



FOR RELEASE AT 2PM ET

September 21, 2021

Contact:

Polk & Co. – Matt Polk, Jessica Johnson, Wayne Wolf, Lilly Claar (Lilly@PolkandCo.com), Saidu Sinlah

Woolly Mammoth – Naomi Longshore (naomi.longshore@woollymammoth.net)

[PHOTOS/ART](#)



FULL CAST ANNOUNCED FOR *A STRANGE LOOP*

PRE-BROADWAY RUN AT WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY

Pulitzer Prize-winning musical to feature Antwayn Hopper, L Morgan Lee, John-Michael Lyles, James Jackson, Jr., John-Andrew Morrison, Jason Veasey and introducing Jaquel Spivey.

Book, Music, & Lyrics by MICHAEL R. JACKSON

Music Direction by RONA SIDDIQUI

Choreographed by RAJA FEATHER KELLY

Directed by STEPHEN BRACKETT

PERFORMANCES BEGIN NOVEMBER 22, 2021 THROUGH JANUARY 2, 2022

(September XX, 2021 – Washington, DC.) The upcoming production of Michael R. Jackson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *A STRANGE LOOP* at Washington DC’s Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company will feature original cast members **Antwayn Hopper** (Thought 6), **L Morgan Lee** (Thought 1), **John-Michael Lyles** (Thought 3), **James Jackson, Jr.** (Thought 2), **John-Andrew Morrison** (Thought 4), **Jason Veasey** (Thought 5) and introducing **Jaquel Spivey** as “Usher.”

A STRANGE LOOP is a first in Woolly history. This “gutsy and jubilantly anguished” (New York Times) new musical follows a young artist at war with a host of demons — including the punishing thoughts in his own head. It will be produced in association with Playwrights Horizons and Page 73.

Christopher Michael Richardson also joins the cast as an understudy for “Usher.”

A STRANGE LOOP is directed by **Stephen Brackett**, music direction by **Rona Siddiqui**, and choreographed by **Raja Feather Kelly**. The show will feature set design by **Arnulfo Maldonado**, costume design by **Montana Levi Blanco**, lighting design by **Jennifer Schriever**, sound design by **Drew Levy**, hair/wig/makeup design by **Cookie Jordan** and orchestrations by **Charlie Rosen**. The creative team also includes **Adam Wiggins** (Copyist), **BOLD Nemuna Ceesay** (Assistant Director), **Bryan Carter** (Associate Orchestrator), **Corey Umlauf** (Assistant Scenic Designer), **Candace Taylor** (Associate Choreographer), **Chelsea Pace** (Intimacy Choreographer), **Erin Gioia Albrecht** (Production Stage Manager), **Victoria Whooper** (Assistant Stage Manager).

A STRANGE LOOP made its World Premiere at Playwrights Horizons in May 2019 to sold out crowds. The show quickly became a critical favorite, praised as “exhilarating and wickedly funny” by New York Magazine’s Sara Holdren and “some of the most vital work in American theater” by The New York Times’ Wesley Morris. Following the successful run, **A STRANGE LOOP** was the recipient of five Drama Desk Awards, two Lucille Lortel Awards, six Outer Critics Circle honors, two Obie awards, one Off-Broadway Alliance Award, and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical. Michael R. Jackson was awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in Drama.

Usher is a Black queer writer working a job he hates while writing his original musical... about a Black queer writer working a job he hates while writing his original musical. Michael R. Jackson’s blistering, mind-blowing, Pulitzer-Prize winning new musical follows a young artist at war with a host of demons — including the punishing thoughts in his head — in an attempt to capture and understand his own strange loop.

Performances of **A STRANGE LOOP** begin Monday, November 22nd at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co. (641 D ST. NW, Washington DC) for a limited 6-week engagement. Tickets are now on sale for **A STRANGE LOOP** at www.woollymammoth.net (202-393-3939).

“When I think about all the unexpected work Woolly could do, what’s more unexpected than a Broadway-bound musical?” said Maria Manuela Goyanes, Artistic Director of Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. “This show is very special to me. When I was 25 and Michael R. Jackson was 24 and still in graduate school, I directed the first early readings of A STRANGE LOOP. With this project, my past is becoming my present, and, in a way, my very own strange loop! This musical centers a Black queer man whose experience stands in sharp relief to the more mainstream LGBTQ progress we’ve seen over the past decade. Woolly Mammoth will break into song with what I believe to be completely Woolly material—a bold show with nerve, replete with soaring and gut-wrenching show tunes.”

