

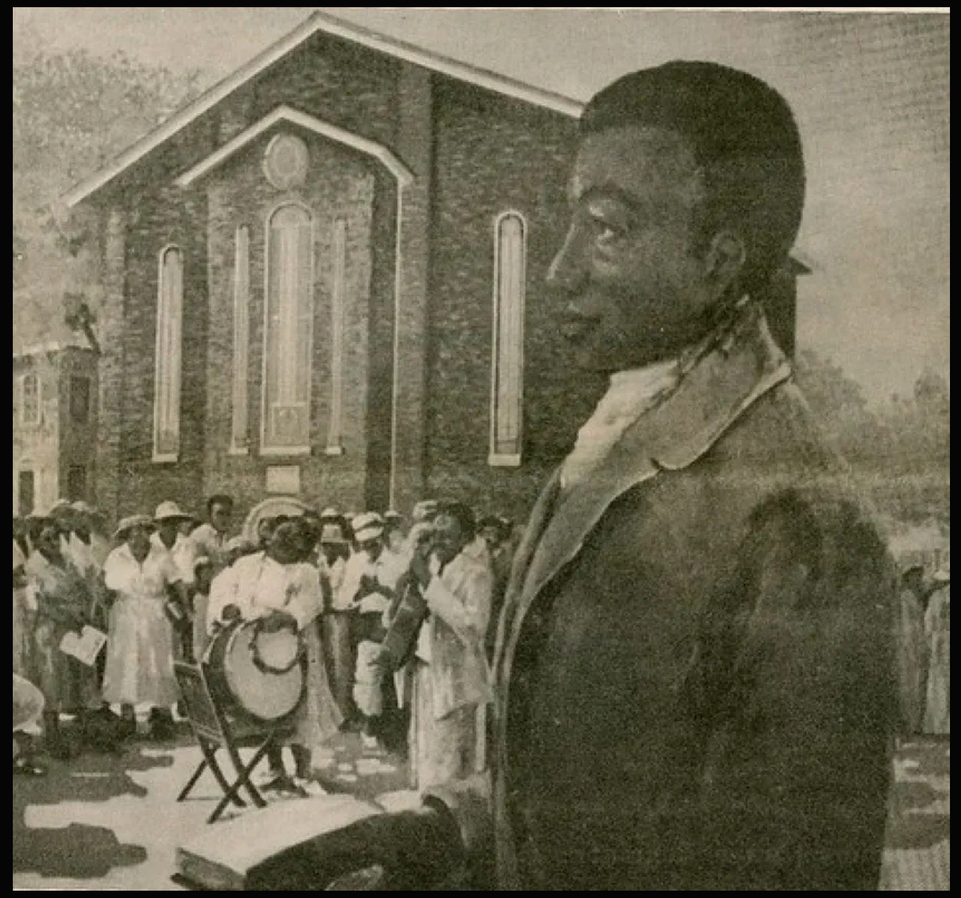
BIG QUARTERLY

A HIP-HOP GOSPEL MUSICAL

A Living Celebration of the Black Church, American History, and Resilience

THE STORY.

Big Quarterly spotlights the legacy of Rev. Peter Spencer. Formerly enslaved, he rose to become a scholar, community leader and ultimately founded the nation's first wholly independent Black church in 1813. One year later, he sparked the Big August Quarterly, an annual freedom festival in Wilmington, Delaware that brought together thousands of Black Americans in celebration and worship that still exists to this day. For those not yet free, Big Quarterly became an opportunity to secure passage on the Underground Railroad.





THE HEART.

At its heart, *Big Quarterly* is a deeply human story about a man whose family was torn apart by slavery and his lifelong desire to reconnect with what he lost. Through building a church, a community and ultimately a festival that brings thousands of people together, Peter discovers that the family he has spent his life searching for may be the one he creates.

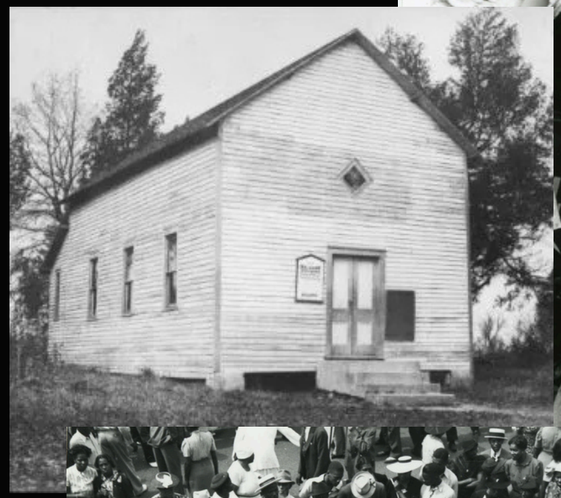
The production blends hip hop, gospel, contemporary dance and theatrical storytelling to explore themes of faith, family, collective liberation and the enduring power of community.

