

URBAN STAGES' WINTER RHYTHMS 2020



**TUESDAY DEC 15 at 8:30pm to
FRIDAY DEC 18, 2020**

Starring: Karen Akers, Aya Aziz, Aaron Lee Battle, Natalie Douglas, several cast members from the play *Bars and Measures* by Idris Goodwin, Roderick Lawrence and Salma Shaw all singing the original music of their friends and collaborators. We also pay tribute and honor the musical genius of composer, musical director the late, Barry Levitt a special friend of Urban Stages. Music Director: Tracy Stark.



PRESENTS

Urban Stages' Artists Entertain!

PERFORMERS

TRACY STARK	AYA AZIZ
RODERICK LAWRENCE	AARON LEE BATTLE
SALMA SHAW	NATALIE DOUGLAS
KAREN AKERS	SUE MATSUKI

CREATIVE TEAM

Musical Director.....TRACY STARK
Director/Editor..... KRISTAN SEEMEL
Production Assistant.....VINCENT SCOTT
Videographer..... KIM T. SHARP
Lights..... MADELEINE BURROW
Sound.....JAMIE TERRAZZINO

Producer of Winter Rhythms.....TOM TOCE
Co producer of Winter Rhythms.....SUE MATSUKI

URBAN STAGES STAFF

Founder/Artistic Director.....Frances Hill
Development and Literary Director.....Antoinette Mullins
Company Manager/Financial Admin.....Olga Devyatisilnaya
Outreach Program Director.....Ilanna Saltzman
Technical Director.....Kim T. Sharp
Literary Projects Consultant.....Bara Swain
Special Projects Producer.....Vincent Scott

Musical Theater Producer.....Tom Toce

Press Rep.....Joe Trentacosta, JT Public Relations

Social Media.....Disnie Sebastien

BIOS

Tracy Stark is a Pianist/Arranger/Conductor/Singer-Songwriter. She is a 10-time MAC Award winner, in the categories of Music Director, Piano Bar Entertainer, and Song of the Year. She is also a Bistro Award winner for Musical Direction, and winner of the Dottie Burman Songwriter of the Year Award. Tracy has worked with Lesley Gore, Phoebe Snow, Karen Black, Randy Jones (Village People), Jimmy Osmond, Tovah Feldshuh, Tonya Pinkins, Marni Nixon, and hundreds of other rock, jazz, and Broadway vocalists. She has conducted, played and sung at all the finest venues all over the world, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center and on numerous television shows, including *The Today Show*. Her songs are on at least 20 different compilation CDs and have been winning accolades in songwriting competitions for the past 2 decades. She has 3 CD's of original music, the latest of which is on the Miranda Music label with some amazing special guests including: Lesley Gore, Jane Monheit, Nona Hendryx, Karen Black, Ann Hampton Callaway and Barb Jungr! - www.TracyStark.com

Roderick Lawrence: Big love to the creative team, my cast & crew for embracing me in taking this journey with them. The Credits: Television: Comedy Centrals *Broad City*, Film: *What The Heart Wants* (coming 2019), *IMMUNE* (MIFF BEST SHORT) Nat. Tour: *The Lion King* (SIMBA U/S). NYC/LA: GUY in *ONCE* the Musical (Pioneer Theatre Company), *OTHELLO* in John Leguizamo's *Othello: The Remix*, Bebe Winans ALT in *Born For This: The Bebe Winans Story*, *August Rush: The Musical*, *YOUTH* in *Passing Strange* (Playhouse Square). Love to God, Mom, Pops, Evan, Shelby, Granny, Auntie Cindy and Buff, Cousins, Vicky B, Camille, Sandy and my entire team over at HCKR! Baldwin Wallace Music Theatre. Arrest the killers of Breonna Taylor. @rodericklaw

Salma Shaw: A two-time Helen Hayes Award recipient and 2020 AUDELCO nominee for Urban Stages' *Bars and Measures*, Salma is thrilled to be back performing in Winter Rhythms. Off-Broadway and Off-Off-Broadway: *Bars and Measures* (4 AUDELCO nominations); *Acquittal*; *This Time* (NYT Critic's Pick); A

Muslim in the Midst. Selected developmental readings: *Monsoon Wedding*; *Rain & Zoe Save the World*; *Ocean in a Teacup*; *In a Sea of Faces*; *Bak Chang*; *MAYA*; *Bollywood Kitchen*. Selected TV: *For Life*; *Main Justice*; *FBI*; *The Blacklist*; *Blue Bloods*; *L&O:SVU*. Upcoming: *Basement* film; the new untitled Michael Che project; and Executive Producing *A Thousand Cuts*, Black Man Films, with Roderick Lawrence (IG/FB: @BlackManFilmsLLC; Web: blackmanfilms.com). Stanford, MIT and Harvard MBA. Proud member of AEA, SAG•AFTRA and Equity (UK). IG: @salma.shaw; Web: salmashaw.com

