

SPOLETO – FESTIVAL USA

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Opera

Vanessa

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
May 27, 29, June 6, 10

Music by Samuel Barber
Libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti
Directed by Rodula Gaitanou
Conducted by Timothy Myers
Scenic and costume design by Cordelia Chisholm

Featuring
Nicole Heaston, Vanessa
Zoie Reams, Erika
Edward Graves, Anatol
Rosalind Plowright, Old Baroness
Malcom MacKenzie, Old Doctor
Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra and Chorus

For four performances at the Charleston Gaillard Center, Samuel Barber's Pulitzer Prize winning 1958 opera, *Vanessa*, makes a triumphant return to Spoleto Festival USA for the first time in 45 years. With a libretto by Spoleto founder Gian Carlo Menotti, this dramatic work receives a contemporary retelling by director Rodula Gaitanou and scenic and costume designer Cordelia Chisholm.

This new production—which receives its US premiere at Spoleto—was originally mounted by Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland, whose 2016 production received glowing reviews from British and European outlets, especially praising the strengthened characterizations and musical expression. Wrote one critic for *Bachtrack*: “Rodula Gaitanour presented us with a gripping production where the inner psychological drama of Vanessa and Erika and their deep-seated traumas were explored and ably developed.” Austin Opera's Timothy Myers, who conducted the work in Ireland to critical acclaim, returns to this work as conductor of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra and Chorus.

Renowned soprano Nicole Heaston sings the title role. Praised by *The New York Times* for her “radiant” and “handsomely resonant voice,” Heaston has appeared with opera companies throughout the world, including The Metropolitan Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Francisco Opera, LA Opera, Semperoper Dresden, and the Glyndebourne Festival in England.

Dance

Ayodele Casel: Chasing Magic

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre
May 27, 28, 29

Created and choreographed by Ayodele Casel
Directed by Torya Beard

Featuring

Dancers: Ayodele Casel, Sean Kaminski, Naomi Funaki, Amanda Castro, Quynn Johnson, Jared Alexander, Dre Torres

Musicians: Crystal Monee Hall (vocalist), Keisel Jimenez, Raul Reyes, Anibal Cesar Crus, Arturo O'Farrill, Jr.

Drama Desk nominee and Bessie Award winning tap dancer and choreographer Ayodele Casel returns to Spoleto this season May 27-29, with her latest work for six dancers: *Chasing Magic*. Casel made her Spoleto Festival USA debut in 2014, performing with Dorrance Dance. In 2017, she premiered her own one-

woman work, *While I Have the Floor*—a Spoleto commission—which was remounted in New York City the following year.

With direction from Torya Beard, *Chasing Magic* originated as a virtual production with The Joyce Theater in 2021. It has been remounted for the stage to critical acclaim, included among a *The New York Times* critics' list of Best Dance Performances in 2022.

About Ayodele Casel:

Lauded as a "tap dancer and choreographer of extraordinary depth" (*The New York Times*), Casel most recently served as Tap Choreographer for the Broadway revival of *Funny Girl*. She was a 2019 – 2020 fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and named Artist in Residence at Harvard University.

Born in The Bronx and raised in Puerto Rico, Casel began her professional training at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Her origins in theater and love for storytelling and tap dance have significantly contributed to the narrative nature of her work, which is rooted in the expression of identity, culture, language, and communication.

For more than 20 years, Casel has served as a dance educator and is co-director of Operation Tap, an online tap dance educational platform. She was featured on a 2021 US Postal Service Forever Stamp in honor of tap dance.

Dada Masilo: The Sacrifice

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre
June 1, 2, 3, 4

Choreographed by Dada Masilo
Composed by Ann Masina, Leroy Mapholo, Tlale Makhene, Nathi Shongwe
Costumes by David Hutt
Lighting and projection by Suzette le Sueur

Featuring

Dancers: Dada Masilo, Julia Burnham, Lehlohonolo Madise, Refiloe Mogoje, Thandiwe Mqokeli, Eutychia Rakaki, Leo Dibatana, Lwando Dutyulwa, Thuso Lobeko, Songezo Mcilizeli, Steven Mokone, Tshepo Zasekhaya
Musicians: Ann Masina, Leroy Mapholo, Mpho Mothiba, Nathi Shongwe

Choreographer Dada Masilo has long been fascinated by the study of unfamiliar dance forms and fusing the vocabularies with contemporary dance and classical ballet to create new movement languages. She

embarked on a study of Tswana dance for her latest work, *The Sacrifice*. A form native to Botswana, its rhythmic and expressive movements have been, at times, used for storytelling and healing. About *The Sacrifice*, Masilo writes: “As a dance student in Brussels, I had the privilege to learn a small section of Pina Bausch’s *The Rite of Spring*. I was intrigued by the complex rhythms of Stravinsky’s score. Though I had never studied its dance, Tswana is the culture of my heritage. The form is elegant and expressive, and, in part, based on the movement of small animals. In creating *The Sacrifice*, I wanted to explore ritual, what sacrifice meant to the Tswana people, and what it can mean now. Narrative is important to my work, and I sought to create a story that delved deeper than a chosen maiden dancing herself to death.”

About Dada Masilo:

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Masilo began dance training in Cape Town and later studied at the Performing Arts Research and Training Studios in Brussels. She returned to South Africa in 2008 and received three commissions from The National Arts Festival, resulting in her reinventions of classic works *Romeo and Juliet*, *Carmen*, and *Swan Lake*, which was nominated for a 2016 Bessie Award. She premiered her *Giselle* in 2017, which received the UK Critics Circle National Dance Award for Outstanding Female Modern Performance. Since 2012, Masilo’s works have been performed in 27 countries around the world.

The Scottish Ballet: The Crucible

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
June 2, 3, 4

Choreographed by Helen Pickett
Composed by Peter Salem
Artistic collaborator: James Bonas
Set and costume design by Emma Kingsbury
Set and lighting design by David Finn

Based on the play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

Featuring

Jean-Claude Picard, conductor
The Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

Following a triumphant world premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival in 2019 and a critically acclaimed tour of Scotland, choreographer Helen Pickett’s award-winning balletic interpretation of *The Crucible* caps Spoleto Festival USA’s dance series, June 2 to 4 in the Charleston Gaillard Center. Scottish

Ballet last performed at the Festival in 2015, when the company presented *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Scottish Ballet made its US debut at Spoleto in 1986.

The first major dance adaptation of Arthur Miller's work, created in collaboration with director James Bonas and with designs by David Finn and Emma Kingsbury, *The Crucible* is an allegorical comment on the McCarthy hearings of the 1950s. Miller's chilling account of the 1692 Salem witch trials recalls a community destroyed by hostility and hysteria. During the Festival, members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra accompany the dancers, playing composer Peter Salem's haunting score.

Scottish Ballet, founded in 1969 and based in Glasgow, is Scotland's national dance company that performs regularly across Scotland and increasingly throughout the UK and internationally, promoting Scotland's pioneering spirit far and wide. Under CEO/Artistic Director Christopher Hampson, Scottish Ballet presents bold, adventurous performances rooted in strong classical technique, accompanied by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra. The company's broad repertoire includes new versions of the classics and ground-breaking commissions, as well as an innovative digital season every two years. Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement program, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, which promotes confidence, fosters well-being, and encourages creativity through dance. In 2019, Scottish Ballet celebrated its 50th anniversary. Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government.

