



SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

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Please note: Images are available for download from the [online media gallery](#).

Spoleto Festival USA Announces 2017 Program

41st Season of America's Premier Performing Arts Festival Takes Place May 26 – June 11 in Charleston, South Carolina

Highlights of the 2017 Festival:

First Spoleto Festival USA production of Tchaikovsky's opulent opera, ***Eugene Onegin***, directed by Festival-favorite Chen Shi-Zheng, featuring soprano Natalia Pavlova and baritone Franco Pomponi

Internationally acclaimed **Druid** theater company, directed by **Garry Hynes**, returns to the Dock Street Theatre, bringing its rendition of Samuel Beckett's masterpiece, ***Waiting for Godot***

Dee Dee Bridgewater, a three-time Grammy winner, Tony winner, and 2017 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, leads off the **Wells Fargo Jazz** series with a Festival-eve concert

US premiere of Antonio Vivaldi's most popular 18th-century opera ***Farnace***, directed by Garry Hynes and conducted by David Bates

Israeli choreographers Hillel Kogan, Sharon Eyal, and Gai Behar make Spoleto Festival USA debuts with cutting-edge works ***We Love Arabs*** (Kogan) and ***OCD Love*** (Eyal and Behar for company L-E-V); Princess Grace Award-winner Andrea Miller's ***Gallim Dance*** returns to the Festival in the 2017 dance series with ***W H A L E***

A special US premiere of the Royal Opera House's ***Quartett***, a 21st-century opera composed by Luca Francesconi; Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy conducts

The **Spoleto Celebration Concert**, featuring the **Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra**, **Westminster Choir**, and musicians from the **Bank of America Chamber Music** series in an exploration of the Festival's musical past conducted by Anne Manson

French circus-arts troupe **Compagnie XY** returns to the Festival with a family friendly showcase of extraordinary feats in ***Il n'est pas encore minuit***

Flamenco luminary María Pagés returns to the Festival with a riveting performance, **Yo, Carmen**, at the Charleston Gaillard Center

The **Westminster Choir, Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus**, and the **Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra** in **Mozart's Great Mass**, one of the composer's most time-honored (yet unfinished) masterworks, conducted by Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller

Sounds of Americana: Lauded singer **Rhiannon Giddens** and Nashville's **Della Mae** each perform for one night only

Breakout New Orleans-based **The Revivalists** at the **Wells Fargo Festival Finale** at Middleton Place, followed by a spectacular post-concert fireworks display on June 11

Expanded series offerings of **Conversations With, Jazz Talks**, and **Master Classes**, providing more opportunities this year for enhancing the Festival experience

January 8, 2017 (CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA)—Festival General Director Nigel Redden has announced the program for the 41st annual Spoleto Festival USA, taking place May 26 through June 11, 2017, in Charleston, South Carolina. "On the heels of a hugely exciting 40th season, this year's Festival promises to build on that momentum, with even more dance and theater performances than in previous years," says Redden. "Charleston's rich history in the arts comes alive during each Festival, and we will explore that history and add to it again in 2017."

The 2017 Festival features more than 160 ticketed events, held in 12 venues around Charleston that reflect the city's past and present—including the raw, intimate Woolfe Street Playhouse, the historic Dock Street Theatre, the versatile Memminger Auditorium, and the recently renovated Charleston Gaillard Center. Again in 2017, the Gaillard will host the Festival's capstone opera, this year a lavish production of Tchaikovsky's ***Eugene Onegin***. In addition to housing the US premiere of Vivaldi's celebrated opera ***Farnace***, the Dock Street Theatre will also be home to acclaimed Irish theater company Druid's production of ***Waiting for Godot***. Award-winning Garry Hynes, Druid's artistic director, will direct both Dock Street performances. A few blocks uptown, three other internationally acclaimed theater productions will be held in College of Charleston's Emmett Robinson Theatre: Blind Summit Theatre's ***The Table***, Aurélia Thierrée's ***Murmurs***, and Rezo Gabriadze's ***Ramona***.

Other College of Charleston venues will again set the stage for Spoleto Festival USA: Jazz Master **Dee Dee Bridgewater** will light up the College's picturesque Cistern Yard with Festival-eve and opening-night concerts as part of the **Wells Fargo Jazz** series, while the Sottile Theatre welcomes a range of innovative contemporary dance companies from around the globe, including France's ballet-meets-hip-hop duo **Wang Ramirez**, Israel's **L-E-V**, and the New York-based **Gallim Dance**.

The **American Express Woolfe Street Series** will send audiences to the Upper King-area industrial building-turned-playhouse for a wide array of events, including a world premiere from tap choreographer and performer **Ayodele Casel**, three programs of Spoleto Festival USA Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy's contemporary **Music in Time** series, and the world premiere of **Cinema and Sound**, featuring Festival-favorite pianist Stephen Prutsman.

And finally, the spectacular **Wells Fargo Festival Finale** will take place across the Ashley River at historic Middleton Place, giving ticket holders access to not only a full lineup of local and regional bands headlined by **The Revivalists**, but also the opportunity to explore the estate's lush grounds and scenic gardens.

The 2017 program and an event calendar can be found [here](#). Tickets go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, January 18, at 10:00am by phone at 843.579.3100 and online at spoletousa.org. A donor pre-sale begins January 10. Tickets can be purchased in person through the Spoleto Festival USA Box Office at the Charleston Gaillard Center (95 Calhoun Street) beginning Monday, May 1. Additional details can be found online and in the ticket-purchasing information below.

2017 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OPERA

The 2017 Festival presents three operas spanning nearly three centuries—Antonio Vivaldi's *Farnace* (1727), Pyotr Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (1879), and Luca Francesconi's *Quartett* (2011). Both *Farnace* and *Quartett* will be given their US premieres, while *Eugene Onegin* will be staged in a new production at the Charleston Gaillard Center.

In Tchaikovsky's grand opera, ***Eugene Onegin***, Russia's wintery beauty—expressed in both simple country life and the glittering aristocracy of St. Petersburg—is the backdrop for this tragic love story, based on Pushkin's classic novel in verse. Chen Shi-Zheng, a Festival-favorite for his work on *Matsukaze* in 2013 and *Monkey: Journey to the West* in 2008, returns to direct this production. Distinguished young conductor Evan Rogister will lead the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, celebrated soprano Natalia Pavlova in the role of Tatyana, and dramatic baritone Franco Pomponi (who appeared in Festival productions of *Lakmé* and *Manon Lescaut*) as Onegin. The opera will be sung in Russian with English supertitles on May 26, June 1, 4, and 8.

Following the opening performance of *Eugene Onegin* on Friday, May 26, an elegant, black-tie evening of ballroom dancing and old-world merriment continues at the Charleston Gaillard Center Banquet Hall. **Tatyana's Ball** features lush waltzes performed by a 50-piece Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, a champagne toast, and a multi-course seated dinner.

Starring countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo in the title role, 18th-century composer Antonio Vivaldi's opera ***Farnace*** will be given its US premiere by Spoleto Festival USA at the Dock Street Theatre, beginning May 27. In its time, the opera was the most widely performed in Vivaldi's catalogue, telling the story of Farnace, King of Pontus, who, following defeat at the hands of the Romans, tries to avoid capture. The plot develops in a string of events that put into question love, honor, and the limits of each. **Garry Hynes** returns to the Festival after what *Opera* magazine deemed a "rapturous" operatic directorial debut for her production of *Kát'a Kabanová*. Hynes, who in 1998, became the first woman to receive a Tony Award for best direction of a play (*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*), will also direct Druid's presentation of *Waiting for Godot* during the 2017 Festival.