Karen Akers, one of America's most arresting and successful concert and cabaret stars, has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Russia. She has appeared in many prestigious venues worldwide from Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, New York's Oak Room at the Algonquin Hotel, and London's Pizza on the Park. Her career also includes three performances at the White House. As audiences cheer, critics are overwhelmed; The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner says of her sound: "It's a great voice, an instrument with the power of Streisand's, the dark passion of Piaf's and the lean irony of Dietrich's, but a voice uniquely her own, because it's coupled with an intelligence that creates moments of riveting theatricality." She appeared at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway as one of the original stars of the Tony Award-winning musical *Grand Hotel*, directed by Tommy Tune. She made her debut on the *Great White Way* in 1982 in *Nine* (also directed by Mr. Tune) for which she won a Theatre World Award as well as a Tony Award nomination. Ms. Akers has had two of her own PBS television specials: *Presenting Karen Akers* and *Karen Akers: On Stage at Wolf Trap*. In addition, she has performed in PBS musical tributes to Ira Gershwin and Duke Ellington. Karen's film roles include the femme fatale in Mike Nichols' *Heartburn* opposite Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep, Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo* and *Vibes*. With Urban Stages, Karen Akers has been part of a movement to make art and education available to all despite economic or geographic restraints. She has used her talents to headline events at our annual award-winning music festival, *Winter Rhythms*, which supports Urban Stages Outreach Program. Outreach tours admission-free plays, workshops and residencies, reaching thousands in all 5 boroughs of New York City every year. We salute Karen Akers for both her incredible talents and for her generosity.

Aya Aziz is a writer, performer, and composer from New York City. Described as "musically adventurous" by the NYTimes, Aya has brought her musical storytelling to Joe's Pub, New York Theatre Workshop (NYTW), The Civilians, the New York

Musical Festival and more. Her solo-show *Sitting Regal by the Window* gained national recognition in Beirut. Her second solo-show, *Eh Dah? Questions for my Father* (NYMF 2016) won awards for Most Outstanding Book and Individual Performance and recently had a fully sold out run with a new 5-cast ensemble in NYTW's 2019 "Next Door" series. Aya also makes music for film, most recently *Ask for Jane*, winner of Best Feature at the 2019 Big Apple Film Festival. You can listen to her new single "Rapids" on all streaming platforms.

Aaron Lee Battle, is singer/actor, with a B.F.A in Theater from Ohio University. Aaron is the recipient of the Backstage Bistro Award for Outstanding Vocalist. Aaron has performed at The Apollo Theater's Music Café with Tom Thorndike and as resident guest artists at Gunay Restaurant in Istanbul Turkey. As an actor, Battle has performed Off Broadway, and in regional theaters throughout the U.S. Aaron has worked with the Gingold Theatrical Group Project Shaw's staged readings. Aaron was seen at the 7th and 30th Cabaret Conventions!

Natalie Douglas: Internationally acclaimed vocalist Natalie Douglas has been honored with twelve MAC Awards, two Nightlife Awards, two Backstage Bistro Awards, and a Broadway World Cabaret Best Vocalist Award. *The Times* (UK) says Natalie Douglas is "a true force of nature" and "in a league of her own," and she has been called "simply everything" by the *New York Daily News*.

This nightclub diva's portrait has joined the illustrious collection of legendary musicians on Birdland's Wall of Fame. Her ongoing residency there is the award-winning Tributes, an SRO monthly series celebrating a different artist each month. Recent tributes have included Nina Simone, Elvis Presley, Shirley Bassey, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Cher, with upcoming concerts celebrating Nat "King" Cole, Barbra Streisand, Roberta Flack, Nancy Wilson, Joni Mitchell, and more. Ms. Douglas has played Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, both the Rose Theater and the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and Cafe Carlyle, among other performing arts centers and clubs across the country.

Ms. Douglas's critically acclaimed third album, *Human Heart*, has won multiple awards. She also has two other CDs, *To Nina . . . Live at Birdland* and *Not That Different*. She is a great favorite of broadcasters, and her music is often featured on NPR, Sirius XM, and BBC Radio London. For more information visit www.nataliedouglas.com.

Sue Matsuki is the Co-Producer of this year's Winter Rhythms. She is the 2020 Bistro Award winner for Outstanding Collaboration celebrating her 25th year of working with her Music Director, Gregory Toroian; she is the very first (2004) recipient of the Julie Wilson Award given by the Mabel Mercer Foundation; she was put on the "Wall of Fame" at Don't Tell Mama celebrating her 33rd year of singing there; and she is an 11-time MAC Award Nominee and a 3-time Winner for Jazz Vocalist, Jazz Duo and Songwriter. Most recently, she was nominated in the 2020 Major Vocalist category. She is a 35-year Cabaret/Jazz singing veteran who has played every NYC club including: Feinstein's, Birdland, The Iridium, The Village Gate, Carnegie Hall and 54 Below. She is an award-winning Songwriter, Reviewer, Teacher, Columnist (*Sue's Views*) and is the author (along with David Sabella) of *So You Want to Sing Cabaret* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020). She has been part of Winter Rhythms for six years and currently hosts a vlog on Urban Stages' website called *Artists Chats*. - www.SueMatsuki.com

SONGS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

Walk This World by: Tracy / Sung by: Roderick and Salma

If I'm Good to Myself by: Tom Toce / Sung by: Salma Shaw

I'll Be Home For Christmas by: Kim Gannon, Music by: Walter Kent / Sung by:
Roderick Lawrence

Roderick's Spoken Word by Roderick Lawrence

Bring on Spring by Dawn Hampton & Bobby Peaco / Sung by: Aaron Lee
Battle

It's Ok To Love by: Aya Aziz / Sung by: Aya Aziz

Frozen In Time by Mark Hartman/ Sung by: Natalie Douglas

Animal in the Pitt by Ellen Fitzhugh and music by Larry Grossman / Sung by:
Karen Akers

Take me as I am by Alex Rybeck / Sung by: Karen Akers

American Sung by: Karen Akers

Bacon by: Mary Liz McNamara / Sung by: Sue Matsuki

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers' Unions:

ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS

AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS

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through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the Artists to appear on this program.