About Helen Pickett:

A native of San Diego, California, Pickett has created over 60 ballets in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe. In 2020-21, Pickett choreographed 12 dance films, including *The Air Before Me*, winning the Audience Choice Award for Screen Dance International Festival, and *Hurley Burley*, which was nominated for an Emmy Award. While Resident Choreographer for Atlanta Ballet she was named Best Choreographer in 2014 and 2015. Pickett's most recent and upcoming commissions include American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, West Australian Ballet, and two new long-form narratives for National Ballet of Canada and Dutch National Ballet.

Pickett danced with William Forsythe's Ballet Frankfurt from 1987 to 1998 and performed with the Wooster Group, under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte until 2003. She collaborated as a choreographer and actress with filmmakers Eve Sussman, Toni Dove, and Laurie Simmons. In 2021, Pickett was co-director of the Jacob's Pillow Contemporary Summer Dance Program and continues to lead her think-tank workshop Choreographic Essentials. She produces a YouTube talk show *Creative Vitality Jam Sessions* and in 2020, founded the Female Choreographer's Big Round Table, a Zoom discussion panel. She earned her Master of

Fine Arts in 2011 from Hollins University and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from The University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 2016.

Theater and Physical Theater

An Iliad

Dock Street Theatre

May 25 (pre-Festival performance), 27, 28, 30, 31, June 2, 3

A Homer's Coat production, in association with Octopus Theatricals

Written by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare

Based on Homer's Iliad, translated by Robert Fagles

Directed by Lisa Peterson

Scenic design: Rachel Hauck

Costume design: Marina Draghici

Lighting design: Scott Zeilinski

Composer/sound design: Mark Bennett

Featuring

Denis O'Hare, The Poet

In an Obie Award-winning contemporary retelling of Homer's age-old story, acclaimed director Lisa Peterson and actor Denis O'Hare turn the familiar tale of gods and goddesses, undying love, and endless battle into a breathtaking tour-de-force. A sweeping account of humanity's unshakeable attraction to violence, destruction and chaos that begs the question: has anything really changed since the Trojan War? Live music is a key component to the onstage action, a bassist punctuates the poet's story through music.

An Iliad was originally developed as part of the New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspects Program; its Off-Broadway premiere produced by New York Theatre Workshop (Jim Nicola, Artistic Director; William Russo, Managing Director) in 2012.

O'Hare and Peterson are founding members of Homer's Coat—a creative collective that explores foundational literature. An actor and a director respectively, they collaborate closely to develop, write, and edit their works, creating unique, energetic, imaginative performative experiences. They developed *An Iliad* over a five-year period, utilizing video, video transcriptions, improvisation, original music, and diligent research.

They are also working on a commission from the McCarter Theatre in Princeton called *The Song of Rome*, a solo for a female performing, picking up where *An Iliad* leaves off—with the destruction of Troy—and follows Aeneas through the founding of Rome, examining the idea of government and empire.

About Denis O'Hare:

The co-author and performer of *An Iliad*, O'Hare is also the co-author of *The Good Book*, which premiered at the Court Theatre and recently had its West Coast premiere at Berkeley Rep. He wrote and starred in his first feature length film, *The Parting Glass*, directed by Stephen Moyer. O'Hare most recently starred in *Tartuffe* at the National in London. His Broadway credits include *Elling*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Sweet Charity*, *Assassins*, and *Take Me Out*—for which he received a Tony Award, Drama Desk, Obie, and Lucille Lortel awards)—as well as *Major Barbara*, *Cabaret*, and *Racing Demon*. He has worked on numerous film projects including *The Goldfish*, *The Normal Heart*, *Dallas Buyers Club*, and *The Proposal*. Television credits include five seasons on *American Horror Story*, two seasons on *True Blood* and *This is Us*; as well as programs including *When We Rise*, *The Good Wife*, *The Comedians*, *Banshee*, and *Bored to Death*.

The Book of Life

Festival Hall

June 1, 2, 3, 4

Co-created, written, and performed by Odile Gakire Katese

Co-created and directed by Ross Manson

Projection design by Sean Frey

Composed by Mutangana Moise

Featuring music performed by Ingoma Nshya, The Women Drummers of Rwanda

In Rwanda, in April 1994, one million people were murdered in 100 days. This new theater project asks:

What happened next? Created by Odile Gakire Katese, *The Book of Life* leads audience members through a remarkable journey—a powerful performance that looks to the future.

The work is based on Katese's years-long project of accumulating letters written by survivors and perpetrators of Rwanda's genocide, with Katese recounting onstage individual letters addressed to those who are gone and her own stories of grief and rebirth. She writes: "We still have the possibility of undoing the genocide in some small way, to bridge the hole that's been left, not with bones or the clothes they wore when they died—but with their lives. The dinners. The lovers. The dates. The joy. How do we undo the un-undoable? We let them live again."

Katese is also surrounded onstage by eight drummers of Ingoma Nshya, The Women Drummers of Rwanda. This group is particularly significant as Rwanda's first-ever female drumming ensemble—a group Katese founded in 2004.

About Odile Gakire Katese:

Former deputy director of the University Centre for Arts and Drama of the National University of Rwanda, Odile Gakire Katese (or “Kiki”) is a self-described professional dreamer and a woman of firsts. She is a Rwandan actor, playwright, director, and cultural entrepreneur whose work has been honored around the world. Envisioning how art can heal and inspire her country, she is the first recipient of the League of Professional Theatre Women's Rosamond Gilder/Martha Coigney International Award. She is a fellow of Salzburg Global Seminar and received the 2012 Carnegie Common Ground Award, which honors outstanding accomplishments in conflict-resolution, negotiation, community building, and peacebuilding around the world.

Only an Octave Apart

Dock Street Theatre
June 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Co-created by Justin Vivian Bond, Anthony Roth Costanzo, Zack Winokur
Directed by Zack Winokur
Music direction by Thomas Bartlett
Arrangements by Nico Muhly
Set design by Carlos Soto
Lighting design by John Torres
Sound design by David Schnirman
Costume design by Jonathan Anderson for JW Anderson and LOEWE

Featuring

Justin Vivian Bond and Anthony Roth Costanzo

In this theatrical, musical revue, two iconic performers, Justin Vivian Bond—an Obie and Bessie Award winner and Tony Award nominee—and Grammy Award winning countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo join forces, subverting distinctions between high and low and juxtaposing their vocal pitches, performance styles, repertoires, and degrees of camp. Carving new pathways between opera and politically subversive cabaret, the pair intermingle their distinct vocal gifts, uniting legendary works like Henry Purcell's 17th century aria "Dido's Lament" to Dido's early 2000s radio hit “White Flag.” By expressing their queer

identities through unique interpretations of classical music, pop music, and points of intersection between the two, the music becomes a prismatic reflection of outsiders who might otherwise be intimidated by the bulwark that the classical world can present. The work is co-created and directed by Zack Winokur, co-founder and Artistic Director of The American Modern Opera Company, who frequently collaborates with Costanzo.

The work was developed during the pandemic across two workshops at the Fisher Center at Bard, then premiered at St. Ann's Warehouse in New York City in 2022. It garnered immense critical acclaim. Since then, Costanzo and Bond have released an album of the production and recently completed a run in London's West End at Wilton's Music Hall.

Gravity & Other Myths: Out of Chaos

Festival Hall
June 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

US Premiere

Directed by Darcy Grant
Set and lighting design by Geoff Cobham
Composed by Ekrem Pheonix
Costumes by Emma Brockliss
Sound design by Mik Lavage

Featuring

Ensemble: Jo Curry, Josh Strachan, Lisa Goldsworthy, Ronan Jenkinson, André Augustus, Em Gare, Jordy Hart, Dylan Phillips

Returning to Spoleto Festival USA after sold-out runs in both 2014 and 2018, this Australian physical theater company brings the US premiere of *Out of Chaos*—a work for eight performers that the artists describe as “our boldest and most ambitious yet.” Hard-edged, explosive acrobatics collide with intimate, verbal confessions to create insight into what it feels like to be onstage in real time. *Out of Chaos*, directed by Darcy Grant with designs by Geoff Cobham, premiered at the Adelaide Festival in February 2019 and received a 2019 Helpman Award for Best Visual or Physical Theatre Production.

Gravity & Other Myths formed in Adelaide, Australia, in 2009, and is renowned for its series of disarmingly accomplished ensemble works. The company uses an honest approach to performance with the goal of creating performances that focus on human connection and acrobatic virtuosity.

Classical Music

Celebrating Geoff Nuttall

(1965 - 2022)

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
May 26

Featuring

Robert Spano, conductor
Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra
and

Livia Sohn, violin
Alisa Weilerstein, cello
Stephen Prutsman, piano
Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor
Paul Groves, tenor
Additional guest artists to be announced

Program includes (additional pieces to be announced):

Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 102

Edward Elgar: *Salut d'Amour*
Livia Sohn, violin

Piotr Illyich Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor
Stephen Prutsman, piano
Robert Spano, conductor
Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

This rollicking, classical music roller coaster celebrates the life and indelible impact of Geoff Nuttall, premier violinist and beloved, charismatic Director of Chamber Music at Spoleto Festival USA from 2010-2022. His death, from pancreatic cancer in the fall of 2022, at the age of 56, reverberated through the classical music world. Special guest artists featured during the concert perform moving musical tributes to their friend, advocate, and collaborator as they celebrate Nuttall in the best way possible: with music. Additional works and performers will be announced ahead of the event. To read more about Geoff Nuttall, follow [this link](#).

Bank of America Chamber Music

Dock Street Theatre
May 26 – June 11

Featuring:
(additional artists may be announced)

Owen Dalby, violin
Alexi Kenney, violin
Livia Sohn, violin
Benjamin Beilman, violin
Lesley Robertson, viola
Masumi Per Rostad, viola
Ayane Kozasa, viola
Christopher Costanza, cello
Alisa Weilerstein, cello
Paul Wiancko, cello
Anthony Manzo, double bass

Steven Banks, saxophone
Tara Helen O'Connor, flute
James Austin Smith, oboe
Inon Barnatan, piano
Stephen Prutsman, piano
Pedja Muzijevic, piano/harpsichord
Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor

A linchpin of Spoleto Festival USA since its inaugural season, the Bank of America Chamber Music series—comprising 11 programs, each performed three times—draws the world’s best chamber musicians to the Dock Street Theatre. In concerts featuring innovative contemporary compositions alongside treasures from the canon, sparking insight and discovery. Formerly led by late Festival Director of Chamber Music Geoff Nuttall from 2010 to 2022, the series in 2023 will bear his indelible influence. Several of Nuttall’s closest musical colleagues will share curatorial and hosting duties; programming to be announced this spring. A new director of chamber music is expected to be announced by fall. To read more about Nuttall, follow [this link](#).

South Carolina Public Radio will record and broadcast each of the series’ concerts on the program “Sonatas and Soundscapes,” weekdays at 11:00am. Hosted by Bradley Fuller, the concerts are interspersed with Festival artists interviews, providing illuminations of the performers’ practices and approach to the music. Those outside of South Carolina can stream the program live at scpublicradio.org.

Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra series

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
June 5, 7, 9

Widely considered one of the most prestigious orchestras of emerging musicians in the world, the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra serves as a backbone to the Festival. This season, the ensemble receives a three-concert series spotlight, showcasing the virtuosity, versatility, and artistry of the young professional

instrumentalists. Each program features powerful works from pivotal moments in music history, from Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, considered the first narrative "program" piece, to Stravinsky's monumental *Le Sacre du printemps*. The programs also feature two compositions receiving US premieres.

The ensemble is led by Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, who selects each of the instrumentalists (more than 80 in 2023) through a nationwide audition tour. Kennedy has served in this capacity since 2011; he first performed with the Festival Orchestra in 1983.

Many of the approximately 1,500 Festival Orchestra alumni credit their experiences at Spoleto Festival USA as formative to their careers. Notable Orchestra alumni include Blake-Anthony Johnson, the CEO & President of Chicago Sinfonietta; Vanessa Rose, Executive Director of the American Composers Forum; Weston Sprott, Dean and Director of The Juilliard School's Preparatory Division and trombonist with the Met Opera Orchestra; renowned conductor Kazem Abdullah; William Hudgins, principal clarinetist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra; and Beth Guterman Chu (viola), Allegra Lilly (harp), and Shannon Wood (timpani), principals of the St. Louis Symphony. In recent years, Festival Orchestra fellows have worked directly with a range of living composers including Helmut Lachenmann, Liza Lim, Huang Ruo, and Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels during the 2022 world premiere of *Omar*.

The Rite of Spring

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
June 5

Featuring
Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra
John Kennedy, conductor
Pedja Mužijević, piano

Program:

Philip Glass: Symphony No. 14 (US Premiere)

Valentin Silvestrov: *The Messenger*
Pedja Mužijević, piano

Igor Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*

About John Kennedy:

John Kennedy's history with Spoleto Festival USA began in 1983 as a member of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. He conducted his first Spoleto opera in 2006 and has served as Director of Orchestral Activities since 2011. In recent seasons, Kennedy has conducted the Festival's world premiere of *Omar*, with music by Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels, and the world premiere production of Huang Ruo's *Paradise Interrupted* (2015), as well as the American premieres of operas including *Émilie* by Kaija Saariaho (2011), *Kepler* by Philip Glass (2012), *Matsukaze* by Toshio Hosokawa (2013), *Facing Goya* by Michael Nyman (2014), *The Little Match Girl* by Helmut Lachenmann (2016), *Quartett* by Luca Francesconi (2017), and *Tree of Codes* by Liza Lim (2018). Kennedy also auditions and selects each member of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra through an audition tour in cities throughout the United States.

