

Gee's Bend
By Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder
ACT1 Theater 2021 for the City of Alpharetta
Alpharetta Arts Center
Directed by: T.S. Edwards

First-Round Auditions: Video submission deadline Monday, December 14th by 6 PM

Callbacks Thursday, December 17th 7 – 9 PM

Required forms available on the website for download.

Sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0845A4A82FA4FE3-gees>

ACT1 Theater acknowledges the precarious nature of theater due to COVID19. This play was chosen specifically for its small cast size and ability to maximize social distancing during rehearsals; if we are not able to accommodate live audiences, we have plans for livestreaming or recorded video subscriptions... actors and crews should still have the fruits of their labor appreciated by the public. We will have plans and procedures in place for rehearsals and performances to ensure the best possible healthy environment for our actors and audiences.

What is ACT1 Theater?

ACT1 is an all-volunteer, non-Equity, no-fee community theater with a focus on quality entertainment. Now in our 25th year, we're proud to bring you musical and non-musical theatrical productions; you'll find us in performance in several major productions each year. Among our many full-length shows have been *Fiddler on the Roof*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor® Dreamcoat*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and many others. In addition, ACT1 Theater has a Partnership with the City of Alpharetta, and performs Shakespeare in the Park, cabarets, plays and other entertainment in support of City activities and venues. ACT1 is the proud recipient of several Metropolitan Atlanta Theater awards, and many nominations. We are a community outreach of Alpharetta Presbyterian Church, and provide entertainment to the community without religious bias. Our casts and crews come from all over the Metro Atlanta area.

In addition to using many experienced theater folks, one of the objectives of our work is to provide a venue for those who have never been involved with theater before. We enjoy seeing new folks discover a love of theater – whether that's performing on the stage; building sets; making costumes; or working as a stagehand, lighting technician or sound technician. We also welcome the contributions of those who keep our day-to-day operations going, like marketing or admin support. As new cast and crew members "learn the ropes" and become seasoned pros, they may decide to try their hand at stage managing or directing. All of our cast, crew, and management are volunteers. No matter what role you choose, this will be the most fun that you have had in a long time! The actors, staff and crew always form bonds that make this more than a hobby – it's family.

What will auditions be like?

We are soliciting audition files comprised of a monologue provided from the show, and two verses of "*How I Got Over*" in a Traditional Gospel style.

(Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt6EP-rzuZc>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMibKVTalwc> - Starts at 7:24.)

Submissions will be accepted immediately until December 14th, and should be submitted as a video file along with the required audition forms to Auditions Director Benjamin Roper at act1theaterauditions@gmail.com. There will be no cuts until after 1st round auditions are reviewed after December 14th.

Callbacks will be made no later than December 15th. Callbacks will be held December 17th at the Alpharetta Arts Center (238 Canton Street, Alpharetta 30009) in the black box theater starting at 7 PM. Due to COVID precautions, if turnout is large we will split into groups with separate time slots. **Please note that there are required volunteer hours to assist with areas supporting this production or ACT1 operations; this is a community theater!** If you are under 18 years old, a parent must read and sign forms as well. Once you have your forms completed, you will let the host or hostess know you are ready. The Director may also ask for additional cold readings or other activities to gauge your range.

Among the things we'll be looking for are:

- Voice quality – Can you project, so that you'll be heard from the back of the auditorium?
- Energy – can we hear the interest and excitement in your voice?
- Facial Expression – Does it match the words you're reading?
- Character – Can you "be" the person you're reading?
- Willingness – Can you follow instructions and give it your best shot?

When will I know if I'm cast?

If we are able to cast you, we will call you no later than Friday, December 18th. An email will be sent to those auditioners who we are not able to cast at this time - all auditioners are encouraged to come back for future auditions! The first read-thru will be at 2 PM on Sunday, January 10th.

What am I committing to?

By coming to auditions you're not committing to anything. Come try us out and see what you think. However, you will be asked to list any conflicts between your personal calendar and the rehearsal and performance schedule; a large number of conflicts may affect your chances of being cast. If we offer you a part, and you accept, then you are making a commitment to attend every rehearsal possible. That means you can't miss a rehearsal unless it's absolutely necessary and you've discussed your situation with the Director and Stage Manager in advance. **All actors will receive a copy of the script after callbacks and are expected to come to read-thru in January off-book. No absences are allowed during the last two weeks of rehearsals or any performance.** Even if you have your part perfected and don't feel you need to be there, remember that your fellow actor is dependent on you being where you're supposed to be. If someone has a line to deliver to you and you're not there, it makes it very difficult to stay in character and keep the scene running smoothly. A major factor in a production not getting to a polished, professional level is a cast that is erratic in attendance. OK, enough preaching – just want you to understand the importance of being at rehearsals.

Tell me about this play!

Gee's Bend depicts the turbulent history of African-Americans in the 20th century by focusing on a single family in the real community of Gee's Bend, AL, which is now famous for the beautiful quilts created by the women that grew up there. Gospel songs weave in and out of this hauntingly beautiful work.

What are the roles available?

4 Roles: All parts are considered leads. Please note that due to the subject matter, we must stay true to the intended race; all actors must be Black. All actors must be able to convincingly portray their character at different ages.

Sadie, Female

Nella, Female

Alice, Asia, Female

Macon, Male

What about rehearsals?

Our schedule calls for 3 rehearsals a week, followed by Friday and Saturday night performances February 19, 20, 26 and 27. Our first rehearsal is scheduled for Sunday, January 10th. Rehearsals are normally on Tuesdays and Thursdays 7 – 10 PM and Sundays 2 - 5 PM. We take very seriously your commitment and your time. The schedule will be laid out in advance, and only rarely deviated from. The very first rehearsal will be a "read-through" and will include the entire cast. It's just what it sounds like – we'll all sit around and read the script. It's the time to meet your fellow actors, learn about policies and procedures, hear the Director's vision for the show, get measured by the costume department, begin to assimilate your character, work on any tricky pronunciation, etc.

After that, the next set of rehearsals will be broken down, scene by scene, and we'll do the "blocking". Blocking is the term used for any stage movement – crossing from one side to the other, sitting down, standing up – all the stuff that supports your lines. It is a MUST to bring a pencil and make notes in your script as you work. Once we're through these "working" rehearsals, it's time to combine them, and run the full act, and later the full show, fine-tuning as we go. There may be additional or extended rehearsals the week before opening, also known as "Tech Week," if the show needs intensive work prior to opening; please leave your schedule flexible this week.

Tickets prices will be \$17 - 20 per person. You can have all your fans book tickets at www.act1theater.com or call the box office at 770-663-8989 to make their reservations. Further details will be forthcoming in the event we are not able to accommodate live audiences in anticipation of a video subscription situation. For any other questions, please email Managing Director, Melody Cookson, at melody.l.cookson@gmail.com