

Skylight Music Theatre Presents



FORGOTTEN VOICES

Unearthing the Roots of American Music

June 19—July 18, 2021

Streaming Presentation

Recorded in front of a live audience

Cabot Theatre, Broadway Theatre Center

Special Performance
2020-2021 Season

Forgotten Voices Creative Team

Director/Writer/Griot Sheri Williams Pannell
Music Director/Program Curator Christie Chiles Twillie
Skylight Artistic Director Michael Unger
African Music Advisor Prof. Paschal Yao Younge

Forgotten Voices Cast

(in alphabetical Order)

Cecilia Davis

Shawn Holmes

Bill Jackson

Tasha McCoy

Kevin James Sievert

Forgotten Voices Musicians

African Percussion and Voice Prof. Paschal Yao Younge
Dobro/Electric Guitar Johnny Maddox
Drums Terry Jeanes
Guitar Stephen Hull

Production Support

Steve Tonar..... Production Manager/Lighting Design
Ryan Rosmann..... Camera Operator
Eli Stamstad Camera Operator
Anna Janicek..... Follow spot operator
Matthew Tucker Audio Operator
Susan Varela Stage Manager

An excerpt from the poem *Forgotten Voices* by Sheri Williams Pannell

Finally, I will say to you what I know to be true

American music has an African root

We hear it in the pentatonic scale of the Black Spiritual

The call and response in the Work Song

The deep throated shout in the Blues

The complexity in the chords in Gospel praise

The stride piano in Ragtime and Jazz

The drums and guitar in Rhythm and Blues

The soulful twang of Country and Western

The beat and freedom of expression in Rock n' Roll

The storytelling over rhythm in Rap and Hip Hop

Go back to the root in Mali, Ghana, Niger, Senegal

Then, like Gershwin, spend some time

With the Gullah people of Sepalo Island

You will find the connection to the Motherland unmistakable

The long journey from Africa to America started in 1619

That was many rains ago

You may think I have forgotten the voices

Oh, but the blood would not be denied.

A message from Director/Writer/Performer—Sheri Williams Pannell

On January 1, 1863, The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln however, the news of freedom did not reach Texas until two and a half years later on June 19, 1865. This day is recognized as Juneteenth. It is in honor of these ancestors that the concert *Forgotten Voices* is dedicated and makes its debut June 19, 2021. An evening in the theater of performance dedicated to the music of Black Americans is still not enough, but music director Christie Chiles Twillie, producer Michael Unger, and I were on a mission to be as thorough as time would permit. With the assistance of talented singers and instrumentalists, *Forgotten Voices* takes us on a musical odyssey from West Africa to the New World. We explore four centuries of music in the United States all of which is influenced by Black Americans. We enjoy the fruit of their labor and creativity. It is time we speak their names. And their voices shall no longer be forgotten.

To those who came before and upon whose shoulders we stand to this very day

To those who survived the Middle Passage and landed on shores of the New World

To those who endured the harsh treatment conditions of enslavement in America

To those who still found a reason to create works of visual and performing arts

To those who innovated ways of singing, dancing, painting and storytelling

To those who share these new artistic expressions and were never compensated

To those whose descendants still seek recognition for loved ones no longer here

To those who support the fight for reparations

To those who invest in the arts of citizens in our community

To those who in any way made a positive contribution to this performance

To those who are present and support the work of the *Forgotten Voices*

Finally, how fortuitous that the *Forgotten Voices* Concert has debuted on June 19, 2021, the day following the signing the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law by the 46th President of the United States, Joseph Biden! Asèò

