



Media Contact: Daniella Ignacio
Communications Manager
(202) 434-9533 or dignacio@fords.org

Ford's Theatre
511 Tenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
www.fords.org

For Release
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Ford's Theatre Society Presents **SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!**



By Cheryl L. West
Directed by Kenneth L. Roberson
Choreographed by William Carlos Angulo
Music Directed by Sheilah V. Walker
Arranged and Orchestrated by Joseph Joubert
Based on the biography entitled "Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe" by Gayle F. Wald

Starring Carrie Compere as Sister Rosetta Tharpe;
Featuring Carol Dennis as Katie Bell Nubin

Performances March 15 – May 13, 2023

Tickets on Sale at Box Office and [Online](#)

Washington, D.C. – Ford's Theatre Society today announced the full cast and creative team for the **spring 2023 East Coast premiere of SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!** A collaboration of artists whose work has been honored by the NAACP and the Grammy, Oscar and Tony Awards joins us in Washington, D.C. They include playwright **Cheryl L. West**, director **Kenneth L. Roberson**, choreographer **William Carlos Angulo**, music director **Sheilah V. Walker**, arranger and orchestrator **Joseph Joubert** and biographer **Gayle F. Wald**. **Carrie Compere** stars as Sister Rosetta Tharpe, with **Carol Dennis** as evangelist Katie Bell Nubin, Tharpe's mother.

Inspired by **Gayle F. Wald's** book *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe*, this musical tells the story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe—one of America's most influential rock-and-roll, R&B and gospel crossover singers and guitarists. Ambitious, courageous and uncompromisingly public, Tharpe became a pioneer of the women's movement for racial and sexual equality and is a musical legend who redefined the national and international music scene in the 1930s

and '40s and beyond. Dive into **Cheryl L. West's** spirited, authentic and emotionally charged story about a charismatic music forerunner and the authentic roots of rock-and-roll.

"With *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*, we continue to tell underrepresented stories in history that address racial justice and we are proud to shine a light on Sister Rosetta Tharpe's legacy," said **Paul R. Tetreault**, director of Ford's Theatre. "There is much to learn from her trailblazing life, with resonances across many communities, as a Black woman of faith who revolutionized gospel, R&B and rock-and-roll. *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* is a soulful, empowering story that will have audiences leaving the theater uplifted."

The Ford's Theatre 2022-2023 season is sponsored by **Chevron** and **Lockheed Martin Corporation**. *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* is also made possible by Lead Sponsor: **ConocoPhillips**, as well as the following Sponsors: **Altria Group**, **KPMG LLP**, **Meta** and **Siemens Corporation**.

COVID-19 Health and Safety

Face coverings are strongly encouraged. Ford's Theatre COVID-19 guidance is developed in collaboration with the George Washington Medical Faculty Associates (GW MFA). As one of the largest physician groups in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, GW MFA is recognized for excellence in clinical care, research and training of future care providers. The advice and expertise of the medical staff at the GW MFA, which is based on data and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has helped Ford's Theatre Society strengthen its safety procedures to better serve and protect patrons, artists and staff as productions and daytime visits resume. This policy is subject to change at any time. For more information about Ford's Theatre health and safety protocols, visit <https://fords.org/visit-us/plan-your-visit/covid-19-health-and-safety>.

A Timeline of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*

Ford's is thrilled to present *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* in its East Coast premiere this March through May. In **2007**, Gayle F. Wald's book, *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* was published. In **2017**, the premiere production of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* was produced at **Pasadena Playhouse**. In **2019**, a reworked version of the show was mounted at **Seattle Repertory Theatre**. An updated second edition of Wald's book was released in **January 2023**.

The Playwright

Cheryl L. West's plays include: *FANNIE: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*, *Akeelah and the Bee*, *Pullman Porter Blues* and *Jar the Floor* (optioned for Broadway). Her plays have been seen in England, Off-Broadway, Broadway (*Play On!*) and in numerous regional theaters around the country. She has written TV and film projects at Disney, Paramount, MTV Films, Showtime, TNT, HBO, CBS and is currently working on commissions for La Jolla Playhouse, Arena Stage, Oregon Shakespeare and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Awards include: Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship, Susan Smith Blackburn, Helen Hayes. Learn more about West at <http://www.cheryllwest.com>.