Outside of the Festival, Kennedy has led acclaimed performances and premieres worldwide of opera, orchestral, ballet, and new music. He is especially noted for his interpretations of contemporary music and has worked with many of the leading composers of our time in over 300 premieres and numerous recordings. He has designed and led many orchestral concerts integrating classic works with the new. Kennedy has recently guest conducted at West Edge Opera, Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra 21, Singapore International Festival of the Arts, the Crested Butte Music Festival, and with many organizations including the Lincoln Center Festival, Other Minds Festival, sfSound, Talea Ensemble, Santa Fe Opera, and New York City Ballet. Kennedy is the composer of more than 90 works, including opera, orchestral, chamber, and experimental works that have been performed throughout the world. In 2022, his family opera *The Language of Birds* received a new production by Canadian Children's Opera Company in Toronto, and he led West Edge Opera in the US premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's opera *Coraline*.

About Pedja Mužijević:

Pianist and curator Pedja Mužijević has defined his career with creative programming, unusual combinations of new and old music, and lasting collaborations with artists and ensembles. He has performed with the Atlanta Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Milwaukee Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, Orquesta Sinfonica in Montevideo, Residentie Orkest in The Hague, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica, and Shinsei Nihon Orchestra in Tokyo. Pedja has played solo recitals at Alice Tully Hall, 92Y, and The Frick Collection in New York; Terrace Theater at The Kennedy Center, Dumbarton Oaks, The Phillips Collection, and National Gallery in Washington, DC; Casals Hall and Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo. His Carnegie Hall concerto debut playing Mozart Concerto K. 503 with Oberlin Symphony and Robert Spano was recorded live and has been released on the Oberlin Music label.

Mužijević's interdisciplinary projects include touring with Mikhail Baryshnikov and the White Oak Dance Project throughout the United States, South America, Europe, and Asia and with Simon Keenlyside in Trisha Brown's staged version of Schubert's *Winterreise* in New York, London, Brussels, Paris, Lucerne, and Melbourne. Combining his two passions—music and food— Mužijević performed works by Ravel and Mussorgsky followed by a multi-course dinner prepared by chef David Bouley in New York.

Mužijević is the artistic administrator at Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York and artistic advisor at Tippet Rise Art Center in Montana, where he curates concerts as well as film shoots for musicians. He also directs Concert in 21st Century residency at the Banff Centre, where he explores concert as a format and the ways it can be more relevant today.

New World Symphony

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
June 7

Featuring

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra
Mei-Ann Chen, conductor

Program:

Florence Price: *Ethiopia's Shadow in America*

Michael Abels: *Delights & Dances*

Antonín Dvořák: Symphony No. 9, "From the New World"

About Mei-Ann Chen:

Praised for her dynamic, passionate conducting style, Taiwanese American conductor Mei-Ann Chen is acclaimed for infusing orchestras with energy, enthusiasm and high-level music-making, galvanizing audiences and communities alike. Music Director of the MacArthur Award-winning Chicago Sinfonietta since 2011, Ms. Chen has been Chief Conductor of Austria's recreation Grosses Orchester Graz at Styriarte since fall 2021 (following two seasons as the orchestra's first-ever Principal Guest Conductor), making her the first female Asian conductor to hold this position with an Austrian orchestra. She also serves as the first-ever Artistic Partner of Houston's ROCO (River Oaks Chamber Orchestra), a post she was named to in 2019 and this fall begins her new role as Artistic Partner with Washington State's Northwest Sinfonietta. Highly regarded as a compelling communicator and an innovative, she has appeared with distinguished orchestras throughout the Americas, Europe, Taiwan, The United Kingdom, and Scandinavia, and continues to expand her relationships with orchestras worldwide (over 120 orchestras to date). Honors include being named one

of the 2015 Top 30 Influencers by Musical America; the 2012 Helen M. Thompson Award from the League of American Orchestras; Winner, the 2007 Taki Concordia Fellowship founded by Marin Alsop; and 2005 First Prize Winner of the Malko Competition (she remains as the only woman in the competition history since 1965 to have won First Prize), and ASCAP awards for innovative programming.

Symphonie Fantastique

Charleston Gaillard Center
Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall
June 9

Featuring

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra
Jonathon Heward, conductor
Micah McLaruin, piano

Program:

Doina Rotaru: *Nymphea* (US premiere)

Edvard Grieg: Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 16
Micah McLaurin, piano

Hector Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique*

About Jonathon Heyward:

Recently declared a “major talent” (*Financial Times*) and the leading “23 to Watch in 23” (*The Washington Post*), Jonathon Heyward is forging a career as one of the most exciting conductors on the international scene. He currently serves as Chief Conductor for the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie in Germany and is the Music Director Designate of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, beginning his five-year contract in the 2023-24 season. Heyward’s guest conducting highlights include appearances with the Royal Opera House in London, The London Symphony, and BBC Symphony, as well as with illustrious orchestras in Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In the United States, Heyward recently conducted the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC, which was followed by debuts with Atlanta, Detroit, San Diego, and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras. Born in Charleston, South Carolina, Heyward began his musical training as a cellist at age 10 and started conducting while still at school. He studied conducting at The Boston Conservatory, where he became assistant conductor of the prestigious institution’s opera department and of the Boston Opera Collaborative and received postgraduate lessons from Sian Edwards at London’s Royal Academy of Music. Before leaving the Academy, he was appointed assistant conductor of

the Hallé Orchestra, where he was mentored by Sir Mark Elder, and became Music Director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra. His debut with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain at the 2021 BBC Proms was hailed by *The Guardian* as “an unforgettable showcase of high-energy collaboration.” Heyward is committed to education and outreach work and is renowned for imaginative concert programming.

About Micah McLaurin:

Hailed as “a strong personality with technique and power to spare” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), Micah McLaurin is a leading pianist of his generation. He has garnered major national press for his unique, singing tone-quality, depth of expression, commanding technique, and personal flair and style—all which have also led to an outsized social media following. A versatile artist, McLaurin does not adhere to a strict “classical” repertoire and creates original arrangements of pop songs and expresses himself through fashion, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a 21st century pianist.

McLaurin has performed as soloist with major orchestras around the world including The Cleveland Orchestra and The Philadelphia Orchestra. In January 2020, he joined countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo as part of the Guggenheim’s Works and Process series, followed by two solo recitals in Milan, as part of the Antonio Mormone Prize. His 2021/22 season highlights included a debut of a new work, *Bohemian Rhapsody in Blue*, by Steve Hackman, receiving its premiere in Hagen, Germany, and engagements in Italy, Fotografiska, and South America with the Illinois Symphony.

Born in 1994 in Charleston, McLaurin studied with Marsha Gerber and Enrique Graf. He earned a Bachelor of Music at the Curtis Institute of Music, working with Robert McDonald and Gary Graffman. He also studied with Jerome Lowenthal in New York.

A Poet’s Love

Queen Street Playhouse

May 26, 27, 29, 30

Music by Robert Schumann

Co-created by Jamez McCorkle and Miwa Matreyek

Stage design by Miwa Matreyek

Tenor Jamez McCorkle performs Robert Schumann’s *Dichterliebe*, accompanying himself on piano through the full German romantic song cycle. In this new, Spoleto-commissioned staged adaptation, McCorkle brings life to the dreamlike narrative—a knight on a quest for his beloved—integrating the magic of live performance and whimsical projections by artist Miwa Matreyek.