THE LEGACY.

Why Now?

Though Peter Spencer's impact places him alongside figures such as Harriet Tubman and Richard Allen, his story remains largely unknown. *Big Quarterly* is not just a musical. It is a resurrection of memory and a celebration of the futures our ancestors imagined for us.

At a time when the full lens of American history is increasingly being narrowed, *Big Quarterly* reclaims a powerful and largely untold story of Black faith, resistance, and self determination. Through live music and theatrical storytelling, this production transforms American history into an EVENT.









THE TEAM.



Kim Kilby
Book, Music, and Lyrics



S. Todd Townsend
Book, Music, and Lyrics



Luke McLemore
Book, Music, and Lyrics



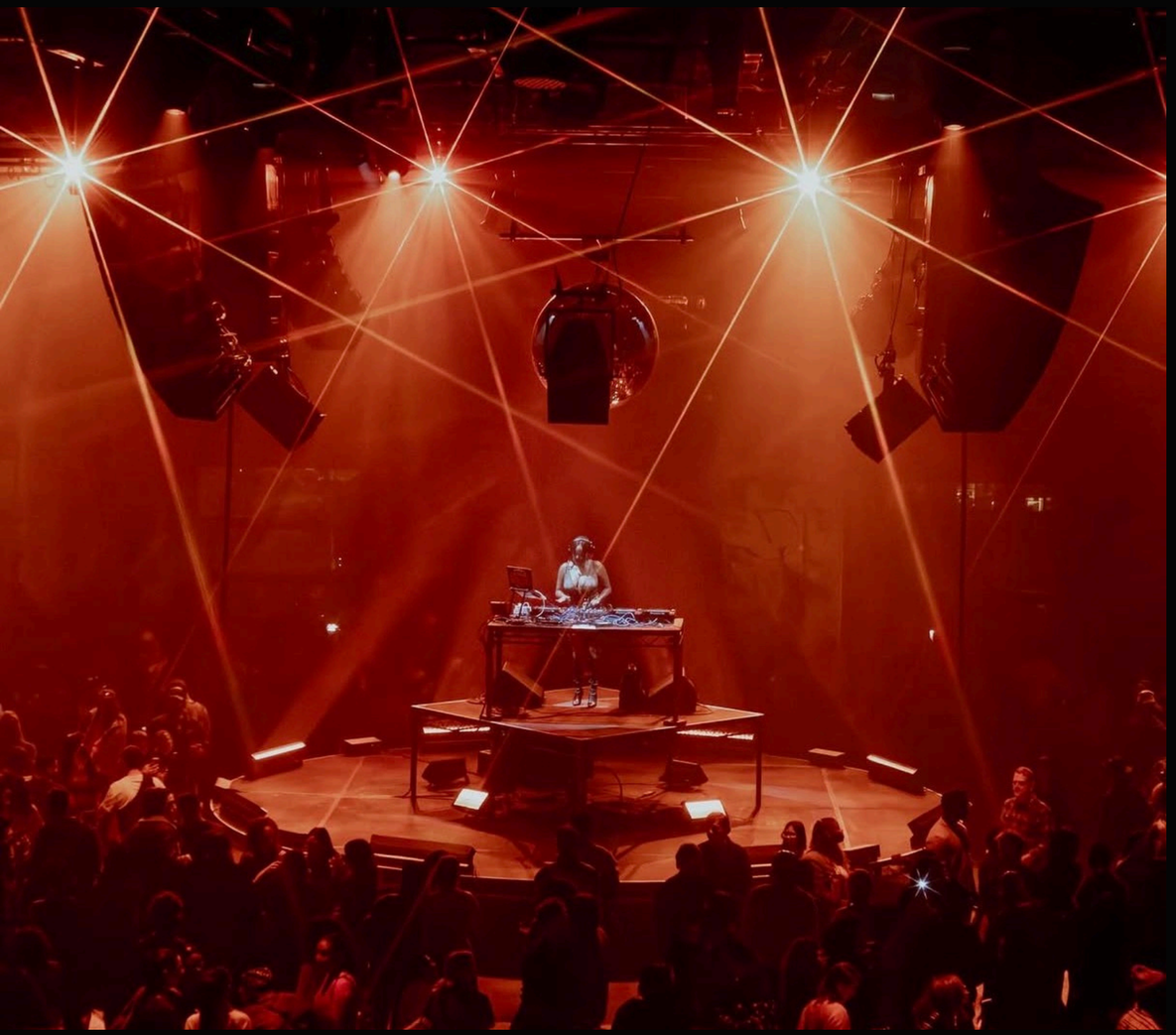
Jōvan Dansberry
Director/Choreographer



Rashad McPherson
Music Director/Vocal Arrangements



Thavius Beck
Hip Hop Producer



THE MUSIC.

