

UNICORN · COLONIAL · FITZPATRICK

BERKSHIRE

THEATRE GROUP

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**Berkshire Theatre Group Presents
Nina Simone: Four Women**

A Provocative and Powerful Musical Exploration

Pittsfield, MA - Filling the stage with a quartet of amazing voices, *Nina Simone: Four Women* begins performances on Friday, August 13 at The Unicorn Theatre (The Larry Vaber Stage, 6 East Street) in Stockbridge, MA and runs through Sunday, September 5. This production is directed and choreographed by Gerry McIntyre (Broadway: *Once on This Island*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*; Off-Broadway: *Spamilton*; BTG: *Godspell*, *A Chorus Line*, *Oklahoma!*).

Set in the fragments of a shattered world, this provocative and powerful musical exploration imagines a conversation between Simone and three African-American women. In the aftermath of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in 1963, Nina Simone rocked the nation with "Four Women," her tribute in song to the four young girls murdered. Scholar and artist Thulani Davis called the song "an instantly accessible analysis of the damning legacy of slavery, that made iconographic the real women we knew and would become."

McIntyre says, "At a time when people are feeling the need to do something in our hurting world but don't know how to start, this production is an incredible reminder that you just need to take the first step. Or write the first note. *Nina Simone: Four Women* meditates on Nina Simone's transition from a singer to an activist. It also deals with issues of colorism among black women that aren't typically dealt with."

Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org or by calling (413) 997-4444. Ticket office hours are every day from 12pm–5pm, or on any performance day from 12pm until curtain. BTG is offering a 10% discount on tickets for all front line workers. All plays, schedules, casting and prices are subject to change.

Nina Simone: Four Women

by Christina Ham

directed and choreographed by Gerry McIntyre

music direction by Danté Harrell

With Darlesia Cearcy, Felicia Curry, Najah Hetsberger, Sasha Hutchings

at The Unicorn Theatre, The Larry Vaber Stage

BTG's Stockbridge Campus, 6 East Street

Preview: Friday, August 13 at 7pm

Press Night/Opening: Saturday, August 14 at 7pm

Closing: Sunday, September 5 at 2pm

Tickets: Preview: \$50

Tickets: \$75

ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Gerry McIntyre (Director and Choreographer) has won widespread acclaim for his most recent choreographic credit: the Berkshire Theatre Group's production of *Godspell*. He was recently named Associate Artistic Director of the York Theatre. His other credits include *Hallelujah Baby* (York Theatre); *Kinky Boots* (The Hangar Theatre); *Soon of a Mornin'* (Lions Theatre); *Once On This Island* (Martin Beck Theatre, Virginia Stage, Pioneer Theatre, Actors' Theatre Of Louisville, La Mirada Theatre, Robby Award for Best Director, Ovation nomination for Best Choreography and Best Musical); *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Actors' Theatre of Louisville); *Chicago* (Ogunquit Playhouse); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* starring Diana Degarmo and Anthony Federov (Lyric Theatre); The National Tour of *Dreamgirls*. As a Choreographer: *Anything Can Happen In The Theatre* (York Theatre), *Forbidden Broadway The Next Generation*, *Side by Side*, *Tommy* and *My Fair Lady* (Berkshire Theatre Festival), *A Saint She Ain't* (Westport Playhouse), *Laura Comstock's Bag-Punching Dog* (*LA Weekly* nomination Best Choreography), *The Wiz* (Broadway Sacramento), *Priscilla* (Gateway Playhouse), *After The Storm* documentary. Gerry is the choreographer of the hit Off Broadway show *Spamilton*.

Danté Harrell (Musical Director) graduated from North Carolina Central University (NCCU) and earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a concentration in Performance. At NCCU Danté studied voice and conducting with Richard Banks, composition with Dr. Lance Hulme, opera performance with Elvira Green and coached with Maestro William Curry of the Durham Symphony. Danté's most recent accomplishments include a socially distant cabaret at Chez Josephine NYC, a Carnegie Hall debut as Chorus Master for Beethoven's *An Die Freude* and a very successful Japanese tour with The New York Gospel Brothers. Danté holds a Masters of

Music degree in Performance from Norfolk State University where he studied voice with Gregory Gardner and piano with Dr. Susan Ha. Currently, Danté is a Professor of Music at Essex County College, serves on the Board of Directors for Harlem Opera Theater and is the Founder and Artistic Director of Carpenter Productions.