COVID SAFETY INFORMATION:

Entrance to any event at Woolly Mammoth will require proof of vaccination or, for those who are not vaccinated, proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the event start time. Guests may show physical or digital proof of their health status. Masks must also be worn at all times while in the building. For more information about Woolly’s safety and vaccine policies please visit <https://www.woollymammoth.net/about-us/safety>.

CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

Michael R. Jackson’s (*Playwright, Composer, Lyricist, he/him*) 2020 Pulitzer Prize and New York Drama Critics Circle winning *A Strange Loop* (which had its 2019 world premiere at Playwrights Horizons in association with Page 73 Productions) was called "a full-on laparoscopy of the heart, soul, and loins" and

a "gutsy, jubilantly anguished musical with infectious melodies" by Ben Brantley for *The New York Times*. In *The New Yorker*, Vinson Cunningham wrote, "To watch this show is to enter, by some urgent, bawdy magic, an ecstatic and infinitely more colorful version of the famous surreal lithograph by M. C. Escher: the hand that lifts from the page, becoming almost real, then draws another hand, which returns the favor." In addition to *A Strange Loop*, he also wrote book, music and lyrics for *White Girl in Danger*. Awards and associations include: a New Professional Theatre Festival Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, a Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, an ASCAP Foundation Harold Adamson Award, a Whiting Award, the Helen Merrill Award for Playwriting, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a Drama Desk Award, an Obie Award, an Antonyo Award, a Fred Ebb Award, a Windham-Campbell Prize, a Dramatist Guild Fellowship and he is an alum of Page 73's Interstate 73 Writers Group. @thelivingmj (Twitter), @thelivingmichaeljackson (Instagram) www.thelivingmichaeljackson.com

Stephen Brackett (*Director, he/him*) Broadway: *The Lightning Thief* (Longacre Theater), *Be More Chill* (Lyceum Theater). Off-Broadway: *A Strange Loop* (Playwrights Horizons, Obie and Drama Desk Awards), *Be More Chill* (Signature and Two River Theaters), *The Lightning Thief* (Theaterworks USA/National Tour), *Buyer & Cellar* (Rattlestick and Barrow Street Theaters/National Tour), *The Mad Ones* (Prospect Theater), *Ultimate Beauty Bible* (Page 73), *Wringer* (NYCCT), *Carnival Kids* (Lesser America), *The Correspondent* (Rattlestick), *After* (Partial Comfort), *The Material World* (Dixon Place), *Be A Good Little Widow* (Ars Nova), and *The Tenant* (Woodshed Collective). Regional: *Fall Spings* (Barrington Stage), *Significant Other* (Geffen Playhouse), *I Now Pronounce* (Humana Festival), *Le Switch* (About Face), *The Great Pretender* (TheatreWorks Silicon Valley). London: *Be More Chill* (The Shaftsbury Theater and The Other Palace) and *Buyer & Cellar* (Menier Chocolate Factory). Upcoming: *AD 16* (The Olney Theater) and *To My Girls* (Second Stage)

Raja Feather Kelly (*Choreographer, he/him*) is a choreographer, a director, and the artistic director of the feath3r theory. He is a three-time Princess Grace Award winner (2017, 2018, 2019), two-time Lucille Lortel Award nominee (2019, 2020), and 2019 Chita Rivera Award nominee. In 2020 he was the Obie Award winner and Outer Critics Circle Award honoree for choreography for the Pulitzer-winning musical *A Strange Loop*. In 2019 he was an SDCF Joe A. Callaway Award finalist for both *A Strange Loop* and the Pulitzer-winning play *Fairview*. Raja is also the 2019–2020 Randjelović/Stryker Resident Commissioned Artist at New York Live Arts, an inaugural Jerome Hill Artist Fellow, and a 2019 Creative Capital award recipient. He is a current fellow of HERE Arts, the Center for Ballet and the Arts at NYU, and a Creative Associate at The Juilliard School. Over the past decade, Kelly has created fifteen evening-length premieres with his company the feath3r theory as well as directing and choreographing extensively for Off-Broadway theatre in New York City. His choreography has also garnered a 2018 Breakout Award from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) and the Solange MacArthur Award for New Choreography (2016), and he was *Dance Magazine's* inaugural Harkness Promise Award (2018).

Rona Siddiqui (*Music Director, she/her*) is composer/lyricist based in NYC. She is a 2020 recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and the 2019 recipient of the Billie Burke Ziegfeld award. Her show *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*, an autobiographical comedy about growing up bi-ethnic in America, had a reading at Playwrights Horizons Nov 2019 (dir. by Raja Feather Kelly). Other musicals include *One Good Day*, *The Tin*, and *Treasure in NYC*. She is the recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award, and the ASCAP Foundation/Max Dreyfus Scholarship. She has written pieces for Wicked's 16th anniversary commemoration *Flying Free*, 24 Hour Musicals, Prospect Theater Company, The Civilians, the NYC Gay Men's Chorus, and 52nd St Project, and has performed concerts of her work at The John F. Kennedy Center

for the Performing Arts and 54 Below. Original scores she has written include *The Vagina Monologues*, *Middletown* and *The Good Person of Szechuan*. Music directing credits: *A Strange Loop*, *Bella: An American Tall Tale*, *Who's Your Baghdaddy* or *How I Started the Iraq War*. www.ronasiddiqui.com

CAST BIOS

Antwayn Hopper (*Thought 6, he/him*) Broadway: *Hair*. Select Off-Bway/NY: Pulitzer Prize Winning *A Strange Loop* (Playwrights Horizons), *The Loophole* (NY Public), *Civil War Christmas* (NYTW), and *This Ain't No Disco* (NYSF). Select Regional: *A Ghost In Satin* (Williamstown Theatre Fest.), *Nick's Flamingo Grill* (Alliance), *Camino Real* (Goodman), *The Brothers Size* (Old Globe), *Rent* (Syracuse Stage), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Lyric Opera House), *Smokey Joe's Cafe*(New Theatre). Film/TV: *A Thousand And One*, *Girl Most Likely*, *Lucy And The Impeding Climate Crisis*, *The Knick*, *Blacklist*, *Royal Pains*, *Z: The Beginning Of Everything*, *Girl Most Likely*, *Shades of Blue*, *A Gifted Man.*" Recordings/In Concert: *The Double Threat* (Demo, PCLO), *Muscles:The Sun God* (Jim Rado, Steve Margoshes), *Voices In Ohio* with *The Bengsons* (Ars Nova), *Showboat* (Carnegie Hall). Trained at School of Drama at Carnegie Mellon. Obie-2020 & Craig Noel Award for Best Ensemble (*Brothers Size*).

James Jackson Jr. (*Thought 2, he/him*) is an actor, musician, and cabaret artist based in New York and originally from Massachusetts. An Obie Award-winner (*A Strange Loop*, off-broadway at Playwrights Horizons), a featured singer with the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, his cabaret/solo work (*Shady Sings the Blues*, *The Black-Ups*) has been seen at Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre, Boston's Club Oberon at the American Repertory Theatre, as well as the Lyric Theatre of Los Angeles, The Green Room42, Feinstein's/54 Below, and The Post Office Cabaret in Provincetown. National Tours: Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind*. Regional credits include *Dreamgirls* (DASH Supporting Actor Award), *Henri Gabler* (Exigent Theatre), *The Wild Party* (SpeakEasy Stage). He's proudly been blocked by both Kirstie Alley and Taylor Dayne. This show is always dedicated to his mother - I miss you. Thank you to DGRW. And all of my love to Tom. www.TheJamesJacksonJr.com and @JJacksonJr

L Morgan Lee (*Thought 1, she/her*) is an Obie award-winning actress and theatre maker based in New York. Her performance in ***A Strange Loop*** Off Broadway garnered her a Lucille Lortel nomination and the distinction of being the first openly transgender actress to originate a role in a Pulitzer Prize winning piece of theatre. L Morgan was recently cast to portray artist Lili Elbe in the British musical adaptation of the novel, ***The Danish Girl*** being workshopped in London. She is also developing a new play, ***The Women (2021)***, which was seen in Ars Nova's 2021 Vision Residency. L Morgan is dedicated to being a part of work centering underrepresented voices on both stage and screen. "She needed a hero, so that's what she became." [@lmorganlee](https://twitter.com/lmorganlee) and lmorganlee.com

