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Lead Producer of The Lowell Offering



Nina Simone: Four Women



The Lowell Offering

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*Tiny Beautiful Things
The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley
Nina Simone: Four Women*



*The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley
The Lowell Offering*



*The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley
The Lowell Offering*

FROM KENNETH L. ROBERSON, DIRECTOR



Nina Simone's best-known gifts to us are the three songs, "Mississippi Goddam," "To Be Young Gifted and Black," and "Four Women." These compositions have truly earned the label, "iconic."

Fannie Lou Hamer, Odetta, and Josh White might come to mind when making a list of singer-songwriters who are known for songs of protest. Troubadours with guitar in hand, strumming melodic, social awareness tunes, welcoming their audience to

calmly participate. Nina Simone does not fit in this category; she uses the percussive sound of her grand piano to beat out songs that do not welcome you to participate, but rather dare you not to. She didn't perform songs of social awareness, but songs of protest, like "Mississippi Goddam." Her invitation, if any, was not to be polite. Her music, her voice, was encouraging you to shout to it, to shout out with anger and might. While the civil rights movement informed both her musical identity and personal life in a big way, she would not allow her anger with White America to keep her from celebrating her people in song. "To Be Young, Gifted and Black" and "Four Women" are two products of this celebration. The former song title speaks for itself. Released in 1970, Simone performed it on an episode of "Sesame Street" in 1972, flanked on either side by the souls for whom she recorded it, innocent Black children venturing out into an America that would send them messages to the contrary. The latter song's name is not as obvious.

Simone's composition, "Four Women," puts down the picket sign and holds up a mirror of self-awareness to the face of Black America. The mirror is reflecting the image of four Black female archetypes side-by-side well known in the Black community. Together, they present a complex narrative of class, social status, and, most destabilizing, colorism. It is a song whose truth still shakes up friendships and even families today. Like Simone herself, "Four Women" is a song that took some time to be fully accepted by many looking into the mirror she held up to them. While not as sentimental as "Black and Blue," nor as singular of expression as "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud," "Four Women" is memorable because it asks us to break silences between us.

I remember seeing Simone perform not too long before her passing. And she did not disappoint. She was the unapologetically Black and gifted Nina Simone that I'd long wished to see!

FROM CHRISTA BROWN



The Free Soil Arts Collective is thrilled to be partnering with Merrimack Repertory Theatre for *Nina Simone: Four Women*. Too often the black experience is considered to be just that, a singular black experience. But Christina Ham's work shows the nuances that make the African American struggle so rich, filled with beauty and pain. Ham brings to light issues that still plague the black community today, forces such as racism, prejudice, and social injustice, as well as the privilege/pain that can be found within colorism, its effects on self-worth, and how it influences how one navigates the world.

Through the stories of these four women, we believe audiences will be given a glimpse into the unmistakable beauty of the Black woman. We also recognize that these portrayals are not perfect, perhaps bordering on stereotypical rather than archetypical, but the most important thing is that these voices be shared, amplified, and somehow lead us to have a thoughtful discourse on what it means to be a Black woman. Every one of their stories deserves to be told.

Founded in January 2019, the mission of the Free Soil Arts Collective is to use theatre as a tool to empower the voices of underrepresented communities. Our name is inspired by the work of the Lowell Free Soil Party to protect the life of fugitive slave Nathaniel Booth in Lowell, MA, in the 1800s. The slogan of the party was free soil, free labor, free men, stating that those who worked the soil deserve to be free. It is our belief that those whose stories are underrepresented in the arts have the right to tell their own stories.

We believe that the women chronicled in *Nina Simone: Four Women* have the right to exist, to tell their truth, and to be portrayed on the stage.

Cheers to Merrimack Repertory Theatre on a successful run!

Christa Brown
Founder, Free Soil Arts Collective

A GRIPPING NINA SIMONE SONG BECOMES A RIVETING PLAY

In her 1966 original song, *Four Women*, Nina Simone created archetypes of African-American women of the time – in both skin color and station. They express the strife and despair of Black life from four very different perspectives.

For the stage, Christina Ham transformed Simone's four-minute narrative into a fully realized play in response to the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham that killed four young girls, and she located the action in the ruins of that church.

The characters are **Aunt Sarah**, a strong, resilient woman, who some say represents enslavement; **Sephronia**, a woman of mixed race forced to live "between two worlds;" **Sweet Thing**, a street prostitute, who can brag, *My hair is fine*; and **Peaches**, a tough, disillusioned woman, who rails in anger at the injustices suffered by her people.

Many fans had long suspected that the character of Peaches is Nina's self-portrait. For the play, Ham transforms Peaches into Nina, who belts the iconic lyrics:

My skin is brown / My manner is tough / I'll kill the first mother I see / My life has been too rough / I'm awfully bitter these days / because my parents were slaves / What do they call me / My name is PEACHES



concerned, is to reflect the times.”

Playwright, journalist, and scholar Thulani Davis described *Four Women* as “an instantly accessible analysis of the damning legacy of slavery that made iconographic the real women we knew and would become. For African-American women it became an anthem affirming our existence, our sanity, and our struggle to survive a culture, which regards us as anti-feminine. It acknowledged the loss of childhoods among African-American women, our invisibility, exploitation, defiance, and even subtly reminded that in slavery and patriarchy, your name is what *they* call you.”

