

Note: Images are available in the [online media gallery](#).

Embargoed until January 5 at 10:00am EST

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

2020

PRESS RELEASE

Spoletto Festival USA presents wide-ranging works, both celebratory and reflective, for a 44th season coinciding with Charleston's 350th anniversary

More than 150 performances taking place May 22 to June 7 in Charleston, South Carolina

Featuring the world premiere of *Omar*

Spoletto Festival USA's co-commissioned opera based on the autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim African sold in Charleston in 1807, with music and libretto by MacArthur Fellow **Rhiannon Giddens**

Music highlights

The Stations: Westminster Choir presents settings from Gesualdo's *Responsoria* against a backdrop of American photographer Tom Keifer's powerful images from the Southern border

Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran's **Two Wings: The Story of Black America in Migration**

Film screening with live orchestra of **Get Out**, conducted by composer Michael Abels

Anti-apartheid activist and 2019 NEA Jazz Master **Abdullah Ibrahim** gives special US concert as part of Wells Fargo Jazz series; jazz programming also includes **Preservation Hall Jazz Band**, a tribute to New Orleans icon Danny Barker (**A New Orleans Jazz Celebration**), **The Cookers**, and more

The Planets: Charleston natives Jonathon Heyward (conductor) and Micah McLaurin (piano) appear with the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra on a concert featuring the music of Edmund Thornton Jenkins, Franz Liszt, and Gustav Holst

Composer-in-residence Jessica Meyer debuts a world premiere for St. Lawrence String Quartet's 25th anniversary at Spoletto during **Bank of America Chamber Music**, directed by Geoff Nuttall; additional featured guest artists include Anthony Roth Costanzo, and Castalian String Quartet, Inon Barnatan, among others

American Public Radio's **Live from Here with Chris Thile** broadcasts from the TD Arena at College of Charleston; **Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi** opens the First Citizens Bank Front Row series at the College of Charleston Cistern Yard

Theater and dance highlights

Director Emma Rice returns to Spoleto with her musical **Romantics Anonymous**

US premiere of **Sea Sick** looks at the climate crisis its effect on the global ocean; **The Believers Are But Brothers** tackles men, politics, and the internet

American Express Woolfe Street Series includes unique performances from cabaret star **Meow Meow** and illusionist/mentalists Scott Silven

Scottish Ballet returns to Spoleto with *The Crucible*; **Caleb Teicher & Company**, **Trisha Brown Dance Company**, and **Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras** join the 2020 dance series

Two physical theater companies present US premieres: **Gravity & Other Myths** and **Machine de Cirque**

January 5, 2020 (Charleston, South Carolina) — General Director Nigel Redden announces details of the 44th season of Spoleto Festival USA, taking place May 22 – June 7, 2020, in Charleston, South Carolina. For 17 days and nights, a variety of artists fill the city's theaters, churches, and outdoor spaces with wide-ranging performances and concerts. "As Charleston celebrates the 350th anniversary of its founding, the Festival looks to its own place in the city's rich history," says Redden. "There's no doubt that Spoleto, founded in 1977, contributed to Charleston's flourishing into its current status as a top destination—by bringing in world-class artists, sparking a thriving arts and culture scene, and helping to revitalize performance spaces that can be used year-round." After undergoing significant backstage and structural renovations, the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre will reopen with Spoleto's landmark world premiere, *Omar*, a distinctly Charleston—and American—story.

Based on the 1831 autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim African who was sold in Charleston in 1807, *Omar* is co-commissioned and co-produced by Spoleto Festival USA and Carolina Performing Arts at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The opera's narrative traces Omar Ibn Said's spiritual journey from his life in West Africa to his enslavement in the Carolinas. Rhiannon Giddens, a Grammy winner and MacArthur Fellow known for exploring the legacy of African American folk traditions, has created the libretto and score. American composer Michael Abels has worked closely with Giddens as co-composer, and Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy is conducting. Charlotte Brathwaite, director, leads a creative team including Mimi Lien

(set design), Ben Zamora (lighting design), Dede Ayite (costume design), Kent Barrett (video design), and Ni’Ja Whitson (choreography). Tenor Jamez McCorkle, who Festival audiences fondly remember as Lensky in the 2017 production of *Eugene Onegin*, sings the title role. The opera will run for six performances beginning May 22.

As Redden previously noted, “Ibn Said’s autobiography is an extraordinary work, and his story is one that’s absolutely crucial to tell. According to some scholars, as many as 30 percent of the enslaved Africans who arrived in the colonies and subsequently in the United States were Muslim, which is a largely unexplored truth in modern discussions of slavery. But Ibn Said is not a number—he’s a man who had feelings, a history, and a life that was taken from him.”

Additional performances during Spoleto’s 2020 season aim to illuminate stories from marginalized communities—in Charleston and beyond. Pianist Jason Moran and mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran’s *Two Wings: The Story of Black America in Migration*, a highlight of the 2020 Wells Fargo Jazz series, is being specifically reconstructed for a Charleston premiere (Charleston Gaillard Center, May 27). Weaving original compositions, jazz standards, and text, this multifaceted concert follows the journey of six million African Americans from the rural South to points north and west. Joining the program are Imani Winds, Toshi Reagon, and filmmaker/writer Julie Dash. Ahead of the performance, *Wall Street Journal* music critic and Spoleto’s Wells Fargo Jazz advisor Larry Blumenfeld sits down with the Morans on May 26 for a Jazz Talk—one of Spoleto’s many free events that aim to enhance the audience’s experience and unmask various aspects of the Festival’s program. Blumenfeld leads a second Jazz Talk (June 1) with pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, a visionary during the anti-apartheid movement and a 2019 NEA Jazz Master. Ibrahim and his band Ekaya perform at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre on June 2.

A screening of Jordan Peele’s Academy Award-winning film *Get Out* takes place May 26 with live accompaniment by the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, led by the film’s composer Michael Abels. (Abels is also the co-composer of *Omar*.) In *Get Out*, released by Universal Pictures in 2017, a young African American man visits his white girlfriend’s family estate and gradually becomes ensnared in a sinister plot. Sixteen choristers from the Westminster Choir will accompany the Festival orchestra in the Charleston Gaillard Center.

Created in the months following the shooting of black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, *Until the Flood* is one of award-winning writer/performer Dael Orlandersmith’s newest works. Based on dozens of intimate conversations Orlandersmith conducted with Ferguson community members, this *New York Times* Critic’s Pick runs May 22 – 26 in the Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston. The one-woman play, writes *The Chicago Tribune*, “achieves a great beauty by bringing us together rather than driving us apart.”

Spoletto's 2020 theater programming includes two additional works of particular relevance: *The Believers Are But Brothers* (Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston, June 2 – 6) by Javaad Alipoor follows three men's journeys to online radicalization, while *Sea Sick* (Woolfe Street Playhouse, May 27 – 30) examines the effects of climate change on the global ocean. This one-woman play, written by Alanna Mitchell and presented as part of the American Express Woolfe Street Series, is especially appropriate for a US premiere taking place in Charleston, as the coastal city wrestles with flooding issues and the threat of offshore drilling.