Based on Heiner Müller's 1982 play, ***Quartett*** brings together all the ingredients of great opera—love, hatred, and demise—when the two principal characters find themselves trapped in a bitter game of seduction and deception. This US premiere of Italian composer **Luca Francesconi's** opera (which was commissioned in 2011 by La Scala in Milan) calls for two singers and two orchestras—one live and one pre-recorded and electronically treated—and will be conducted by the Festival's Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities **John Kennedy**. Director **John Fulljames** first mounted this fully immersive Royal Opera House production in 2014, of which *The Guardian* wrote, "...the piece uses the whole apparatus of a large-scale opera house

in ways that threaten to turn the institution and the art form upside-down.” Charleston’s Memminger Auditorium will serve as *Quartet’s* Festival setting on May 28, 31, and June 3.

THEATER

The Festival’s 2017 theater productions feature a range of international presentations from puppetry to monologue to a larger-scale production. Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* is programmed alongside Henry Naylor’s *Angel*, a contemporary monologue set in Northern Syria; Aurélia Thierrée and Victoria Thierrée Chaplin’s *Murmurs*, a surreal psycho-drama shaped by a range of visual effects; and two works of modern puppetry, *Ramona* and *The Table*.

Druid’s Artistic Director **Garry Hynes**, who will also be directing opera *Farnace* at the 2017 Festival, leads **Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot***, perhaps the defining play of the 20th century. Designer **Francis O’Connor** (lauded for his work in Spoleto Festival USA’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 2016) will again bring his inventive designs to Dock Street Theatre starting on May 25. Actors **Garrett Lombard**, **Aaron Monaghan**, **Rory Nolan**, and **Marty Rea** star in this retelling, which *The Irish Times* describes as “the freshest, funniest, and most affecting production of the play in at least a quarter of a century.”

Opening weekend will also bring **Aurélia Thierrée** and **Victoria Thierrée Chaplin’s** collaboration, ***Murmurs***, to the Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston (May 26 through 29). Presenting a dreamlike, largely wordless rumination on a woman’s adventure into a surreal and shifting landscape, Thierrée returns to Spoleto Festival USA following sold-out performances of *Aurélia’s Oratorio* in 2007. This time, she will be accompanied by featured performers Magnus Jakobsson and Jamie Martinez. Innovatively using set design, objects, and puppetry to transform everyday things into manifestations of the soul, *Murmurs* straddles the delicate line between imagination and madness.

Described by *Edinburgh Festivals Magazine* as “a compelling, thought-provoking, symbolic piece of theatre,” ***Angel*** is inspired by a true story. **Henry Naylor’s** one-woman monologue follows a heroic sniper—a member of a band of Kurdish female fighters—who may just be the angel that Kobani, a town in Northern Syria, was hoping for as ISIS forces move in to take the region. *Angel* is presented as part of the **American Express Woolfe Street Series** on May 26 through May 29.

Georgian playwright and director **Rezo Gabriadze's** *Ramona* (May 31 through June 4 at College of Charleston's Emmett Robinson Theatre) presents a charming yet tragic tale of two trains in love. Ramona—a shunting engine—waits for years in a railway station for her heroic Trans-Siberian locomotive, Ermon, to return from his journey across the railroads of Russia. Yet when the circus comes to town, Ramona joins the troupe—ultimately sealing her own fate. Georgian playwright Gabriadze returns to the Festival for a second appearance following his production of *The Battle of Stalingrad* in 2003. Gabriadze Theatre offers a production full of extraordinary scenes created from ordinary objects; the director and his puppeteers crystalize, in miniature, the joy and heartbreak of love and the unrecoverable past.

Puppetry masterwork continues with **Blind Summit Theatre's** *The Table*, which is centered around Moses, a cantankerous three-man-operated puppet who wants to share an epic philosophy-meets-comedy tale about God, life and death, and puppetry—but who easily gets distracted. *The Table* has received a Fringe First award, and, in 2012, Blind Summit Theatre served as puppet directors for the London Olympic Opening Ceremonies. Staged at the Emmett Robinson Theatre June 6 through 10, this production will occupy a welcome space between contemporary humor and historical reference. Festival audiences will remember Blind Summit Theatre's director **Mark Down**; he co-directed the 2016 production of *The Little Match Girl*.