Four Women was controversial when it was released. Some African-Americans felt the women were more stereotypical than archetypal. Many radio stations, including the highest-rated jazz station in New York City, refused to play the song for fear it would insult their female listeners. Simone said it was an honest portrait, and, “An artist’s duty, as far as I am

She noted that, “For African-American women artists of my generation, ‘Four Women’ became the core of works to come, notably . . . *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*,” as well as works by Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara, and Toni Morrison, who said of Simone, “She saved our lives.”

Today Simone’s *Four Women*, along with *Mississippi Goddam*, *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to be Free*, and *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, still inspires listeners and artists. Samples of Simone songs enliven tracks by Lauryn Hill, Kanye West, and Jay-Z. The 2015 documentary, *What Happened, Miss Simone?*, earned an Academy Award nomination, and The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inducted the “High Priestess of Soul” in 2018.

Davis proclaimed, “May the High Priestess’s cult widen to take in the unwise, who made her as outrageous as she was!”



NINA'S RESPONSE

To Concerns about "Four Women"

“I wrote a song, *Four Women*, which went into these feelings a little. The women in the song are black, but their skin tones range from light to dark and their ideas of beauty and their own importance are deeply influenced by that. All the song did was tell what entered the minds of most black women in America when they thought about themselves: their complexions, their hair – straight, kinky, natural, which – and what

other women thought of them. Black women didn't know what the hell they wanted because they were defined by things they didn't control, and until they had confidence to define themselves they'd be stuck in the same mess forever – that was the point the song made. When ‘Four Women’ was released in 1966 some black radio stations banned DJs from playing it because they said it ‘insulted’ black women. It didn't, and banning it was a stupid thing to do, but I wasn't surprised. The song told a truth that many people in the USA – especially black men – simply weren't ready to acknowledge at that time.”



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BONNIE J. BUTKAS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



TERRY BERLINER
INTERIM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

NINA SIMONE: FOUR WOMEN

BY CHRISTINA HAM

FEATURING

DIONNE ADDAI ALANNA LOVELY DEANNA REED-FOSTER
ARIEL RICHARDSON DANIEL RILEY

SCENIC DESIGNER
CHRISTOPHER RHOTON^

COSTUME DESIGNER
MICHAEL ALAN STEIN^

LIGHTING DESIGNER
LEE FISKNESS^

SOUND DESIGNER
LINDSAY JONES^

PRODUCER
PETER CREWE

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
MAEGAN A. CONROY*

MUSIC DIRECTOR
DANIEL RILEY

DIRECTED BY
KENNETH L. ROBERSON^

FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 8, 2020

Nina Simone: Four Women is produced by special arrangement with Bruce Ostler, BRET ADAMS, LTD. 448 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036 www.bretadamsltd.net

Nina Simone: Four Women was commissioned by Park Square Theatre, St. Paul, Minnesota, Richard Cook, Artistic Director, C. Michael-jon Pease, Executive Director and received its first public performance on March 8, 2016.

Merrimack Repertory Theatre presents *Nina Simone: Four Women* produced in association with Northlight Theatre.

+ Member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

^Member of United Scenic Artists



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CAST

Nina Simone..... Dionne Addai
Sweet Thing Alanna Lovely*
Sarah Deanna Reed-Foster*
Sephronia Ariel Richardson*
Sam Waymon/Music Director..... Daniel Riley*

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

RUN TIME

Approximately 95 minutes, no intermission

TIME AND PLACE

A semblance of the ruins of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

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Follow the conversations:
#NINAMRT



*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.



The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in this production are represented by United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation, and AEA (Actors' Equity Association), SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers Society), and USA (United Scenic Artists).

MUSIC & CREDITS

“I Loves You Porgy”

George Gershwin, Du Bose Heyward and Ira Gershwin © 1935 (Renewed) Ira Gershwin Music (ASCAP), Unknown Publisher (Ns) and Dubose and Dorothy Heyward Memorial Fund Pub. (ASCAP). All Rights on Behalf of Ira Gershwin Music Administered by WB Music Corp. All Rights Reserved.

“Old Jim Crow”

Nina Simone, Jackie Alper and Ron Vander Groef
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“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”

Written by Civilia D. Martin and Charles H. Gabriel

“God Be With You ‘Til We Meet Again”

Lyrics by Jeremiah Eames Rankin, Music by William Gould Tomer

“Nobody”

Music by Bert Williams and Lyrics by Alex Rogers

“Sinnerman”

By Nina Simone
© 1965 (Renewed) WB Music Corp.
(ASCAP). All Rights Reserved

“No Images”

Based on the poem by William Cuney

“Brown Baby”

Lyrics and Music by Oscar Brown, Jr Published by Bootblack Publishing Company, LLC (BMI) Administered by CMG Worldwide, Inc. Used by permission of Edward B. Marks Company.
All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

“To Be Young, Gifted and Black”

Written by Weldon Irvine and Nina Simone
Published by EMI Grove Park Music, Inc. obo itself and Ninandy Music (BMI) Courtesy of Sony/ATV Music Publishing. Used by permission.

“Mississippi Goddam”

Nina Simone
© 1965 (Renewed) WB Music Corp.
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“Shout: Oh, Mary”

Written by Christina Ham

“Four Women”

Written by Nina Simone
Published by EMI Waterford Music, Inc. obo itself and Rolls Royce Music Co.
(ASCAP) Courtesy of Sony/ATV Music Publishing. Used by permission.