On May 29 and 31, Spoleto is producing a distinctive choral-and-visual-arts experience at Memminger Auditorium, The Stations. In this production, members of the Westminster Choir—led by Festival Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller—perform settings from Carlo Gesualdo's *Responsoria* while photographs from artist Tom Kiefer's *The American Dream* series are illuminated throughout the space. Gesualdo's music, written in 1611 for Holy Week Tenebrae services leading up to Easter Sunday, provides a compelling setting for Kiefer's images depicting items collected at a US Customs and Border Protections facility in Arizona. The Westminster Choir, celebrating its 100th anniversary, also performs two solo repertory concerts at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (May 23 and 30) featuring music by Benjamin Britten, Paweł Łukaszewski, Daniel Elder, and Jake Runestad.

As always, classical music at the Festival spans centuries. In various concerts throughout the season, members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, under the direction of Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, play selections from Vivaldi, Beethoven, and Liszt, along with contemporary artists Max Richter, Michael Abels, inti figgis-vizueta, and Derek Tywoniuk, among others. In a concert highlighting Holst's *The Planets* (Charleston Gaillard Center, May 30), the Festival Orchestra also plays "Rhapsodic Overture" by Edmund Thornton Jenkins—a Charlestonian born in 1894 who got his early start in his father's Jenkins Orphanage Band before receiving a diploma from London's Royal Academy of Music. Also featured on this concert are Charleston natives Micah McLaurin, performing Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1, and Jonathon Heyward conducting.

The Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, Westminster Choir, and Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus join forces for a spectacular performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the master's birth. The beloved Bank of America Chamber Music series, comprising 11 programs performed three times in the Dock Street Theatre, also includes Beethoven in its concerts—his Septet in E-flat major. Bank of America Chamber Music Director and host Geoff Nuttall has once again organized an eclectic season with a strong roster of returning players and fresh faces; series details will be announced in full in April 2020.

Also running nearly every day of the Festival in the Dock Street Theatre acclaimed director Emma Rice's *Romantics Anonymous*. This charming musical, praised by *The Guardian* as "a multifaceted

gem, chock-full of love, generosity and joy,” was adapted by Rice from the French-Belgian film *Les Émotifs Anonymes* and features lyrics and music by Christopher Dimond and Michael Kooman.

Over final weekend, Charleston sets the stage for *Live from Here* with Chris Thile, American Public Radio’s popular variety show featuring music, comedy, and audience interaction. More than two million listeners tune in each week; this special broadcast (TD Arena at College of Charleston, June 6) is presented in partnership with the College of Charleston and the support of The ETV Endowment of South Carolina. Popular music offerings presented as part of the First Citizens Bank Front Row series in 2020 include Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi (May 24), The Wood Brothers (May 29), and Steep Canyon Rangers (June 3), all in the College of Charleston Cistern Yard. And on Sunday, June 7, The War and Treaty return to Spoleto for the Wells Fargo Cistern Finale—a celebratory evening concert held for the first time at the Cistern Yard and drawing the 44th season to a close.

The full 2020 program, featuring more than 150 ticketed events, is outlined below and can be found [here](#), along with an event calendar. Tickets go on sale to the general public on **Wednesday, January 15, at 10:00am EST** by phone at **843.579.3100** and online at **spoletousa.org**. A donor pre-sale begins Monday, January 6. Tickets can be purchased in person through the Spoleto Festival USA Box Office at the Charleston Gaillard Center (95 Calhoun St.) beginning May 1. Additional information can be found online and below.

2020 Program Details

| Opera

Omar

Omar

World premiere

Music and libretto by Rhiannon Giddens

Co-composed by Michael Abels

Conducted by John Kennedy

Directed by Charlotte Brathwaite

Set design by Mimi Lien

Costume design by Dede Ayite

Lighting design by Ben Zamora

Video design by Kent Barrett

Choreography by Ni’Ja Whitson

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre

May 22, 25, 28, 31, June 3, 7

Omar is based on the 1831 autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim African who was sold in Charleston in 1807. The opera is co-commissioned and co-produced by Spoleto Festival USA and Carolina Performing Arts at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The world premiere opera will open Spoleto Festival USA's 2020 season at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre. Subsequently, the production will travel to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where performances will take place at co-commissioner/co-producer Carolina Performing Arts during its 2020 – 2021 season.

The opera's narrative traces Omar Ibn Said's spiritual journey from his life in West Africa to his enslavement in the Carolinas. In 1807, at age 37, he was transported to Charleston—where more than 100,000 West Africans were brought to America before the importation of slaves was banned in 1808. Today, as many as 60 percent of African Americans can trace their roots to Charleston.

Upon arrival in the United States, Ibn Said was sold to a Charlestonian, but escaped and fled to North Carolina, where he was recaptured, sent to jail, and then resold to James Owen, the brother of one of the state's governors. Ibn Said penned his autobiography in Arabic in 1831. It is considered the only surviving, unedited autobiography of an enslaved Muslim written in Arabic in the United States. During the Festival, the original manuscript will be on view at the Gibbes Museum of Art.

The Festival first tapped Rhiannon Giddens to compose the opera and write the libretto in 2017. In a statement, Giddens has said: "My work as a whole is about excavating and shining a light on pieces of history that not only need to be seen and heard, but that can also add to the conversation about what's going on now. This is a story that hasn't been represented in the operatic world—or in any world."

Musically, the work incorporates West-African traditions with conventional Western opera instrumentation. It is composed for a cast of nine, 24 choristers, and a full orchestra. **Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy** is conducting.

American composer **Michael Abels** is working closely with Giddens to develop the score. "In telling Omar's story with the orchestra, it's crucial that there are elements that represent him culturally, with Arabic and African influences," Abels has said. "There will be some instrumentation and tonality that honor those cultures and bring them into the opera house. Opera can address stories and the human condition in a way virtually no other art form can. We're in a place in history where religion is being used to blame, separate, and isolate people from one another. This story is a perfect chance to put that conflict onstage and allow people to see it in ways that can be healing and transcendent of personal differences."

Award-winning director **Charlotte Brathwaite** is leading a creative team including Mimi Lien (set design), Ben Zamora (lighting design), Dede Ayite (costume design), Kent Barrett (video design), and Ni'Ja Whitson (choreography).

Confirmed casting includes **Jamez McCorkle** (Omar), **Daniel Okulitch** (James Owen/master), **Cheryse McLeod Lewis** (Omar's mother), **Laquita Mitchell** (Julie), **Catherine Anne Daniel** (Katie Ellen), **Adam Klein** (Auctioneer), **Ashley Emerson** (Little Daughter), **Michael Redding** (Omar's brother/man at auction), and **Anthony Webb** (James Owen's friend).

On Saturday, May 23, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Giddens and Abels at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre as part of Spoleto's free discussion series, Conversations With.

| Musical Theater

Romantics Anonymous

Romantics Anonymous

Plush Theatricals in association with Wise Children

Directed by Emma Rice

Dock Street Theatre

May 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, June 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Adapted from the French film *Les Émotifs Anonymes*, *Romantics Anonymous* tells the story of two chocolatiers who must overcome their various social anxieties in order to open themselves to the possibility of love. Written and directed by **Emma Rice**—whose works *The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk*, *The Red Shoes*, *Don Jon*, and *Tristan & Yseult* have been seen and loved by Spoleto Festival USA audiences—and with lyrics and music by Christopher Dimond and Michael Kooman, the production opened to rave reviews at Shakespeare's Globe in 2017.