DANCE

Presenting a total of six companies—and including one world premiere—the 2017 dance series, sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina, invites audience members to rethink what they hold true about dance, life, love, and the boundaries humans set between one another. Productions span discipline—from flamenco to hip hop and beyond—as well as country of origin, including two from Israel's thriving contemporary dance scene.

Leading off the dance series during opening weekend, ballet- and martial arts-trained **Honji Wang** and gifted former B-boy **Sébastien Ramirez** transcend boundaries with their duet *Monchichi*, drawing on their own backstories to develop a new language. Ramirez, who is French with Spanish origins, crosses cultural and choreographic paths with Wang (who was born in Frankfurt to Korean parents) to create a portrait of a new, urban, mobile, and intercultural generation. But as *The New York Times* puts it, “The language that bridges their differences, though, isn't some blend of ballet and breaking. It's an outgrowth of hip-hop, and Ms. Wang dances it as adroitly as

Mr. Ramirez.” In addition to its three performances, **Company Wang Ramirez** will also lead a **master class** on Thursday, May 25.

Returning to the Festival after celebrated performances in 2003 is the passionate flamenco artist **María Pagés**, who will embody the legendary character of Carmen in her vibrant ode to femininity entitled **Yo, Carmen**, staged at the Charleston Gaillard Center on May 27 and 28. In the work, Pagés sketches a portrait of the eternal feminine free of prejudice and conventions, endowed with the voice of all women. Accompanied by some of Spain’s most talented musicians along with a company of fiery dancers pounding out fierce rhythms, Pagés will stand out once again as an iconic figure of flamenco. Singapore’s *Live* writes: “It is not often that one gets to see a true master at work, but when it happens, it is magical.”

In a world premiere presented as part of the **American Express Woolfe Street Series**, tap dancer and choreographer **Ayodele Casel** will create a virtuosic piece exploring language, communication, identity, and legacy. A native New Yorker, Casel turned to tap as part of her training to be an actor; two years after her introduction to the art form, the versatile dancer landed the only female role in Savion Glover’s *Not Your Ordinary Tappers*. Casel has been creating and presenting her own work since 1999 and was hailed by the late legendary tapper, Gregory Hines, as “one of the top young tap dancers in the world.” Casel will perform five shows at the Woolfe Street Playhouse beginning Thursday, June 1.

Israeli choreographers **Sharon Eyal** and **Gai Behar** bring their celebrated work **OCD Love** to the Festival’s 2017 dance series on June 2, 3, and 4 at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre. Performed by dancers of Eyal and Behar’s ensemble, **L-E-V**, the work is set to deep, pulsing grooves created live by DJ Ori Lichtik and explores themes of the heart through the lens of obsessive compulsion. The choreographers’ focus on repetition and frustration create a mesmerizing movement vocabulary in this work, which was inspired Neil Hilborn’s poem about the condition of OCD: “I asked her out six times in thirty seconds. She said yes after the third one, but none of them felt right so I had to keep going.” Members of L-E-V will lead a **master class** in the company’s unique style on June 3.

In a Festival debut on June 5 at the College of Charleston Emmett Robinson Theatre, performer and choreographer **Hillel Kogan’s** **We Love Arabs** will examine the Arab-Israeli conflict with

humor and subtlety. Earning the “Outstanding Creator of 2013” award from the Israeli Dance Critics Circle for this piece, Kogan performs with **Adi Boutrous**, speaking as well as moving through space, seeking a way to break through prejudices. *The Jerusalem Post* called this work “witty, provocative, political, and hilarious,” declaring admiration for Kogan’s “mind, originality, as well as his deep stage comprehension.” Kogan will also lead a **master class** on Saturday, June 10.

