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

Embargoed until January 5 at 10:00am EST

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

2020

44TH SEASON AT A GLANCE

May 22 – June 7, 2020 | Charleston, South Carolina

Opera

World premiere: *Omar*

Musical Theater

Romantics Anonymous

Theater

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

Cabaret

Meow Meow

Dance

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

Physical Theater

Gravity & Other Myths | Machine de Cirque

Music

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

Wells Fargo Jazz

Preservation Hall Jazz Band | A New Orleans Jazz Celebration: A Tribute to Danny Barker |
Aruán Ortiz and Don Byron | Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran's Two Wings | The Cookers |
Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya | Linda May Han Oh and Fabian Almazan

First Citizens Bank Front Row

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

Visual Arts, Artist Talks, and More

Tickets | spoletousa.org or 843.579.3100

Donor pre-sale begins January 6 | **Available to the public** beginning January 15 at 10:00am EST

In-person ticket sales open at the Charleston Gaillard Center on May 1.

Opera

Omar

This world premiere opera is based on the life of Omar Ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim African sold in Charleston in 1807. The work (music and libretto by Rhiannon Giddens; co-composed by Michael Abels) follows Ibn Said's spiritual journey from his life in Senegal to his enslavement in the Carolinas. (May 22, 25, 28, 31, June 3, 7; College of Charleston Sottile Theatre)

Musical Theater

Romantics Anonymous

Director Emma Rice's work returns to the Festival with *Romantics Anonymous*, a musical (produced by Plush Theatricals in association with Wise Children) adapted from the French-Belgian film *Les Émotifs Anonymes* with music and lyrics by Christopher Dimond and Michael Kooman. (May 21 – 25, 27 – 31, June 2 – 7; Dock Street Theatre)

Theater

Until the Flood

In the months after the shooting of teenager Michael Brown, Dael Orlandersmith traveled to Ferguson, Missouri, to interview community members about the event and the social unrest that followed. In this one-woman play, Orlandersmith portrays eight characters with a broad range of perspectives inspired by her interviews. (May 22 – 26; Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston)

Sea Sick

Produced by Theatre Centre and making its US premiere at Spoleto, *Sea Sick* is a one-woman performance based on journalist Alanna Mitchell's bestselling book about climate change and its devastating effects on the global ocean. (May 27 – 30; Woolfe Street Playhouse)

Wonders at Dusk

An acclaimed illusionist, mentalist, and performance artist, Scott Silven blends storytelling, theater, and illusion for an hour-long immersive and mesmerizing performance. (June 1 – 7; Woolfe Street Playhouse)

The Believers Are But Brothers

Written and performed by Javaad Alipoor, *The Believers Are But Brothers* follows three men's journeys to online radicalization. Through the work itself and the use of WhatsApp, Alipoor invites the audience to engage with the resentment and violence that frame the international crisis of masculinity and the toxic underground networks of the internet it breeds. (June 2 – 6; Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston)

Cabaret

Meow Meow

Evening cabaret performances from singer, dancer, and actress Meow Meow (with an accompanying pianist) showcase her incredible vocal range, humor, and impeccable timing. (May 22 – 26; Woolfe Street Playhouse)

Dance

Scottish Ballet

Returning to Spoleto with American choreographer Helen Pickett's *The Crucible*, Scotland's national ballet company performs this exciting story ballet based on Arthur Miller's masterpiece with new music by Peter Salem. (May 22 – 24; Charleston Gaillard Center)

Caleb Teicher & Company

This acclaimed tap dance ensemble performs *Bzzzzz* and *Variations*, two innovative works from award-winning choreographer Caleb Teicher that mine America's rich music and dance traditions and reflect his joyful and spirited tap dance style. (May 28 – 31; Emmett Robinson Theatre at College of Charleston)

Trisha Brown Dance Company

The post-modern dance company returns to Spoleto for two distinct performance experiences: *Trisha Brown: In Plain Site* presents outdoor site-specific iterations of Brown's early works that are free and open to the public; while the repertory program offers *Foray Forêt*, *Groove and Countermove*, and *Working Title* in a traditional theater setting. (May 28; Hampton Park; May 29, 30; College of Charleston Sottile Theatre)

Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras

In her latest work, *Sombras (Shadows)*, flamenco master Sara Baras, who is known for the style of la farruca—a dance of rapid-fire footwork traditionally performed by men—makes the technique completely

her own. (June 6, 7; Charleston Gaillard Center)