Darlesia Cearcy (Aunt Sarah) was last seen on Broadway as Erzulie, Goddess of Love in the Tony Award-winning revival *Once On This Island*. She has appeared as an original cast member and U/S to Audra McDonald and performed as Lottie Gee in the Broadway musical *Shuffle Along*. She has performed on Broadway as Nettie in *The Color Purple*, Sarah in *Ragtime* for which she received a Helen Hayes Nomination and *The Goodbye Girl*. She's sung on MTV's Most Wanted, VH1, Top of the Pops in London and was nominated for a Viva Award for her single release "Everlasting Pictures". Her television credits include: Guest Star on *High Fidelity*, *Madame Secretary*, *FBI*, *House of Cards*, *Elementary*, *Law & Order: SVU* and *Nurse Jackie*.

Felicia Curry (Nina Simone) is an actor, singer, and performer in the Washington, D.C. area. She was last seen in Studio Theatre's streaming production of *Until the Flood* and in late 2020, she filmed the world premiere of Caleen Sinette Jennings's one-woman play, *Queen's Girl: Black in the Green Mountains* for Everyman Theatre. In 2018, she received a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Play for Factory 449's *Lela & Co.*, and in 2020, she was nominated for two Helen Hayes Awards for *Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus* (John F. Kennedy Center) and *Agnes Of God* (Factory 449). Off-Broadway: *We Three Lizas*, *DMLRR: The Brontes*, *Petite Rouge*. National Tours: KC: *Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka*, Mattel/Live Nation: *Barbie Live!*, *Capitol Steps*. Regional: Ford's Theatre, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Round House Theatre, Rep Stage, Studio Theatre, Signature Theatre, MetroStage, Gulfshore Playhouse, Virginia Repertory Theatre (*The Color Purple*, *Celie* - RTCC Award for Best Lead Actress). Curry has hosted Washington's Helen Hayes Awards three times; been named one of "12 DC Stage Dynamos" by *The Washington Post*; and one of "DC's Biggest Theatre Stars" by *Washington Magazine*. She is a resident company member at Factory 449 in Washington, D.C., Everyman Theatre in Baltimore and on the Advisory Board (Artistic Associate) at Ford's Theatre. She was recently elected to the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archive (WAPAVA) Board of Directors.

Najah Hetsberger (Sweet Thing) recently graduated from Montclair State University with a BFA in musical theater and is an alumni of LINK 2020. Her most recent credit is "All Good Gifts" in *Godspell* (Berkshire Theatre Group). Najah will be in her first Broadway National Tour starting this fall.

Sasha Hutchings (Sephronia) most recently appeared on Broadway as Laurey Williams in *Oklahoma!*, winner of the 2019 Tony Award for Best Revival. Sasha is notably an original cast member of *Hamilton* and can be seen in the *Hamilton* film on Disney+. Additional Broadway credits include: *My Fair Lady*, *Rocky*, *Motown* and *Memphis*. Sasha appears in the premiere season of the new Starz series, *Run The World*. Her additional TV credits include: Paula Kelly on *Fosse/Verdon*, *The Bold Type*, *Jessica Jones*, *Master of None*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Dangerous Book for Boys* and *SMASH*. Sasha is a teaching artist with the Arthur Miller Foundation, Epic

Theatre Ensemble and New York City public school theatre programs. She holds a BFA in Dance Performance from Oklahoma City University.

Safety Measures

BTG continues to implement procedures and protocols to reflect current state and local mandated health and safety guidelines. The Unicorn Theatre has upgraded HVAC filters, added ozone-free NPB ionization and otherwise complies with all local and state safety requirements. Proof of Vaccination is required for this event. Patrons may present a photograph or physical vaccination card upon arrival to the performance. Masks are mandatory for all patrons regardless of age (unless eating or drinking in specified areas). There is no distancing between parties. Contactless ticket scanning will be done for patrons at their point of entry. Free-standing hand sanitizer stations will be placed at various locations throughout the space. A doctor/nurse is on duty for all performances. Patrons who are not feeling well should contact BTG's box office to discuss rescheduling options.

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. In 2010, under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, the two organizations merged to form Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG). Berkshire Theatre Group's mission is to support wide ranging artistic exploration and acclaimed performances in theatre, dance, music and entertainment. Every year, BTG produces and presents performances to over 68,000 attendees and, through our Educational Program, serves over 11,000 Berkshire County school children annually. In July 2020, Berkshire Theatre was the first company in the United States to earn approval from Actors' Equity Association to produce a musical (*Godspell*) in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic.