



**News Release
Virginia Repertory Theatre**

For Immediate Release

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**Virginia Rep's Children's Theatre Presents
Akeelah the the Bee
By Cheryl L. West
Based on the screenplay by Doug Atchison**

Richmond, VA – Virginia Repertory Theatre opens *Akeelah and the Bee* on Friday, September 29 at the Children's Theatre at Willow Lawn to kick off the 2017-18 Children's Season. Based on the 2006 film starring Keke Palmer, **Cheryl L. West's** adaptation of the screenplay by **Doug Atchison** follows the journey of 11-year old Akeelah as she travels from the southside of Chicago to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. The show runs through November 5, 2017 at the Children's Theatre at Willow Lawn, 1601 Willow Lawn Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23230.

Director **Audra Honaker** makes her Virginia Rep directorial debut, after performing in several Virginia Rep productions, including *Mame*, *Charlotte's Web* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. The production stars **Abigail Cook-Robinson**, a 5th grader at Park Ridge Elementary School, as Akeelah, and **William Anderson** (*Golden Goose*, *The Color Purple*, *South Pacific*) as Dr. Larabee.

Returning to the Virginia Rep stage, the cast features **Alana C. Smith** (*Go, Dog. Go!*), **Anna Jackson** (*A Christmas Story: The Musical*) and **Karla Brown** (*The Color Purple*). Cast members **Jordan R. Pearson**, **Taylor McKenzie Cannon**, **Jamar Jones**, **Rowan Sharma**, **Samantha Easter**, and **Zora Johnson** make their Virginia Rep debut. The current cast list is below.

Scenic Design is by **Terrie Powers** (*Da, Dancing Lessons*), Lighting Design is by **BJ Wilkinson** (*Shakespeare in Love*, *Croaker*) and Costume Design is credited to **Hannah**

Chalman.

Virginia Rep is thrilled to offer a new FREE Community Tickets Grant for nonprofit organizations. We encourage all organizations who have a demonstrated need for complimentary tickets to fill out a short application on our website: bit.ly/CommunityTix

Ticket Information

Box Office 804-282-2620

www.virginiarep.org

Full Price Tickets: \$20

Discounted Group Rates available.

Press Kits Available at <http://va-rep.org/press.html>

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Direction & Design

Direction	Audra Honaker
Scenic Design	Terrie Powers
Lighting Design	BJ Wilkinson
Costume Design	Hannah Chalman
Sound Design	Derek Dumais
Stage Management	Rachel Dilliplane

Cast List

Abigail Cook-Robinson	Akeelah Anderson
Alana C. Smith	Gail Anderson
Jordan R. Pearson	Reggie Anderson
William Anderson	Dr. Joshua Larabee
Taylor McKenzie Cannon	Georgia
Karla Brown	Batty Ruth
TBA	Drunk Willie
Jamar Jones	JT
TBA	Dylan Chiu
Rowan Sharma	Javier Mendez
Samantha Easter	Trish
Anna Jackson	Izzy
Zora Johnson	Ratchet Rhonda
TBA	Mr. Chiu

About Virginia Repertory Theatre

Virginia Repertory Theatre is the regional professional theatre in Richmond, Virginia. With a budget of \$5 million, four distinct venues, an educational touring arm, and an annual audience over 530,000, Virginia Rep is one of the largest performing arts organizations in Central Virginia. Virginia Rep stages four seasons annually: the Signature Season at the Sara Belle and Neil November Theatre, Theatre Gym Season in partnership with Cadence Theatre Company, Virginia Rep's Children's Season at Willow Lawn, and the Hanover Tavern Season.

Corporate Sponsors

Virginia Rep is grateful for support from Federal Realty and the Shops at Willow Lawn, Richmond Family Magazine, The Shubert Foundation, The Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Nationals Endowment for the Arts.