The musical's story: Angélique makes beautiful chocolates, carefully infused with all the emotion that seems to overwhelm her in daily life. Jean-René runs a chocolate factory that is running out of steam, rather like his own existence. Both seek help from the usual sources: Jean-René favors self-help tapes and Angélique joins a support group, Les Émotifs Anonymes. Their individual journeys melt into a delicate love affair.

Romantics Anonymous is an unusual and tender love story. As Broadway World describes: "The feel-good factor is through the roof; you really will leave the theater 'dancing on air' and beaming from ear

to ear.” Performances of *Romantics Anonymous* run nearly every day of Spoleto’s 17-day season including a preview (not open to press) on Thursday, May 21. Learn more: romanticsanonymous.com.

| Theater

Until the Flood | *Sea Sick* | *Wonders at Dusk* | *The Believers Are But Brothers*

Until the Flood

By Dael Orlandersmith

Directed by Neel Keller

Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston

May 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

Created by acclaimed writer/performer and Pulitzer Prize nominee **Dael Orlandersmith**, *Until the Flood* is based on extensive interviews following the 2014 shooting of black teenager Michael Brown by white police officer Darren Wilson. Awarded a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick, this tour-de-force one-woman show gives voice to a community haunted by injustice and a country yearning for change.

Orlandersmith wrote and performed *Until the Flood* (commissioned by The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis) in 2016. Her other works include *Forever*, *Black n Blue Boys/Broken Men*, *Stoop Stories*, *The Gimmick*, and *Beauty’s Daughter*, for which she received an Obie Award. Orlandersmith’s acclaimed work, *Yellowman*, is about colorism in the black community, taking place in a 1960s Gullah community in the South Carolina Sea Islands.

On Sunday, May 24, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Orlandersmith at the Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston as part of Spoleto’s free discussion series, *Conversations With*.

Sea Sick

US Premiere

Written and performed by Alanna Mitchell

Directed by Franco Boni

Co-directed by Ravi Jain

Woolfe Street Playhouse

May 27, 28, 29, 30

Produced by The Theatre Centre, **Alanna Mitchell**'s *Sea Sick* debuted in 2014 and makes its US premiere during Spoleto Festival USA. Centering around climate change and how humans are altering the chemistry of the global ocean, the work is based on Mitchell's bestselling book of the same name. An award-winning Canadian journalist (her bylines have been seen in *The New York Times*, *Globe and Mail*, *National Geographic*, and more), Mitchell writes about science and social trends, specializing in investigative reporting. In *Sea Sick*, Mitchell uses science and delicate wit to educate audiences about the state of the ocean and shares her hopes for the future. These performances are presented as part of the American Express Woolfe Street Series. Learn more: alannamitchell.com.

Wonders at Dusk

Performed by Scott Silven

Woolfe Street Playhouse

June 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

An acclaimed illusionist, mentalist, and performance artist, Scott Silven pushes the boundaries of his craft by creating smart and uniquely immersive performances that mesmerize audiences around the globe. Following two sold-out runs in New York and an extensive international tour, the Scotland-born Silven brings *Wonders at Dusk* to Charleston for his Festival debut. The hour-long work combines storytelling, theater, and illusion for a show that “may not only leave you baffled at Silven's expertise but may also prompt a few discussions of long-forgotten personal memories” (Broadway World). These performances are presented as part of the American Express Woolfe Street Series. Learn more: scottsilven.com.

On Wednesday, June 3, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Silven at the Woolfe Street Playhouse as part of Spoleto's free discussion series, Conversations With.

The Believers Are But Brothers

Performed, written, and co-directed by Javaad Alipoor

Co-directed by Kirsty Housley

Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston

June 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Javaad Alipoor, an award-winning writer, director and performer, is known for work grounded in political and social commitments. He is a founding member of the Alliance in Support of Iranian Workers, an activist with Syria Solidarity UK, and has contributed chapters to books about the Arab

Spring. He is artistic director of Northern Lines, a company that specializes in making work with and for hard-to-reach multi-ethnic communities. He strives to make work that tackles big international political questions in a way that ties them to the here and now.

In 2016, Alipoor made contact with several people running ISIS-supporting social media accounts, as well as young men active with the online alt-right. Working with journalists and specialists, he made relationships with the sites' curators and, delving deeper, found himself lost in an electronic maze of terrorists, neo-fascists, fantasists, and police spies. *The Believers Are But Brothers* tells this story and invites audiences to engage with the resentment, violence, and networks of power that eat away at the structures of 20th-century liberalism and social democracy. Alipoor reframes the rise of violent and apocalyptic Islamic extremism in the crucible of an international crisis of masculinity and the toxic underground networks of the internet it breeds. Learn more: <http://www.javaadalipoor.co.uk/babb>.

On Thursday, June 4, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Alipoor at the Charleston Library Society as part of Spoleto's free discussion series, Conversations With.

| Cabaret

Meow Meow

Meow Meow

Woolfe Street Playhouse

May 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

Post-modern diva Meow Meow has hypnotized, inspired, and terrified audiences globally with unique creations and sell-out seasons from New York's Lincoln Center and Berlin's Bar Jeder Vernunft to London's West End and the Sydney Opera House. For her Spoleto Festival USA debut, Meow Meow's evening cabaret performances (with an accompanying pianist) at Woolfe Street Playhouse showcase her incredible vocal range, humor, and impeccable timing. The performances are presented as part of the American Express Woolfe Street Series.

Meow Meow's award-winning solo works have been curated by David Bowie, Pina Bausch, and Mikhail Baryshnikov, as well as numerous international arts festivals. As well as being a prolific music and theater creator, she specializes in the Weimar repertoire and French chanson, and recently appeared as Titania in Emma Rice's revolutionary *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Shakespeare's Globe.

With collaborator Pink Martini's Thomas M. Lauderdale, Meow Meow has written and recorded the album *Hotel Amour*, and a solo album, *Mermaid*, is forthcoming. Meow's other albums include *Songs*

from a Little Match Girl and *Vamp*, co-written with long-time collaborator and composer Iain Grandage.

Learn more: meowmeowrevolution.com.

| Dance

Scottish Ballet | Caleb Teicher & Company | Trisha Brown Dance Company | Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras

Scottish Ballet

The Crucible

Choreography by Helen Pickett

Charleston Gaillard Center

May 22, 23, 24

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 *The Crucible* opens Spoleto Festival USA's dance series, May 22 to 24 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 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 fear, 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. Learn more: scottishballet.co.uk/event/crucible.

Caleb Teicher & Company

Bzzzz and *Variations*

Choreography by Caleb Teicher

Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston

May 28, 29, 30, 31

Caleb Teicher & Company, founded in 2015 by acclaimed dancer/choreographer **Caleb Teicher**, seeks to expand the capacity of America's rich music and dance traditions through innovative choreography, performance, and contextualization. Utilizing tap dance, vernacular jazz, Lindy hop, and a mix of other American dance styles, the company's work reflects a collective conscience within modern American culture.

