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CENTER

SEPT 24 - OCT 12, 2019

jazz singer

Joshua William Gelb & Nehemiah Luckett

JOSHUA WILLIAM GELB & NEHEMIAH LUCKETT **JAZZ SINGER**

JOSHUA WILLIAM GELB
DIRECTOR

NEHEMIAH LUCKETT
COMPOSER & MUSIC DIRECTOR

JOHNNY G. LLOYD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

ZHAILON LEVINGSTON
DRAMATURGIST

PERFORMERS
JOSHUA WILLIAM GELB
NEHEMIAH LUCKETT
CRISTINA PITTER
STANLEY MATHABANE

LINDSEY HURLEY
STAGE MANAGER

ELLEN MISCHINSKI.
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

YOU-SHIN CHEN
SCENIC DESIGNER

MARIKA KENT
LIGHTING DESIGNER

LIANNE ARNOLD
PROJECTIONS AND VIDEO
DESIGNER

KATE MARVIN & STANLEY
MATHABANE
SOUND DESIGN

RODRIGO MUÑOZ
COSTUME DESIGNER

ZAN VALENTO
PROPS DESIGNER

SEAN T. MCGRATH
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

MARISA ARELLANO
SOUND ENGINEER / OP

GRACE ORR
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

ALPHONSO HORNE
GUEST ARTISTS CURATOR

FRANK NICHOLAS POON
PRODUCER

CATHERINE ANN TAYLOR
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

EVERYMAN AGENCY
PUBLIC RELATIONS

JARRETT KEY
PRODUCTION IMAGE

jazz singer is a musical rendering inspired by the play, *THE JAZZ SINGER* by Samson Raphaelson, a distinctly U.S. American story, one that interrogates appropriation, assimilation, atonement, and whether escape from the specter of blackface is possible.

Most famously released as the first feature-film-with-synchronized-dialogue, *The Jazz Singer* is a distinctly American story about a "jazz crooner" forced to choose between his immigrant Jewish heritage and his aspirations to become a Broadway star. Remembered mostly for its use of blackface, this story of assimilation, appropriation, and atonement set on the Lower East Side is being exhumed in a new jazz staging that interrogates the stigma of the film and asks if we can ever truly escape the specter of blackface?

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Marisa Arellano (Sound Engineer / Op) (she/her) is a Sound Designer and Composer based in New York City. She is originally from Tucson, AZ. Upcoming projects include *FEAR* with Cherry Lane Alternative (Asst. Sound Design), *Pride and Prejudice* at Long Wharf Theater (Asst. Sound Design) and *Wolf Play* at Soho Rep (Asst. Sound Design). Favorite previous credits include *ALMA* at Yale Cabaret (Sound Designer and original music) and *Twelfth Night* at Yale Rep (Asst. Sound Design and Sound Engineer).

Lianne Arnold (Video / Projections Designer) is a Video & Scenic Designer and Inter-disciplinary Artist working in theater, opera, music, dance, film & art installation. Recent performance design includes *The Hello Girls* (59E59), *Oscar at the Crown* (3 Dollar Bill), *Lil Buck & Jon Boogz' Love Heals All Wounds* (CAP UCLA), *Words on the Street* (Baruch - also co-creator), *45 Minutes from Coontown* (York Theater), Joseph Keckler's *Let Me Die* (Opera Philadelphia/FringeArts) and Joseph Keckler's *Train With No Midnight* (Prototype Festival). She has exhibited video art and installations in galleries in New York and New Jersey with her collaborator Leslie Kerby. Live Design Magazine "Young Designer to Watch"; proud member of Wingspace Design Collective and USA829; MFA from CalArts. www.liannearnold.com

You-Shin Chen (Scenic Consultant) is a New York-based Scenic Designer for performing arts from Taiwan. As a theater practitioner, she is committed to diversity and humanity. Recent theater credits include: *Mrs. Murray's Menagerie* (ArsNova); *Rock-A-Bye* (BalletX, Wilma Theater); *Eclipsed* (Berlind Theatre, inclusion for PQ 19'); *UGLY* (the feath3r theory & Bushwick Starr); *We Were Everywhere* (Lewis Center for the Arts); *Messiah* (LaMama, Stonewall 50) ; *Emperor's Nightingale, Acquittal* (Pan Asian Rep); *Plural (Love)* (Soho Rep. Director/Writer Lab) *Men on Boats, We are Proud to Present...*, (Yale Dramatic Association); *Memory Retrograde* (Harunalee x ArsNova Maker's lab, UTR incoming!); *The Hollower* (New Light Theater Project) She is the recipient of the 2019 Daryl Roth Creative Spirit Award at The Lilly Awards. youshinchen.com

Joshua William Gelb (Performer / Director) is a Director, Performer, and Librettist based in the Lower East Side. In residence at Abrons Arts Center, Gelb conceived and directed the 150th anniversary re-imagining of America's supposed first musical, *The Black Crook*, about which he lectured at Harvard's Houghton Library.

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Other productions have been seen at Prelude, Ars Nova, Edinburgh Fringe, The New Ohio, Incubator Arts, Joe's Pub, Polyphone Festival, and Target Margin. With Sinking Ship Productions he co-created/directed the Drama Desk Nominated *A Hunger Artist*, which continues to tour internationally. Gelb is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, and an associate artist with *Sinking Ship*. As a performer Gelb has appeared with Little Lord, Theater Reconstruction Ensemble, Haruna Lee, Woodshed Collective, TeleViolet, and Catherine Galasso. www.joshuawilliamgelb.com

Alphonso Horne (Guest Artist Curator) Alphonso Horne is one of the most sought-after musicians today. Known for his high level of musicianship, Horne has performed with some of the leading musicians in jazz including, Wynton Marsalis and Jazz at Lincoln Center, PBS Special: Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett, and playing on Grammy Nominated albums (*Jamison*, 2015; *My Favorite Things*, 2015). Horne leads an active career as a sideman. Some of his credits include, the Tony Award-winning Broadway production *After Midnight*, the Tony Award Nominated *Shuffle Along*, touring with Allen Stone, performing with the Count Basie Orchestra, touring with Rhiannon Giddens, and recently with Rihanna at the *Video Music Award* show in 2017. Horne also was the producer for Nancy Harrow's album "*The Song is All*". As a leader, he is the bandleader of an early jazz band: Gotham Kings and is producing his original show "*Mother Kofi: The Tale of An African Princess*". Alphonso can also be seen on CBS's "*The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*" and in the jazz biopic, "*BOLDEN*". Alphonso holds a BM from Florida State University (2010) and a MM in Jazz Studies from The Juilliard School (2013).

Lindsey Hurley (Stage Manager) is a NYC-based Stage Manager. Recent credits include: *The Greatest Musical Never Written* (Birdland Theater), *Message in a Bottle* (Prospect Theater Company), *Max Vernon's Existential Life Crisis Lullaby, Parts 2 & 3* (Joe's Pub), *Macbeth* (The Art House), *June is the First Fall* (Yangtze Repertory Theatre), *Life X3* (New Light Theater Project), *Hitler's Tasters* (NLTP), *Lucky Chick* (Paradise Factory), and the *Kenan Fellowship Showcase* at Lincoln Center.

Marika Kent (Lighting Designer) is a New York City-based designer of new and classic plays, musical

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theater, opera, dance, experimental theater, puppetry and site-specific performance. Recent & Upcoming Credits: *Reconstruction* (The TEAM), *No Child*; *Memphis*; *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Cape Fear Regional Theater), *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (ACT of CT), *Ajjaak on Turtle Island* (IBEX Puppetry, The New Victory), *Roan @ The Gates* (Luna Stage), *Chimpanzee* (HERE Arts), *Perp*; *Abigail's Party* (The Barrow Group), *Generation NYZ*; *Alaxsxa/Alaska*; *Beyond Sacred* (Ping Chong + Co), *Skinamarink or The Peanut Butter Show*; *Now is the Time...* (Little Lord), *How To Hamlet*; *You on the Moors Now* (Theater Reconstruction Ensemble), *Cheryomushki*; *Albert Herring*; *The Snow Maiden* (Manhattan School of Music Opera) *She*; *No Words*; *Rhapsody in K* (Ariel Rivka Dance). Proud member of Wingspace Theatrical Design. www.marikakent.com

Zhailon Levingston (Dramaturg) is a Writer, Director, Performing Artist, and Activist. He co-founded #WORDSONWHITE, an arts and activism campaign and is an artist in resident for Columbia Law School. He recently directed *Neptune* at Dixon Place and the Brooklyn Museum, *The Years That Went Wrong* by David Zheng at The Lark and MCC. Other credits include *The Exonerated* at Columbia Law School and *Chariot Part 2* at SoHo Rep for The Movement Theatre Company. He is the Associate Director Primer for a *Failed Super Power* with Tony Award winner Rachel Chavkin and *Runaways* at The Public with Sam Pinkleton. He was Associate Director for the Genesis plays at the 14th Street Y! Most recently he directed *Mother of Pearl* at the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center and *Chicken* and *Biscuits* at Queens Theatre.

Johnny Lloyd (Assistant Director) is a New York-based playwright, producer, and administrator. Johnny is the Producing Director of InVersion Theatre and co-creator of the *WE READ BOOKS* short-play series at The Tank. Johnny's work as a playwright, producer, administrator and artist has been seen at The Public Theater, La MaMa, En Garde Arts, Corkscrew Theater Festival, Judson Memorial Church, 59E59, The Drama League, Dixon Place, and more. Johnny is a member of the 2019-2020 Liberation Theatre Company's Writing Residency. Johnny was a semi-finalist for the 2018 Open-Application Commission at Clubbed Thumb and the 2017-2018 Shubert Fellow for Playwriting at Columbia University. MFA Candidate in Playwriting: Columbia University. jgllloyd.weebly.com.

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Nehemiah Lockett (Performer / Composer / Music Director) is originally from Jackson, Mississippi, Nehemiah Lockett has been performing, composing and conducting for over 30 years. From an early age he connected his deep love of music to the transformative power of building community through breathing and singing with family and friends. He has been a featured soloist at the National Cathedral, Carnegie Hall and has performed all over the US and Europe. He has composed solo, choral and instrumental pieces. He has had productions of two full length musicals: *Hamlet: Prince of Funk* (1999) with collaborators Owen Beverly (Evans) and Matthew Smith and *Brick by Brick* (2006), based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe with collaborator, Ross Wade. Currently, Nehemiah has two musicals in development—*Triple Threats* with Tracey Lee and *A Burning Church* with Zhailon Levingston and Alex Hare. Nehemiah is the Music Director and Composer for Rev. Billy and the Stop Shopping Choir (<http://revbilly.com>). Nehemiah has deep gratitude for Power APAC (Academic and Performing Arts Complex) in Jackson, Mississippi where he studied music and theater and for his family that allowed him to dream crazy dreams.

Kate Marvin (Sound Designer) Recent designs include *Wives* (Playwrights Horizons), *Chimpanzee* (HERE Arts Center), *Happy Days* (Mark Taper Forum), *Fruiting Bodies* (Ma-Yi Theater Company), *Riddle of the Trilobites* (Flint Repertory Theatre), *The Magician's Daughter* (Geva Theatre Center), *Sweat* (Asolo Repertory Theatre), *Men on Boats* (American Conservatory Theatre), *A Doll's House, Part 2* (Actors Theatre of Louisville), *Indecent* (Guthrie Theater), *Babette's Feast* (Portland Stage Company), *Crossing Delancey* (Alliance Theatre), *Grounded* (Westport Country Playhouse), *[Porto]* (Women's Project Theater), *Wilder Gone* (Clubbed Thumb), *Fidelio* (Heartbeat Opera), *More Wonder Please* (Target Margin Lab), *Twelfth Night and Romeo & Juliet* (Trinity Shakespeare Festival). Kate is an Associate Artist with Target Margin Theater and Little Lord. MFA: Yale School of Drama. www.katemarvinsound.com.

Stanley Mathabane (Musician / Sound Designer) is a Sound Designer, Composer and Multi-Instrumentalist based in Brooklyn, NY. Trained in both musical composition and sound design, Stanley utilizes texture and tone to enhance the sensation of cross-modal experience. A former student of Tony Award-winning

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Sound Designer, Rob Kaplowitz, and Broadway Actor, Mark Nelson, Stanley's experience encompasses a breadth of performance and design. As both an actor and sound designer in the New York City downtown theater scene, his cutting edge approach to creating seeks to make use of established technique while continually striving to expand and innovate. Stanley's previous Sound Design work includes Regional Theater Productions of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, Kenneth Lonergan's *Lobby Hero*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and Alison Gregory's *Not Medea!*. An incessant creative force, Stanley also performs and records "indie" rock compositions in the Manhattan and Brooklyn music scenes under the moniker "SunSon".

Sean McGrath (Technical Director) is a Multi-faceted Theater Technician, Writer, and Producer. Current projects include *The Wild Parrots of Campbell* (Producer, December 2019), *Eureka Day* (Colt Coeur, Production Manager), Martin Moran's *All The Rage* (The Barrow Group, Production Manager), *The Way She Spoke* (Audible Theater, Sound Engineer). He is the Co-Artistic of The NOW Collective (www.nowcollective.org).

Ellen Mischinski (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freelance Stage Manager and Associate Producer with Poetic Theater Productions. Recent stage management credits include *Feeling Good* (Poetic Theater Productions/Musical Theatre Factory), *Measure for Measure* (Red Caravan), *Severance* (Read As Written/The Tank), *TINA* (Poetic Theater Productions/Tiny Big Worlds), and *The Dream Project* (Yonder Window Theatre Company). With Poetic Theater Productions, Ellen has been on the producing and/or curatorial team of over 20 plays, showcase productions, readings, and development workshops. Many thanks to the whole *Jazz Singer* team!

Rodrigo Muñoz (Costume Designer) is a New York-based Costume Designer originally from Mexico City. Graduated from The National School of Theatre and Arts (Mexico) BA degree in Theatre Set Design, He recently earned an MFA in Costume Design from NYU/Tisch School of the Arts. Recent credits include: *Hamlet* (Dir. Mark Wing Davey) and *Animal Farm* (Dir. Scott Illingworth.) México credits include *Madero o la Invocación de los Justos* (Dir. Mauricio Jiménez), *La Belleza* (Dir. David Olguín), and *Escurrimiento y*

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Anticoagulantes (Dir. Daniel Constantinni). www.rodrigomunozdesign.com.

Grace Orr (Production Assistant) is a New York–based Artist and is thrilled to be a part of this production. She has previously worked with Seattle Shakespeare, the Spoleto Festival, the Builders Association at BAM, and is working on the *The One Thousand and One Nights* at Target Margin Theater.

Cristina Pitter (Performer) is a queer afro-latina fat babe nomad artist, sex educator, and founder of The Ashe Collective, an ancestral storytelling and community outreach group. She also has the best laugh ever. SERIOUSLY. You might have seen her work at The Metropolitan Opera, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Mabou Mines, 59E59, Ars Nova, Classic Stage, New Ohio Theatre, Vital Joint, Joe’s Pub, The PIT, The Tank, The Flea Theater, JACK, Dixon Place, or three separate but specific bathtubs. BFA Acting Brooklyn College. Feel free to follow her antics at cristinapitter.com

Frank Nicholas Poon (Producer) is a New York-based, American–Asian Producer, Performer, and Writer in both realms of film and theatre with nationally–featured work. He has proudly worked with Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, National Asian Artist Project, En Garde Arts, International WOW Company, Columbia University, Scandinavian American Theater Company, Target Margin Theater, Astoria Performing Arts Center, and more. He is the Creator and Managing Producer of Token Collective: advocating for diversity on all platforms. [@franknpoon](https://twitter.com/franknpoon)

Catherine Ann Taylor (Associate Producer) was raised in Columbia, South Carolina, and she graduated from Tulane University in 2016. Her 2016 Edinburgh production of Jerry Finnegan’s *Sister* by Jack Neary was nominated for three Derek Awards for emerging artists. She was an Assistant Director for the English Theatre of Rome before moving to New York in Winter 2018 to work for the Broadway producers at Red Spear Productions. She has directed six shows and written three since her move. Her one-act *Thin Slicing* was a finalist in Manhattan Repertory Theater’s Fall 2018 One-Act Competition, and a finalist for the Martha P. Croyle Award for Achievement in Playwriting. The play was selected for MRT’s Best of 2018 Showcase,

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and the Players Club's Playwrights Take The Stage showcase. She is currently working on her first writing commission for a web series. www.catherineanntaylor.net. @CatherineAnnTaylor

Zan Vailento (Props Designer) Current: *Mothers* (Playwright's Realm, asst to Samantha Shoffner). Props: *Miss Julie* (Access), *Hvmlet* (Experimental Bitch). Eleven productions as Head Properties on crew at TFANA including *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Happy Days* starring Dianne Wiest, and the Pulitzer-winning *Fairview*. Directing and assisting: Jessica McIlquham's *Sons & Dogs*, *Utopia*, *Bright and Brave* (Dixon Place), Kerrigan and Lowdermilk's *Republic* (dir. Michael Arden), Cheeyang Ng and Khiyon Hursey's *Eastbound* (NY Theatre Barn, dir. Joe Barros), *Sound Bites*, *NYC Fringe*, *Duplex*, and *Amas*. Zan is the associate director of John Cameron Mitchell's serial podcast-musical, *Anthem: Homunculus*. @violent_toe

Everyman Agency (Public Relations) founded by former Artist and Curator John Wyszniowski, is a New York-based communications firm promoting complex ideas, mostly in the arts. Everyman Agency builds awareness and provokes action for cultural organizations and individual artists by putting impactful storytelling, strategic thinking, and meaningful relationships at the heart of their work. They believe in the power of the media to shine a spotlight on new and underrepresented voices. Everyman Agency specializes in dance, theater, music, visual art and the compelling work in between. everymanagency.com

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Please Contact John Wyszniowski (john@everymanagency.com) for Press Related Questions.

ABOUT ABRONS

Abrons Arts Center is a home for contemporary interdisciplinary arts in Manhattan's Lower East Side neighborhood. A core program of the Henry Street Settlement, Abrons believes that access to the arts is essential to a free and healthy society. Through performance presentations, exhibitions, education programs and residencies, Abrons mobilizes communities with the transformative power of art.

Abrons Arts Center values freedom of expression and creativity, ever striving to provide creative communities with a space that celebrates diversity of thought and experience. Abrons aims to be an anti-oppressive home to people from all backgrounds and does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, citizen status, ancestry, age, religion, disability, sex or gender identity. As definitions of expression and inclusion evolve, Abrons is committed to continually revising this statement in collaboration with our communities.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

Abrons Arts Center is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta). We pay respect to Lenape peoples and ancestors past, present, and future, and acknowledge our reliance on the land and waters of Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland. We offer our care and gratitude to Lenapehoking, and are committed to resisting colonialism through the support of Indigenous-led programming and Indigenous artistic practices.

You are welcome here.

Support neighborhood businesses! As a thank you for supporting our programming, we're offering discounts to some of our favorite Lower East Side hangouts. For more information, click on abronsartscenter.org/plan-your-trip/dining-and-attractions. And get a discount when you bring this program!



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