With faith, hope and love,

Sheri Williams Pannell

Musical Numbers

PART 1

- Balanfon Song** Christie Chiles Twilie
Traditional
- Ga De Seke Gadets Meli O** Prof. Paschal Younge & Ensemble
Traditional
- Kalëawo, Dzogbedzie Nya Le** Prof. Paschal Younge & Ensemble
Traditional
- Saba De Miawo Kɔ Dzogbedzi** Prof. Paschal Younge & Ensemble
Traditional
- Kundo yi Yevu wo de megbɔ o** Prof. Paschal Younge & Ensemble
Traditional
- There is a Fountain** Cecilia Davis & Ensemble
Traditional
- When I Survey the Wonderous Cross** Ensemble
Traditional
- I've Just Come From the Fountain** Ensemble
Traditional
- Roll 'Em Pete** Shawn Holmes
Big Joe Turner, Pete Johnson
- Strange Things Happening Every Day** Cecilia Davis & Ensemble
Traditional
- I Feel Like Going Home** Bill Jackson
Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, Son House
- Baby Please Don't Go** Shawn Holmes
Traditional
- Lovesick Blues** Kevin James Sievert
Cliff Friend, Irving Mills
- Minnie the Moocher** Kevin James Sievert & Ensemble
Cab Calloway, Irving Mills, Clarence Gaskill
- Prisoner of Love** Bill Jackson
Russ Columbo, Clarence Gaskill, Leo Robin
- It Don't Mean a Thing** Cecilia Davis
Duke Ellington, Irving Mills
- I Put a Spell on You** Tasha McCoy
Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Herb Slotkin
- Maybellene** Kevin James Sievert
Chuck Berry
- Tutti Frutti** Shawn Holmes
Little Richard, Dorothy La Bostrie
- I Got A Woman** Kevin James Sievert
Ray Charles, Renald Richard
- Chain of Fools** Tasha McCoy
Don Covay
- I'd Rather Go Blind** Tasha McCoy & Ensemble
Etta James, Ellington Jordan, Billy Foster

<i>A Fool in Love</i>	Tasha McCoy & Ensemble
Ike Turner	
<i>Strange Fruit</i>	Bill Jackson
Abel Meeropol	
PART 2	
<i>Come See About Me</i>	Kevin James Sievert & Ensemble
Brian Holland, Lamont Dozier, Eddie Holland	
<i>Uptight</i>	Kevin James Sievert
Stevie Wonder, Sylvia Moy, Henry Cosby	
<i>Get Ready</i>	Bill Jackson & Ensemble
Smokey Robinson	
<i>Satisfaction</i>	Kevin James Sievert & Ensemble
Mick Jagger, Keith Richards	
<i>Please, Please, Please</i>	Shawn Holmes, Kevin James Sievert, Bill Jackson
James Brown, Johnny Terry	
<i>Purple Haze</i>	Bill Jackson
Jimi Hendrix	
<i>Green Onions</i>	Band
Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Lewie Steinberg, Al Jackson Jr.	
<i>Riders on the Storm</i>	Bill Jackson
John Densmore, Robby Krieger, Ray Manzarek, Jim Morrison	
<i>War Pigs</i>	Shawn Holmes
Tony Iommi, Ozzy Osbourne, Geezer Butler, Bill Ward	
PART 3	
<i>I Want To Take You Higher</i>	Ensemble
Sly Stone	
<i>Jackson 5 Medley (ABC, Who's Loving You & I Want You Back)</i>	Kevin James Sievert & Ensemble
ABC (Berry Gordy, Freddie Perren, Alphonzo Mizell, Deke Richards)	
<i>Who's Loving You</i> (Smokey Robinson)	
<i>I Want You Back</i> (Berry Gordy, Freddie Perren, Alphonzo Mizell, Deke Richards)	
<i>Never Gonna Give You Up</i>	Bill Jackson, Shawn Holmes
Stock Aitken Waterman	
<i>Lovin' You</i>	Cecilia Davis
Minnie Riperton, Richard Rudolph	
<i>Bring the Funk</i>	Ensemble
Jerome Brailey, George Clinton, Bootsy Collins	
<i>Last Dance</i>	Cecilia Davis
Paul Jabara	
<i>On The Radio</i>	Cecilia Davis
Donna Summer, Giorgio Moroder	
<i>Let's Groove</i>	Shawn Holmes & Ensemble
Maurice White, Wayne Vaughn	
<i>Rapper's Delight</i>	Bill Jackson, Shawn Holmes, Kevin James Sievert, Ensemble
Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers, Sylvia Robinson, Henry Jackson, Michael Wright, Guy O'Brien,	
<i>Lift Every Voice And Sing</i>	Ensemble
James Weldon Johnson, J. Rosamond Johnson	