Teicher began his career as a founding member of Michelle Dorrance's Dorrance Dance while also freelancing in the worlds of contemporary dance—with The Chase Brock Experience and The Bang Group—swing dance, and musical theater. Teicher performed at Spoleto with Dorrance Dance in 2014. He has received commissions from such institutions as The Joyce Theater, New York City Center, the Guggenheim Museum, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and Lincoln Center Out of Doors. He is known for choreographic collaborations with diverse musical talents including composer/pianist Conrad Tao, Ben Folds, and Regina Spektor. Teicher is the recipient of two Bessie Awards, a 2019 Harkness Promise Award, and a 2019 NEFA National Dance Project Production Grant.

At Spoleto, Caleb Teicher & Company presents two works: ***Bzzzz***, in which seven tap dancers and a live beatboxer explore the relationship between two forms of building and breaking pattern, and ***Variations***, set to Glenn Gould's interpretations of Bach's Goldberg Variations. Learn more: calebteicher.net.

Trisha Brown Dance Company

Trisha Brown: In Plain Site

Choreography by Trisha Brown

Hampton Park

May 28

Foray Forêt, Groove and Countermove, and Working Title

Choreography by Trisha Brown

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre

May 29, 30

Established in 1970, Trisha Brown Dance Company (TBDC) is a post-modern dance company dedicated to the performance and preservation of the work of Trisha Brown, one of the most influential choreographers whose groundbreaking work forever changed the dance landscape. From her roots in rural Washington, Brown arrived in New York in 1961 and participated in the choreographic composition workshops taught by Robert Dunn, from which Judson Dance Theater was born. Expanding the physical behaviors that qualified as dance, Brown discovered the extraordinary in the everyday, and brought tasks, natural movement, and improvisation into the making of her choreography.

Brown's artistic investigation extended 40 years, creating more than 100 choreographies, six operas, and visual art pieces that have earned recognition in numerous museum exhibitions and collections. In the 1960s, Brown engaged collaborators such as visual artists Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, and Elizabeth Murray and musicians Laurie Anderson, John Cage, and Alvin Curran, to name a few. Today, longtime TBDC company members Diane Madden and Carolyn Lucas serve as Associate Artistic Directors.

At Spoleto, TBDC offers two unique performance experiences. First is *Trisha Brown: In Plain Site*, which adapts some of Brown's early works into a free site-specific performance in Charleston's Hampton Park on May 28. On May 29 and 30, the company performs three works on the proscenium stage at College of Charleston Sottile Theatre: *Foray Forêt* (1990), with designs by Robert Rauschenberg; *Groove and Countermove* (2000), with music by Dave Douglas; and *Working Title* (1985), one of Brown's early explorations—a precursor to her famous *Lateral Pass*—that became a resource for years for the choreographer. Learn more: trishabrowncompany.org.

Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras

Sombras (Shadows)

Choreography by Sara Baras

Charleston Gaillard Center

June 6, 7

Since founding her company in 1998, flamenco superstar **Sara Baras** has shared more than 4,000 performances around the globe, dancing on acclaimed stages at New York City Center, Sadler's Wells, Royal Albert Hall, and Teatro Real de Madrid. During Spoleto's 2020 season, Baras makes a triumphant return to the Festival for the first time since 2006, performing her latest work, *Sombras (Shadows)*, at the Charleston Gaillard Center on June 6 and 7. Baras is known for the style of la farruca—a dance of rapid-fire footwork traditionally performed by men—and in this performance, the master makes the technique

completely her own. The performance features scenic design by visual artist Andrés Mérida, music by company music director Keko Baldomero, and text from Santana de Yepes. Learn more: sarabaras.com.

| Physical Theater

Gravity & Other Myths | Machine de Cirque

Gravity and Other Myths

Out of Chaos

US Premiere

Directed by Darcy Grant

Memminger Auditorium

May 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

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.” In it, 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. Learn more: gravityandothermyths.com.au.

Machine de Cirque

La Galerie

US Premiere

Directed by Olivier Lépine

Memminger Auditorium

June 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

This Quebec-based physical theater company makes its Spoleto Festival USA debut with the US premiere of *La Galerie*. Under the leadership of stage director Olivier Lépine, the work features seven world-class circus artists and a multi-instrumentalist, all onstage for an evening of breathtaking acrobatics, enticing live music, and bewilderingly unusual feats.

Boasting performers from Cirque du Soleil, Cirque Eloize, and Les Sept Doigts, Machine de Cirque was created in 2013 by acrobats Raphaël Dubé and Yohann Trépanier, percussionist Fred Lebrasseur, and artistic director Vincent Dubé. Since then, the company has toured worldwide and garnered tremendous public and critical success. In 2016, the company shattered the Guinness World Record for the most consecutive back flips on a teeterboard. Learn more: machinedecirque.com/en.

| Wells Fargo Jazz

Preservation Hall Jazz Band | A New Orleans Jazz Celebration | Aruán Ortiz and Don Byron | Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration | The Cookers | Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya | Linda May Han Oh and Fabian Almazan

Preservation Hall Jazz Band

Ben Jaffe, bass, tuba, percussion

Charlie Gabriel, saxophone, clarinet

Clint Maedgen, saxophone, percussion

Ronell Johnson, trombone

Walter Harris, drums

Kyle Roussel, piano

Branden Lewis, trumpet

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 22

Preservation Hall Jazz Band (PHJB) has held the torch of New Orleans music aloft for more than 50 years, all the while carrying it enthusiastically forward as a reminder that the history it was founded to preserve is a vibrantly living history. The band's newest album, *So It Is* (2017), is the septet's second release featuring all-new original music, penned largely by leader **Ben Jaffe** and 84-year-old saxophonist **Charlie Gabriel** in collaboration with the entire band. Longtime members Jaffe, Gabriel, **Clint Maedgen**, and **Ronell Johnson** have more recently been joined by **Walter Harris**, **Branden Lewis**, and **Kyle Roussel**, and the new blood has hastened the group's journey into new musical territory. Reinvigorated by the post-Katrina rebuilding of their beloved home city, the band is redefining what New Orleans music means today.

For those wary that a band with the rich history of the PHJB is tackling new material, Jaffe is quick to point out that the Preservation Hall—which his parents, Allan and Sandra Jaffe, founded in 1961—was never meant to be a museum. At its beginnings, the band broke racial boundaries to present the

legends of New Orleans music, living links to the origins of jazz. Today, with a band whose ages range nearly 60 years, the mission remains the same: to pass on the traditions while continually revitalizing it with fresh ideas. Learn more: preservationhalljazzband.com.

A New Orleans Jazz Celebration

Featuring Dr. Michael White and Catherine Russell

Michael White, clarinet and music director

Catherine Russell, featured vocals

Shannon Powell, drums, tambourine, vocals

David Torkanowsky, piano

Don Vappie, banjo and vocals

Gregory Stafford, trumpet and vocals

Jeffery Miller, trombone

Kerry Lewis, bass and tuba

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 23

Born in New Orleans in 1909, banjo and guitar player **Danny Barker** left for New York City in 1930 and played and recorded with a wider range of jazz musicians than any other musician of the idiom, before or since. These included Jellyroll Morton, Cab Calloway, Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, and Wynton Marsalis.