The Book Author

Gayle F. Wald is a Professor of American Studies at George Washington University. Her biography *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (Beacon Press) was the basis of the documentary *Sister Rosetta Tharpe: Godmother of Rock* and has been featured in the *New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker* and *Rolling Stone*. An updated second edition, reflecting Tharpe's 2018 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, was published in 2023. Her current project is a biography of the children's musician Ella Jenkins. Raised in Philadelphia and its

suburbs, she resides in Washington, D.C. Learn more about Wald and the book at <https://shoutsistershout.net/about-the-author/>.

The Director

Kenneth L. Roberson is an award-winning veteran director, choreographer and performer. His credits include: Broadway: *Avenue Q* (Tony Award Best Musical) *All Shook Up*, *Freak*, *Purlie* (Encores!). Off-Broadway: Vineyard: *A Boy and His Soul*. Theatre for the New City: *The Joint*. Apollo Theater: *Jazz a La Carte*, *Harlem Song*. Regional: Northlight Theatre: *Nina Simone: Four Women*. New Victory Theatre: *Lettin' The Good Times Roll*. Skylight Theatre: *Raisin*. Arena Stage: *Crowns*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Virginia Stage: *Frog Kiss*. Baltimore Center Stage: *Once on this Island*. Alliance Theatre: *ETHEL*. Film: HBO: *Lackawanna Blues*, Fox: John Leguizamo's *House of Buggin'* (Primetime Emmy Nomination). Roberson is a graduate of the Henry Grady School of Journalism at the University of Georgia. Learn more about him at www.kennethroberson.com.

The Creative Team

William Carlos Angulo will choreograph, after serving as choreographer for the 2020 developmental lab and the 2019 Seattle Repertory Theatre production. **Sheilah V. Walker** (Broadway: *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*, *Ragtime*) serves as the music director. **Joseph Joubert** (Broadway: *Caroline, Or Change*, *Motown the Musical*, *Disaster!*, *The Color Purple*, *Violet*, *Leap of Faith*), who orchestrated last year's celebrated production of Nolan Williams, Jr.'s *Grace*, will serve as the orchestrator and arranger. **Tyler Rhodes** (Broadway: *A Night With Janis Joplin*) is the associate director and dramaturg, having previously worked as associate director on *SHOUT!* at Seattle Repertory Theatre and Pasadena Playhouse. **Emily Madigan** will serve as the associate choreographer and **Victor Simonson** serves as the associate music director.

The Cast

Carrie Compere (Broadway: *The Color Purple*, *Holler If Ya Hear Me*; Off-Broadway: *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*) reprises her role from the Seattle Repertory Theatre production as the trailblazing Sister Rosetta Tharpe. Joining her is **Carol Dennis** (Broadway: *The Color Purple*, *Street Corner Symphony*, *Big River*) as Rosetta's mother, evangelist Katie Bell Nubin, who she previously portrayed at Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Additional cast members include **Kelli Blackwell** (Olney Theatre Center: *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*) as Mahalia Jackson, **Felicia Boswell** (Emmy Winner & Grammy Nominee for NBC's *Jesus Christ Superstar LIVE*) as Marie Knight, **Joseph Anthony Byrd** (Seattle Rep: *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*) as Cab Calloway, **Raquel Jennings** (Ford's: *Grace*) as Showgirl/Usher/Nurse, **Joe Mallon** (Ford's: *The Trip to Bountiful*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Death of a Salesman*) as Richie, **Keenan McCarter** (Southern Illinois Summer Music Festival: *Roméo et Juliette*) as Dizzy Gillespie, **Sinclair Mitchell** (Broadway: *The Lion King*) as Reverend Tharpe, **Jarran Muse** (Ford's: *Grace*) as Russell Morrison/Nicholas Brother, **David Rowen** (Off-Broadway: *Bob Marley's Three Little Birds*) as Lucky Millinder/Neckbone, **Nia Savoy-Dock** (Signature Theatre: *The Color Purple*) as LeeAnne/Showgirl, **Jamal Antony Shuriah** (National Tour: *American Idiot*) as Little Richard/Nicholas Brother and **Jalisa Williams** (Signature Theatre: *The Color Purple*) as Showgirl.

Jessica Bennett (Olney Theatre Center: *Beauty and the Beast*), **Jay Frisby** (Ford's: *Grace*), **Troy Hopper** (Ford's: *Violet*) and **Michael Wood** (Olney Theatre Center: *Beauty and the Beast*) will be swings. **Stephanie Klapper Casting** provided support with New York casting.

The Designers

Tim Mackabee (Ford's: *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Glass Menagerie*) will be the

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scenic designer. Mackabee creates a set for a show that exists in transitions between Rosetta's memory and the present world. According to Mackabee, the space serves both of those worlds simultaneously. "The shell of the space is meant to evoke a church," he said. "We stylized the components of an old church to make it the emotional space of the show. The show moves through time quickly, so small pieces come and go a lot through the set to land us in a particular time and place."

Alejo Vietti (Ford's: *A Christmas Carol, Meet John Doe*) will be the costume designer, with **Joseph Shrope** as associate costume designer. **Charles G. LaPointe** (Broadway: *Mr. Saturday Night, Beetlejuice, Ain't Too Proud*) will be the hair and wig designer, with **Rachael Geier** as associate hair and wig designer. **Alan C. Edwards** (Ford's: *Guys and Dolls*) serves as the lighting designer, with **Max Doolittle** as associate lighting designer. **Sun Hee Kil** (Broadway: *Choir Boy*) will be the sound designer, with **Matthew Bell** as associate sound designer.

The team also includes D.C.-based fight and intimacy consultants **Jenny Male** (Resident Intimacy and Fight Director at Rep Stage) and **Sierra Young** (Mosaic Theatre Company: *The Till Trilogy*, Woolly Mammoth/Baltimore Center Stage: *Ain't No Mo*). Ford's Theatre regular **Marie Schneggenburger** will be the prop designer and coordinator. **Bernita Robinson** (Broadway: *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf, Thurgood, Ragtime, Jelly's Last Jam*) and **Lori Lundquist** (Broadway: *Fosse, The Best Man, Holiday*) will be the production stage managers, with **Taryn Friend** (Ford's: *A Christmas Carol, One Destiny*) serving as assistant stage manager.

Accessibility and Special Performances

At Ford's Theatre, we are committed to ensuring visitors of all abilities can experience the performances, exhibits, history and programs our site has to offer. *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* will have **audio-described** performances on Tuesday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 29 at 2 p.m. An **ASL-interpreted** performance is on Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m. Accessible seating is available in both the rear orchestra and balcony sections. A **Sensory-Friendly** performance is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at 2 p.m. More information is forthcoming.

Beginning March 27, 2023, all performances of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* will be captioned via the [GalaPro Free Closed Captioning Mobile App](#). GalaPro is available from the App Store or Google Play and allows patrons to access captioning on demand through their phone or tablet device. Patrons can set their phones to airplane mode and connect to the local GalaPro WiFi network before the performance begins. More information at <https://fords.org/visit-us/plan-your-visit/accessibility/galapro-captioning>.

Ford's Theatre accessibility programs are supported by the **Liberty Mutual Foundation**.

Free First Preview: March 15, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Ford's Theatre partners with TodayTix to give out free tickets for the first performance of each mainstage production in our theatrical season. Tickets are available via the TodayTix app, beginning 10 a.m. ET on March 8 for the March 15, 7:30 p.m. performance of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* Visit <https://fords.org/whats-happening/discounts/first-free-preview/> for lottery entry details.

Ford's Education Events

The **Teacher Preview Workshop** for *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* will be on Wednesday, March 15 at 5:30 p.m. [Learn more and apply here.](#)

Student matinees for *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* are Friday, March 24 at 12 p.m., Friday, March 31 at 12 p.m. and Thursday, April 13 at 12 p.m. [Learn more on the Ford's Theatre website.](#)

Generation Abe Events

Save the dates:

March 30, 2023 and May 4, 2023

Generation Abe events for history and theatre lovers ages 21-40 are BACK for *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* More information is forthcoming. Save the dates for discounted tickets to performances and opportunities to mingle with artists, staff and peers after performances in partnership with District Fray's On Tap. [Learn more about #GenAbe here.](#)

Ford's Theatre Society

Ford's Theatre Society was founded under the guidance of executive producer **Frankie Hewitt**, who, during her 35-year tenure, established Ford's as a living, working theatre producing performances that highlighted the diversity of the American experience. Since the arrival of **Paul R. Tetreault** as Director, critics and the theatregoing public have recognized Ford's for the superior quality of its artistic programming. With works from the Tony-nominated *Come From Away* and the nationally acclaimed *Big River*, to the world premieres of *Meet John Doe*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *Liberty Smith*, *Necessary Sacrifices*, *The Widow Lincoln* and *The Guard*, Ford's Theatre is making its mark on the American theatre landscape. For its accomplishments, the organization was honored in 2008 with the National Medal of Arts. In the past decade, the mission of Ford's Theatre Society expanded to include education as a central pillar. This expansion led to the creation and construction of the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in February 2012. Currently under the leadership of Board of Trustees Chairman **Phebe N. Novakovic** and through the lens of Lincoln's leadership and legacy, Ford's Theatre Society is advancing the "unfinished work" of Abraham Lincoln by creating a vibrant, accessible Ford's Theatre campus that cultivates civic discourse, supports our nation's educators and engages the community with our history. For more information on Ford's Theatre and the Ford's Theatre Society, please visit www.fords.org.

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#FordsShout

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Ford's Education on Twitter: [@fordsedu](#)

Website: www.fords.org



FACT SHEET: SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!

Book by Cheryl L. West * Based on the biography entitled "Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe" by Gayle F. Wald * Directed by Kenneth L. Roberson * Choreographed by William Carlos Angulo * Music Directed by Sheilah V. Walker * Arranged and orchestrated by Joseph Joubert *

Inspired by **Gayle F. Wald's** book *Shout, Sister, Shout!*, this new musical tells the story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe—one of America's most influential rock-and-roll, R&B and gospel crossover singers and guitarists. Ambitious, courageous and uncompromisingly public, Tharpe became a pioneer of the women's movement for racial and sexual equality and musical legend who redefined the national and international music scene in the 1930s and 40s and beyond. Dive into **Cheryl L. West's** spirited, authentic and emotionally charged story about a charismatic music forerunner and the authentic roots of rock-and-roll.

Dates: March 15-May 13, 2023

Press Night: Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Opening Night: Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Location: Ford's Theatre is located at 511 10th Street NW, between E and F Streets.

Times: Tuesdays-Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays-Sundays at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Tickets range from \$36-\$90 and are available to the public now. [Reserve tickets here.](#)

COVID-19 Safety: Masks are strongly encouraged. Please [read our full COVID-19 policy](#) on our website.

Accessibility:

Ford's Theatre is accessible to persons with disabilities, offering wheelchair accessible seating and restrooms, audio enhancement and Braille and large print playbills. *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* will have **audio-described** performances on Tuesday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 29 at 2 p.m. An **ASL-interpreted** performance is on Thursday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m. Accessible seating is available in both the rear orchestra and balcony sections. A **Sensory-Friendly** performance is scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at 2 p.m. For more accessibility information, [please visit our website.](#)

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Parking:

Paid parking is available at several independent neighborhood garages: the 24-hour QuickPark at the Grand Hyatt (entrance on 10th Street between G and H Streets NW), the Central Parking Garage (entrance on 11th Street between E and F Streets NW), and the One Parking garage below Ford's Theatre (at 511 10th Street, NW).

Metro:

The Metro Center station (Red, Blue, Orange and Silver Lines) is two- and one-half blocks north of the theatre from the Eleventh Street exit. The Gallery Place-Chinatown station (Red, Yellow and Green Lines) is two- and one-half blocks north of the theatre from the G Street exit. For further information, call Metro at (202) 637-7000.

Tickets at www.fords.org — #FordsShout

Information: (202) 347-4833 — Toll Free: (888) 616-0270 — Groups: (202) 638-2367

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