WHO'S WHO



DIONNE ADDAI (*Nina Simone*) feels blessed to be spending her first time on the MRT stage with this wonderful cast and crew. She is an actor and teaching artist, local to Chicago. Recently Dionne was seen in *Eclipsed* (Pegasus/Theater on the Lake), *We are Pussy Riot* (Red Tape Theatre), *Breath, Boom* (Eclipse Theater), *What of the Night* (Cor/Stage Left Theater), *Aesop's Fables* (Raven Theater), and as an understudy with performances at Northlight Theatre, Writer's Theatre, and ETA Creative Arts. For more info on her teaching artist work with youth, check out icah.org.



ALANNA LOVELY (*Sweet Thing*) is happy to be here at Merrimack Rep! Chicago credits: *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* (Looking-glass Theatre Company), *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Northlight Theatre), *Merrily We Roll Along* (Porchlight Theatre), *Ragtime* (Griffin Theatre), *Bare: A Pop Opera* (Refuge Theater), and *A Christmas Story: The Musical* (Paramount Theater). Regional Credits: *Mother Divine* and *The Music Man* (Western Playhouse). Recent recurring TV credit: “Empire” (Fox) as Lana DuBois. Many thanks to her friends and family and the Gray Talent team.



DEANNA REED-FOSTER (*Sarah*) is a Chicago based Emmy Award and Jeff Award winning actress who is thrilled to be making her Merrimack debut. Chicago theatre credits include: *The First Deep Breath* (Victory Gardens Theatre), *Be Here Now*, *Mill Fire* and *Marvin's Room* (Shattered Globe Theatre), *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Northlight Theatre), *HeLa* (SideShow Theatre), *The Watson's Go To Birmingham 1963* (Chicago Children's Theatre), *Barbecue* (Strawdog Theatre) and *Even Longer And Farther Away* (The New Colony Theatre). Regional credits include: *Fences* (Judy Bayley Theatre/UNLV). Deanna can be seen in films like *Last Flag Flying*, *Widows* and *Southside With You*. You can also see her on television in

NBC's *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago PD*, *Southside*, *Joe Pera Talks With You* and *The Chi*. Deanna completed the Gately Poole Acting Conservatory where she studied the Meisner technique. She is a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA and is represented by DDO Chicago.



ARIEL RICHARDSON (*Sephronia*) is thrilled to be reprising her role as Sephronia here at Merrimack Repertory Theatre! Ariel was last seen on stage in *Nina Simone: Four Women* at Northlight Theatre in Chicago. Ariel received her BFA-Acting from Oklahoma City University. Other notable theatre credits include *Twelfth Night* at Writers Theatre (Glencoe, IL); the multi-award-winning world premiere of *Southern Gothic* at Windy City Playhouse (Chicago); *Twelfth Night* at Montana Shakespeare Theatre (Bozeman, MT); and *Octaroon* at Definition Theatre (Chicago). Some television credits include “Chicago P.D.” (NBC Universal), “Soundtrack” (Netflix), “The Chi” (Showtime), and “Empire” (Fox Television Networks). Represented by Stewart Talent, Ariel would like to send endless love to her family, friends and the amazing cast & crew of *Nina Simone*!



DANIEL RILEY (*Sam Waymon/Music Director*) MRT debut. Daniel is excited to reprise his roles as Sam Waymon/Music Director! Born and raised in Chicago. Favorite roles include Othello (*Othello*), Coalhouse Walker Jr. (*Ragtime*), and Narrator (*Passing Strange*). Jeff Award: *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (Best Ensemble), 2017 Silver Telly Winner: *Christmas Mass at Mercy Home* (Use of Music). Featured on *Dark Side of the Moon* a Capella (VOCOMOTION Records). Thanks to everyone at MRT and Northlight. Support live theater!

KENNETH L. ROBERSON (*Director*) is Professor of Practice in the Theatre, Drama and Contemporary Dance Department at IU, also a director, choreographer, teacher, performer and writer, whose New York City credits, as choreographer include *Avenue Q*, Tony Award For Best Musical;

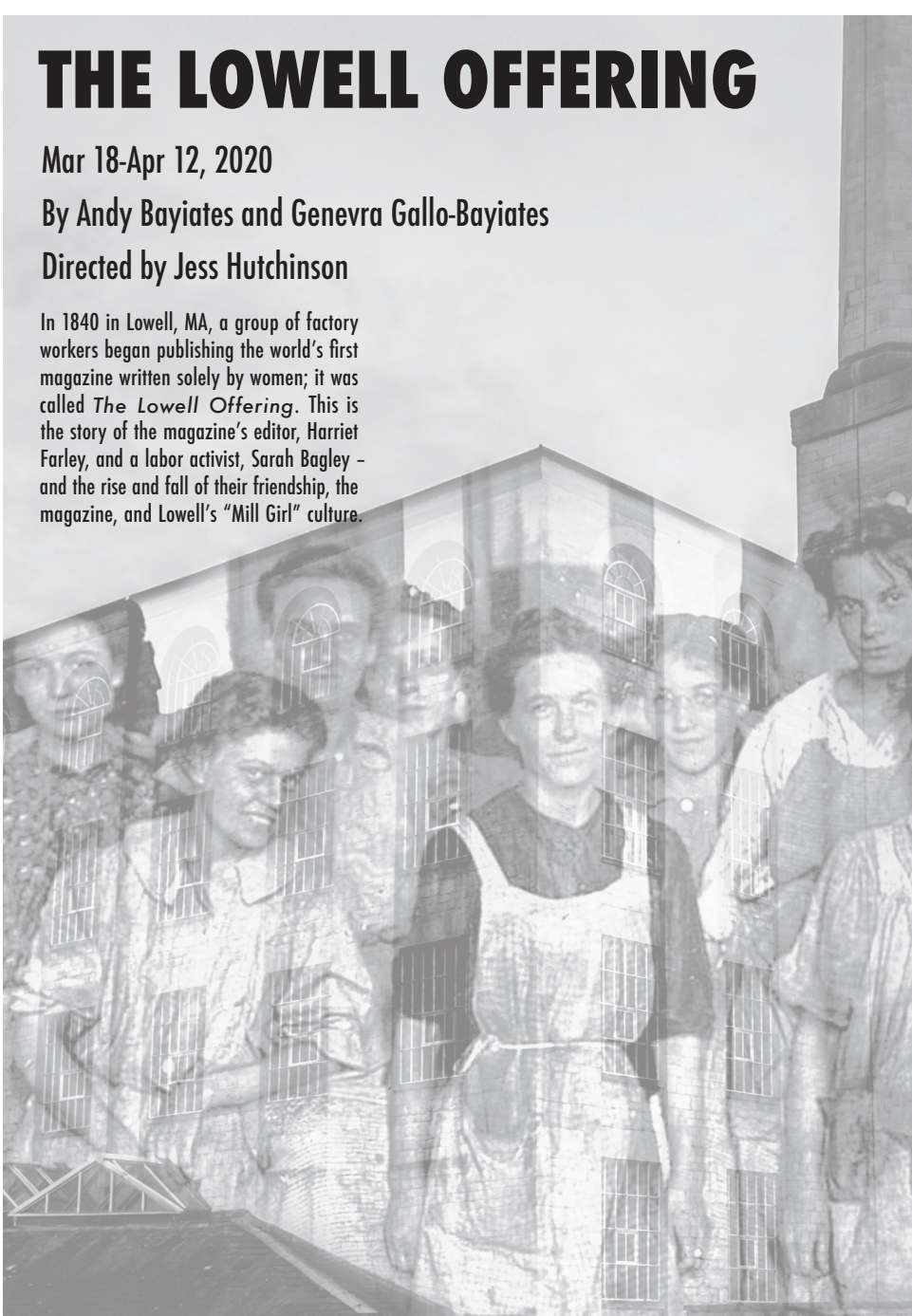
THE LOWELL OFFERING

Mar 18-Apr 12, 2020

By Andy Bayiates and Genevra Gallo-Bayiates

Directed by Jess Hutchinson

In 1840 in Lowell, MA, a group of factory workers began publishing the world's first magazine written solely by women; it was called *The Lowell Offering*. This is the story of the magazine's editor, Harriet Farley, and a labor activist, Sarah Bagley – and the rise and fall of their friendship, the magazine, and Lowell's "Mill Girl" culture.



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WHO'S WHO

All Shook Up, *Purlie* (Encores!); *Freak, A Boy and His Soul*, George C. Wolfe's *Harlem Song*, *The Joint*, and *Jazz a La Carte* (both as director and choreographer.) Abbreviated regional theatre credits include, as Director/Choreographer: *Nina Simone*; *Four Women*, *Frog Kiss*, *Ethel*, *Crowns*, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Once on This Island*, Regional theatre credits as Choreographer: *Ray*, *The Color Purple*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Thunder Knocking on the Door*. Film: HBO's *Lackawanna Blues*, *Preaching to the Choir*, *Brother to Brother*, and John Leguizamo's *House of Buggin'*, Fox TV for which he received an Emmy Nomination. www.Kennethroberson.com

CHRISTINA HAM (*Playwright*) Christina's plays have been developed and produced both nationally and internationally with the Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, Center Theater Group, The Guthrie Theater, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Goodman Theater, Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Tony Award-winning producer Arielle Tepper Madover Off-Broadway at Theater Row, and the Tokyo International Arts Festival among many others. Her theater for young audiences play *Four Little Girls: Birmingham: 1963* was directed by Tony Award winning actress Phylicia Rashad and performed in front of a sold-out audience at the Kennedy Center to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. It was simultaneously presented in 47 states across the country and streamed worldwide to commemorate the bombing with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Attorney General Eric Holder conducting the post-show discussion in Birmingham. Her theater for young audiences musical *Ruby! The Story of Ruby Bridges* was the best-selling show in the history of St. Paul's StepStone Theatre. Christina is a two-time recipient of a McKnight Fellowship in Playwriting and a Jerome Fellowship from the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, the Marianne Murphy Women & Philanthropy Award in Playwriting, a MacDowell Colony Artist Residency, and a previous nominee for Center Theater Group's Richard E. Sherwood Award for Distinguished Emerging Theater Artist. She has received commissions from the Kennedy Center, The Guthrie Theater, and Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, among many others. Her plays are published by Dramatic

Publishing, Heinemann, PlayScripts, Inc., Smith and Kraus, and Oberon Books. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California and holds an MFA in Playwriting from The UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television where she was a Graduate Opportunity Fellow. Christina is an Affiliated Writer at the Playwrights' Center where she is also a member of its Advisory Council and a member of the Playwrights Union in Los Angeles and The Dramatists Guild of America. She is a member of The Kilroys who have been advocating for the equal representation of woman, trans, and non-binary writers on American stages. Recently, *American Theatre* magazine named her one the top 20 most-produced playwrights of the 2018-19 season. She holds a Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence at Pillsbury House Theatre and is a writer on the new Amazon horror Anthology series *THEM: Covenant*.

