



National Black Theatre Festival®

August 1-6, 2022 • Winston-Salem, North Carolina



Produced by the
North Carolina Black Repertory Company
Larry Leon Hamlin, Founder

BLAKE VISION ENTERTAINMENT

AN ARETHA STORY

Natural Woman



Embassy Suites –
Reese Theatre in the Pavilion - Lower Level
Tuesday, August 2, 8:00pm
Wednesday, August 3, 8:00pm
Thursday, August 4, 2:00pm
Friday, August 5, 8:00pm
Saturday, August 6, 8:00pm

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Blake Vision
ENTERTAINMENT

Natural Woman: An Aretha Story

Written and directed by Thandiwe DeShazor

Lorenzo Sanford, Music Director

Thomas Blake, Lateefa Mosley, and Thandiwe DeShazor,

Co-Executive Producers

About the Company

Thomas Blake founded Blake Vision Entertainment in 2001. He started his career at the helm of many music videos for prominent hip/hop artists at his studio, House of Music. In 2009 he joined forces with Lateefa Mosely, a powerhouse director, writer and actor from Philadelphia, and in 2017 began collaborating with Thandi DeShazor of Thandi & Company with their production of *Shut Yo Mouth: A Little Richard Story*. With over 35 years of experience between them, they have gone on to write, direct, and produce original musical tribute plays such as *The Roots of Gospel*, *Ain't No Mountain: A Diana Story*, *At Last: An Etta Story*, *Never Too Much: A Luther Story* and many more to come.

Natural Woman: An Aretha Story asks the question: If you could have a conversation with the younger version of yourself, what would you say? Would you share joys or regrets? Would you remember the great loves in your life? Would you reminisce about the good times with your family? In this production you will hear the story of two women: Young Ree and The Queen of Soul. It is a tale about the journey from childhood to adolescence, from a young woman to a Queen. The past and present intertwine as we filter her passionate lyrics through her interactions with many influences in her life, such as Sam Cooke, Mahalia Jackson, Mavis Staples, Dennis Edwards and of course her father, the Reverend C. L. Franklin.

WHO'S WHO



L'Tanya "Sugarlips" Shields (The Queen of Soul) has shared the stage with B.B. King, Wynton Marsalis, Stevie Wonder, Little Richard, and a host of other veterans of the music industry. As a member of Voice of Atlanta (VOA) choir, she recorded with and accompanied Sir Elton John on his Peachtree

Road World Tour to critical acclaim. You can purchase her latest album *FINALLY* at www.sugarbonemusic.com



Natasha Brown (Young Ree) is an Atlanta transplant born and raised in Arkansas. She is a Billboard Top 5 chart songwriter who has been singing and playing piano since childhood.

Lorenzo Sanford (Music Director) has performed with many celebrated artists, including Stevie Wonder, Abbey Lincoln, Peabo Bryson, Melba Moore, Jennifer Holliday, and Lizz Wright. His work in musical theater includes working with acclaimed director Kenny Leon in Langston Hughes' *Tambourines to Glory*; under the direction of Kent Gash, in *Five Guys Named Moe*; in the Tony Award winning Alliance Theatre production of *Tick, Tick, Boom!*; and in the workshop production of *Motown: The Musical*, the Broadway hit written and produced by Berry Gordy, Jr. He currently resides in Atlanta where he also sings with a variety of groups.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Arts Council of
Winston-Salem & Forsyth County
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of the Department of Resources.



The North Carolina Black Repertory
Company is supported by the Arts
Council of Winston-Salem and
Forsyth County.



NBTF logo design by
LaVon Van Williams

THE BLACK SEED



WHO'S WHO

Arthur D. Turner (Keyboards), a native of Pittsburgh but residing in Atlanta for nearly 30 years, earned music degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and the New England Conservatory. He's accompanied performers at the Atlanta Jazz Festival, Music Midtown, Sweet Auburn Festival and Star Spangled Night at Lenox Mall, as well as appearing in numerous metro Atlanta entertainment venues, and theater and church groups. Currently, he's the accompanist and vocal coach for the Magnet Choral and Musical Theater programs at Tri-Cities High School, Fulton County, Georgia.

Carla "Carletta" Allen (Background vocalist) is a singer and songwriter who has worked as lead vocalist and background vocalist. A multi-talent artist, she is also a dancer and a videographer.

Andre "DreDay" Barkley (Background vocalist) is a singer, composer, and musical arranger. He's been singing since he was six years old. He's always had a love for the arts and he's really passionate about what he does.

Ray Mc Murtry (Bass)

Cynthia Price Spears (Mary) earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from Emerson College. She has performed in numerous theatre productions over the years, including 227 with the Marla Gibbs Theatre Co. and *No Shells* by Jackie Boatwright Entertainment. She is a member and judge for the Suzi Bass Awards. She is a drama instructor, choral and praise team member, and an R&B singer.



W
S

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In a place where intellectual curiosity and creative freedom are revered, the National Black Theatre Festival brings a new level of artistic exploration to Winston-Salem. Since 1989, NBTF has been a bright beacon for avant-garde and awe-inspiring performances. Our congratulations and appreciation to the NBTF for calling Winston-Salem home.



LEARN MORE

Pick up your complimentary destination guide and hotel information at:

Visit Winston-Salem Visitor Center • 200 Brookstown Ave • Winston-Salem
Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. • Saturday 10 a.m.–4 p.m. • Closed Sunday

WHO'S WHO

Lateefa Mosley (Executive-Producer) is known for Georgia's Most Talented Kids and Monologue City. She received an Associate's Degree in Theatre Arts from Northampton Community College in Allentown, PA, and a Bachelor's and Master's in Business Entertainment from Georgia State. Her motto is "Dream, Believe and Achieve".

Thomas Blake (Founder of Blake Vision Entertainment, Executive Producer) has produced or directed nearly 1000 theatrical stage plays through Blake Vision Entertainment. His film works include *It's Major* (2019), *MidLife* (2018), *Bad Intentions* (2016), *The Gospel* (2005), and over nine short films and three documentaries. In 2008 Blake opened The Porter Sanford III Performing Arts & Community Center as its Technical Director. In 2012 he opened East Mountain Studios. Blake is currently working on the Golden Years *FlashBack* series, and he has three major films in the works.

Thandiwe "Thandi" DeShazor (Writer, Director, Co-Producer) is an actor, writer, producer and director. You can find him on AMC's recurring series *Lodge 49*. He's also appeared in *Murder Calls*, *Fatal Attraction*, and *Swamp Murders*. His Atlanta theatre credits include *Angels in America* and *The Legend of Georgia McBride*. @thandiwethomas



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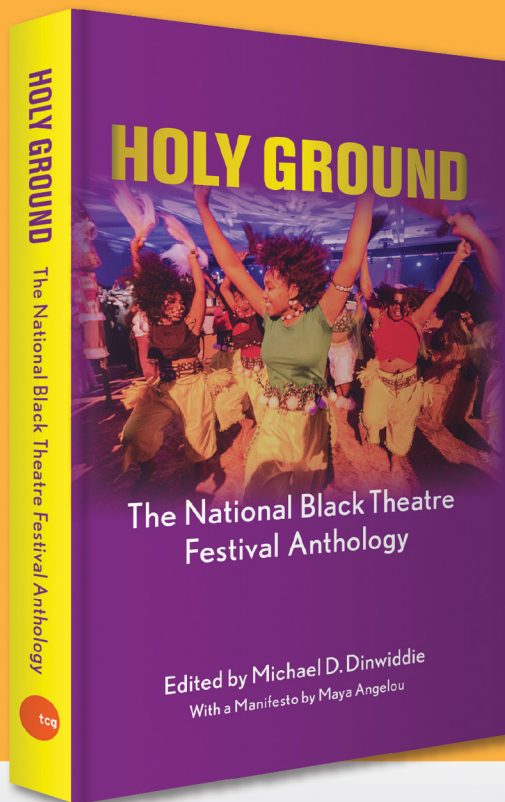


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The late founder and artistic director, Larry Leon Hamlin (“Mr. Marvtastic”) and his wife, Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin, founded the Marvtastic Society in 2003. Members are part of the inner circle of friends who support Hamlin’s dream and vision of sustaining Black theatre globally.

We invite you to join this group of dynamic individuals and help to assure the success of the Repertory Company and its National Black Theatre Festival.

ncblackrep.org



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 the 2022 National Black Theatre Festival.