About Jamez McCorkle:

An innate musician and trained pianist, American tenor Jamez McCorkle made headlines after his critically acclaimed appearance in the world premiere of Rhiannon Giddens's *Omar* at Spoleto Festival USA in 2022 and LA Opera. In 2023, McCorkle returns to the Bayerische Staatsoper as Duke of Cornwall Lear, Spoleto Festival USA for an innovative new project, and the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. Looking ahead to future seasons, appearances include debuts with San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Hamburg State Opera, the Royal Danish Theatre, and Glyndebourne Opera.

Born in New Orleans, McCorkle is an alumnus of the Curtis Institute of Music, Mannes College, the New School for Music, and Loyola University. He was a member of the International Opera Studio in Zurich and took part in the Young Artist Program of the Salzburg Festival in 2017. McCorkle was a finalist in the coveted Neue Stimmen competition in 2019 and is a winner of several awards and competitions including the George London Competition, Sullivan Foundation, Brava! Opera Competition, National Opera Association Vocal Competition and the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Gulf Coast Region.

About Miwa Matreyek:

Miwa Matreyek is an animator, director, designer, and performer based in Los Angeles. With a background in animation, Matreyek creates live, staged performances in which she interacts with her animations as a shadow silhouette, at the intersection of cinematic and theatrical, fantastical and tangible, illusionistic and physical. Her work exists in a dreamlike visual space that makes invisible worlds visible, often weaving surreal and poetic narratives of conflict between man and nature. She travels internationally as a one-woman show, often incorporating artist talks and workshops.

Her interdisciplinary shadow performances have been presented at venues and festivals including MOMA, Lincoln Center, Sundance New Frontier, Future of Storytelling conference, Exploratorium, Adler Planetarium, ISEA conference, Meta.Morph (Norway), Anima Mundi (Brazil), Houston Cinematic Arts Festival, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, and many more.

She received her MFA for Experimental Animation and Integrated Media from CalArts in 2007. She is also a co-founder and core-collaborator of the multi-media theater company, Cloud Eye Control.

She is a recipient of the Sherwood Award (2016), Creative Capital Award (2013), Princess Grace Award (2007), and Princess Grace Foundation's Special Projects award (2009, 2012, 2019). Cloud Eye Control is a recipient of several awards and grants including MAP fund (2013), National Theater Project grant by NEFA (2013), NPN Creation Fund (2008). Her recent work *Infinitely Yours* won the Golden Nica for Computer Animation at Ars Electronica 2020.

Tell Your Story

Festival Hall
May 27

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WE ARE FAMILY

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra fellows
William Gibb, Stephanie Liu, Austin Lewellen, Aurora Mendez

Spearheaded by collaborative pianist and music therapist Renate Rohlfing, bassist and Spoletto Orchestra Manager Edward Kass, and Festival Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, this unique project pairs four emerging composers of the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra with artists and activists—members of the Charleston community—to engage in creative placemaking.

The project began in January: Orchestra fellows attended a weekend-long training in which musicians worked with music therapists, composers who specialize in creative placemaking, and a sociology professor to learn best practices and hone collaborative skills before meeting their partners. Over the course of several months, the pairs will work together to create sonic collages distinct to the community members' personal histories and experiences in Charleston. The culminating pieces will be performed at Festival Hall.

This is the second edition of this endeavor. Listen to the pieces created in 2022 [here](#).

About We Are Family:

We Are Family (WAF) began in April 1995 under the direction of Tom Myers (1940-2016), the father of a gay son. Myers recognized the need for support for LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, etc.) youth, and WAF was born from the love of a father for his son. WAF initially focused on the use of direct mail to provide constructive information to people and community leaders that LGBTQI youth would normally seek out for counsel and support. The staff sought out speaking engagements whenever possible, at churches and other public places to spread a message of understanding and acceptance. In early 1997, WAF began to offer direct services (SafeSpace) to LGBTQI youth in the Tri-County area through a weekly peer support group.

A Southern Grassroots non-profit organization, WAF provides affirming spaces for LGBTQI+ and ally youth up to the age of 24 through direct support, leadership development, and community engagement. Its institutional vision is for LGBTQI+ and ally youth feel empowered to find their places in the world, in their families, and in their communities.

Music in Time

Time Keepers

Festival Hall
May 28

Directed and hosted by John Kennedy

Featuring:

Members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

Program:

György Ligeti: *Poème symphonique for 100 Metronomes*

Liza Lim: *Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus*

Marking the 100th birthday of György Ligeti, his notorious *Poème symphonique*—a work for 100 mechanical metronomes—is a meditation on our perception of time and what can be heard in slowing down. Liza Lim’s significant recent *Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus* follows, documenting the mutation of life and time, from fragments of lost music to choral sounds of fish that populate an endangered Australian coral reef. As the composer notes, “All time and its traces are with us still.”

Music in Time

Sanctum

Queen Street Playhouse
May 31

Directed and hosted by John Kennedy

Featuring:

Courtney Bryan, pianist/composer

Members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

Program:

Éliane Radigue: *Occam 17b*

inti figgis-vizueta, *Coradh*

Courtney Bryan: *Sanctum*

Sarah Hennies, *Everything Else*

The composer Courtney Bryan (who also performs during the Wells Fargo Jazz series) invokes the solace found amidst tribulation in her work *Sanctum*. This innovative program also includes *Occam 17b*, a sonic meditation on the ocean and periodicity by Éliane Radigue, a largely unacknowledged trailblazer of experimental music, as well as works by inti figgis-vizueta and Sarah Hennies.

Spoletto Festival USA Chorus + Orchestra

Handel's Dixit Dominus

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre
May 30

Conducted by Joe Miller
Spoletto Festival USA Chorus
Members of the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

Twenty-four members of the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra join the full Festival Chorus for two iconic Baroque works: George Frideric Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Henry Purcell's *Te Deum Laudamus and Jubilate*, one of the first works that scores orchestral accompaniment to a religious hymn. Festival Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller conducts this concert at the Sottile Theatre.

Assembled anew each year through national auditions, the Spoletto Festival USA Chorus takes on a dynamic new identity each season, reflecting the diverse voices of its singers as well as the dynamic seasonal repertory.

Spoletto Festival USA Chorus

Density 40:1

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
June 7, 8

Conducted by Joe Miller
Spoletto Festival USA Chorus

Through a program exploring vocal density, the Spoletto Festival USA Chorus fills the sanctuary of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church first with Thomas Tallis's 40-voice motet, *Spem in alium*, considered the greatest work of Early music. In subsequent selections, compositions by contemporary composers, including David Lang, Jonathan Dove, and Caroline Shaw, strip vocal parts incrementally—revealing a single solo voice for the final piece. Festival Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller conducts.