CHRISTOPHER RHOTON (*Scenic Designer*) is delighted to be working on his first production at Merrimack Repertory Theatre. He has enjoyed being able to re-create his original design for *Nina Simone* in a completely different venue. Christopher is a freelance designer based in Chicago and recently became a member of United Scenic Artists. Upcoming productions include the Chicago premiere of *Hit Her with the Skates*, *Kinky Boots* at the Paramount Theatre, and *The World Goes Round* at the Marriott Theatre. He is the Associate Scenic Designer for the upcoming London premiere of *The Prince of Egypt* on the West End and was recently the Associate on the Hollywood Bowl production of *Into the Woods*. Christopher earned his MFA in Scenic Design from Indiana University in Bloomington. For more information, please visit www.Christopher-Rhoton.com

MICHAEL ALAN STEIN (*Costume Design*). So excited to be a part of this magnificent production at Merrimack Repertory. OFF-BROADWAY: *Absolution* (St. Luke's Theatre), *Devoted Dreams* (Beckett Theatre), *The Happy Family* (Beckett Theatre), *How To Write While Sleeping* (Soho Rep.). REGIONAL: *The Christians*, *Seven Guitars* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Seven Guitars* (St. Louis Black Rep.), *The Old Settler* (Geva Theatre), *The Old Settler* (Intiman Theatre), *The Colored Museum* (Alliance Theatre),

WHO'S WHO

Thunder Knocking On The Door (The Guthrie), *Thunder Knocking On The Door* (Cincinnati Playhouse and Arena Stage), *In Walks Ed* (Long Wharf Theatre), *In Walks Ed* (Cincinnati Playhouse), *Seven Guitars* (Penumbra Theatre), *Dinah Was* (Penumbra Theatre), *Eleanor: A Love Story* (Ford's Theatre), *A Darker Face Of The Earth* (Crossroads Theatre and The Kennedy Center), *The Black Nativity* (Pantages Theatre). Chicago Theatre: *Five Presidents* (American Blues Theater), *Beauty's Daughter* (American Blues Theater), *Nina Simone: Four Women* (Northlight Theatre), *Vivisections from the Blown Mind* (The Goodman Theatre), *Black Nativity* (Congo Square Theatre and The Goodman Theatre), *Twisted Melodies* (Congo Square Theatre), *Stoops* (Eta Theatre), *Shango Diaspora* (Eta Theatre), *Trains A Coming* (Chicago Theatre Company), *The Other Cinderella* (Black Ensemble Theatre), *Nikki Giovanni: A New Song For A New Day* (Steppenwolf). Dance: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Deeply Rooted Dance Theatre, River North Dance Co., Royal Caribbean Cruises (Brilliance Of The Seas). Film/TV: "Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise" (American Masters/PBS), "L.A.Hair" (WE Network), "Chicagoliscious" (Style Network), *Of Boys And Men*, *The Origins Of Wit And Humor*, *The Drunk*, *The Truth*, *Justice*. Commercial credits include Walmart, Walgreens, McDonald's, Sears Optical. Education: Parsons School Of Design, NYC. Awards: TCG/National Endowment Of The Arts Fellowship, Joseph Jefferson Nomination, Joseph Jefferson Citation, three Black Theatre Alliance Awards. www.Michaelalansteincostume.com

LEE FISKNESS (*Lighting Designer*) first designed *Nina Simone* at Northlight Theatre in Chicago. Lee is a Chicago-based designer where he has designed for companies, including Steppenwolf, The Goodman, Chicago Shakespeare, Lyric Opera, Drury Lane, The Marriott Theatre, The Court Theatre, Writers Theatre, Victory Gardens, Windy City Playhouse, Lookingglass Theatre, Griffin Theatre, About Face, and The Hypocrites. Regionally, he has designed for Emerson Colonial Theatre, People's Light & Theatre, Two River Theatre, Manhattan School Of Music, Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Arsht

Center, Opera Colorado, Portland Opera, Kentucky Opera, Florentine Opera, Milwaukee Repertory, Minneapolis Music Theatre, and others. He has worked on the lighting teams for TV shows including "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Rosie Show," "The Steve Harvey Show," Fox Sports, and Chicago Bears Network. Lee has taught at Columbia College and Northwestern University. He received a MFA in Design from Northwestern University. Lee is the Lighting Director at The Santa Fe Opera where he has worked for 17 seasons. www.leefiskness.co

LINDSAY JONES (*Sound Design*) - Broadway: *Slave Play*, *The Nap*, *Bronx Bombers*, and *A Time to Kill*. Off-Broadway: *Boo!candy* (Playwrights Horizons), *Mr. Joy* (LCT3), and *Privacy and Dry Powder* (Public Theater). He's worked regionally at Guthrie, Alliance, Goodman, ACT, Chicago Shakespeare, Steppenwolf, La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, and many others. International: Stratford Shakespeare Festival (Canada), Royal Shakespeare Company (England), and many others. Awards include seven Joseph Jefferson Awards and 24 nominations, two Ovation Awards and three nominations, three Drama Desk Award nominations, three Helen Hayes nominations, and many others. Film scoring: HBO Films' *A Note of Triumph* (2006 Academy Award, Best Documentary). www.lindsayjones.com

MAEGAN A. CONROY (*Production Stage Manager*) Maegan is thrilled to be returning to MRT for her second full season! Selected previous credits include *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Cry It Out*, *The Heath*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Native Gardens*, *The Royale* (Merimack Repertory Theatre); *Creditors*, *Ugly Lies the Bone*, *DibbleDance: Shoes On, Shoes Off*, *Private Lives*, *Julius Caesar* (stage manager, Shakespeare & Company); *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Greater Boston Stage Company); *Guards at the Taj* (Central Square Theatre); *The Effect*, *A Measure of Normalcy* (Gloucester Stage Company). Maegan received her BFA in Stage Management from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. She and her husband live with their dog in Lowell, MA. Maegan is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