The Cast (*alphabetical order*)



Cecilia Davis most recently appeared as a soloist in the Skylight Music Theatre/Milwaukee Opera Theatre

production of *Carmina Burana*. Other roles on the Cabot stage include Olympia/Dr. Miracle in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Clara in *Porgy and Bess* and the *Les Misérables* ensemble. Davis has appeared in a number of productions with Milwaukee Opera Theatre, and also performs in recitals through various local concert series.



Shawn Holmes has appeared in shows throughout Wisconsin, including Skylight Music Theatre, Florentine

Opera, First Stage Children's Theatre, Middleton Players Theatre, Black Arts MKE and Four Seasons Theatre.

Favorite roles include Jacob in *La Cage aux Folles* (winner of Best Supporting Actor in a Musical - *Footlights Awards*) at Skylight and others include Coalhouse Walker Jr. from *Ragtime* (winner of Best Actor in a Musical - *Broadway World*), and Sebastian the Crab in Disney's *The Little Mermaid*.



Stephen Hull (Guitar)

The blues may not have been born in the state of Wisconsin, but it sure lives there. Born on February 23,

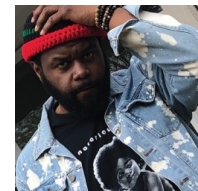
1999, Racine native Stephen Hull (pronounced "Steven"), decided that he would help keep the blues alive by playing his heart and soul out on the guitar at the tender age of 14. Dubbed a young B.B. and Albert King all rolled into one, Stephen's influences from the men themselves are readily showcased whenever possible. Though his roots are in blues, you can believe that R&B, soul, and Jazz music

are essential parts of his musical vocabulary. From Duke Ellington, to B.B. King, to Eric Gales, Stephen is a true music lover looking to share his love of music with you and leave his mark on the world. You can keep up with his schedule by visiting his Facebook page, The Stephen Hull Experience. Can you dig it?



Bill Jackson has appeared at Skylight as Agwe and Papa Ge in *Once on This Island* and Fats Waller in *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Other

Milwaukee area credits include Mr. M in *My Children! My Africa!* and Belize in *Angels in America: Perestroika* (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), Chester Kimmich in *Storefront Church* (Windfall Theatre), Applegate in *Damn Yankees* and Leading Player in *Pippin* (Sunset Playhouse) and Henry in *The Lion in Winter* (Pride Theatre Company) at The Alchemist Theatre.



Terry Jeanes (Drums)

Born and raised in Milwaukee and has been embedded in the music scene as young as 6 years of

age. Started out playing drums and singing in church at a young age and has been blessed to travel many states with several Gospel artist. He plays and also sings with several local groups around the city from The DMC (Dope Music Crew), Shonn Hinton and Shotgun, Adi and my Brothers Brother, and other groups as fill-ins on occasion



Tasha McCoy was seen at Skylight in *The Gospel at Colonus* (2020) and *Crowns* (2016). She has appeared on stages in

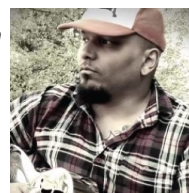
Milwaukee theaters and venues as both an actress and vocalist for over 20 years. Her work in *Antarctica, WI,*

Flyin' West and *Black Nativity* have established her as a seasoned actor in Milwaukee's diverse theater community.



Kevin James Sievert made his professional debut at Skylight Music Theatre in *Hot Mikado* (2017) as Pish Tush, and in the Ensemble of

Urinetown as Robbie the Stockfish and as the production's Dance Captain. Sievert returned to Skylight in the 2018-2019 season as Little Moe in *Five Guys Named Moe*, where he received a nomination and became a finalist for the *Footlights* People's Choice Award for Outstanding Supporting Performer in a Musical (Professional).