The dance series will conclude with the Festival return of 2014 Guggenheim Fellow and Princess Grace Awardee **Andrea Miller**, when her New York-based **Gallim Dance** presents **W H A L E** at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre June 8, 9, and 10. (The company performed her *I Can See Myself in Your Pupil* in 2010.) A full-length work that uses radical physical language and an impulsive narrative pace to juxtapose love, sex, and domesticity, *W H A L E* is both intimate and cinematic, guided by Miller’s virtuosic and fresh choreography. No stranger to the academic world, Miller has created and set work for more than 40 institutions—Harvard University and The Juilliard School among them—and in Charleston, Festival audiences will have the opportunity to attend a **Gallim Dance master class** on Saturday, June 10.

PHYSICAL THEATER

After a triumphant Festival debut in 2013 (performing *Le Grand C*), **Compagnie XY** will bring a new piece of French circus—this time a metaphor for the ways in which humanity faces instability and imbalance—to Charleston’s Memminger Auditorium for six performances beginning June 6. In *Il n’est pas encore minuit*, performers will evoke aspects of the human experience: the inevitable fall, the state of weightlessness, the euphoria of uplift. The troupe’s feats—stacking bodies four-people high, for instance—and continuous surprise create an edge-of-your-seat experience for audiences of all ages.

MUSIC

After the great success of last year’s 40th-Season Celebration Concert, Spoleto Festival USA will again explore the depths of its rich history in a new jubilant evening. Artists from every corner of the Festival’s musical offerings—the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, the Westminster Choir, and musicians from the Bank of America Chamber music series—will join together for the **Spoleto Celebration Concert** at the Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall at the Charleston Gaillard Center, led by esteemed conductor **Anne Manson**, who is returning to the Festival for

her third time in recent years. The varied program on May 30 will include works by Charleston composer **Edmund Thornton Jenkins**, **Leonard Bernstein's "Symphonic Dances" from *West Side Story***, and chamber musicians—including The Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director for Chamber Music violinist **Geoff Nuttall**—in a **Vivaldi** concerto. The concert will also include works by **Joseph "Fud" Livingston**, an early jazz musician born in Charleston in 1906.

Westminster Choir, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus, and the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra will combine forces on June 6 to present works including **Mozart's Great Mass**. Thought to be written as a peace offering to his father—who did not approve of Mozart's marriage—the mass features solos (written for, among others, his wife Constanze) that require great virtuosity and range; these traits along with mighty choruses and grandiose orchestral writing make this work far more ornate than any church music of its time. Festival Director of Choral Activities **Joe Miller** will conduct this choral masterwork that has captivated and delighted audiences for more than 200 years.

Joe Miller will also conduct the Festival's ever popular **Westminster Choir Concerts** at the Cathedral Church of St. Luke and St. Paul. The choir, lauded as "remarkable for its precision, unanimity, and power" by *The New York Times*, will explore its striking sonic capabilities in a program titled *A Thousand Years to Live* (May 29 and June 3). It will feature works by American composers **Dominick DiOrio**, **Kile Smith**, and **Paul Crabtree**, along with **Brahms's *Three Songs***, op. 42 for a cappella choir, Latvian composer **Uģis Prauliņš's *Laudibus in Sanctis***, and music from the Sacred Harp and Ring Shout traditions.

Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities **John Kennedy** will lead the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra in **Gustav Mahler's** beatific **Symphony no. 4**, a yearning for a peaceful life on earth with his setting of the poem "Das himmlische Leben" (The Heavenly Life). Soprano **Pureum Jo**, whose performance in the opera *Matsukaze* at the 2013 Festival received critical acclaim from *Opera News*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Charleston's *Post and Courier*, will return as a soloist. Also on the June 3 program entitled **Mahler 4 and Dreaming** will be the US premiere of ***Dreaming*** by Icelandic composer **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**, which won the Nordic Council Music Prize in 2012.

As part of the **American Express Woolfe Street Series**, the world premiere of **Cinema and Sound** will pair silent film shorts with original music composed by pianist **Stephen Prutsman**. The suspense, surrealism, and silliness of the three early films—*The Cameraman's Revenge* (1910), *Suspense* (1913), and *Mighty Like a Moose* (1926)—is well suited for the Woolfe Street Playhouse, where Prutsman and a quartet from the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra will offer this music-meets-the-silver-screen experience for five performances starting on June 7. **Cinema and Sound** is co-commissioned by Spoleto Festival USA, Schubert Club, and Festival Mozaic, with generous support from Michael Hostetler and Erica Pascal.

Under the direction of violinist **Geoff Nuttall**, the **Bank of America Chamber Music** series features 33 concerts of 11 programs performed three times in the historic **Dock Street Theatre**. Nuttall's signature wit and *joie de vivre* mark each of the performances, whether he is playing with his **St. Lawrence String Quartet**, or acting as emcee. The series is set apart by the unmatched stage chemistry and rollicking good time the musicians have as they play together. Returning favorites this season include countertenor **Anthony Roth Costanzo** (who will also star in the title role during the Festival's US premiere of *Farnace*); percussionist **Steven Schick**, last heard at the Festival in 2013; as well as oboist **James Austin Smith**, violinist **Livia Sohn**, and pianists **Pedja Muzijevic** and **Stephen Prutsman**. They are joined by several Festival newcomers: composer-in-residence **Jaroslav Kapuscinski**, composer/cellist **Joshua Roman**, pianist **Gilles Vonsattel**, and the **Rolston String Quartet**, a Canadian ensemble that won the 2016 Banff International String Quartet Competition. The full program will be announced in April.

Directed and hosted by the Festival's Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, the **Music in Time** series includes four concerts exploring contemporary music. Three will be held at the Woolfe Street Playhouse as part of the **American Express Woolfe Street Series**. The first program (on May 28), entitled **Tempus Fugit**, will highlight a new generation of international composers including Argentina's **Jose Manuel Serrano**, Estonia's **Helena Tulve**, and Italy's **Luca Francesconi** (who also composed the opera *Quartett*, receiving its US premiere at the Festival). Members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra will perform, led by conductor Jeffrey Means. On May 31, rising-star composers **Ted Hearne** and **Jonathan Holland**'s work, *Synchrony*, a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, will be featured in the program **Sounding Peace**, which will also include a selection from time-honored American composer **Lou Harrison**. For the third program on June 5, Kennedy will lead a presentation of

John Cage's classic 1976 performance piece ***Lecture on the Weather***, which was created using texts by Henry David Thoreau, recordings of nature, and projections.

The Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston will also welcome the June 1 **Music in Time** performance, featuring Festival chamber music favorite, pianist **Pedja Muzijevic**. The program, **Dialogues with Pedja Muzijevic**, will include four Haydn sonatas interspersed with three modern works by Jonathan Berger, John Cage, and Morton Feldman, to offer listeners a fresh landscape for hearing works anew.

Augmenting Spoleto Festival USA's rich classical music canon will be two special musical guests. On Friday, June 2, Nashville-based and Grammy-nominated string band **Della Mae** will take to the College of Charleston Cistern Yard, a perfect match for lead singer Celia Woodsmith's unvarnished yet intimate vocals and the group's knack for blurring the lines between bluegrass, folk, soul, and old-time traditions. **Rhiannon Giddens**, the former frontwoman for the Grammy-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops (heard at the Festival in 2010 and 2008), will share an evening of American roots music at the Charleston Gaillard Center on Friday, June 9. Giddens's show-stopping voice, writes *Rolling Stone*, "sweeps, soars, and snarls, driven by equal parts classical training and folksy instinct."

WELLS FARGO JAZZ

The 2017 Wells Fargo Jazz series highlights some of the top artists working today, from acclaimed masters to rising stars. In addition to exploring the tension between the art form's past and present, this season's series will also touch on jazz's deep connection with one of Charleston's sister Southern cities—New Orleans.

Three-time Grammy winner **Dee Dee Bridgewater** kicks things off with Festival-eve and opening-night performances at College of Charleston Cistern Yard. Named a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master, Bridgewater successfully carries the torch passed on by greats Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, thinking more like an instrumentalist than a vocalist, scatting well-constructed yet improvised melodies, and interpreting songs in an original and personal way. This leading light of the jazz vocal tradition is set apart by a charisma and natural talent for communicating with an audience—a charisma that led to a Tony for her theatrical performance in *The Wiz* and international recognition.

Opening weekend also welcomes Buenos Aires-born **Sofía Rei**, one of the most inventive voices on the current New York City scene. Rei, who’s “passion and clarity has been embraced from Carnegie Hall to the hippest downtown haunts” (*The New York Times*), explores ties between South American folklore, jazz, flamenco, and electronic sounds, producing works that project an uplifting, melodic purity while maintaining driving rhythmic complexity. During six unique concerts in settings that range from solo to quartet, Rei will delight audiences with rarely heard songs from every corner of the Americas, along with original compositions.

Playing at the College of Charleston Cistern Yard on May 27 and 28, Cuban musician **Pedrito Martinez**’s world-class status as a percussionist, singer, and bandleader has garnered a fervent following—including the likes of Eric Clapton and Roger Waters, along with Paul Simon and Wynton Marsalis, both of whom Martinez has performed with. Martinez brings authentic Cuban tradition into the 21st century with a powerhouse quartet that entices audiences to get up and dance. Each bandmate contributes something integral: Peruvian percussionist **Jhair Sala**’s timing and intuition fuse with Martinez’s, and the two drummers play as one; pianist **Edgar Pantoja-Aleman** bends genre boundaries with a constant supply of heat and skill; and bassist **Yunior Terry** considers his bass “one more dancer out there on the floor.” Together, the **Pedrito Martinez Group** is “writing a new chapter in Cuban music history, and their shared excitement is irresistible” (NPR’s *All Things Considered*).

One of the most significant jazz musicians of his generations, trumpeter **Terence Blanchard** has won multiple Grammy awards and extends a jazz tradition embodied by Louis Armstrong—grounded in their shared hometown of New Orleans. His sought-after sound both as a performer and composer can be heard on almost every Spike Lee film, among others; he has carved out a singular place in contemporary culture that extends well beyond jazz’s reach. **Terence Blanchard featuring the E-Collective** will perform at the Cistern Yard on June 3 with a distinctly groove-based quintet, teeming with funk, rock, R&B, and blues sounds. The ensemble thrives on the perfect mixture of Blanchard’s genius and the innovations of his bandmates: guitarist **Charles Altura**, pianist/keyboardist **Fabian Almazan**, bassist **DJ Ginyard**, and drummer **Oscar Seaton**.

As a pianist and singer, **Henry Butler**’s place in the pantheon of New Orleans musical greats is secure. He tells stories through the rise, swing, and rumble of his fingers as they channel sounds

from a diverse array of genres: jazz, Caribbean, classical, pop, blues, and R&B, among others. Trumpeter, bandleader, and arranger **Steven Bernstein**—a veteran of New York City’s downtown scene and a Grammy-award winner—refers to himself as a “retro-futurist.” The fiery unit, **Butler, Bernstein & The Hot 9**, will use New Orleans tradition and early 20th-century blues as a launching point during their June 1 performance at the College of Charleston Cistern Yard.

In the early days of his career, saxophonist and flutist **Charles Lloyd** was invited to be a guest on recordings with the Doors, the Beach Boys, and the Grateful Dead. Now armed with an honorary doctorate from Berklee College of Music and the title of Jazz Master from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lloyd will return to Spoleto Festival USA (he previously appeared during the 2001 and 1994 Festivals). For the **Charles Lloyd Quartet** concert at the Charleston Gaillard Center on June 2, Lloyd will play with a group of dynamic musicians a generation or more his junior: pianist **Gerald Clayton**, bassist **Larry Grenadier**, and drummer **Eric Harland**.

The Wells Fargo Jazz series concludes with **Evan Christopher’s Clarinet Road**, June 7 – 10. When he left California for New Orleans in 1994, **Evan Christopher** began a journey along what he calls a “clarinet road,” working to honor and extend the legacies of such early Creole clarinetists as Sidney Bechet, Barney Bigard, and Omer Simeon. With a sound and style that combines virtuosity, immaculate taste, and enthusiasm, his music explores the full range of possibilities in this tradition. At his six Festival performances at the Simons Center Recital Hall, the trio will also include Christopher’s close New Orleans associates: guitarist **Brian Seeger** and bassist **Roland Guerin**.

In addition to Terence Blanchard featuring the E-Collective’s June 3 concert, Blanchard, an outspoken presence and articulate educator, will sit down with music critic **Larry Blumenfeld** for a **Jazz Talk** called “**Trumpeting Truth: A Conversation with Terence Blanchard**” earlier on that Saturday at the Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston. The two will discuss how arts, advocacy, and social justice issues intersect in Blanchard’s career as bandleader, film composer and educator, as well as within the wider music community.

Blumenfeld will also lead another **Jazz Talk**, “**Fud at 100: A Centennial Celebration**,” alongside Charleston Jazz Initiative co-founder **Karen Chandler** and Charleston **Mayor John Tecklenburg**. Born in Charleston in 1906, Joseph “Fud” Livingston worked alongside the legends

of early jazz, and authored the classic song, “I’m Thru With Love.” The mayor—a musician and Livingston’s great nephew—and Chandler will discuss Livingston’s legacy at the Simons Center Recital Hall at the College of Charleston on May 28.

Located 14 miles from downtown Charleston, the historic plantation and beautifully manicured gardens of Middleton Place will set the backdrop for the day-long **Wells Fargo Festival Finale** on Sunday, June 11. After a full lineup of local and regional groups (announced at a later date), New Orleans-based, groove-oriented rock band **The Revivalists** will take center stage for a rousing conclusion to the 2017 Festival. The evening will close with a spectacular display of post-concert fireworks.

BEHIND THE GARDEN GATE

For a fifth year, Spoleto Festival USA will again collaborate with the Charleston Horticultural Society and The Garden Conservancy to present **Behind the Garden Gate**—self-guided tours on May 27 and June 3 through 16 of Charleston’s most charming private gardens that are often hidden behind gates and ivy-covered walls.

CONVERSATIONS WITH

The Festival continues its **Conversations With** discussion series—interviews with Festival artists conducted by Emmy Award-winning CBS News correspondent **Martha Teichner**. This season, the four sessions will feature: *Quartett* director **John Fulljames** and conductor **John Kennedy**, *Waiting for Godot* and *Farnace* director **Garry Hynes**, tap dancer **Ayodele Casel**, and pianist/composer **Stephen Prutsman**. Ayodele Casel’s conversation will take place at the Woolfe Street Playhouse; all others will be held at the Charleston Library Society.

Find a full calendar of events [here](#).

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets will go on sale to the general public on **Wednesday, January 18, at 10:00am** online at spoletousa.org and by phone at 843.579.3100.

For contributors to Spoleto Festival USA, a donor pre-sale starts on January 10, providing exclusive access to tickets and premium seating for the 2017 season. Access is based on

contribution level; more information on the donor pre-sale and how to donate can be found at spoletousa.org.

On-site box office operations will be located at the Charleston Gaillard Center beginning Monday, May 1. Tickets may be purchased in person Monday through Sunday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

The Festival offers subscription packages to the Bank of America Chamber Music series. Subscribers choose from three packages—one including all 11 programs, one for six programs, and one for five programs. Subscribers have access to premium seats in a consistent location for every performance. Other benefits include special exchange privileges and early program announcements. For additional information, contact the patron services manager at 843.720.1114 or visit spoletousa.org/chamber-music-subscriptions.

Go Spoleto! accommodation and ticket packages are available in partnership with four premium Charleston hotels. For more information, visit spoletousa.org/gospoleto.

Festival gift certificates can be purchased in any amount and used towards performance tickets, merchandise such as Festival posters, or towards a charitable contribution to Spoleto Festival USA. To purchase gift certificates, order online at spoletousa.org or by phone at 843.579.3100.

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