WHO'S WHO

PETER CREWE (*Producer*) **MRT: Producer:** *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Cambridgian Rock Band*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *The Haunted Life*, *The Heath*, *Slow Food*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, *Murder for Two*, *Native Gardens*, *Little Orphan Danny*, *Lost Laughs: The Slapstick Tragedy of Fatty Arbuckle*, *KNYUM*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Royale*, *Going to See the Kid*, *Abigail/1702*, *45 Plays Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. **Stage Manager:** *The Outgoing Tide*. **Assistant Stage Manager:** *Out of the City*, *Oceanside*, *The Best Brothers*, *13 Things About Ed Carpolotti*, *Dusk Rings a Bell*, *Equally Divided*, *The Devil's Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith*, *Stella and Lou*, *Proof*, *Red*, *Half'n Half'n Half*, *Mrs. Whitney*, *The Voice of the Turtle*, *Two Jews Walk Into a War...*, *The Exceptionals*, *Tryst*, *Four Places*, *The Last Days of Mickey & Jean*, *Black Pearl Sings!*, *Fabuloso*, *The Seafarer*, *Bad Dates*, *Tranced*, *The Fantasticks*, *A View of the Harbor* (workshop), Stage Management Intern (2004). Regional: Company Manager, Studio Arena Theatre; Production Assistant, Studio Arena Theatre; Assistant Stage Manager, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, Seaside Music Theatre; **Assistant Stage Manager**, *Lucie de Lammermoor*, Boston Lyric Opera; Stage Management Intern, Trinity Repertory Company. Education: BFA, Salem State College in 2004.

BONNIE J. BUTKAS (*Executive Director*) Bonnie most recently served as the Senior Director of Foundation Relations at Rochester Institute of Technology, where she led the university's strategic efforts to secure funding from private and family foundations. During her tenure, RIT secured its first significant gifts from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Henry Luce Foundation. Prior to RIT, she was the Director of Development at Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, NY overseeing five years of unprecedented growth in the company's contributed income and playing a key role in a successful \$10 million capital campaign to renovate the building and grow the theatre's endowment. In New York City, she served as the Director of External Relations at the York Theatre Company, the Director of Development

and Communications at TADA! Youth Theatre, Directing Assistant on *The Lion King* on Broadway, and the co-founder of Lexington Dance Collective. Prior to NYC, she was the Managing Director of Bristol Valley Theater in Naples, NY. Butkas was raised in the Finger Lakes region of Western New York and holds degrees in Journalism and Dance from the University at Buffalo. She volunteered with the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Genesee Valley, Girl Scouts of Western New York, and the YWCA of Rochester & Monroe County. In Fall 2016, she co-founded Action Together Rochester. She serves on the MCC's Academic Arts Center Advisory Board, and lives in Westford.

TERRY BERLINER (*Interim Artistic Director*) For 25 years, Terry has been a freelance director based in New York City. Her work has been seen on Broadway and Off, in regional theatres, and universities across the country. Passionate about new work, and the houses that build it, she is thrilled to join MRT. This past season she wrote and directed a new holiday musical for Vanguard, directed the TDF Gala honoring Graciela Daniele, Reggie Van Lee, and Bob Mackie, directed a developmental reading of *Dream*, a new musical based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and directed the first developmental reading of the new Frank Wildhorn, Rinne Groff and Robin Lerner musical *The Song of Bernadette*. Terry has served as Artistic Director for LeAp Onstage (a playwriting program in NYC), Artistic Director for North Shore Summer Theater, and Interim Artistic Director for Maui Onstage. She has written for *American Theatre* magazine, Asolo Rep (season program), *Theatre Bay Area*, *Theatre History Studies*, and participated in the CAP21 Writers Residency and the Rhinebeck Writers Retreat. Her new musical *Alone in the U.S.* (written with Bobby Cronin), has been presented at CAP21, New York Film Academy, Penn State, University of Cumbria, and won the Outstanding Program of the Year Award at Marymount Manhattan College. For five years, Terry served as a member of Off Broadway's Lucille Lortel nominating committee. She is a core faculty member at Peridance Capezio Center in New York City, a member of the Dramatists Guild, and the Stage Directors and

WHO'S WHO

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Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) celebrates 41 years this season as the Merrimack Valley's professional theatre. With a steadfast commitment to new plays, MRT annually produces seven works, including several premieres.

Under the leadership of **Executive Director Bonnie J. Butkas** and **Interim Artistic Director Terry Berliner**, MRT strives to fulfill its mission to "create remarkable new and contemporary plays that bring joy to our art form while engaging, entertaining and enriching our community." The non-profit company guarantees that shows are accessible to audiences of all incomes; partners with businesses and other non-profits to fully engage the community; and contributes to the economic vitality of Lowell by attracting diverse audiences from throughout the region. Recent acclaimed productions include *The*

Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley and *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, the two best-selling productions in MRT's history; former Artistic Director Sean Daniels' own autobiographical play, *The White Chip*, which played Off-Broadway this past October; *I and You* (Off-Broadway transfer) and *Silent Sky* by Lauren Gunderson, the most produced playwright in America; *Women in Jeopardy!* and the world premiere of *Slow Food* by Wendy MacLeod; *KNYUM* by Cambodian playwright and actor Vichet Chum; and *The Lion*, singer-songwriter Benjamin Scheuer's award-winning musical memoir, which launched its national tour from MRT in August 2015, following critically acclaimed runs in New York and London.

