

SPOTLIGHT

The **SEPTEMBER PAC Spotlight** shines on:

Hardin County native Joey Stone portraying Coalhouse Walker Jr. & Co-Directing *Ragtime* this month at the PAC.



What Do You Do For A Living?

Professional Actor & Stage Director, Arts Education Leader, Community Engagement + Program Director, Nonprofit + Cultural Strategist, Community + Ensemble Builder

What have you participated in at the PAC?

Working on *Ragtime* at the PAC is my first time experiencing any art in this space. Today, I have the honor & pleasure of serving as co-director of the production as well as starring as Coalhouse Walker Jr. in the story.

What have been your most rewarding PAC experiences?

Rewarding experiences continue to unfold for me every day at the PAC. I've been introduced to & reconnected with artists from across Hardin County & beyond as we've worked together to build this production & bring this important American story to our community audiences.

I am particularly proud to have so many diverse artists join us on stage & on the creative team. This production features more Black actors than any other PAC production to date, highlighting Bart & his staff's ongoing outreach & community-building efforts to create art & opportunities that truly reflect & uplift the community we serve.

What did you learn from your PAC experiences?

I'm learning more & more every day from my experiences here at the PAC. Having spent many years in educational theatre & community outreach, I love how beautifully those two essential elements come together in the PAC ProAm shows. It continues to be such a joy working alongside artists from different backgrounds & areas of expertise to create something truly moving & important.

Why is the PAC important to you?

Local arts organizations play an integral role in the fabric of our communities. They provide access to creativity while fostering cross-cultural understanding & bridging socioeconomic divides. Research demonstrates that accessible arts programming can enhance emotional regulation & social-emotional learning in both students & adults. Studies have also shown connections between arts participation & increased empathy, improved literacy outcomes through integrated learning approaches, stronger community engagement, & measurable economic benefits for local communities of all sizes.

Why should the PAC be important to others?

As I've shared my work & heart with this community, & witnessed the diverse artists who come together here, I've experienced what's possible when we create spaces where everyone is welcomed & supported to thrive. The PAC represents the kind of community we should all want: one where people are valued not by some arbitrary measure of merit created & imposed by others, but by the inherent worth we all possess & the unique gifts we bring to our shared creative work as humans. When we build these inclusive spaces together as artists, we're modeling what community can look like at its best. We're proving that when people from different backgrounds & experiences are given the platform & support to create together, something magical happens: Change. Everyone deserves to be part of a community that sees their value, nurtures their growth, & celebrates what they contribute simply by being themselves. The PAC matters because it shows us that this kind of community isn't just an ideal, IT'S ACHIEVABLE! & once you've experienced that level of acceptance & creative collaboration, you want it everywhere.

[Learn more about all the other PAC Spotlight Ambassadors we've recognized over the years at www.thepac.net](http://www.thepac.net)

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