Barker returned to New Orleans in 1965 and, a few years later, recruited young musicians from the community to assemble the Fairview Baptist Church Brass Band. (Many of these young musicians would, in turn, grow up to be important contributors to New Orleans music.) And in the 1970s, Barker was largely responsible for a resurgence in the New Orleans brass band tradition.

Celebrating Barker's life and achievements, this concert features musical director and clarinetist **Dr. Michael White** and renowned vocalist **Catherine Russell**, with some of New Orleans finest musicians including **Shannon Powell, Jeffery Miller, Greg Stafford, David Torkanowsky, and Kerry Lewis**.

Aruán Ortiz and Don Byron Duo

Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston

May 24, 25, 26, 27

Pianist, violist, and composer **Aruán Ortiz**, who grew up in Santiago, Cuba, and has lived in the US since 2002, is among the most creative pianists on jazz’s landscape. He has written music for jazz ensembles, orchestras, dance companies, chamber groups, and feature films, incorporating influences from contemporary classical music, Cuban Haitian rhythms, and avant-garde improvisation.

A lifelong New Yorker, **Don Byron** is an unparalleled clarinetist, whose classical training and exquisite technique anchor a career spanning an unusually broad range of music—including early jazz, gospel, and even klezmer music. Since being named “Jazz Artist of the Year” by *Down Beat* in 1992, Byron has been consistently named among the best clarinetists by critics and readers alike in leading international music journals. Acclaimed as much for his restless creativity as for his unsurpassed virtuosity as a player, Byron has presented a multitude of projects at major music festivals around the world.

Together, Ortiz and Byron released *Random Dances and (A)tonalities* in 2018, which *Billboard* named among the 10 best jazz albums of the year. At Spoleto, the duo performs six concerts in the Simons Center Recital Hall.

Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration

Produced by Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran

Jason Moran, piano

Alicia Hall Moran, mezzo-soprano

Toshi Reagon, vocals and guitar

Imani Winds Woodwind Quintet

Julie Dash, filmmaker/writer

Charleston Gaillard Center

May 27

Jason Moran and **Alicia Hall Moran** first presented *Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration* at Carnegie Hall in March 2019, followed by engagements at The Kennedy Center, The Elb in Hamburg, and Symphony Center at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. The program explores the Great Migration, the 60-year era marking the passage of six million African Americans from the rural South to northern cities and beyond. The Morans draw on their own family lore and stories—both harrowing and inspired—of this historic movement with music from rhythm and blues to gospel, classical to Broadway, work songs to rock, and more. The program is adapted for each performance location; at Spoleto, the concert will feature **Toshi Reagon**, **Imani Winds**, and filmmaker/writer **Julie Dash**, as well as **strings players Juliette Jones, Curtis Stewart, Tia Allen** and **Chala Yancy**.

Praised by *The New York Times* for her “imaginative recontextualization of classical singing,” mezzo-soprano and composer Alicia Hall Moran is a trained vocalist whose productions include *Black Wall Street* (2016), inspired by the Wall Street career of her father and the Tulsa race riot of 1921. Alicia made her Broadway debut in the Tony-winning revival of *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess* before starring as Bess in the celebrated 20-city American tour. She has been commissioned by such institutions as MoMA, The Kitchen, and Art Public / Art Basel Miami; collaborators include Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company, guitarist Bill Frisell, the band Harriet Tubman, and visual artist Carrie Mae Weems—with whom she performed at Spoleto Festival USA in 2016.

Jazz pianist, composer, and visual artist Jason Moran was born in Houston in 1975 and earned a degree from the Manhattan School of Music. He has been awarded fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation, United States Artists, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and Ford Foundation. Moran has produced 15 albums and composed scores for Ava DuVernay’s films *Selma* and *13th* as well as Ta-Nehisi Coates’s stage version of *Between the World and Me*. His historical piece about Fats Waller, *Fats Waller Dance Party*, was performed at Spoleto Festival USA in 2016. Moran is currently the artistic director of Jazz at the Kennedy Center, programs concerts for Park Avenue Armory, and teaches at New England Conservatory. Learn more: twowingsmigration.com.

On Tuesday, May 26, *Wall Street Journal* jazz critic and Spoleto’s Wells Fargo Jazz advisor Larry Blumenfeld interviews Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran at the Charleston Gaillard Center’s Salon I as part of the Festival’s free Jazz Talks discussion series.

The Cookers

Billy Harper, tenor saxophone

Eddie Henderson, trumpet

George Cables, piano

Cecil McBee, bass

Billy Hart, drums

Donald Harrison, alto saxophone

David Weiss, trumpet

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 28

This all-star septet summons a mid-1960s’ jazz spirit with a potent collection of expansive post-bop originals—all marked by the killer instincts and pyrotechnic playing of the heaviest hitters on the scene today. **Billy Harper, Cecil McBee, George Cables, Eddie Henderson, and Billy Hart** came up in the

'60s—playing with the likes of Herbie Hancock, Sonny Rollins, Charles Lloyd, and Keith Jarrett. By contrast, **David Weiss** and **Donald Harrison**, the youngest members of The Cookers, are from a more recent generation. (Combined, the group has over 250 years of experience in the jazz world and has been a part of over 1,000 recordings.) Yet each artist has also spent time leading his own series of groups as well, and each has a keenly individual sound.

Since this version of the band was solidified in 2007, the group has performed at such venues around the world as the Newport Jazz Festival, New Orleans Jazz Fest, Vancouver Jazz Festival, Umbria Jazz Festival, and Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, among many others. After more than 10 years together, The Cookers, who “embody the serious-as-death commitment that it took to thrive on the New York scene some four decades ago” (*The Boston Globe*), recently released their fifth album, *The Call of the Wild and Peaceful Heart*. Learn more: thecookersmusic.com.

Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre

June 2

Nelson Mandela has referred to **Abdullah Ibrahim** as “South Africa’s Mozart,” and few would disagree. 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 become one of the leading pianists, composers, and figures 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. In 2019, he was named an NEA Jazz Master and he released his latest album, *The Balance*, in August of the same year. Learn more: abdullahibrahim.co.za.

On Monday, June 1, *Wall Street Journal* jazz critic and Spoleto's Wells Fargo Jazz advisor Larry Blumenfeld interviews Ibrahim at the Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston as part of the Festival's free Jazz Talks discussion series.

Linda May Han Oh and Fabian Almazan

Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston

June 3 – 6

Cuban American pianist **Fabian Almazan** and Australian bassist **Linda May Han Oh** first met in 2006 while pursuing master's degrees at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. Soon thereafter, Oh joined the bands of Dave Douglas, Joe Lovano, and Pat Metheny, among others, while Almazan played with the likes of Terence Blanchard, Mark Guiliana, and Ambrose Akinmusire. In 2019, the Jazz Journalists Association named Oh the Up-and-Coming Artist of the Year; she was also the recipient of Chamber Music America's New Jazz Works Grant. The founder and director of Biophilia Records, Almazan works to ensure a continued awareness concerning the music industry and environmental justice. Almazan and Oh have recorded seven albums of each other's music and together have toured internationally.

In their four concerts during Spoleto's 2020 season, the duo will explore the sonic possibilities with Oh on both electric and acoustic bass (and vocals) and Almazan at the acoustic piano, utilizing a variety of electro-acoustic techniques to sculpt the instrument's sound.

| First Citizens Bank Front Row

Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi | The Wood Brothers | Steep Canyon Rangers

Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 24

Festivalgoers can experience more of **Rhiannon Giddens's** artistic scope in this Cistern Yard concert, with Italian multi-instrumentalist **Francesco Turrisi**. In May 2019, the pair released *there is no Other*, at once a condemnation of "othering" and a celebration of the spread of ideas, connectivity, and shared experience.

Tracing the overlooked movement of sounds from Africa and the Arabic world and their influence on European and American music, *there is no Other* illuminates the universality of music and

the commonality of the human experience. The album comprises a mix of original songs penned by Giddens and a diverse set of interpretations. The original “I’m on My Way” received a 2020 Grammy Award nomination for Best American Roots Performance.

A musical storyteller, Giddens is known for mining African American folk traditions to uncover often-neglected historical accounts and personal records of enslaved people. She studied opera at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music before founding The Carolina Chocolate Drops, with which she recorded albums *Genuine Negro Jig* and *Leaving Eden*. Giddens has released two solo albums, *Tomorrow is My Turn* (2015) and *Freedom Highway* (2017), and together with Leyla McCalla, Allison Russell, and Amythyst Kiah, released *Songs of Our Native Daughters*. Giddens has also composed music for Nashville Ballet’s *Lucy Negro Redux* and was a regular cast member on the CMT television drama *Nashville*.

Turrisi defies easy categorization. Called “a musical alchemist” by the *Irish Times*, Turrisi is a Turin-born musician whose Dublin base reflects his global sensibilities. With his unique ability to fold early music, pan-Mediterranean modal melodies, and European flavored jazz into a single repertoire, Turrisi has developed a musical style that crisscrosses cultures and forges musical alliances that are both old and familiar and startlingly brand new. He has performed and recorded with Bobby McFerrin, Dave Liebman, early music group L’Arpeggiata, and contemporary ensemble Bang on a Can, among others.

On Saturday, May 23, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Giddens at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre as part of Spoleto’s free discussion series, Conversations With.

The Wood Brothers

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

May 29

Dubbed “masters of soulful folk” by *Paste*, The Wood Brothers formed after brothers Chris and Oliver Wood pursued separate musical careers for 15 years—Chris (bass) was one-third of famed contemporary jazz trio Medeski Martin & Wood, while Oliver (guitar) toured with Tinsley Ellis before releasing a half-dozen albums with his band King Johnson. Drummer Jano Rix joined the group in the early days, and the band released its first album in 2006. January 2020 marks the release of their eighth studio album, *Kingdom in My Mind*, the Grammy-nominated trio’s most spontaneous and experimental collection yet. On May 29, the band makes its Spoleto debut at the College of Charleston Cistern Yard for an evening blending bluegrass, Americana, folk, jazz, country, and rock. Learn more:

paradigmagency.com/music/artists/the-wood-brothers.

Steep Canyon Rangers

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

June 3

Since Steep Canyon Rangers came together in 2000, the Asheville, North Carolina, Grammy winners have developed a remarkable catalogue of original music that links them to the past while also demonstrating their ambitious intent to bring string-based music into contemporary relevance. Comprising Woody Platt (guitar), Graham Sharp (banjo), Mike Guggino (mandolin), Nicky Sanders (fiddle), Mike Ashworth (drums), and Barrett Smith (bass), the musicians are also frequent collaborators of renowned banjoist and comedian Steve Martin. The Rangers released their latest album *Out in the Open* in 2018, affirming their place as one of the most versatile bands in contemporary American music. They are known for bending and shaping the bluegrass aesthetic and wedding it to elements of pop, country, and folk rock to create something original. *Out in the Open* is an undeniable milestone on the Rangers' ongoing creative journey forward as they search for new horizons and musical vistas. Learn more: steepcanyon.com.

| Music

Bank of America Chamber Music | Music in Time | *Get Out* | Westminster Choir Concerts | The Planets | The Stations | Four Seasons Recomposed | Beethoven's Ninth Symphony | *Live from Here with Chris Thile* | The War and Treaty

Bank of America Chamber Music

Directed and hosted by Geoff Nuttall

Dock Street Theatre

May 22 – June 7

Eleven programs—each performed three times—feature bright contemporary compositions and canonic treasures. **The Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director of Chamber Music Geoff Nuttall** organizes and hosts each concert, punctuating them with his “boundless enthusiasm” as he “functions as both gifted musical partner and ebullient emcee” (*Limelight*). Nuttall's **St. Lawrence String Quartet**, celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2020, has played consecutively at Spoleto Festival USA for the past 25 years. Marking this achievement is a world premiere by **Jessica Meyer, the 2020 Bank of America Chamber Music composer in residence**. A violist, composer, and educator, Meyer's work has been commissioned by other institutions including Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, The Juilliard School, and National Sawdust.

While programming for each Bank of America Chamber Music concert will be announced in full this April, Nuttall has shared a few teasers: **Beethoven’s Septet in E-flat major** and **Schubert’s double cello quintet**. Returning artists include countertenor **Anthony Roth Costanzo**, pianists **Inon Barnatan**, **Pedja Muzijevic**, and **Gilles Vonsattel**, oboist **James Austin Smith**, clarinetist **Todd Palmer**, violinist **Jennifer Frautschi**, and violist **Hsin-Yun Huang**. Cellist **Paul Wiancko**, the series’ 2019 composer in residence, along with **David Byrd Marrow** (French Horn) and **Amy Harman** (bassoon)—all who debuted last season—are also returning.

Artists new to the series are acclaimed recorder player **Tabea Debus**, cellist **Arlen Hlusko**, and the London-based **Castalian String Quartet**: Sini Simonen, Daniel Roberts, Charlotte Bonneton, and Christopher Graves. Awarded 1st Prize at the 2015 Lyon Chamber Music Competition and 3rd Prize at the 2016 Banff International String Quartet Competition, Castalian String Quartet formed in 2011 and recently presented several US debut recitals at The Philips Collection, Lincoln Center, and Middlebury College.

Music in Time

Directed and hosted by John Kennedy

Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston

May 23

Woolfe Street Playhouse

May 24 and June 5

Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy organizes, directs, and hosts this new music series each year. As he describes it, each program is at once meditative, humorous, and exhilarating, showcasing new works by young composers from around the world in a convivial and relaxed setting.

In 2020, three programs feature a broad spectrum of new work, including a US premiere. On May 23 in the Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston, cellist **Seth Parker Woods** takes center stage for **Difficult Grace**, a program that takes its title from composer **Fredrick Gifford**’s piece of the same name. Woods also plays selections by **Monty Adkins**, **Nathalie Joachim**, and **Chinary Ung**, as well as the **US premiere of Fausto Romitelli’s *Your Time Is Over***, a concerto for cello and small orchestra.