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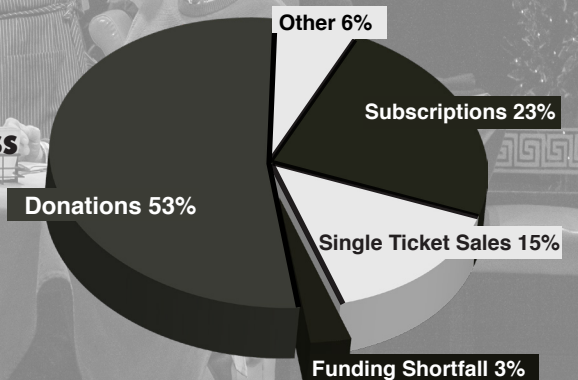
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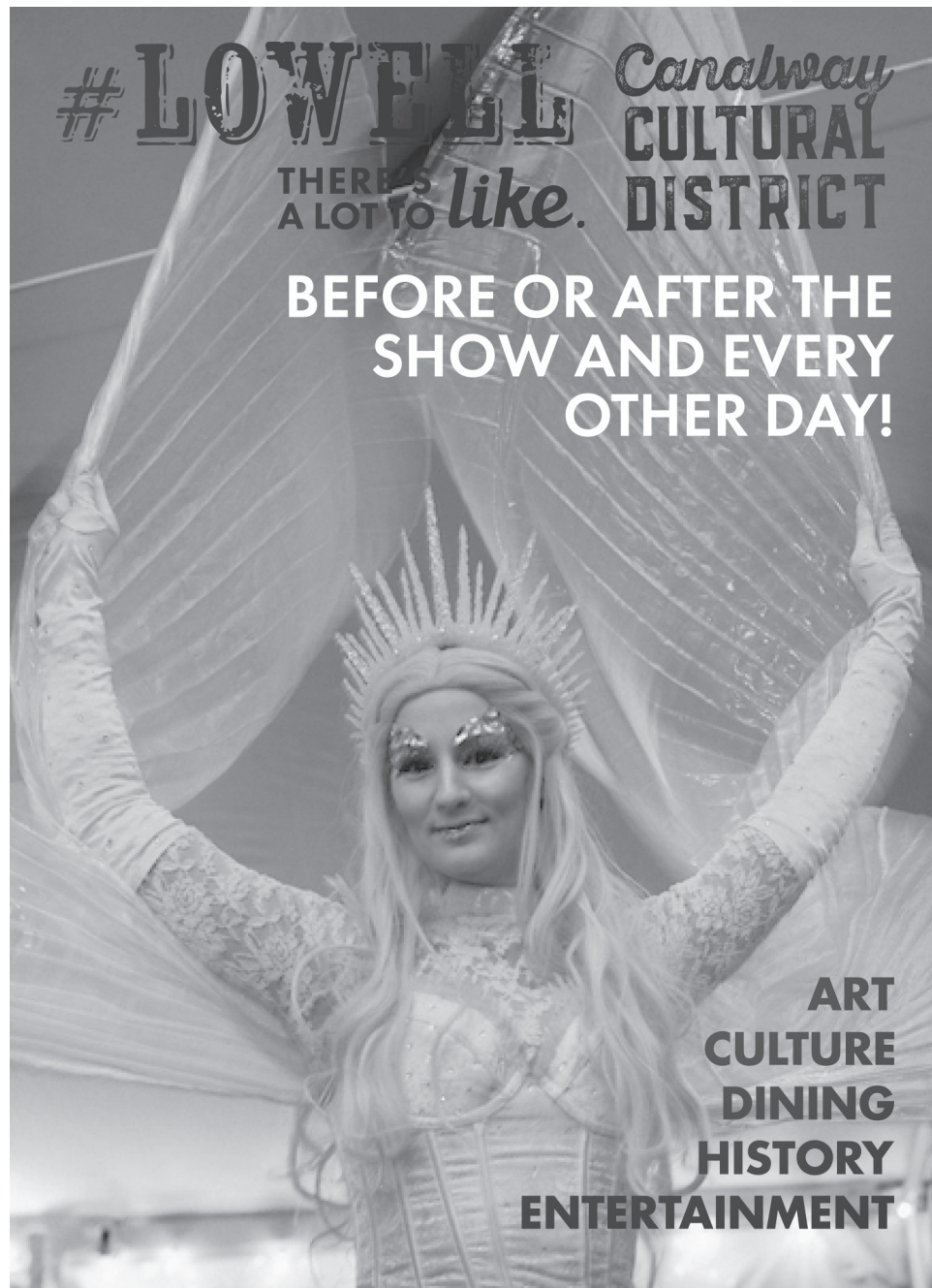
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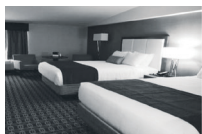


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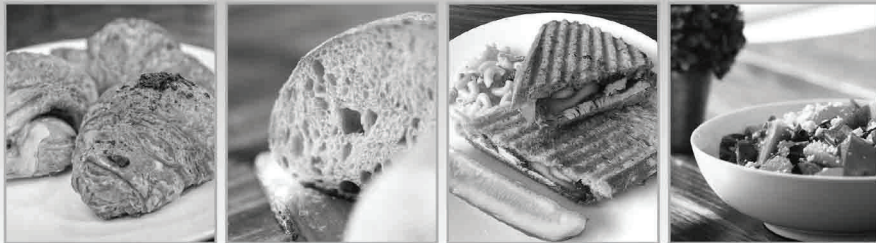
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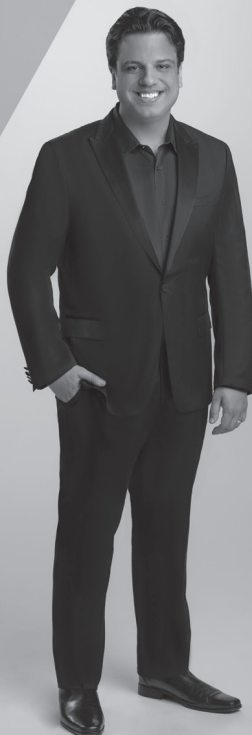
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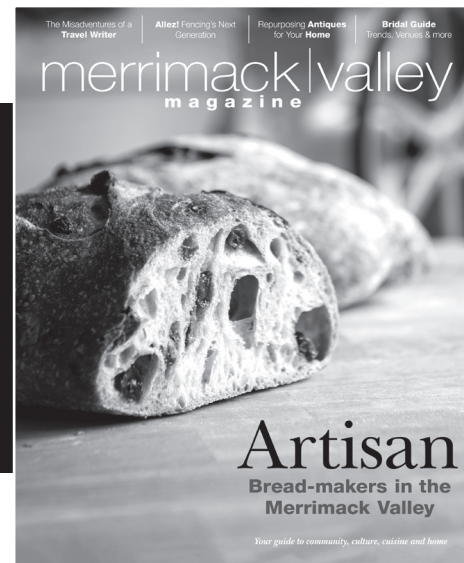
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Please reserve our free listening devices through the box office when you make your reservation.

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We provide a portion of our programs in large print. See concessions for a free copy.

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Wheelchair space is available by notifying the Box Office when purchasing tickets. A ramp is located to the left of MRT's main entrance.

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Please turn off your cell phones, beeping watches and electronic devices when entering the theatre. Please do not text during the performance.

Refreshments are available before performances and during intermission. Food is not allowed in the theatre. Intermission beverages may be pre-purchased at the concession stand. If you bring a beverage into the theatre, please carry out the trash when you leave. Please refrain from unwrapping cellophane wrappers during the performance. For the comfort of all patrons, please avoid wearing strong perfumes, colognes, and hairsprays.

EMERGENCY CALLS

If you expect an emergency call during a performance, please leave your name and seat location with the House Manager. MRT's emergency phone number is 978-654-4678, press 9.

FIRE REGULATION

Please take a moment to locate the nearest emergency exit. If the fire alarm sounds, please remain in your seat until the House Manager directs you to the nearest exit. Do not run. Exit the theatre in a calm and orderly manner.

RESTROOMS/LATECOMER POLICIES

If at any time you leave your seat during the performance, the House Manager will seat you in the rear balcony when you return.

No one will be admitted once the performance begins. The House Manager will seat you in the rear balcony until intermission, at which time you may take your ticketed seat.

Restrooms are located in Lowell Memorial Auditorium (LMA). Follow the signs down the hallway on the left side of the theatre. Please do not go past any barriers or an alarm will sound.

RECORDING/PHOTOGRAPH REGULATIONS

The use of any recording device, either audio or video, and the taking of photographs, either with or without flash, is strictly prohibited during the performance. **EXCEPTION:** You may take photos of the set before the show. If you post photos on social media, please acknowledge the designers.

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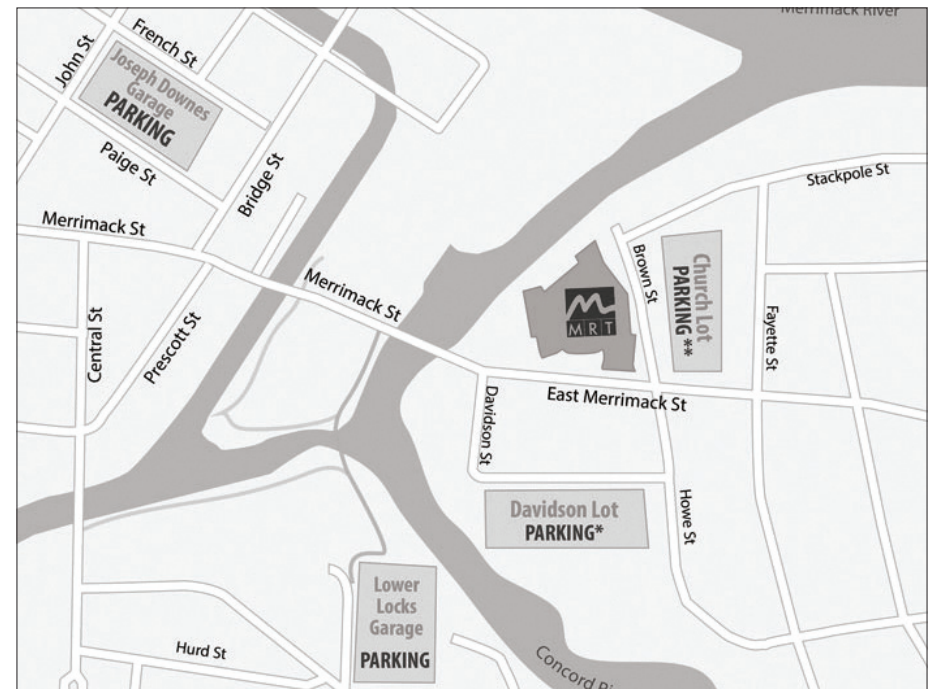
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