Wells Fargo Jazz

Quentin Baxter Quintet

And special guests

College of Charleston Cistern Yard
May 27

Quentin Baxter, drums, percussion
Charleston Singleton, trumpet
Mark Sterbank, tenor saxophone
Demetrius Doctor, piano, organ
Rodney Jordan, bass

Guest Artists

Bobby Watson, alto saxophone
Dan Wilson, guitar
Gino Castillo, percussion

In a rollicking homecoming concert, Quentin Baxter illuminates the Cistern Yard—where, as a child, he heard evening concerts from outside its wrought-iron gates. While the Grammy-winning drummer has anchored other ensembles at the Festival, this evening puts Baxter front and center, leading a phenomenal band through time-honored classics and his own compositions that infuse modern jazz with the Gullah and church traditions of his Charleston roots.

About Quentin Baxter:

Born into a family of drummers, Baxter's unique skill sets have garnered a Grammy Award as producer/performer, four Grammy nominations as producer/performer and the 2017 South Carolina Governor's Award for the Arts. In Charleston, April 25 is proclaimed "Quentin E. Baxter Day." In 2017, he received the College of Charleston Alumnus of the Year Award, the 2017 Eddie Ganaway Distinguished Alumni Award, and an induction to the Savannah Coastal Jazz Hall of Fame.

Currently touring world-wide with Grammy Award-winning Gullah sensation Ranky Tanky and multi-Grammy-nominated vocalist/composer René Marie, Baxter regularly performs many of the most prestigious venues and festivals, including The Kennedy Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, San Francisco Jazz, Savannah Jazz Festival, Savannah Music Festival, Joy of Jazz Festival in South Africa, France's Toulouse Jazz Festival, and the Umbria Jazz Festival, and Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi in Italy.

Baxter's passion for world-wide performances is paralleled by his dedication to educate, promote, produce, and present world-class artists in his hometown and neighboring regional communities. From 1997 to 2019 he served as Adjunct Professor of Jazz Studies at the College of Charleston and formed the production company Baxter Music Enterprises (BME, LLC) in 2004. He also serves as Musical Director of the Charleston Jazz Initiative, a multi-year research project that explores the jazz history and legacy of African American musicians from Charleston and other places in the Carolinas; founding board member of the Jazz Artists of Charleston; board member of both the Charleston Symphony Orchestra and Engaging Creative Minds. From 2012-2015, BME, LLC teamed up with Sermet's Downtown to create Charleston's only "listening room" experience, The Mezz. Baxter is currently in the design/development stages of the Baxter Center for Music Performance, Education, and Production, a stand-alone structure designed and dedicated to the presentation and advancement of live music.

Kris Davis Diatom Ribbons

College of Charleston Cistern Yard
June 2

Kris Davis, piano, Fender Rhodes
DJ Val Jeanty, turntable, electronics
Terri Lyne Carrington, drums
Trevor Dunn, bass
Julian Lage, guitar

Kris Davis is a critically acclaimed pianist and composer, described by *The New York Times* as a beacon for "deciding where to hear jazz on a given night."

In 2019, her album *Diatom Ribbons* was named jazz album of the year by both the *New York Times* and the NPR Music Jazz Critics Poll. Featuring Grammy award winning drummer Terri Lyne Carrington (who performed during Spoleto in 2019), Haitian turntablist Val Jeanty, and bassist Trevor Dunn, Davis draws from the musical worlds of free improvisation, spoken word, electronica, mainstream jazz, R&B and rock. During Spoleto on June 2, guitarist Julian Lage, who last performed during the Festival in 2010, joins this experimental ensemble for a cutting-edge and raucous evening.

Davis was named a 2021 Doris Duke Artist alongside Wayne Shorter and Danilo Perez, 2020 Pianist of the Year by *Downbeat* Magazine, and 2021 Pianist and Composer of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. Davis was also named "Pianist of the Year" in the 2022 *Downbeat* Critics Poll.

Henry Threadgill Zooid

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre
June 6

Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone, flute, bass flute
Christopher Hoffman, cello
Liberty Ellman, acoustic guitar
Jose Davila, tuba, trombone
Elliot Kavee, drums

One of few jazz composers to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Music, Henry Threadgill, who came out of the imaginative environs of the '60s Chicago scene, possesses a brilliant creative mind and is one of the premier composers, thinkers, and reedmen of our time. His level of creativity undiminished over more than three decades as a leader of various ensembles.

Threadgill is the quintessential freethinker who falls between the cracks of established categories like jazz, classical, or world music.

“I never did consider my music jazz. Jazz is part of my vocabulary, but I don’t do jazz specifically,” he says. “I consider myself an international musician. The world is an international place, so I always felt my music should be marketed that way.” His 2015 album *In for a Penny, In for a Pound* won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize and was described as a “highly original work in which notated music and improvisation mesh in a sonic tapestry that seems the very expression of modern American life (Pi Recordings)”.

His compositions demonstrate his experience in blues, gospel, Latin, jazz, classical music, reggae, polka and marching bands, integrating his global influences so smoothly into a singular, deeply personal style that can’t really be called eclectic.

“The latest stuff is geared toward the current reality of American life, especially urban American life,” notes Threadgill. “Everything’s constantly changing, and I’ve always wanted my music to reflect that. The constant cultural shifts are unstoppable.”

He continues: “The music of now and the music of tomorrow is the most important thing as far as I’m concerned. The music of yesterday was fine—it helped us to get here—but we should be focusing on synthesizing those experiences and going further.”

Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

June 8

Abdullah Ibrahim, piano

Ekaya: Cleave Guyton, Lance Bryant, Andre Murchison, Will Terrill

Abdullah Ibrahim is South Africa's most distinguished pianist and a world-respected master musician. Born in 1934 in Cape Town, Abdullah Ibrahim's early music education began at 7 years old with formal piano lessons at his mother's church. Then, his musical influences ranged from spiritual hymns; traditional African music; carnival and minstrel music; and American jazz, swing, and boogie-woogie. He earned the nickname "Dollar" from American sailors for his spirited efforts to buy American LPs, which could be found for one dollar. This nickname stuck, and he would later earn renown as "Dollar Brand."

Ibrahim was a founding member of South Africa's first premier jazz group, the Jazz Epistles. In exile in 1963 Europe, destiny would call when Duke Ellington discovered Ibrahim in a jazz café in Zurich, which led to the recording, *Duke Ellington presents the Dollar Brand Trio (Reprise)*. Following his mentor to New York, where he would later convert to Islam, Abdullah Ibrahim recorded prolifically and became one of the leading pianists and composers in modern jazz.

His songs "Mannenberg" and "Soweto" from the 1970s were embraced as anthems of protest against Apartheid South Africa. In the 1980s, he formed the septet Ekaya, which became one of the few successful acoustic jazz groups of this era. A documentary film, *A Struggle for Love*, about Ibrahim's life was made in 2004.

For more than a quarter-century, Ibrahim has toured the world extensively, appearing at major concert halls, clubs and festivals, giving sell-out performances, as solo artist or with other renowned artists (notably, Max Roach, Carlos Ward and Randy Weston). His collaborations with classical orchestras have resulted in acclaimed recordings, such as *African Suite* (1999, with members of the European Union Youth Orchestra) and the Munich Radio Philharmonic orchestra symphonic version, "African Symphony" (2001), which also featured the trio and the NDR Jazz Big Band.