Hip Hop

Hip hop drives the storytelling structure of the piece, using rap, spoken word, and lyrical flow as a theatrical language that propels the narrative forward.

Gospel

Rooted in the traditions of the Black church, an ensemble of gospel vocalist shape the emotional and spiritual core of the work, creating moments of communal release and collective transformation.

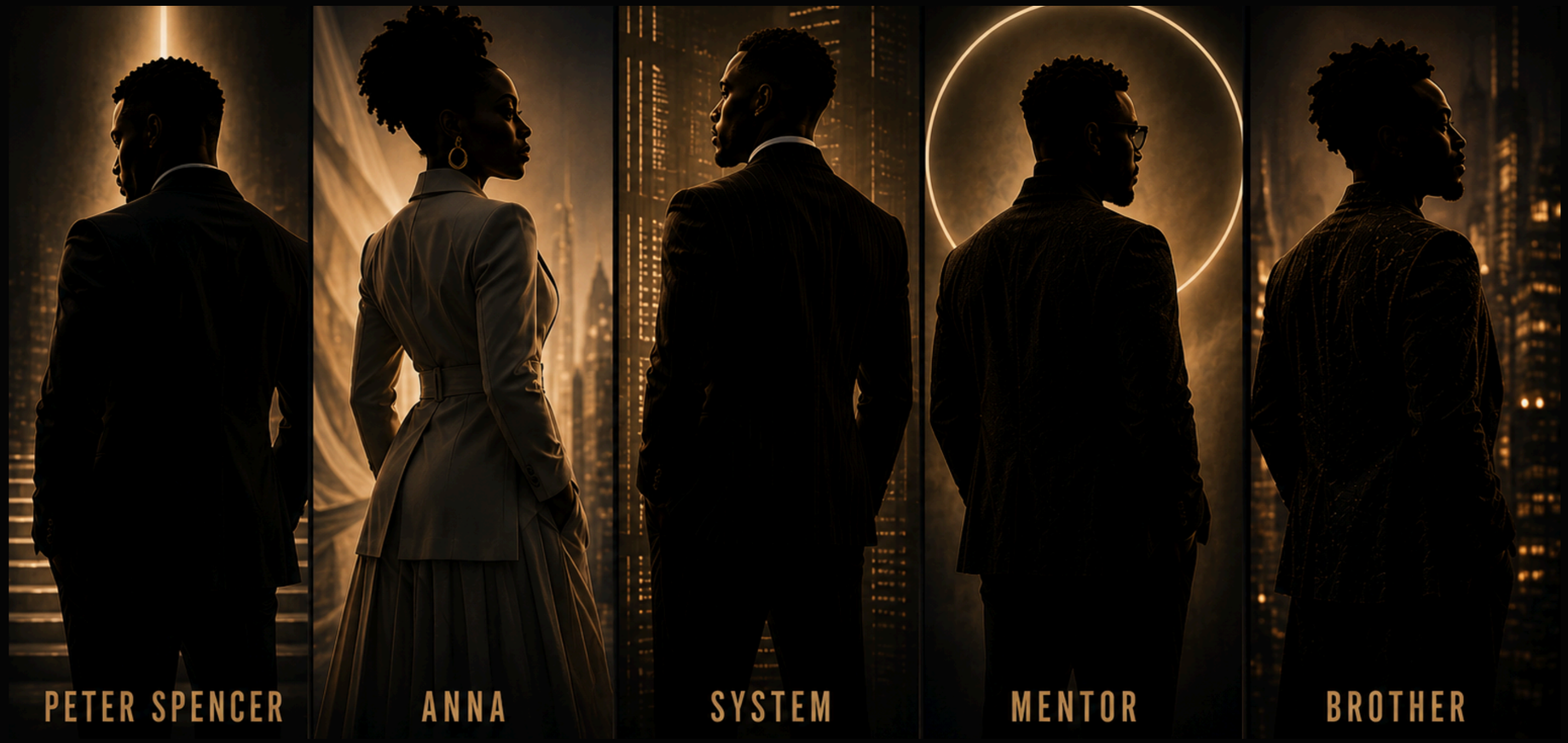
The DJ / Record Keeper

Serving as both archivist and conductor of memory, an on-stage DJ uses live sampling, archival voices, and layered sound to transform history into a living, rhythmic landscape that connects past and present.

