

AND  
**THEY DANCE  
REAL SLOW  
IN JACKSON**  
BY JIM LEONARD JR.



APRIL  
**29**  
MAY  
**- 3**  
2026

Wed. Apr-29 (7:00 PM)  
FREE PREVIEW

Thurs. Apr-30 (3:00 PM)  
PAY WHAT YOU CAN

Fri. May 1<sup>st</sup> (7:00 PM)

Sat. May 2<sup>nd</sup> (3:00 PM)

Sun. May 3<sup>rd</sup> (3:00 PM)

VC Performing Arts Center  
Yunker Auditorium  
4700 Loma Vista Road

General Admission: \$10  
Students/Seniors: \$5

NATHAN COLE  
STAGE DIRECTOR

ANAIS LIBUNAO:  
HAIR/MAKEUP DESIGN

JAMIE BIRKETT:  
SET DESIGN

PAUL OSEGUERA  
LIGHTING DESIGN



**AND THEY DANCE REAL SLOW IN JACKSON  
BY JIM LEONARD JR.**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 - SUNDAY, MAY 3  
VC PERFORMING ARTS CENTER, YUNKER AUDITORIUM

**CAST**

ELIZABETH WILLOW.....Clarissa Serrano  
BETH WILLOW.....Jasmine Venegas  
BEN WILLOW.....Miles Vega

Ensemble (in order of appearance)

FIRST WOMAN, JUDITH, RUTHY.....Joy Avant  
SECOND WOMAN, CINDY SUE WHITE,.....Samantha Hill  
GIRL AT MALL  
FIRST MAN, SKEETER, SANTA.....Ryan Evans  
SECOND MAN, WOODY, JEREMY, ELF.....Justin Gibson  
NANCY MATTHEWS, MAMA.....Liliana Dominguez  
RUSSEL TAYLOR, TIMMY, HERMAN.....Cody Warren  
EMMA MATTHEWS, CLARANELLE,.....Summer Rose Hayashi  
PHOTOGRAPHER  
BOBBY MORGAN, MOOSE.....Victor Melendez  
REVEREND PEESTER, MADDIE.....Anna Zavala  
KID, BILLY TAYLOR, SAM.....Andy Perez

AND THEY DANCE REAL SLOW IN JACKSON is presented by arrangement with  
Concord Theatricals on behalf of Dramatists Play Service.

[www.concordtheatricals.com](http://www.concordtheatricals.com)

AND THEY DANCE REAL SLOW IN JACKSON was first performed at the New  
Playwrights' Theatre, Washington, D.C. and subsequently performed at Circle  
Repertory Company's Festival of New Plays at Lucille Lortel's White Barn Theatre.

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## **CREATIVE TEAM**

Director.....	Nathan Cole
Set Designer.....	Jamie Birkett
Costume Designer.....	Anais Libunao
Lighting Designer.....	Paul Oseguera
Sound Designer.....	Nathan Cole
Hair and Makeup Designer.....	Anais Libunao
Stage Manager.....	Angel Renee Torres
Graphic Designer.....	Brian Hotchkin
Publicity & Marketing.....	Gabriel Aragon

## **PRODUCTION PERSONNEL & CREW**

Student Acting Coach.....	Savanah Maldonado & Isaiah Maldonado
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Ava Carbajal, Lux Icarian, Katie Kolberg, & Joshua Shearer
Set Crew.....	Jesus Guzman, Juan Mendez, Paul Oseguera & Paloma Salas
PAC Technician.....	Tyson Sauthoff
Technical Assistants.....	Juan Mendez & Paloma Salas
Costume/Wardrobe Crew.....	Mariana Garcia, Jesus Guzman, Esmeralda Hinojosa, & Rowena Muller
Light Board Operator.....	Angel Renee Torres
Sound Board Operator.....	Ava Carbajal
Running Crew.....	Lux Icarian, Katie Kolberg, & Joshua Shearer
Sound Engineer/Mics.....	Tyson Sauthoff
House Manager.....	Gabriel Aragon

## **VENTURA COLLEGE'S DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS**

VC's Department of Performing Arts prepares students to pursue careers in music, theatre, and dance. Students have the opportunity to study with a highly qualified and recognized faculty in a variety of ensembles including Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Chamber Music Ensembles, College Chorus and Singers, VC Musical Theatre & Opera, Jazz Band, VC Dance, and VC Theatre.

