



THE VOICE OF FREEDOM

FROM HARLEM TO CIVIL RIGHTS

CREATED AND DIRECTED BY
DESTINY COLEMAN

MARCH

28

FRIDAY

**OHIO
WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY**



THE VOICE OF FREEDOM

FROM HARLEM TO CIVIL RIGHTS

CAST

DESTINY COLEMAN

Creator & Director

ASHLEY BROOKS WISE

Pianist

KENNETH EADDY

Tenor

KAROLYN LEE GHOLSTON

Soprano

TIFANI KENDRICK

Spoken Word

DEMEESHIA MARSHALL

Mezzo-soprano

ABOUT

The Voice of Freedom: From Harlem to Civil Rights is a powerful, multi-disciplinary performance that celebrates the depth and resilience of the African American experience through a blend of spoken word, historical texts, and music. Featuring three dynamic singers, a spoken word artist, and a pianist, the production weaves together classical, jazz, and iconic works from the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights movements. Themes of justice, community, and hope resonate throughout, offering audiences an emotional journey that sparks meaningful conversations about African American heritage and cultural identity.

As a tribute to the transformative power of art, *The Voice of Freedom: From Harlem to Civil Rights* underscores the political and social dimensions of creative expression. This performance serves as a beacon of reflection, unity, and empowerment.

CAST



Destiny Coleman (Creator & Director) is a creative director, writer, and classically trained mezzo-soprano celebrated for her dynamic contributions to arts and education. With a distinctive blend of creativity and leadership, she has mastered the art of program creation, management, and community engagement. As the Director of The Woltemade Center for Economics, Business & Entrepreneurship at Ohio Wesleyan University, she fosters innovation and collaboration across disciplines.

Previously, Ms. Coleman served as Director of Education and Artistic Administration for Opera Columbus, where she oversaw the production of annual performances and spearheaded the development of 12 groundbreaking educational programs and 25 community partnerships, engaging over 16,000 individuals annually. As a mezzo-soprano, Ms. Coleman has performed with The Ohio State University, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Opera Columbus, and the Lincoln Theatre. She has also performed with artists Heather Headley

and Andrea Bocelli.

Ms. Coleman has received several awards, including the Next Up Columbus Award from the Columbus Young Professionals Club, recognizing emerging leaders making a positive impact on the future of Columbus; the Sir William Osler, MD, Award from The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, honoring her leadership in the Columbus arts community and her commitment to bringing the performing arts to OSU medical center staff and patients; and, in 2023, *The Journey: Civil Rights*, created and directed by Ms. Coleman, earned the Greater Columbus Arts Council's Columbus Makes Art Excellence Award, recognized for outstanding achievements in innovation, risk, and artistic excellence in a performance.

Ms. Coleman holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from The Ohio State University and a Master of Science in Business Management and Leadership from Western Governors University. She actively contributes to the arts community as a Board Member of Converging Arts Columbus, Greater Columbus Arts Council Navigator, and Culture Co-Chair of the Columbus Young Professionals Club Leadership Council. She is also an alum of the YWCA Columbus Leadership for Social Change Program, the Columbus Young Professionals Club Impact Academy, and Leadership Delaware County. Learn more at www.DestinyColeman.com.



Ashley Brooks Wise (Pianist) is delighted to serve as the collaborative pianist for The Voice of Freedom again. She is an accomplished educator, entrepreneur, and an award-winning musician. Ashley is a native of Jackson, TN and earned a BM in Piano Performance at Middle Tennessee State University and an MM in Piano Pedagogy from The University of Tennessee.

Ashley is very active in her local school and music community. She has served on the executive boards of both the district and state levels for the Ohio Music Teachers Association as VP of Teacher Activities and chair of conferences and was most recently appointed to the 2025 National Conference Planning Committee for the Music Teacher National Association. As owner of Wise Notes, Ltd., Ashley teaches, serves throughout the city and beyond as a collaborative pianist, presenter and talent coach. Ashley, alongside her husband

Ceylon, operates The Wise Channel on YouTube, producing family and classroom-friendly content that resonates globally. Their family music group, The Wise Channel, contributed to the GRAMMY®-Nominated Best Children's Album "All One Tribe" with the One Tribe Collective. Ashley's commitment to inclusion led her to co-found the nonprofit Parent Diversity Network with her husband, fostering a sense of belonging in local schools and she serves as the Black Student Union advisor at Olentangy Berlin High School. Ashley believes in the power of music and uses it as a vehicle to connect and promote positivity with those around her.



Kenneth Eaddy (Tenor) A true multihyphenate--singer, dancer, musical theatre actor, educator, entrepreneur, and activist--Kenneth Eaddy has a 15-year history of performing in and around the Central Ohio area. In 2019, Kenneth traveled to the Senegambia region of West Africa to collaborate in an international exchange with Bakalama Danse to further their knowledge of dance, drums, language, and culture. In 2024, Kenneth was a collaborator with the dancing troupe Brother(hood) Dance's production Black On Earth, which premiered at the Wexner Center for the Arts. The production is an immersive and interactive work that integrates dance, agriculture, and technology to tell the history of Black Farmers. Kenneth currently serves as the Festival Coordinator for the Columbus Arts Festival, produced by the Greater Columbus Arts Council.



