greenbrier Valley Theatre, The Media Theatre, and Tuacahn Center for the Arts. Ken has performed his solo show, *The Death of...* at theatres across the country. He also co-hosts the podcast *Campfire Classics* with his fiancée Heather Michele Lawler, who yo-u can see here in NC Stage's next show: *The Last Wide Open*. With love and deep appreciation to his family, to Heather, and of course, to the whole team here at NC Stage.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Carrie Day Production Manager

Susan Rennie Builder

Charlie Lance Run Crew

Special thanks to Jamie Sandberg

PRODUCTION BIOS

Charlie Flynn-McIver (*Director*) is the artistic director and co-founder, with his wife, Angie Flynn-McIver, of NC Stage. He has appeared most recently in *Jeeves Saves the Day*, *A Doll's House Part 2*, and *Stones in His Pockets* as well as NC Stage's world premieres of *Someone Else* and *Stalking the Bogeyman*. At Flat Rock Playhouse, he appeared in *The Odd Couple*, *12 Angry Men* and *The 39 Steps*. Some NC Stage credits include: *Hamlet*, *Loot*, *Art*, *All in the Timing*, *Chesapeake*, and *Macbeth*. National Tour: *Wit* with Judith Light. Off Broadway: *Ice Island*, *the Wait for Shackleton*. Directing credits for NC Stage include: *The Lehman Trilogy*, *The Understudy*, *R. Buckminster Fuller: The History (and Mystery) of the Universe*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Annapurna*, *4000 Miles*, *All is Calm*, *Rapture Blister Burn*, and *Other Desert Cities*. Charlie has a Bachelor of Music in Music Theatre from Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and an MFA in acting from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Lindsey A. Moss* (*Production Stage Manager*) is beyond thrilled to be back at NC Stage and to be part of this wonderful production. Previous credits include *Hairspray*, *Les Miserables*, *The Last Five Years*, and *Miss Saigon* (among many others) at Flat Rock Playhouse; *Vrooommm!* at Triad Stage; and *Twelve Dates of Christmas-2017 & 2018*, *The Lifespan of a Fact*, *The Roommate*, *Be Here Now*, *Thurgood*, and *The Lehman Trilogy* at NC Stage. Many thanks to Charlie, Angie, Ken, Philip, Emily, and the entire NC Stage team and a BIG thank you to YOU for supporting the return of live theatre.

Michael Amico [he/him] (*Scenic Design*) is happy to be designing his second show for NC Stage, the first being *The Lehman Trilogy*. Look for his work in the rescheduled October show *The Last Wide Open* this June and July. Prior to moving to North Carolina last year, he was the production manager at Palm Beach Dramaworks in West Palm Beach, Florida for 20 seasons. At Dramaworks he designed scenery for dozens of shows, including regional and world premieres. Favorite designs include: *American Buffalo*, *The Chairs*, *Talley's Folly*, *The Pitman Painters*, *Indecent*, *Woody Guthrie's American Song*, *Little Foxes*, *Night of the Iguana*, and *August: Osage County*.

Madisyn Craig (*Costume Design*) is a costume designer and technician currently based in Asheville, NC. Madisyn has a background working in both the film and theatrical industries. Her work in film production ranged from costume design and construction to special effects makeup and more. Her most recent position as the Costume Shop Manager for the UNCA Department of Drama had her working on productions such as *Elektra*, *No Exit*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*. Some recent theatrical costume design credits include

PRODUCTION BIOS

A Wrinkle in Time, Timon of Athens, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Madisyn will soon be leaving Asheville and moving on to a career in Boston, MA, as the Assistant Costume Manager for the American Repertory Theatre. She thanks NC Stage for bringing her on for one last Asheville based production before her move.

CJ Barnwell [he/him] (*Lighting Design*) With an impressive portfolio that includes collaborations with Mountain Theatre Company, North Carolina Theatre, Theatre Raleigh, Flat Rock Playhouse, West Virginia Public Theatre, TheatreSquared, and Orlando Shakespeare Company, CJ brings vibrant lighting and projection designs to life. At NC Stage, CJ's work has lit productions like *Jeeves Intervenes*, *Brave New World*, and *Grounded*. This marks CJ's third production of *All Is Calm* at NC Stage, highlighting his ongoing connection to this meaningful work. Recent highlights include *Catch Me If You Can* at Mountain Theatre Company, the regional premiere of *Bull Durham* at Theatre Raleigh, and *Boulevard of Bold Dreams* at Orlando Shakes. His designs have illuminated productions such as *The Color Purple*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *West Side Story*, as well as adventurous new works like *Curvy Widow*. His projection design work includes *Thurgood*, *The Mountaintop*, and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. With a passion for storytelling and a keen eye for detail, CJ continues to elevate theatrical experiences for audiences nationwide. Explore his work and upcoming projects at www.CJLights.com follow him on Instagram at @cj_Lights.

Sylvia J. Pierce (*Props Artist*) is a life-long theatre enthusiast playing one of Ole King Cole's fiddlers at age 4. She pursued technical theatre in grad school, deciding she'd rather be a techie than a conceptual designer. Starting out professionally in Cambridge, MA in 1978, she worked her way South, through New York City, Atlanta and all over the US and abroad for the next two decades. Along the way she built and managed shows for theatre and broadcast television events, joined IATSE Local #4, built lots of sets, owned two companies, went on the road, and finally moved slightly north to Asheville. Finding that the mountains felt like home, she finally gave up her nomadic lifestyle and settled down. Now, she works and builds for local theatre companies and is enjoying this phase of her career.

Actors' Equity Association ("Equity"), founded in 1913, is the U.S. labor union that represents more than 51,000 professional Actors and Stage Managers. Equity fosters the art of live theatre as an essential component of society and advances the careers of its members by negotiating wages, improving working conditions and providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. Actors' Equity is a member of the AFL-CIO and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. #EquityWorks.

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