

SEPTIMA

BY PATRICIA WILLIAMS DOCKERY



DIRECTED BY
SHARON GRACI



TICKETS + INFO
PURETHEATRE.ORG

LOWCOUNTRY
TOUR

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2024

PURE
THEATRE

"WE NEED TO BE
TAUGHT TO STUDY
RATHER THAN
BELIEVE, TO INQUIRE
RATHER THAN
TO AFFIRM."

SEPTIMA POINSETTE CLARK

PURE
THEATRE

SEPTIMA

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PATRICIA WILLIAMS DOCKERY

DIRECTED BY SHARON GRACI*

SEPTIMA

ZANIA CUMMINGS

CHORUS

SHIVAM V. PATEL* MICHELE POWE KEITH H. ALSTON

JOSH WILHOIT* SONJA D. REED

* = PURE Core Ensemble Member

SOUND DESIGNER MILES BOINEST°

SCENIC DESIGNER & LIGHTING DESIGNER RICHARD HEFFNER°

COSTUME DESIGNER AMBERNICE TOLLIVER°

° = PURE Theatre Resident Designer

PERFORMED IN ONE ACT WITH NO INTERMISSION

SEPTIMA had its world premiere at PURE Theatre

March 10 - April 3, 2023.

THIS TOUR HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM ARTS ETC., THE BEAUFORT FUND AT COASTAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, AND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE CHARLESTON AREA.



PATRICIA WILLIAMS DOCKERY (PLAYWRIGHT) is a writer, playwright, scholar-activist, and international commentator, consulted for her expertise on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), social justice, and Black women's intersectional experiences. With extensive museum, non-profit, and higher education experience, she has developed engaging educational public programs for K-12 and general audiences at The Field Museum, The Museum of Science and Industry, and at The College of Charleston Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. Her books include *Slavery and the African American Story* (2023) published by Random House Books for Young Readers and the edited volume of essays *Teaching Daughters of the Dust as a Womanist Text and the Black Arts Aesthetic of Filmmaker Julie Dash* (2020) published by Peter Lang. She is one of the producers of Julie Dash's upcoming documentary TRAVEL NOTES OF A GEECHEE GIRL. She currently serves as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Morgan State University. Dr. Dockery is a Fulbright scholar and earned a BA in English from Fisk University, a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Dartmouth College, and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

SHARON GRACI (DIRECTOR) is the co-founder and artistic director of PURE Theatre. Under her leadership, PURE Theatre has developed into one of the premier theatre companies in the Southeast. She is responsible for programming and producing more than 90 Southeast Regional Premiere productions, 28 World Premiere productions and for developing multiple PURE programs that heighten PURE's impact and amplify PURE's position as a "community building theatre" (Charleston City Paper). Notable initiatives include PURE Lab, the division of PURE responsible for developing new work, and PURE Youth Companies, PURE's education arm serving students in SC's Title 1 Schools. She is also responsible for implementing PURE's industry-leading streaming program, which scales PURE's work and serves audiences and students locally and throughout SC, the US, and abroad. Under her leadership, PURE was awarded the SC Theatre Association's 2020 Theatre of Distinction Award for its ability and commitment to continuing to produce theatre and serve audiences during the pandemic. Sharon is the recipient of the South Carolina Arts Commission Fellowship for Acting, an alumnus of Lincoln Center Director's Lab, a SC Liberty Fellow, and a member of the Aspen Institute and the Aspen Global Leadership Network. She has a degree in acting from Augusta State University and studied acting at Point Park University and the Pittsburgh Conservatory of Theatre. Selected Directing Credits: World Premieres - SEPTIMA, ATWATER, FOLLY BEACH, A SUDDEN SPONTANEOUS EVENT, SHEEP'S CLOTHING. Regional Premieres: COMPULSION, MLIMA'S TALE, CHOIR BOY (MOJA Festival), SWEAT (MOJA Festival, Piccolo Spoleto Festival), Selected Stage Acting Credits: TESTAMENT OF MARY, LIFESPAN OF A FACT, BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE (PURE Theatre); KING LEAR, TWELFTH NIGHT (Actors Theatre of SC); DANCING AT LUGHNASA (Actor's Theatre of Charlotte). Television/Film: MR. MERCEDES (On Demand), RECKLESS (CBS), HOMELAND (Showtime), ONE TREE

HILL (WB), ARMY WIVES (Lifetime), THE INSPECTORS (CBS) and SURFACE (NBC). Film: THE WISE KIDS, WARRIOR ROAD, DOWNTURN, DESTINY ROAD.