Johnny Maddox (Dobro) The Maddox family got their first cd player sometime around 1992. One of their first records was

a blues collection containing many legendary songs, including one Mojo Hand by Lightnin Hopkins. This music made a lasting impression on young Johnny. Maddox typically plays a steel dobro and is musically driven by the Mississippi Delta and Hill Country blues styles including Son House, Bukka White, Mississippi Fred McDowell and RL Burnside. He is recording live from his home in Varkus, Finland.

The Creative Team



Sheri Williams Pannell (Director) is a stage director, playwright, theater educator and performer. For

Skylight she directed *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Crowns*, *Violet*, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and performed in *Once On This Island* (Erzulie, MAMA), *Porgy And Bess* (Maria), *The King And I* (Lady Thiang) and *Wings* (Nurse/Mrs. Timmons). She has worked at Madison Children's Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Old Lyric Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Milwaukee Rep, and University Opera (Madison). Pannell is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Peck School of the Arts, serving as Area Head for the Musical Theatre Program. She is artistic director at Bronzeville Arts Ensemble and an artistic associate at First Stage. Pannell co-directs the drama group at Calvary Baptist Church. A long-standing member of the theatre community, in 2017 the City of Milwaukee recognized Pannell as an Artist of the Year. A graduate of Spelman College, Pannell also holds an MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Christie Chiles Twillie (Music Director) is a pianist, music director, conductor, vocal coach, sound designer and

composer. At Skylight: *Five Guys Named Moe* (2019 *Footlights* Winner Best Musical Direction), *Newsies*, and *The Gospel at Colonus*. Compositional credits include: *A Raisin in the Sun* (Invictus), *America 2.0* (Definition), Harrison River's *We Are Continuous* (GEVA), Isaac's Gomez's *The Way She*

Spoke (Milwaukee Chamber Theatre), *The Niceties* (Forward) and *The Mountain Top* (American Players). Twillie was a 2019 Rachel Rockwell Fierce Women Behind the Table Award for Music Direction by Porchlight Music Theatre. She earned a BTAA nomination for Best Music Direction (*Yellowman*) in 2018.



Michael Unger (Skylight Artistic Director) joined Skylight in fall, 2019 and has directed *KidsWrites*, virtual

productions, and launched new works initiatives to bring to Skylight such famed songwriters as Paul Williams, Dennis DeYoung; and a festival of BIPOC writers. Unger is also the Producing Artistic Director of NewArts, started in response to the Sandy Hook tragedy. Previously, he was Associate Artistic Director of Off-Broadway's York Theatre. He has directed many benefit concerts, including for Sandy Hook and Parkland. Selected world premieres include *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Caligula*, and *A ROCKIN' Midsummer Night's Dream*, featured in the documentary film, *Midsummer in Newtown*.



Prof. Paschal Yao Younge (African Music Advisor/Percussion and Voice) is a Professor of Music at Ohio University and

currently the Executive and Music Director of Azaguno, Inc., a multi-ethnic ensemble based in Athens, Ohio that focuses on research, preservation, and performance of African, African American, Caribbean, and Latin American Music and Dance. Dr. Younge was born at Dzodze, a village in the Volta Region of Ghana, and has studied both western and traditional African instruments. He

further expands his understanding and knowledge of African cultural heritage through drumming, dancing, and research. As a specialist in African choral and brass band music, Dr. Younge has presented and performed at festivals, concerts, and conferences in over 45 States/Provinces in the US/ Canada and 25 countries internationally. Before coming to Ohio University, Younge taught at West Virginia University, where he served as Director of the World Music Center and at the University of Ghana as Principal Music Instructor and director of several ensembles.

Skylight Music Theatre Staff
[Click here for staff listing.](#)

Special Thanks

Emma Knott, Amanda Marquardt, Raudel Resendez & Ashlee Tonar, Dr. Doug Syme, Nathaniel Unger, Phoebe Unger, Prof. Paschal Yao Younge & Prof. Zelma Badu-Young.

Skylight Music Theatre is pleased to offer *Forgotten Voices* free of charge. Contributions are appreciated.
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Skylight music theatre 2021-2022 **season**

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