Physical Theater

Gravity & Other Myths

Bringing the US premiere of *Out of Chaos*, this Australian contemporary circus arts company has had sold-out Spoleto runs in 2014 and 2018. The ensemble's newest work is described by the artists as "our boldest and most ambitious yet." (May 22 – 26; Memminger Auditorium)

Machine de Cirque

This Quebec-based physical theater ensemble makes its Spoleto Festival USA debut with the US premiere of *La Galerie*—a whimsical piece that takes viewers on a wild ride behind the scenes of an art gallery. (June 2 – 7; Memminger Auditorium)

Music

Bank of America Chamber Music

Festival Director of Chamber Music Geoff Nuttall directs and hosts this series comprising 11 programs, each performed three times, featuring beloved classics and bright contemporary pieces. Composer in residence Jessica Meyer debuts a world premiere written for the St. Lawrence String Quartet, which celebrates its 25th season at Spoleto. Other works include Beethoven's Septet in E-flat major and Schubert's double cello quintet. (May 22 – June 7; Dock Street Theatre)

Music in Time: Difficult Grace

Cellist Seth Parker Woods features in this new-music concert featuring Fredrick Gifford's *Difficult Grace*, along with selections by Monty Adkins, Nathalie Joachim, Chinary Ung, and the US premiere of Fausto Romitelli's *Your Time Is Over*. (May 23; Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston)

Music in Time: Distress to Serenity

Led by Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy, members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra perform works by up-an-coming international composers including Clifton Guidry, Žibouklė Martinaitytė, Bergrún Snæbjörnsdóttir, and Derek Tywoniuk. (May 24; Woolfe Street Playhouse)

Music in Time: ...at some point...

Featuring works by Robert Fleitz, Juri Seo, Kelly Sheehan, and inti figgis-vizueta's *To give you form and*

breath, this program showcases members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra under the baton of Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy. (June 5; Woolfe Street Playhouse)

Get Out

For this live concert performance of *Get Out*, the 2017 Universal Pictures film is shown on a large screen as the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra performs Michael Abels's score, conducted by Abels himself. (May 26; Charleston Gaillard Center)

Westminster Choir Concerts

The chorus in residence at Spoleto Festival USA since 1977, the ensemble—led by Festival Director of Choral Activities Joe Miller—celebrates its 100th anniversary with a program including 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. (May 23, 30; St. Matthew's Lutheran Church)

The Planets

Under the baton of Charleston native Jonathon Heyward, the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra performs Holst's *The Planets*; "Rhapsodic Overture" by Edmund Thornton Jenkins, born in Charleston in 1894; and Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1, featuring Charlestonian Micah McLaurin. (May 30; Charleston Gaillard Center)

The Stations

Members of the Westminster Choir perform settings from Carlo Gesualdo's *Responsoria* as they lead audience members through Memminger Auditorium. Each selection is paired with an image from photographer Tom Kiefer's series, *The American Dream*. (May 29, 31; Memminger Auditorium)

Four Seasons Recomposed

In a concert conducted by Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestra Activities John Kennedy, members of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra perform *Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi – The Four Seasons*. (June 1; Charleston Gaillard Center)

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

Marking the 250th anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven's birth, the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, Westminster Choir, and Charleston Symphony Orchestra Chorus join forces under the baton of German

conductor Ruth Reinhardt for a performance of Beethoven’s final symphony. (June 4; Charleston Gaillard Center)

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

Produced by American Public Media, this variety show features a unique blend of musical performances, comedy, and audience interaction. During each live broadcast, MacArthur Fellow Chris Thile welcomes a wide range of well-known and up-and-coming talent to the stage. Guest artists to be announced this spring. (June 6; TD Arena at College of Charleston)

The War and Treaty

Named the 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 at the College of Charleston Cistern Yard. The Wells Fargo Cistern Finale begins at 8:30pm. (June 7; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

Wells Fargo Jazz

Preservation Hall Jazz Band

A torchbearer of New Orleans jazz for more than 50 years, the septet released its latest album, *So It Is*, in 2017. Reinvigorated by the post-Katrina rebuilding of their beloved home city, Preservation Hall Jazz Band aims to uphold the city’s sonic traditions while continually revitalizing them with fresh ideas. (May 22; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

A New Orleans Jazz Celebration

Dr. Michael White leads this eight-piece star-studded tribute to legendary guitarist and banjoist Danny Barker, an artist, writer, bandleader, and educator largely responsible for a resurgence in the New Orleans brass band tradition in the 1970s. (May 23; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

Aruán Ortiz and Don Byron Duo

Cuban-born and rising-star pianist Aruán Ortiz teamed up with trailblazing New York-born clarinetist/saxophonist Don Byron for the critically acclaimed 2018 album *Random Dances and (A)tonalities*, “an exhilarating dialogue that transcends generational and geographic boundaries” (*Billboard*). (May 24 – 27; Simons Center Recital Hall at College of Charleston)

Two Wings: The Music of Black America in Migration

Produced by MacArthur Fellow and pianist Jason Moran and famed mezzo-soprano Alicia Hall Moran, this multifaceted program delves into the harrowing and inspiring stories from the Great Migration. Guest artists in Charleston include filmmaker and writer Julie Dash, singer/composer Toshi Reagon, and the ensemble Imani Winds. (May 27; Charleston Gaillard Center)

The Cookers

A supergroup of seven jazz icons combined to form one of the finest straight-ahead jazz bands today, The Cookers have worked together for the past 12 years. The group performs worldwide and recently released their fifth album, *The Call of the Wild and Peaceful Heart*. (May 28; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya

Named a 2019 NEA Jazz Master, pianist and composer Abdullah Ibrahim embarks on a rare world tour with his longtime band, Ekaya. Born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa, Ibrahim became an anti-apartheid activist who later performed during Nelson Mandela's inauguration. (June 2; College of Charleston Sottile Theatre)

Linda May Han Oh and Fabian Almazan

This cutting-edge duo—Australian bassist Linda May Han Oh and Cuban American pianist Fabian Almazan—make their Spoleto debuts exploring the sonic possibilities with Oh on the electric and acoustic bass (and vocals) and Almazan imaginatively sculpting the sound of an acoustic piano. (June 3 – 6; Simons Center Recital Hall)

First Citizens Bank Front Row

Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi

Tracing the overlooked movement of sounds from Africa and the Arabic world and their influence on European and American music, Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi play selections from their 2019 album, *there is no Other*. (May 24; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

The Wood Brothers

Dubbed “masters of soulful folk” by *Paste*, this Grammy nominated trio—Oliver and Chris Wood and Jano Rix—play favorites from their repertoire and new releases from their forthcoming album, *Kingdom In My Mind*. (May 29; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

Steep Canyon Rangers

This North Carolina-based sextet is known for bending and shaping the bluegrass aesthetic and wedding it to elements of pop, country, and folk rock to create something original. The Rangers released *Out in the Open* in 2018, affirming their place as one of the most versatile bands in contemporary American music. (June 3; College of Charleston Cistern Yard)

Visual Arts

Fred Wilson: Afro Kismet

Featuring conceptual Artist Fred Wilson's most recent body of work, this exhibition 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 will be Omar Ibn Said's original manuscript and a new installation by Wilson inspired by Ibn Said's life. (May 15 – October 4; The Gibbes Museum of Art)

Artist Talks and More

Conversations With

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

Jazz Talks

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

Spoletto Salons at 14 George Street

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

Behind the Garden Gate

For the eighth year, Spoletto Festival USA collaborates with the Charleston Horticultural Society and The

Garden Conservancy's National Open Days Program to open 16 private gardens for self-guided tours.
(May 23, 30; locations to be announced)

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. Members of the public can enter the portal and find themselves transported to Dakar, Senegal—near the birthplace of Omar Ibn Said 250 years ago. (Dates, programming, and location to be announced)

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

Spoleto Festival USA is generously supported by Wells Fargo; Bank of America; BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina; First Citizens Bank; South State; American Express; Bloomberg Philanthropies; BMW Manufacturing Co.; Sherman Capital Markets, LLC; Charleston GI; and Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation. The 2020 season is made possible in part by the City of Charleston; South Carolina Arts Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts; and the County of Charleston. Spoleto ETC is made possible in part by Carol H. Fishman, in memory of Leo Fishman; The Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust; William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust; and Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts.

Funding for *Omar*

Generous support is provided by Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art; Ford Foundation; Deborah Kennedy Kennard and William E. Kennard; OPERA America's Opera Grants for Female Composers program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation; JPMorgan Chase & Co.; The Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust; Post and Courier Foundation; Leslie K. Williams and James A. Attwood, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. Richard DeScherer; and Ms. Susan L. Baker and Mr. Michael R. Lynch.

Omar is co-commissioned and co-produced by Spoleto Festival USA and Carolina Performing Arts at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Carolina Performing Arts' participation in this project is made possible through the support of the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust.