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SPECIAL THANKS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH I, TOO, SING AMERICA

African American Art and Culture Complex, Fern Ebling, Raul Pereira, Lena Potts

GRAPHIC DESIGN Sharyn Lee

PHOTOGRAPHY Emily Mitchell

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MISSION

BATCO unites artists and audiences through live theatre that is reflective of the authentic perspectives and history of the San Francisco Bay Area. Our non-profit organization supports artists through creative development, full productions, and mentorships that aspire to engage a new generation of live theater supporters.

UP NEXT AT BATCO

One Googol and One by Aidaa Peerzada

A new musical play based the Arabian One Thousand and One Nights

AUDITIONS - AUGUST 13, 14, 15

Email info@sfbatco.org to make an audition appointment

An interdisciplinary interpretation
of the work of poets and artists of color



JULY 27 / 8PM

JULY 28 / 2PM + 8PM

AFRICAN AMERICAN

ART AND CULTURE COMPLEX

Buriel Clay Theater

762 Fulton Street

Featuring works by

LANGSTON HUGHES, JEAN TOOMER,

BEYONCE, FRANCES CHUNG,

GWENDOLYN BROOKS and more set

to dance and song.

Conceived and music directed

by Othello Jefferson.

BATCO.

Tickets at sfbatco.org

DIRECTOR'S NOTE FROM JAMIE YUEN-SHORE

BATCO co-founders, Marcelo and Rodney, and I participated in Park and Rec's Young People's Teen Musical Theater Company when we were in middle and high school.

Throughout our formative years with the company, we were constantly inspired by our vocal director, Othello Jefferson, who brought passion and professionalism to our training, and consistently wowed us with his breathtaking voice, effortless accompaniment, and limitless musical knowledge. As BATCO has grown, we have repeatedly turned to Othello for musical direction and accompaniment. He has supported our artistic visions for many years and is responsible for imbuing us with many of the creative tools we draw upon to create work. Recently, when he accompanied BATCO's Annual Holiday Tap Takeover, I insisted that he sing the finale. As the cast marveled at his talents, I got an idea. I called Othello and asked, "After 10+ years of you supporting our artistic projects, what project of yours can BATCO support?" Othello then told me about an idea he had, while reading to his young daughters, to put poems by poets of color to music. The book that inspired him was titled *I, Too, Sing America* after the poem *I, Too* by Langston Hughes. The book is an anthology that includes poems from three decades of black poets. Inspired by the title, we decided to put together a show of poems that presents the spectrum of the human experience authored by people of color. In finding and curating the poems for this piece, we thought carefully about the topics and themes we wanted to feature, with the goal of embracing and championing representation in every part of the process and product. We wanted to find works that resonated with us, and especially moments or ideas we related to that we don't often see on stage or hear in popular narratives. In considering the overall tone of the work, we recognized it would be inauthentic to create a piece about representation of people of color and ignore that the history and present condition of many people of color in this country includes marginalization and trauma. That being said, it would also be inauthentic to reduce the lives of black and brown people to only hardship, and not shine a light on the pride, ambition, romance, humor, grit, hubris, wonder, or ingenuity we seek to relate to and see mirrored in art. We therefore sought to present a broad and inclusive range of experiences and emotions authored by artists of color. Collaborating with these artists and especially Othello on these pieces has been one of my greatest joys and honors.

CREATOR'S NOTE FROM OTHELLO JEFFERSON

In "I, Too, Sing America", you will see an example of what makes this country great: a diverse group of people (singers, poets, performers, artists, and dancers) who share their gifts and talents to collaboratively create a work that gives a snapshot of the experiences of people of color in America. Through the work of various artists and poets, you will see that no matter one's human condition, there is an undeniable connection that unites us more than it divides us. Let each song, movement, and quote remind us that each of us has the power to use our voice to share the story of our lives and ultimately declare that "I, Too, Sing America"! I would like to thank BATCO Co-founders Rodney and Marcelo and Director/Producer Jamie for giving this show an opportunity to come alive for you! I am incredibly grateful and very proud to have watched these individuals grow up and become the marvelous artists/ performers/ educators that they are today. Thank you to this incredible cast for their energy and ingenuity, for you have made this experience both an absolute joy and a privilege!

ACCENTS

Denise Frohman

my mom holds her accent like a shotgun, with two good hands. her tongue, all brass knuckle slipping in between her lips her hips, all laughter and wind clap.

she speaks a sanchocho of spanish and english, pushing up against one another, in rapid fire

there is no telling my mama to be "quiet," she don't know "quiet."

her voice is one size better fit all and you best not tell her to hush, she waited too many years for her voice to arrive to be told it needed housekeeping.

English sits her her mouth remixed so "strawberry" becomes "ehstrawbeddy" and "cookie" becomes "ehcookie" and kitchen, key chain, and chicken all sound the same.

my mama doesn't say "yes" she says "ah ha" and suddenly the sky in her mouth becomes a Hector Lavoe song.

her tongue can't lay itself down flat enough for the English language, it got too much hip, too much bone, too much conga, too much cuatro, to two step, got too many piano keys in between her teeth, it got too much clave too much hand clap got too much salsa to sit still

it be an anxious child wanting to make PlayDoh out of concrete English be too neat for her kind of wonderful.

her words spill in conversation between women whose hands are all they got sometimes our hands are all we got and accents remind us that we are still bomba, still plena

say "wepa" and a stranger becomes your hermano. say "dale" and a crowd becomes your family reunion.

my mama's tongue is a telegram from her mother decorated with the coqui's of el campo. so even though her lips can barely stretch themselves around english, her accent is a stubborn compass always pointing her toward home.

"I'M ROOTING FOR EVERYBODY BLACK"

Cortney Lamar Charleston

Everybody Black is my hometown team. Everybody Black dropped the hottest album of the year, easy. Everybody Black is in this show, so I'm watching. Everybody Black is in this movie, so I'm watching. Everybody Black wore it better, tell the truth. Everybody Black's new book was beautiful. How you don't know about Everybody Black?! Everybody Black mad underrated. Everybody Black remind me of someone I know. I love seeing Everybody Black succeed. I hope Everybody Black get elected. Everybody Black deserves the promotion more than anybody. I want Everybody Black to find somebody special. Everybody Black is good peoples. Everybody Black been through some things. Everybody Black don't get the credit they're due. I met Everybody Black once and they were super chill and down-to-earth. I believe in Everybody Black. There's something about Everybody Black.

IN DADDY'S ARMS

Folami Abiade

in daddy's arms i am tall
& close to the sun & warm
in daddy's arms
in daddy's arms
i can see over the fence out back
i can touch the bottom leaves of the big magnolia tree
in cousin Sulkie's yard
in daddy's arms
in my daddy's arms the moon is close
closer at night time when I can almost touch it
when it grins back at me from the wide twinkling
skies
in daddy's arms i am tall
taller than Benny & my friends Ade & George
taller than Uncle Billy
& best of all
i am eye-ball-even-steven with my big brother Jamal
in my daddy's arms
i am strong & dark like him & laughing
happier than the circus clowns
with red painted grins
when daddy spins me round & round
& when the whole world is crazy upside down
i am big and strong & proud like him
in daddy's arms
my daddy

THREE THOUSAND LOST KISSES**Andrés Montoya**

the night swoons
to the hip-hop
of gunshots
and stars.
a young woman's teeth
challenge
everything
about sorrow's suitcase
of explanations
and i am learning to hope
like a bird
learns
its first
affair
with wind
and sun

like an orange
learns
to take flight
into the mouth
of a boy
in summer.

the trees are prophesying.
the mountains are waiting
for the long trek to the sea
and the sea

waits
like a lover
anticipating the kiss
of three thousand
lost kisses.

the night swoons
and the trees
begin their blue-black
dance
in the wind.

FREEDOM [Chorus]**Beyoncé**

Freedom! Freedom! I can't move
Freedom, cut me loose!
Freedom! Freedom! Where are
you? Cause I need freedom too!
I break chains all by myself
Won't let my freedom rot in hell
Hey! I'ma keep running 'cause
a winner don't quit on
themselves

I, TOO**Langston Hughes**

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the
kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful
I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

WOMEN**Alice Walker**

They were women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice—stout of
Step

With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
Starched white
Shirts

How they led
Armies
Headragged generals
Across mined
Fields
Booby-trapped
Ditches
To discover books
Desks
A place for us

WOMEN [CONTINUED]

How they knew what
we
Must know
Without knowing a page
Of it
Themselves.

ONCE BARBIE CHANG WORKED**Victoria Chang**

Once Barbie Chang worked on a
street named Wall
once she sprinkled her yard with
timed water once
she wore lanyards in large rooms
all the chairs
pointed in the direction of one
speaker and a podium
once she stood up at the end to
leave but everyone
else stood up and began putting
their hands together
and that started her always wanting
something better

PAGE 65 /**RIDING THE SUBWAY IS AN ADVENTURE****Frances Chung**

Riding the subway is an adventure
especially if you cannot read the signs.
One gets lost. One becomes anxious and
does not know whether to get off when
the other Chinese person in your car
does. (Your crazy logic tells you that
the both of you must be headed for the
same stop.) One woman has discovered
the secret of one-to-one correspondence.
She keeps the right amount of pennies
in one pocket and upon arriving in each
new station along the way she shifts one
penny to her other pocket. When all the
pennies in the first pocket have
disappeared, she knows that she is home.

PIECE	AUTHOR	COMPOSER	VOCALISTS	CHOREO	DANCERS
<i>I, Too, Sing America: I</i>	Othello	Othello	All	Christine	All
<i>The Black Finger</i>	Angela Grimke	Othello	Natasha	Alex	Alex, Jaavon
<i>Beehive</i>	Jean Toomer	Othello	Women	Daniel, Christine	Daniel, Isa ft. Andy
<i>Wanting Memories</i>	Yasaye M. Barnwe	Yasaye M. Barnwe	All	Isa, Nina, Christine	Daniel, Isa, Julie, Nina
<i>Women</i>	Alice Walker	Maya, Sowah	Women	Rolanda	
<i>In Daddy's Arms</i>	Folami Abiade	Othello	Anthone, Josh, Marcus, Rodney	Jaavon	Jaavon
<i>Accents</i>	Denise Froham	Marcelo, Marissa, Maya	Marcelo, Marissa, Maya, Willie	Tayna	Tayna
<i>Once Barbie Chang Worked</i>	Victoria Chang	Othello	All ft. Addy	Christine	All ft. Nina
<i>Page 65 / Riding the subway is an adventure</i>	Frances Chung	Othello	Addy	Julie, Nina	Julie, Nina
<i>We Real Cool</i>	Gwendolyn Brooks	Othello	Men	Jamie	
<i>I, Too</i>	Langston Hughes	Othello	Rodney		
<i>Freedom</i>	Beyoncé	Arr. by Louis	All	Alex, Christine	All
<i>I'm Rooting for Everyone Black</i>	Cortney Lamar Charleston		Ro		
<i>Three Thousand Lost Kisses</i>	Andrés Montoya	Marissa, Maya	Marissa, Maya	Alex, Christine	Alex, Christine
<i>I Gotta Find Peace of Mind</i>	Lauryn Hill	Lauryn Hill	Akua, Willie	Alex	Alex
<i>Quotes</i>	Audre Lorde, Junot Díaz, James Baldwin, Nina Simone		Niesha, Marcelo, Anthone, Esther		
<i>To a Dark Girl</i>	Gwenedolyn Bennett	Othello	Jocelyn		
<i>I, Too, Sing America: II</i>	Othello	Othello	All	Jamie	All

CONCEPT AND MUSIC DIRECTION Othello Jefferson
DIRECTION, PRODUCTION, AND POEM SELECTION Jamie Yuen-Shore
CHOREOGRAPHY DIRECTION Christine Chung
STAGE MANAGEMENT, SET DESIGN, AND LIGHT DESIGN Claudio Silva
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGEMENT Katie Dragone
BASS Kendra Kop
DRUMS Ahkeel Mestayer
GUITAR Calvin Studebaker
PIANO Othello Jefferson

COMPANY

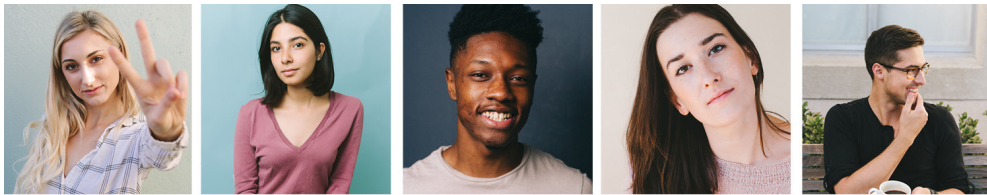
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 Maya Vilaplana • Gus Wellin • Nina Wu

COMPOSITIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Othello Jefferson, Maya Vilaplana, Marissa Bergmann.
 Marcelo Javier Pereira, Louis Lagalante, Sowah Mensah

CHOREOGRAPHY

Christine Chung, Alex Nana-Sinkam, Nina Wu, Julie Ni,
 Daniel Cancel, Isa Musni, Tayna Gonzalez Rivera



NEED SOMETHING OTHER THAN A SELFIE?

HEADSHOTS & PORTRAITS BY LORENZ ANGELO // HELLO@LORENZANGELO.COM // LORENZANGELO.COM

THE BLACK FINGER
Angelina Weld Grimke

I have just seen a beautiful thing
 Slim and still,
 Against a gold, gold sky,
 A straight cypress,
 Sensitive
 Exquisite,

A black finger
 Pointing upwards.
 Why, beautiful, still finger are you black?
 And why are you pointing upwards?

BEEHIVE
Jean Toomer

Within this black hive tonight
 There swarm a million bees;
 Bees passing in and out the moon,
 Bees escaping out the moon,
 Bees returning through the moon,
 Silver bees intently buzzing,
 Silver honey dripping from the swarm of bees
 Earth is a waxen cell of the world comb,
 And I, a drone,
 Lying on my back,
 Lipping honey,
 Getting drunk with silver honey,
 Wish that I might fly out past the moon
 And curl forever in some far-off farmyard flower.

TO A DARK GIRL
Gwendolyn Bennett

I love you for your brownness,
 And the rounded darkness of your breast,
 I love you for the breaking sadness in your voice
 And shadows where your wayward eyelids rest.

Something of old forgotten queens
 Lurks in the lithe abandon of your walk
 And something of the shackled slave
 Sobs in the rhythm of your talk.

Oh, little brown girl, born for sorrow's mate,
 Keep all you have of queenliness,
 Forgetting that you once were slave,
 And let your full lips laugh at Fate!

WANTING MEMORIES
Ysaye M. Barnwell

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
 to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
 I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
 To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
 You said you'd rock me in the cradle of your arms.
 You said you'd hold me 'til the storms of life were
 gone.
 You said you'd comfort me in times like these and
 now I need you.
 Now I need you...And you are gone.
 Now the world outside is such a cold and bitter place.
 Here inside I have few things that will console.
 And when I try to hear your voice above the storms
 of life,
 then i remember all the things that I was told.
 I think on the things that made me feel so wonderful
 when I was young.
 I think on the things that made me laugh , made me
 dance, made me sing.
 I think on the things that made me grow into a being
 full of pride.
 I think on these things, for they are true.
 I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me
 to see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.
 I thought that you were gone, but now I know you're
 with me.
 You are the voice that whispers all I need to hear.
 I know a "Please", a "Thank you", and a smile will take
 me far.
 I know that I am you and you are me, and we are one.
 I know that who I am is numbered in each grain of
 sand.
 I know that I am blessed,
 again, and again, and again, and again, and again.

WE REAL COOL **I GOTTA FIND PEACE OF MIND**
Gwendolyn Brooks **Lauryn Hill**

We real cool. We
 Left school. We

Lurk late. We
 Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
 Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
 Die soon.

[Intro]
 I gotta find peace of mind
 I gotta find peace of mind
 He says it's impossible, but I
 know it's possible
 He says it's impossible, but I
 know it's possible
 He says there's no me
 without him, please help me
 forget about him