On the second program, **Distress to Serenity** (Woolfe Street Playhouse, May 24), members of the **Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra** perform works by up-an-coming international composers including **Clifton Guidry**, **Žibouklé Martinaitytė**, **Bergrún Snæbjörnsdóttir**, and **Derek Tywoniuk**. And on Friday, June 5, Kennedy leads members of the Festival Orchestra for the program **...at some point...**,

featuring works by **Robert Fleitz**, **Juri Seo**, and **Kelly Sheehan**. The concert also features **inti figgis-vizueta's** *To give you form and breath*, which draws inspiration from US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo's poem, "Remember." The concerts at Woolfe Street Playhouse are part of the American Express Woolfe Street Series.

Get Out

Conducted by Michael Abels

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

A Universal Pictures film

Charleston Gaillard Center

May 26

For this live concert performance of *Get Out*, the 2017 Universal Pictures film is shown on a large screen as the Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra performs **Michael Abels's** heart-pounding score, conducted by Abels himself. In *Get Out*, a speculative thriller from Blumhouse and the mind of Academy Award-winning filmmaker Jordan Peele, a young African American man visits his white girlfriend's family estate and gradually becomes ensnared in a sinister plot.

In the liner notes of the original motion-picture soundtrack, Peele reflects on his collaboration with Abels and how they worked to conjure an unexpected new sound. He says, "I envisioned distinctly Black voices harmonically creating an unnatural sound. The absence of hope. The void of the voiceless. A disembodied Negro spirit. The Sunken Place."

Get Out was nominated for four Academy Awards® and won for Best Original Screenplay. The film is rated R.

During Spoletto's 2020 season, **Abels** is also the co-composer of *Omar*. In addition to his work with Jordan Peele (*Get Out*, *Us*), he most recently scored the film *See You Yesterday*, and current projects include the films *All Day and a Night*, the forthcoming *Bad Education* starring Hugh Jackman and Allison Janney, and a ballet for Butler University. Abels's concert symphonic works have been performed by many of the major orchestras in the US including Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Atlanta, St. Louis, and Baltimore. He has arranged or written music for artists as diverse as Doc Severinsen and James Earl Jones, composed a children's opera for LA Opera, and arranged a gospel album for the Rev. James Cleveland. Abels is co-founder and current Executive Director of the Composers Diversity Collective, an organization promoting diversity and inclusion in music for media.

On Saturday, May 23, CBS News correspondent Martha Teichner interviews Abels at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre as part of the free discussion series, Conversations With.

Westminster Choir Concerts

Conducted by Joe Miller

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

May 23, 30

Since 1977, **Westminster Choir**—comprising students at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey—has served as Spoleto Festival USA's chorus in residence. The ensemble is led by **Festival Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller**, who also serves as the Director of Choral Activities for Westminster Choir College and is the Director of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir. In 2020, the Choir celebrates its 100th anniversary.

For Spoleto Festival USA's 2020 season, Westminster Choir offers two concerts, designed to showcase the ensemble's "precision, unanimity and power" (*The New York Times*), held in the sanctuary of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. The program includes **Benjamin Britten's *Hymn to St. Cecilia*** and works by **Paweł Łukaszewski**, **Daniel Elder**, and **Jake Runestad**, as well as favorites from Westminster's vast repertory.

The Planets

Conducted by Jonathon Heyward

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

Charleston Gaillard Center

May 30

The Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra's showcase concert features an exhilarating lineup of repertoire, including "**Rhapsodic Overture**," by **Edmund Thornton Jenkins**, a Charlestonian born in 1894, whose early music education was received at his father's orphanage on Franklin Street. **Gustav Holst's *The Planets*** headlines the program, which also features **Franz Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1**, performed by rising talent **Micah McLaurin**. From Charleston, McLaurin completed his bachelor's degree at Curtis Institute of Music and currently studies at The Juilliard School. He has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, and the North Carolina Symphony, among others.

Leading the evening is **guest conductor**—and fellow Charlestonian—**Jonathon Heyward**, one of the most promising young conductors on the international scene. Winner of the 2015 Besançon International Conducting Competition, Heyward was selected as a Los Angeles Philharmonic Dudamel

Conducting Fellow for the 2017 – 2018 season. He recently completed three years as assistant conductor of Hallé Orchestra and in 2021, will serve as the Chief Conductor Designate of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie. Originally trained as a cellist and chamber musician, Heyward studied conducting at The Boston Conservatory. He completed his postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music.

The Stations

Conducted by Joe Miller

Westminster Choir

Photography by Tom Kiefer

Memminger Auditorium

May 29, 31

In 2003, American **photographer Tom Kiefer** took a custodial job at an Arizona Customs and Border Protections facility and began noticing repeat items in the trash—things like soap, toothpaste, wallets, combs, and bibles that were brought to the US by migrants before being confiscated, lost, or discarded. A few years later, the artist began collecting, then photographing, the belongings for a series eventually titled *El Sueño Americano (The American Dream)*.

For this distinctive choral-and-visual experience, several of Kiefer’s images are paired with the music of **Carlo Gesualdo**, a controversial late-Renaissance composer whose progressive music influenced composers from Stravinsky to Boulez some 350 years after his death. Leading the audience on foot through Memminger Auditorium, members of Westminster Choir perform settings from **Gesualdo’s Responsoria**—a cycle from Holy Week Tenebrae services—pausing at each image for reflection and song.

Tom Kiefer’s photography will be on view at Memminger Auditorium on Saturday, May 30, and Sunday, May 31, from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Viewings are free and open to the public.

Four Seasons Recomposed

Conducted by John Kennedy

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre

June 1

Under the baton of **Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestra Activities John Kennedy**, members of the *Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra* perform **Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi – The**

Four Seasons. By pairing the old with the new, this concert at the College of Charleston Sottile Theatre asks if the virtuosity and patterns in the 18th-century baroque masterpiece are so different from a post-minimalist aesthetic.

Described by NPR as “a restless musician, composer and something of an alchemist in sound who doesn’t seem to fit into any tidy genres,” **Max Richter**’s work “deftly blurs the lines between the classical and electronic worlds.” Released in 2012, *Recomposed* topped classical album charts in 22 countries; since then, the British composer has released five additional solo albums; and created music for HBO’s *The Leftovers* and *My Brilliant Friend*; ballet choreographer Wayne McGregor; and major films including *Ad Astra*, *Mary Queen of Scots*, and *White Boy Rick*.

Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony

Conducted by Ruth Reinhardt

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

Westminster Choir

Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Charleston Gaillard Center

June 4

Led by German conductor Ruth Reinhardt, the **Westminster Choir**, **Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus**, and **Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra** join forces to perform **Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony**, one of the composer’s most recognizable works that culminates with the famous setting of Friedrich Schiller’s poem, “Ode to Joy.” First performed in Vienna in 1824, the work is Beethoven’s final completed symphony and represents a stylistic bridge between the Classical and Romantic periods of western Music. This season marks the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth, which is being celebrated around the globe in 2020.