ZANIA CUMMINGS (SEPTIMA) Born and raised in Charleston, Zania Cummings is an Actor, Poet and Creative formerly based in NYC. She received her classical training at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, becoming an Academy Company member upon graduating. While studying in New York, Zania rediscovered her love of poetry and has been performing as a spoken word artist in Charleston and world wide. Zania loves to find the intersectionality and balance in multiple mediums of Art. Theater, however, will forever and always be her ultimate love!

MICHELE POWE (CHORUS) is a well-known actress in Charleston and the surrounding areas. She is a familiar face on TV and has performed in many stage productions such as FINDING FREEDOM: THE JOURNEY OF ROBERT SMALLS with the Gaillard Center, MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM with South of Broadway, and THE EXONERATED with Midtown Productions. She is excited to reprise her roles and work with the extraordinary cast and crew of SEPTIMA.

KEITH H. ALSTON (CHORUS) is a Charleston native who made his stage debut playing Boy Willie in THE PIANO LESSON for the Flowertown Players. He has since enjoyed working with many theater companies in Charleston, and some of his favorite performances were FINDING FREEDOM: THE JOURNEY OF ROBERT SMALLS, CLYDE'S, MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM, ONE MONKEY DON'T STOP NO SHOW, A RAISIN IN THE SUN, DRIVING MISS DAISY, FIVE GUYS NAMED MO, and THE PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR STORY.

JOSH WILHOIT* (CHORUS) is an actor, director, mediocre guitar player, husband, and dad. A native of Kentucky and graduate of Furman University, he first migrated to the Lowcountry 26 years ago. Josh is proud and honored to be a member of the PURE Theatre Core Ensemble and thanks you for supporting live theatre.

SONJA D. REED (CHORUS) is from Charleston, SC and is a retired educator, singer, and an actress. Mrs. Reed is a graduate of South Carolina State University and she recently retired from a thirty year career as a teacher, during which she developed a theatre program for Burke High School in Charleston. Theatrical work includes HUSH DAT GULLAH, BUBBLING BROWN SUGAR, and the Piccolo Spoleto presentation of IT AIN'T NOTHING BUT THE BLUES (Art Forms and Theater Concepts), as well as work with the Henderson Davis Players.

SHIVAM V. PATEL* (CHORUS) received his master's training at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London and is excited to be working at PURE as a Core Ensemble member. Past credits include ATWATER, CLYDE'S, and MLIMA'S TALE at PURE, DISGRACED, INTO

THE WOODS, THE SEAGULL, NEXT FALL, WORKING - A MUSICAL, THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD, LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL, THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE ABRIDGED, and many others. In his spare time, Shivam is working as a UX Designer. If you don't know what UX stands for, feel free to ask him!

MILES BOINEST* (SOUND DESIGNER) is a theatre artist from Charleston, SC. He is the company stage manager and a resident designer at PURE. Select design credits at PURE include THE LEHMAN TRILOGY, ATWATER (World Premiere), COMPULSION: OR THE HOUSE BEHIND, SEPTIMA (World Premiere), A HIDDEN LIFE (World Premiere), TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS, LAST RITES (World Premiere), THE AGITATORS, STAGES (World Premiere), IF I FORGET, FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS, A SUDDEN SPONTANEOUS EVENT (World Premiere), MARIE ANTOINETTE, and FOLLY BEACH (World Premiere).