John-Michael Lyles (*Thought 3, he/him*) is a Harlem-based, Texas-raised, multi-hyphenate creative. As an actor, he's been seen in: *A Strange Loop* (Playwright's Horizons), *This Ain't No Disco* (Atlantic), *Sweeney Todd* (Barrow Street), *The Flick* (Barrow Street), *Brooklynite* (Vineyard), *Big River* (Encores!), *1776* (Encores!), *The Art of Falling* (Second City/Hubbard Street) & *Choir Boy* (Guthrie). TV credits include: "The Other Two", "Chicago PD", "NCIS: New Orleans", & "The OA". Film: *Blind*. As a writer, he's co-writing a new musical with David Gomez, *Shoot for the Moon*, with developmental support from the Dramatist Guild Foundation Fellows class of '21, Musical Theater Factory's 2nd MAKERS Cohort & the '21 Rhinebeck Writers Retreat. He wrote additional music for the Second Stage production of Young Jean Lee's *We're Gonna Die*. He is currently writing a new musical with support from 5th Avenue Theater's First Draft: Raise Your Voice commission program. [@jmlyles1](https://twitter.com/jmlyles1) | www.john-michaelyles.com

John-Andrew Morrison (*Thought 4, he/him*) won a Lucille Lortel and an OBIE Award for his work in the Pulitzer Prize winning musical *A Strange Loop*. He is also an Outer Critics Circle Honoree for his performance in The Off Broadway premiere of *Blues for an Alabama Sky*. John-Andrew spent many years working at La Mama with George Ferencz as a member of The Experimentals working on readings, workshops and productions of around 50 new plays. John-Andrew's work has been seen throughout the country at theaters including Playwrights Horizons, KEEN Company, The Hartford Stage, Baltimore Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, La Jolla Playhouse and A.R.T. Internationally his work has been seen at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival with *Boy Steals Train* which won The Fringe First and The London Stage Awards. John-Andrew's work on film includes *The Last OG* and the television pilot *West 40s*. John-Andrew is a co-host and co-creator of the web talk show *5 Questions with James and JAM* with James Jackson Jr. He is also a guest interviewer for Season 2 of *The Live at the Lortel* podcast and creates social media content for The Lucille Lortel Theater Foundation. John-Andrew has been an adjunct lecturer in musical theater performance at The Edna Manley School for the Visual and Performing Arts in Kingston, Jamaica and he holds a BA in Theater Arts from Brandeis University and an MFA in Acting from U.C.S.D. @jandymorri and johnandrewmorrison.com

Jaquel Spivey (*Usher, he/him*) is grateful to be making his professional debut in this iconic production. He recently graduated from Point Park University with a degree in Musical Theatre. He sends all of his love to Michael, Stephen, this stunning cast, Telsey+Co, Barbara, and Woolly Mammoth. For my family. God is good y'all! @jaquelspivey

Jason Veasey (*Thought 5, he/him*) is so very happy to be back in the loop telling this story, with this family. He was last seen in the original Playwrights Horizons production of *A Strange Loop* for which he won an Obie Award. Other credits include the Broadway and National touring companies of *The Lion King* and countless credits on stages across the country including Actors Theater of Louisville, Denver Center and The MUNY! On TV you could spot him on "High Maintenance," "Chicago Fire," "Dash and Lily," "Flatbush Misdemeanors," "Betty" and more. Upcoming: the film *Home Free*. Shoutouts to the folks at Nicolosi & Co. and as always DVS and V. Jason would like to dedicate this run and every other run of *A Strange Loop* to Darius Smith and especially Keldon LaVar Price and Rich Affannato. I wish you could've seen our show. You would've loved it.

Christopher Michael Richardson (*Usher Understudy & Thought 4 Understudy, he/him*) is an actor, director, and teaching artist in the Washington D.C. area. He is the creator/composer of *Everyday Magic*, an interactive digital series with Arts on the Horizon, and has appeared in *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* (The Musical) at The John F. Kennedy Center TYA (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding TYA Production); *Gun & Powder* at Signature Theatre; *Matilda* at Olney Theatre Center; *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* at Imagination Stage (Helen Hayes Award, Outstanding TYA Production); *The Wiz* at Ford's Theatre (Helen Hayes Nomination, Supporting Actor); *The Book of Will* at Round House Theatre; and *Macbeth* at The Shakespeare Theatre. He holds a B.A. in English and Theatre from The College of William & Mary. www.cmrich.me

<https://www.woollymammoth.net/> Twitter: [@woollymammothtc](https://twitter.com/woollymammothtc)
Facebook: facebook.com/woollymammothtc Instagram: [@woollymammothtc](https://instagram.com/woollymammothtc)

#