***Live from Here* with Chris Thile**

TD Arena at College of Charleston

June 6

Live from Here with Chris Thile is a live radio variety show featuring a unique blend of musical performances, comedy, and audience interaction. During each broadcast, acclaimed musician, songwriter, and MacArthur Fellow Chris Thile welcomes a wide range of well-known and up-and-coming talent to share the stage and create a beautiful listening experience. *Live from Here* is produced and

distributed nationwide by American Public Media and is heard by more than two million listeners each week on nearly 600 public radio stations, online, and on SiriusXM Radio.

For the live broadcast during Spoleto, featured artists will be announced closer to the event. The performance is presented in partnership with the College of Charleston and the support of The ETV Endowment of South Carolina. Learn more here: livefromhere.org.

The War and Treaty

College of Charleston Cistern Yard

June 7

Named Americana Music Awards' Best Emerging Artist in 2019, The War and Treaty—Michael and Tanya Trotter—culminate Spoleto's 2020 season with an outdoor evening concert held for the first time in the College of Charleston Cistern Yard.

A US Army veteran, singer Michael Trotter, Jr., found his voice when he was pulled from the frontlines to write songs for the fallen. Following his discharge, Trotter met Tanya Blount, a seasoned performer whose musical influences include Mahalia Jackson, Dolly Parton, Sister Odette, and Aretha Franklin. The two fell in love, got married, and created a new musical collaboration. The duo released its first EP, *Down to the River*, in July 2017. Their most recent full-length album, *Healing Tide*, was produced by Buddy Miller and is marked by the duo's transcendent vocals and soaring harmonies.

The Wells Fargo Cistern Finale doors open at 8:00pm. Outside food and beverages are prohibited; concessions will be available for purchase onsite. The music begins at 8:30pm.

| Visual Arts

At the Gibbes Museum of Art

Fred Wilson: Afro Kismet

The Gibbes Museum of Art

May 15 – June 7

Fred Wilson: Afro Kismet features the internationally acclaimed conceptual artist's most recent body of work. A MacArthur Fellow, Wilson is renowned for challenging assumptions of history, culture, race, and conventions of display. By reframing objects and cultural symbols, he alters traditional interpretations, encouraging viewers to reconsider social and historical narratives. In *Afro Kismet*, the artist juxtaposes

contemporary objects of his own making and museum-quality artifacts to investigate the long-ignored presence of communities of African descent in Europe.

Additionally on display at The Gibbes Museum will be Omar Ibn Said's original manuscript and a new installation by Wilson inspired by Ibn Said's life.

| Garden Tours

Behind the Garden Gate

For the eighth year, Spoleto Festival USA collaborates with the **Charleston Horticultural Society** and **The Garden Conservancy's National Open Days Program** to open some of Charleston's lushest private sanctuaries for self-guided tours. Each Saturday tour (May 23 and May 30) features eight different private gardens, promising two full days of discovery and wonder in these artfully cultivated spaces. Garden descriptions and more information can be found at gardenconservancy.org/open-days/charleston.

| Portal to Senegal

Shared Studios

With an aim to create meaningful connections between people separated by distance and difference, Shared_Studios brings communities together in immersive spaces to talk, dance, play, and collaborate as if in the same room. Members of the public can enter a shimmering gold portal during open hours or for a specific program (location and programming to be announced) and find themselves transported to Dakar, Senegal—near the birthplace of Omar Ibn Said 250 years ago—interacting with members of a community more than 4,000 miles away. Details will be announced closer to the launch. Learn more about this multidisciplinary collective: sharedstudios.com.

| Artist Talks

Conversations With | Jazz Talks | Spoleto Salons

Conversations With

Emmy Award-winning CBS News correspondent **Martha Teichner** hosts discussions with Festival artists: Rhiannon Giddens and Michael Abels (College of Charleston Sottile Theatre, May 23), Dael Orlandersmith (Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston, May 24), Scott Silven (Woolfe Street Playhouse, June 3), and Javaad Alipoor (Charleston Library Society, June 4).

Jazz Talks

Jazz critic and Spoleto's Wells Fargo Jazz advisor **Larry Blumenfeld** interviews musicians of the Wells Fargo Jazz series: Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran (Charleston Gaillard Center, May 26) and Abdullah Ibrahim (Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston, June 1).

Spoleto Salons at 14 George Street

Taking place before the Festival begins in May, these free discussions highlight behind-the-scenes aspects of Spoleto and its productions. Salon topics and exact dates/times will be announced this spring.

How to Buy Tickets

Tickets will go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, January 15, at 10:00am EST online at spoletousa.org and by phone at 843.579.3100.

For contributors to Spoleto Festival USA of \$100 or more, a donor pre-sale starts on January 6, providing exclusive access to tickets and premium seating for the 2020 season. Access is based on contribution level; more information about the donor pre-sale and how to donate can be found at spoletousa.org.

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

Go Spoleto! hotel-and-ticket packages are available in partnership with seven Charleston hotels: Ansonborough Inn, Belmond Charleston Place, Charleston Marriott, Francis Marion Hotel, Emeline, Palmer's Pinckney Inn, and Zero George. Guests can book a room with one of the Festival hotel partners and receive a code to purchase a range of specially priced performance tickets. For more information, visit spoletousa.org/gospoletto.

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

Spoletto Festival USA

Founded in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA is an annual 17-day performing arts festival in Charleston, SC, that presents leading artists in classical and popular music, opera, jazz, dance, and theater. The 2020 season takes place May 22 to June 7 in various locations on the downtown peninsula, including the historic Dock Street Theatre and the Charleston Gaillard Center. Spoleto Festival USA is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

Leadership

Nigel Redden, Spoleto Festival USA General Director | [Bio](#)

John Kennedy, Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities | [Bio](#)

Joe Miller, Director of Choral Activities | [Bio](#)

Geoff Nuttall, The Charles E. and Andrea L. Volpe Director of Chamber Music | [Bio](#)

Spoletto Festival USA Orchestra

Assembled anew each year through nationwide auditions, the Festival's resident ensemble accompanies each season's opera selections and symphonic concerts. Smaller ensembles participate in choral, chamber, and contemporary music performances. The Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra works closely with Resident Conductor and Director Orchestral Activities John Kennedy as well as guest conductors and composers. Learn more [here](#).

Venues

Charleston Gaillard Center | 95 Calhoun St.

Charleston Library Society | 164 King St.

City Hall | 80 Broad St.

College of Charleston Cistern Yard | 66 George St.

College of Charleston Sottile Theatre | 44 George St.

Dock Street Theatre | 135 Church St.

Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston | 54 St. Philip St.

Gibbes Museum of Art | 135 Meeting St.

Hampton Park | 30 Mary Murray Dr.

Memminger Auditorium | 56 Beaufain St.

Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston | 54 St. Philip St.

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church | 405 King St.

TD Arena at College of Charleston | 301 Meeting St.

Woolfe Street Playhouse | 34 Woolfe St.

Images

A selection of high resolution images can be found in Spoleto Festival USA's [online gallery](#).

Spoleto Festival USA Funders

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Funding for *Omar*

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