## DEAR AUDIENCE

Free parking is available for Friday through Sunday events in the West Parking lot, adjacent to the Center. Parking on campus for Wednesday & Thursday events requires a parking pass available in the parking lot at designated parking pass dispensers.

This production includes strong language and moments of violence. You'll also experience loud noises, theatrical smoke, and dynamic lighting effects throughout the performance.

Please silence all phones during the performance. Also, please no text messaging as it disturbs the electronic equipment and other patrons.

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production and distributing recordings or streams in any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author(s)'s rights and actionable under united states copyright law.

For more information, please visit:

[www.concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists](http://www.concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists)

Please be courteous to other patrons by escorting disruptive patrons to the lobby.

Please pay careful attention if you must leave the theatre for any reason. Exit slowly. Actors use all aisles, entrances, and exits, throughout the entire performance.

There will be one ten-minute intermission after the first act.



**SUPPORT:** If you would like to help support programs like these, please consider making a donation to the VC Foundation Music Fund. Gifts in any amount are a vital part of promoting Ventura's homegrown talent.

**SPECIAL THANKS:** Beatriz Herrera, Andrea Horigan, Angelica Gonzalez, Paula Muñoz, Letty Mojica, Amberley Tanner, James Behan, Dr. Kristy Thomas, Laura Solis-Tetris, Brian Hotchkin, Gabriel Aragon, Lilia Rubacalva, Teresa Bonham, Angela Wilkins, Moorpark College Theatre Department, and the Faculty and Staff of the Department of Performing Arts at Ventura College

## DIRECTORS NOTE

I first encountered this play as a high school junior, sitting in a round of Dramatic Interpretation at the Texas Forensics Association state championship. A young performer walked to the front of a rather large classroom, and with astonishing clarity, embodied four distinct children and one wheelchair-bound young adult, all at once, in ten minutes or less. No props, no set or costumes, just her. She didn't just perform; she transported everyone in that room to Jackson. By the end, I was emotionally drained and deeply unsettled by what Elizabeth endured. Yet my seventeen-year-old-self understood it.

I remember rushing to my theatre teacher and coach, urging her to order the script. I needed to know the other parts of the story. The following year, my school brought that same play to life in our U.I.L. One-Act Play competition. I played the parts of Timmy and the First Man. It felt like a culmination. In truth, it was only a beginning.

A few years after I finished graduate school, I was a part-time instructor at an acting conservatory in Dallas, Texas when I returned to the play in a new role - as a producer and director. I had a modest budget of \$1,500, thirteen outdated lighting instruments, and a group of student actors fueled more by determination than resources. What we lacked in means, we made up for in purpose. That experience deepened my connection to the work and to the quiet, persistent power of storytelling.

In recent years we've been surrounded by narratives that feel increasingly fractured; stories marked by division, distortion, and, at times, a troubling lack of empathy. It raises difficult questions: What will history remember of this moment? Who will shape that memory? Will the truth endure, or be bent to serve individual self-interest?

Amid all that noise, this play kept returning to me, unbidden, even insistent. I began to understand why. Some stories do not fade; they wait. They ask to be revisited when we are ready to hear them differently. I realized it was time to return to *And They Dance Real Slow* in Jackson, to Elizabeth, and to the lessons they both carry. And like last time, I had just the right students and creative team to tell the story in the way I wanted to tell it.

This marks my third opportunity to engage with this play as a creative artist. I've come to this story now having known both profound joy and deep loss, and the story meets me in those places with a quiet, steady truth. To me, the story of Elizabeth endures not because it is fixed, but because it grows alongside us. Its lessons are not bound to a single moment. They endure, asking us to listen, to reflect, and, perhaps, to see one another more clearly.

~Nathan Cole