RICHARD HEFFNER* (SCENIC DESIGNER) Since 2013, Richard has designed scenery for nearly every production on PURE THEATRE's stage, including, among others, THE CHINESE LADY, CHOIR BOY, FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS: PARTS 1,2,&3, CONSTELLATIONS, AND RUSSIAN TRANSPORT. He has designed and built sets and lighting for more than 200 productions here in Charleston and served for 27 years as resident Scenic, Lighting, Graphic Designer and Technical Director for The Footlight Players on Queen Street. A graduate of Fairmont State University, Richard has been associated with The Prop Box, Piccolo Spoleto, and numerous projects for Film and Television. Other talents include music, graphic design, photography and woodworking.

AMBERNICE TOLLIVER* (COSTUME DESIGNER) is a Charleston native. Her love and appreciation for theatre began at a young age with Charleston Stage Company. Ambernice went on to study costume design at the College of Charleston. She recently received a Master's degree from the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business. Ambernice's theatrical credits include THE LEHMAN TRILOGY, ATWATER, THE CHINESE LADY, COMPULSION: OR THE HOUSE BEHIND, SEPTIMA, HANGMEN, CLYDE'S, and A HIDDEN LIFE. She is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority!

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ABOUT SEPTIMA POINSETTE CLARK

Septima Poinsette Clark was a civil rights activist born in 1898 in Charleston, South Carolina. She attended the Avery Normal Institute and graduated in 1916. Clark started her career as a schoolteacher in a one room schoolhouse at the age of 18. Unable to go to college, Clark received her licentiate of instruction and began working on John's Island as an educator. She taught for nearly 20 years before enrolling at Benedict as a part-time student. Clark eventually earned her BA from Benedict College in Columbia, and her MA from Virginia's Hampton Institute. She wanted to do more to advance the rights of African Americans, so she joined the Charleston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Many southern states enforced segregation until the mid-1900s, denying African Americans the right to attend white schools. African American teachers were not allowed to teach in the Charleston public school system, and instead, had to accept teaching in rural school districts. Clark and others thought this was unfair, and they protested to win African Americans the right to teach at Charleston public schools. The campaign was successful and Clark believed that social activism had the power to better the lives of African Americans.

In the 1950s, Clark and the NAACP advocated for integrating public schools. Her involvement in the NAACP caught the attention of the Charleston City School Board. Clark was asked to deny her membership in the NAACP, but she refused. As a result, the school board fired her. No longer employed, she devoted all of her time to activism. Clark was particularly upset by the voting system in the South. Black men and women had the right to vote but were often kept from the voting polls by literacy tests and poll taxes.

Clark designed educational programs to teach African Americans how to read and write by tying their everyday lives to the vote. Her idea for "citizen education" became the foundation of the Citizenship Schools. She worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to win rights for African Americans.

Septima Clark served as an advocate and a leader until her death in 1987.

PURE THEATRE IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY



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PURE Theatre is a professional regional theatre in Charleston that creates consequential theatre experiences by and for a diverse gathering of artists and audiences. PURE produces work that inspires thought, ignites dialogue, and heightens consciousness, and contributes to the urgent exchange of ideas, viewpoints, aspirations, and inspirations of our community. For almost two decades, PURE has radically adhered to a consistent vision for success, focusing foremost on our drive for increased relevance and deep connection. PURE has established itself as a gathering place of collective action where our community grapples with our divisive issues, mines our collective purposes, and seeks out common ground. Using drama as a catalyst for inclusion, awareness, acceptance, action, and change, PURE's community of patrons and artists reflect diversity in race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identification, socioeconomics, and sociopolitical preference.

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NEXT at PURE



CAROLINE, OR CHANGE

BOOK AND LYRICS BY TONY KUSHNER
MUSIC BY JEANINE TESORI

APRIL 4-APRIL 27

FEATURING BRANNEN DAUGHERTY*,
EMILY WILHOIT* & TONYA SMALLS WILLIAMS*

In 1963, the Gellman family and their maid, Caroline, live in sleepy Lake Charles, Louisiana. Caroline is a single mother of four working in a service job, while Noah, the Gellman's son, is a young Jewish boy coming of age after a personal tragedy. They form a special bond in this passionate and powerful musical set against the backdrop of the Civil Rights movement, and two families trying to make sense of the world and each other. CAROLINE, OR CHANGE is a "colossal creative smash" (*Amsterdam News*) that follows the money to the source of American inequality.

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