In 2019, he was named an NEA Jazz Master and he released two albums, *The Balance*, with Ekaya, and a solo work called *Dream Time*. His most recent album *Solitude*, was recorded on the pianist's birthday amidst the coronavirus restrictions of autumn 2020.

Courtney Bryan

Jazz at the Playhouse: Queen Street Playhouse
June 1, 2, 3

Courtney Bryan, piano
Gladney, saxophone
Brian Quezergue, electric bass
Joe Dyson, drum set

Pianist and composer Courtney Bryan inaugurates Jazz at the Playhouse, offering five concerts (June 1–3) at Queen Street Playhouse. She performs solo for two concerts—presenting her concert-length work *Songs of Laughing, Smiling, and Crying* (2012), followed by a solo performance of originals and spirituals. For the remaining performances, Bryan’s quartet performs music from her current project, *Sounds of Freedom*.

About Courtney Bryan:

A native of New Orleans, Bryan is “a pianist and composer of panoramic interests” (*The New York Times*) in conversation with various musical genres, including jazz and experimental music, as well as traditional gospel, spirituals, and hymns. Focusing on bridging the sacred and the secular, Bryan’s compositions explore emotion through sound, confronting the challenge of notating the feeling of improvisation. With degrees from Oberlin Conservatory, Rutgers University, and Columbia University with advisor George Lewis, Bryan completed postdoctoral studies in the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University. Bryan is the Albert and Linda Mintz Professor of Music at Newcomb College in the School of Liberal Arts, Tulane University, Composer-in-Residence with Opera Philadelphia, and a Creative Partner with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. She was the 2018 music recipient of the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, a 2019 Bard College Freehand Fellow, a 2019-20 recipient of the Samuel Barber Rome Prize in Music Composition, and a 2020 United States Artists Fellow. She has two recordings, *Quest for Freedom* (2007) and *This Little Light of Mine* (2010) and has a third recording in progress, *Sounds of Freedom*.

Immanuel Wilkins Quartet

Jazz at the Playhouse: Queen Street Playhouse
June 7, 8, 9, 10

Immanuel Wilkins, alto saxophone
Micah Thomas, piano
Rick Rosato, bass
Kweku Sumbry, drums

The music of saxophonist and composer Immanuel Wilkins is filled with empathy and conviction, bonding arcs of melody and lamentation to pluming gestures of space and breath. Listeners were introduced to this riveting sound with his acclaimed debut album *Omega*, which was named the #1 Jazz Album of 2020 by *The New York Times*. The album also introduced his remarkable quartet with Micah Thomas on piano, Daryl Johns on bass, and Kweku Sumbry on drums, a tight-knit unit that Wilkins features once again on his stunning sophomore album *The 7th Hand*.

Lauded as the Best Jazz Album for 2022 across multiple media outlets, *The 7th Hand* explores relationships between presence and nothingness across an hour-long suite comprising seven movements. “I wanted to write a preparatory piece for my quartet to become vessels by the end of the piece, fully,” says the Brooklyn-based, Philadelphia-raised artist who Pitchfork said “composes ocean-deep jazz epics.”

For his works, Wilkins often draws inspiration from critical thought. Even the striking album artwork challenges convention: “I wanted to remix the Southern Black baptism, and also provide critique on what is considered sanctified and who can be baptized.”

In five performances at the Queen Street Playhouse during his Spoleto Festival USA debut, the Immanuel Wilkins Quartet presents music from his oeuvre and beyond.

Front Row and Finale (Contemporary Music)

Ebony Bones

And the Bones Orchestra

College of Charleston Cistern Yard
May 26

With a blonde afro and a London lilt, Ebony Bones is a visionary artist who works across genres and disparate sounds. She composes, writes, produces, and releases her own punk-inflected, alternative soundtracks, many of which are graced with dark pop undertones. Bones has been enlisted by Yves Saint Laurent and Alexander Wang to score campaigns and runway shows, and Bones is also noted for her collaborations with Yoko Ono and the legendary Lee ‘Scratch’ Perry. Becoming the first female composer for the renowned Royal Court, her third album features The Beijing Symphony Orchestra. She is a redefining voice in the music industry today.

Bones entered the spotlight at a young age, studying at London's Sylvia Young Theatre School alongside classmate and friend Amy Winehouse. At 12-years old, Bones was discovered by Oscar-winning actor Sir Mark Rylance, then the artistic director of Shakespeare's Globe, and enlisted for his production of *Macbeth*. At 15, she starred as a rebellious teenager in the British TV show *Family Affairs* alongside Idris Elba.

Bones released her debut album, *Bone of My Bones*. Her high-watt stage presence brings a whirl of energy to the stage with her fashion antics. Known for her multiple costume changes, she can often be spotted donning designer pieces by Iris van Herpen and Manish Arora. Her music, however, isn't the traditional punk trio. Pushing boundaries as one of the few female music producers to work alongside orchestras, there is a real cinematic feel to her work. She says: "I'm always pushing myself into unknown territory; I enjoy the challenge of stepping outside my circumference and learning from other cultures."

She released her latest album *Nephilim* in 2018, which explores nationalism, xenophobia, and censorship. Speaking truth to power, the afro-futuristic anthem "Kids of Coltan" touches upon the subjects of neo-colonialism and human rights violations.

For her concert opening night of Spoleto Festival USA on May 26, Bones is backed by a 14-piece orchestra for a true, one-of-a-kind, boundary-pushing concert experience.

Nickel Creek

College of Charleston Cistern Yard
May 31, June 1

Chris Thile, mandolin
Sara Watkins, fiddle
Sean Watkins, guitar

Making its Spoleto debut, Nickel Creek performs two nights in concerts sponsored by First Citizens Bank. Nickel Creek is the platinum-selling, internationally renowned roots trio of mandolinist Chris Thile, violinist Sara Watkins and guitarist Sean Watkins. The Grammy-winning band has revolutionized folk and roots music since first performing together as children at a pizza parlor in San Diego in 1989, signing to acclaimed roots label Sugar Hill Records after wowing the bluegrass circuit for a decade. Nickel Creek quickly broke through in 2000 with their Grammy-nominated, Alison Krauss-produced self-titled LP, which showcased not only their instrumental virtuosity but also their songwriting prowess. The trio quickly followed that effort with the Krauss-produced *This Side*, a landmark release that earned Nickel Creek the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Folk Album and brought their progressive take on acoustic music to a broader audience,

greatly influencing the sound and trajectory of roots music in the process. The 2005 Grammy-nominated album *Why Should the Fire Die?* found the trio pushing genre boundaries even further, incorporating elements of alt-rock and indie pop into their singular brand of acoustic music. Nickel Creek released the critically acclaimed and joyously received *A Dotted Line* in 2014. On March 24, 2023, the band will release its newest album, *Celebrant*.