Karolyn Lee Gholston (Soprano), and adjunct instructor of voice at Kenyon College, has gained a stellar reputation in operatic, and recital works in the central Ohio area. She is native of Altoona, Pennsylvania, and received a B.A. from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania in music performance. She went on to earn an M.M in vocal performance/pedagogy from The Ohio University.

Recent engagements include the 2024 soprano soloist in Brahms's "Ein deutsches Requiem" with Kenyon and the Knox County Symphony, soprano vocalist in William Todd's "Mass in Blue" at the 2023 Kentucky Blues & Jazz Festival with Capriccio Columbus, guest solo artist with the Capriccio Jubilee singers spring 2023 season, Opera Columbus's guest vocalist in both productions of "The Journey, The Voice of Freedom" and "The Voice of Freedom Civil Rights" where she performed her original work "Uncomfortable Conversations."

Gholston has been a featured guest vocalist for The Black Opera Alliance's Gala, Capriccio Columbus's Shout for Joy Concert and soloist for Nathaniel Dett's The Chariot Jubilee.

Past opera roles include La Ciesca in Opera Columbus "Gianni Schicchi," Annie in Opera Columbus' world premiere "The Flood Workshop," Kate Pinkerton in "Madama Butterfly," Anna (Donna Anna) in Opera Columbus' ten performance production of "#UncleJohn," which is an adaptation of Mozart's "Don Giovanni." Gholston has also sung the roles of the infirmiry nun in Opera Project Columbus' production of "Suor Angelica," Lucia in Nino Rota's "I Due Timidi" with Opera Project Columbus, Musetta in "La Bohème" with the first collaboration of Shadow Box and Opera Columbus's "Opera on the Edge," Fiordiligi in "Cosi fan tutte" in Firenze, Italy, with the Florence Voice Seminar/Westminster Choir College.

Along with her concert and solo work, Gholston has created her own music genre #Opsoul, which is a fusion of soul and contemporary music with operatic voicings. She is a published songwriter with a catalogue of over 40 published songs, online content creator and music influencer.



Tifani Kendrick (Spoken Word) started singing and reciting poems at church when she was 3 years old being raised by her Grandmother in Springfield, Ohio. During her middle school years, she viewed creative expression as a positive outlet as she managed the emotional turbulence of having a Mother with substance use disorder. By the time she reached Springfield South High School, her love for music and theater had blossomed. Starring in High School productions such as To Kill a Mockingbird, The Odd Couple, and The Wizard of Oz, she developed a love for performing. While studying psychology at Ohio University, she began her award-winning Spoken Word career performing on stages across the country as part of a collective of artists named Positive United Real Expression. Over the past the 25 years residing Columbus, Ohio her performance highlights include being in the cast of the stage adaptation of the novel Soul Matters, being featured in the Streetlight

Guild's Rhapsody and Refrain, Maroon Arts Group ROOTS Open Mic, performing at the Ohio Attorney General's Office Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Zora's House 2.0 Groundbreaking ceremony, and the Back Stage at the Lincoln 10-year Anniversary as a 2020 Artist Incubation Program Graduate. In 2023, she

narrated the 2023 production of The Journey: Civil Rights. In October 2020, Tifani turned her trauma into a TEDx Talk on the Life Saving Power of Inspiration. As an artist, Tifani K publishes and performs work that expresses her authentic voice as a Black woman, community advocate, and Mother rooted in love.



DeMeeshia Marshall (Mezzo-soprano) is a local artist and songwriter from Columbus, Ohio. She has been singing since the young age of 5. Over the years, DeMeeshia has had the opportunity to be a part of a variety of productions, shows, and events. She has also traveled to different states to perform with various performance companies and productions. In 2016, she was crowned “The Voice of Columbus,” sponsored by David Brown and Harmony Project, an event that was also aired on NBC 4 News.

In 2017, she graduated from The Ohio State University, where she completed her undergraduate studies and earned a Bachelor’s in Music Performance. DeMeeshia has been blessed with the ability to use her voice across many genres, such as gospel, jazz, and classical opera, just to name a few.

DeMeeshia enjoys expressing herself through music because it allows her to create a melodic picture and tell her version of the story through song. She captures the audience's attention with her melodic melismas, and through her soulful tonality and deep connection to the music, DeMeeshia takes her listeners on a journey. Music is her passion, and she believes that God has granted her this gift to spread love and share it with the world.

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- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong, Andrews, Kehinde, & Joseph, Peniel E. (2022). *Black America*. HarperCollins, New York.
- Angelou, Maya. (1978). *And Still I Rise*. Random House, New York.
- Hughes, Langston. (1994). *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Knopf, New York.

Websites, Museums, and Educational Resources

- National Archives: Civil Rights Movement Documents and Photographs. <https://www.archives.gov>
- Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture: Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights Resources. <https://nmaahc.si.edu>
- International African American Museum. <https://iaamuseum.org/>
- History Channel: Civil Rights Movement Overview. <https://www.history.com/articles/civil-rights-movement>

YouTube Videos Shown During Performance

- Langston Hughes reads The Negro Speaks of Rivers
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cKDOGghMU>
- Nina Simone: That Blackness
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3ClwX7oyXk>
- Is This America? | Fannie Lou Hamer's America | America ReFramed
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ytLLsK3keY&t=145s>
- "I've Been To The Mountaintop." - Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZQdANyuh34>