Big Quarterly Demos

THE CAST.

The *Big Quarterly* cast consists of 5 Principals and an ensemble of dancers and vocalists. It is led by Peter Spencer and Anna Spencer, and supported by three narrating *Conductors* who guide the audience through the story while also embodying key historical and emotional forces within Peter's journey.





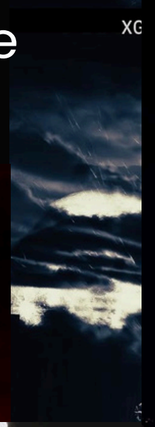
THE MOVEMENT.

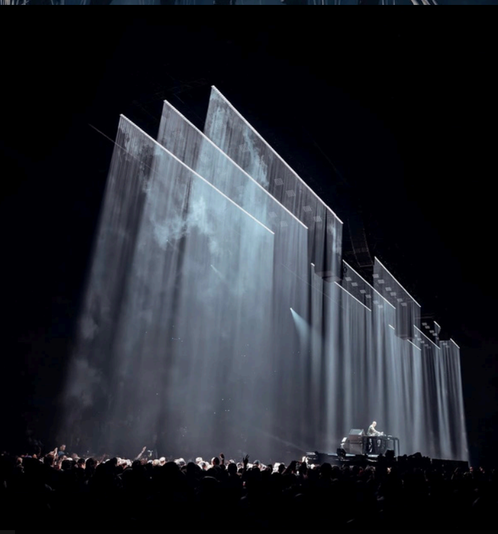
Movement is central to the storytelling of *Big Quarterly*, blending contemporary dance, hip hop, and urban jazz styles to create a physical language rooted in rhythm and communal expression. Performed by a highly versatile ensemble, the choreography functions as both narrative and ritual, transforming the cast into ancestors, forces of oppression, community members, and the living pulse of the Black church across generations.

THE WORLD.

The world of Big Quarterly is immersed in elements of Afrofuturism, blending contemporary design with visual touchstones of the early 19th century. The production uses the innovation of today to transform history into a living communal experience where memory, faith and the promise of a brighter future feel within reach.

















THE AUDIENCE.

Big Quarterly is designed to bring together audiences across generations, cultures, and backgrounds. While rooted in the history of Peter Spencer, the production speaks to universal themes of freedom, resilience, and belonging, inviting both traditional theatergoers and new audiences into a theatrical event that feels contemporary and deeply human.

Blending the energy of a live concert, the emotional release of a gospel revival, and the innovation of contemporary dance theater, *Big Quarterly* aims to create an experience audiences return to again and again.





THE JOURNEY.



Spring 2025

Big Quarterly was featured in New York Theatre Barn's Spring 2025 Choreography Lab, where the creative team explored how movement supports and deepens the storytelling in early development.



Spring 2026

Big Quarterly was presented at Vanderbilt University's New York City campus through an evening of performance and dialogue. Moderated by Dean Yolanda Pierce, PhD, the event combined live musical excerpts with academic discussion, creating a space where scholarly research, artistic practice, and historical narrative informed one another in real time.



Fall 2026

Big Quarterly will particpate in a series of Musical Appreearances and Live Performances including :

- Special Musical Guests at the 2026 Delaware Prayer Breakfast in Wilmington, DE
- Big Quarterly in Concert for the 20th Anniversary of New York Theater Barn



THE FUTURE.

We are actively seeking passionate theater makers, producers, investors and creative collaborators to join us in the continued development of *Big Quarterly*. As we move toward future workshops and productions, we welcome producing partners and supporters who share our vision for innovative, music-driven storytelling. Together, we have an opportunity to bring Peter Spencer’s extraordinary story to life and introduce a new generation of audiences to this powerful chapter of American history.

THANK YOU.

FOLLOW THE SOUND:

@bigquarterly

www.bigquarterly.com

BIG QUARTERLY CONTACT:

JŌVAN DANSBERRY | JOVAN.DANSBERRY@GMAIL.COM

KIM KILBY | KIM@KILBYCREATIVEWORKS.COM

*Additional materials supplied upon request