Each member of Nickel Creek has taken part in many outside projects over the years, too. Thile is a 2012 recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and served as the host of the American radio variety show *Live from Here* (formerly *A Prairie Home Companion*) from 2016 to 2020. Over the course of Nickel Creek's career, Thile has released collaborative albums alongside world-renowned musicians like Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Brad Mehldau, and Stuart Duncan. His Grammy-winning band Punch Brothers has released six studio albums, the most recent being 2022's *Hell on Church Street*, a reimagining of the beloved 1983 Tony Rice album *Church Street Blues*. Sean Watkins has kept busy outside of Nickel Creek, too, co-founding Watkins Family Hour alongside Sara, releasing three albums with the collective, and maintaining the long-running collaborative show in Los Angeles for a decade. Sean has also released a string of solo albums, most recently 2020's *This Is Who We Are* with the Bee Eaters. Sara Watkins's projects include the Watkins Family Hour band, as well as co-founding the Grammy-winning roots trio I'm With Her alongside Aoife O'Donovan and Sarah Jarosz. She has released four studio albums, most recently 2021's *Under the Pepper Tree* and has contributed fiddle to recordings by artists like Phoebe Bridgers, the Killers, and John Mayer.

Kishi Bashi with Strings

College of Charleston Cistern Yard
June 3

For an unforgettable evening on June 3, multi-instrumentalist K. Ishibashi (aka Kishi Bashi) is backed by five string players for a fitting Spoleto debut.

One of the most in-demand musicians on the indie scene, Kishi Bashi released his first solo album in 2011. Titled *151a*, the work is a showcase of singular talent and ambition, launching his career as a soloist—a one-man orchestra sprouted from a foundation of string loops. While he had been a longtime collaborator of artists including Regina Spektor, Sondre Lerche, and of Montreal, Kishi Bashi stands on his merit.

From deconstructed Beach Boys-esque doo-wop to the menacing marriage of Eastern hues and Western operatics, *151a* is a mediation between opposing drives, offering possible reconciliation but never

promising it. The album's emotional wellspring, "I Am the Antichrist To You," was reimagined in 2021 when it was featured on the animated sci-fi sitcom *Rick and Morty*, introducing Kishi Bashi to a new generation.

Bashi also uses *151a* as a vehicle to explore his cultural background. Using Japanese refrains as a compositional and textural device, Bashi celebrates his heritage with earnestness. Japanese phrases and couplets are sung as the response to resplendent calls, offering listeners a conversation that dovetails with the album's themes of love, sentimentality, and self-discovery.

Alisa Amador

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

June 7

In a concert sponsored by First Citizens Bank, Alisa Amador performs during the Front Row series on June 7, marking an exciting debut Festival debut. The winner of the 2022 NPR Tiny Desk Contest, Amador's music is a synthesis of the many styles she's voraciously absorbed: rock, jazz, funk, and alternative folk, all rooted in the Latin music of her family and formative years. NPR's Cyrena Touros calls her "a pitch-perfect rendition of my wildest dreams," and NPR's Bob Boilen calls Amador "a powerful voice whose tender performance commands attention and fosters connection." Amador has opened for such artists as Lake Street Dive, Madison Cunningham, Watchhouse, Hiss Golden Messenger, and countless others. She also performed at both South By Southwest 2022 and Americanafest 2022 as an official showcasing artist. With soulful singing, poetically incisive lyrics, and syncopated rhythms, Amador's music will spark tears, joy, and dance all within one set. Amador released her debut EP, *Narratives*, in 2021.

Wells Fargo Festival Finale featuring Tank and the Bangas

Firefly Distillery

June 11

Tank and the Bangas:

Tank Ball, vocals

Norman Spence, bass

Joshua Johnson, drums

Albert Allenback, saxophone

Culminating the 2023 Festival season, North Charleston's Firefly Distillery again hosts the Wells Fargo Festival Finale, this year featuring Tank and the Bangas. On June 11, the distillery's gates will open at 5:00pm, with music beginning at 6:00pm. Guests are encouraged to pack picnics, blankets, and chairs.

Outside alcohol is prohibited; adult beverages will be available onsite for purchase. Additional information about the event will be shared this spring.

About Tank and the Bangas:

From New Orleans, five-piece group Tank and the Bangas has a rare knack for combining various musical styles—fiery soul, deft hip-hop, deep-groove R&B, and subtle jazz—into one cohesive whole that evokes the scope of New Orleans music while retaining a distinctive feel all its own.

Singer and poet Tarriona “Tank” Ball fronts the band, displaying a vivid charisma that helped the group win NPR’s 2017 Tiny Desk Concert—the inaugural year—by unanimous acclaim, standing out among 6,000 entrants because of what Bob Boilen called “the depth of their lyricism and the versatility of their players.”

What began as a loose collaboration at an open-mic night in 2011 has grown into a mesmerizing musical force that’s only picking up speed. After a featured set at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival early in the band’s career, the musicians built a reputation outside their hometown by grinding it out on the road, honing their live show and releasing the 2013 album *Think Tank*, all the while converting audiences into passionate fans and garnering critical acclaim, from the *New Orleans Advocate* to *The New York Times*. The Huffington Post writes that Tank and the Bangas defy description: “It’s music that you have to experience.” The group has toured internationally and performs at other major music festivals including Glastonbury, Coachella, and Bonnaroo.

Tank and the Bangas released their riotous single “Quick,” in 2017. They were nominated in the Best New Artist category for the 2020 Grammy Awards and released the album *Green Balloon* that year. Their third studio album, *Red Balloon*, was released in 2022; President Barack Obama counted one of its songs, “Communion in my Cup,” among his essential listens for that year.

Artist Talks

Conversations With

Hosted by CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner

Featuring:

Jamez McCorkle: May 28 at Queen Street Playhouse

The Book of Life’s Odile Gakire Katese: June 2 at Festival Hall

Justin Vivan Bond and Anthony Roth Costanzo: June 8 at Dock Street Theatre

Jazz Talks

Hosted by Wells Fargo Jazz advisor and *Wall Street Journal* critic Larry Blumenfeld

Featuring:

Courtney Bryan: June 3 at Queen Street Playhouse

Henry Threadgill: June 5 at The Charleston Place

Tickets are available beginning Friday, January 27, at 10:00am ET: spoletousa.org or 843.579.3100

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA FUNDING

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SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

Spoletto Festival USA was founded in 1977 by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who sought to create an American counterpart to the annual Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, that he had founded in 1958. Now in its 47th year, Spoleto Festival USA is internationally recognized as America's premier performing arts festival. For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston's historic theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with performances in opera; theater; dance; and chamber, symphonic, choral, and jazz music. Spoleto's mission is to present programs of the highest artistic caliber while maintaining a dedication to young artists, a commitment to all forms of the performing arts, a passion for contemporary innovation, and an enthusiasm for providing unique performance opportunities for established artists. Beyond its role as a launching pad for young talent, Spoleto also serves as a catalyst for cultural change and has aided in Charleston's rise as a global arts and culture destination. With General Director & CEO Mena Mark Hanna at its helm, the 2023 season takes place May 26 to June 11 in various locations on the downtown peninsula. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

IMAGES: A selection of high-resolution images can be found [in the online gallery](#).

MORE: Visit the [virtual press room](#).