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Ford's Theatre Society Announces Creative Team Update for **SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!**

Performances March 15-May 13, 2023

Washington, D.C. – Ford's Theatre Society today announced that **Sheldon Epps** will be joining the creative team of the musical **SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!** as the Production Supervisor.

As Ford's Theatre's Senior Artistic Advisor, **Sheldon Epps** is a highly sought-after and acclaimed director in theatre and television. Epps served as the Artistic Director at the Pasadena Playhouse from 1997-2017 and continues to serve as the Artistic Director Emeritus. He recently published a memoir, "My Own Directions: A Black Man's Journey in the American Theatre." In 2017, Epps produced the premiere of **SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!** at Pasadena Playhouse. Under his guidance, the musical was brought to Ford's Theatre for its East Coast premiere. Epps has previously collaborated with **SHOUT!** playwright **Cheryl L. West** as the director of the 1996 Broadway production of *Play On!*

"Sheldon's passion and vision as a director will allow this musical to soar to new heights," said **Paul R. Tetreault**, director of Ford's Theatre. "There is no question his creative force will be felt by audiences who will leave our theatre shouting for more."

"I am thrilled to bring this powerful story about a bold and enormously talented musical artist to Ford's," said **Sheldon Epps**, Senior Artistic Advisor of Ford's Theatre. "With a strong connection to D.C. and lasting influences globally, Rosetta's music has the ability to bring people together. I have been a great supporter of this project and of telling this remarkable story since the world premiere production at Pasadena Playhouse."

The full cast and creative team for the spring 2023 production of **SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!** continues to be a collaboration of artists that includes playwright **Cheryl L. West**, arranger and orchestrator **Joseph Joubert**, biographer **Gayle F. Wald**, choreographer **William Carlos Angulo** and music director **Sheilah V. Walker**. **Carrie Compere** stars as Sister Rosetta Tharpe, with **Carol Dennis** as evangelist Katie Bell Nubin, Tharpe's mother.

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**.

About Sheldon Epps

Sheldon Epps was the Artistic Director of the renowned Pasadena Playhouse for two decades. Currently, he continues to serve The Playhouse as Artistic Director Emeritus. He has also served as

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Artistic Advisor for Theatre Under The Stars in Houston. He has directed numerous plays and musicals at many of the country's major theatres, including Roundabout Theatre Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Guthrie Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Arena Stage and the Goodman Theatre. He conceived and directed the Tony nominated musicals *Play On!* and *Blues in the Night*, which also received an Olivier Awards nomination for Best Musical. He co-directed the Tony nominated Broadway production of *Baby It's You!* Mr. Epps also has a busy career as a television director helming episodes of shows such as *Frasier*, *Friends*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, *Girlfriends*, the new Netflix series *The Upshaws* and many others. He currently serves as Senior Artistic Advisor at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., and he is the author of the bestselling "theatrical memoir," "My Own Directions: A Black Man's Journey in the American Theatre," published by McFarland Books. At Ford's Theatre, Mr. Epps directed *Twelve Angry Men* and *My Lord, What A Night*, and he most recently worked on *The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look* festival of new works with Director of Artistic Programming **José Carrasquillo** and Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions Advisor **Sydné Mahone**.

About SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!

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 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. Learn more about the musical at www.fords.org/performance/shout-sister-shout/.

About 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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