INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL®

A NC Black Rep Experience

JUL 27 — WINSTON-SALEM, NC — AUG 1

2026

STEAL AWAY HOME

North Carolina Central University

Saturday
August 1
11:00am

The Benton Convention Center
Salem Ballroom

PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA • HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD ANATOMY OF AN OPERA: NIA IMANI FRANKLIN • STEAL AWAY HOME OUR STORIES...WE ARE, BECAUSE WE WERE • REIMAGINED VOLUME III: YOUNG THANG • PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON • RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE • SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL • MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE • NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM • MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY • JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD • ANATOMY OF AN OPERA: NIA IMANI FRANKLIN • STEAL AWAY HOME • OUR STORIES...WE ARE, BECAUSE WE WERE • REIMAGINED VOLUME III: YOUNG THANG PHENOMENAL WOMAN, MAYA ANGELOU: A FIRESIDE CHAT • THE BIRTHRIGHT SESSION-LATE NIGHT WITH MATELYN ALICIA • HOLY GROUND • JITNEY • TOPDOG/UNDERDOG • BLOOMING IN DRY SEASON RUNNING FOR MY LIFE • IN THE BLACK • BERTA, BERTA • ART OF WISE SEARCHING FOR WILLIE LYNCH • PURLIE VICTORIOUS • FENCES • BEING BLACK ON BROADWAY • THE LEGEND OF BUSTER NEAL MICHAEL COLYAR'S LATE NIGHT COMEDY • THE TRIAL OF ONE SHORT-SIGHTED BLACK WOMAN VS. MAMMY LOUISE AND SAFREETA MAE • A FIDDLER'S TALE • TERRY STEELE SINGS LUTHER VANDROSS • STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONAL YOUTH TALENT SHOWCASE • MIDNIGHT POETRY JAM MARVIN: THE MARVIN GAYE REVUE • CROSS THAT RIVER • EVERYBODY JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE • SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD • THE GREAT LOVER • THE BLUEST EYE • THEIR EYES

INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL®

A NC Black Rep Experience

Winston-Salem | The City of Winston-Salem salutes the 2026 International Black Theatre Festival.

STEAL AWAY HOME

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

Adapted by **Aurand Harris**
From the novel by **Jane Kristof**

The North Carolina Central University Theatre Program is dedicated to cultivating artist-scholars who use the power of performance to educate, inspire, and transform communities. Celebrating 75 years of excellence, NCCU Theatre combines rigorous academic training with dynamic production experiences that prepare students for careers in theatre, film, television, education, and related creative industries. Rooted in a rich tradition of storytelling, social engagement, and artistic innovation, the program embraces both classical and contemporary works while amplifying diverse voices and perspectives. NCCU Theatre is honored to participate in the International Black Theatre Festival with two productions, reflecting the program's enduring commitment to artistic excellence, cultural storytelling, and the next generation of theatre artists.

PRODUCTION CREW

Producer/Chair ..... *Dr. Asabi (S. Howard)*
Director/Prop Design ..... *Dr. Nadia Bodie-Smith*
Technical Direction ..... *Arthur Reese*
Costume Design ..... *Lydia Houston*
Light Designer ..... *Ryan Green*
Set Design ..... *Donteze Johnson-Cooper*
Sound Design ..... *Inaede Marughu*
Stage Manager ..... *Marle Howie*
Shadow Projectionist ..... *Evan Redfearn*

Violence/Gun Shots

CAST

Amos.....DAVION PERSON

Obadiah.....AMARI SMITH

Pastor Prentice..... MALACHI MOORE

Joe/Shadow Ensemble ..... DERONTAY ALEXENDAR

Will/Ensemble ..... JASMIN PEREZ

Edgar/Elijah McNaul/Jud/Man with Gun ..... MATTHEW SALAS

1st Neighbor/Old Man/Patrol ..... JONATHAN DREZNER

Jack ..... KENNETH HINTON

Mrs. Strauss/Shadow Ensemble..... ABRIANA REED

1st Man/Conductor/Shadow Ensemble..... JADIN TALLEY

Pa/Shadow Ensemble..... PAUL DARGAN

Mama/Young Man/Mrs. Weber/
2nd Neighbor/Shadow Ensemble..... SAMYA HOWARD

2nd Man/Shadow Ensemble/Set Designer ....DONTEZE JOHNSON-COOPER

Stage Hand/Shadow Ensemble ..... ARIANA GRAY

Ms. Melissa/Shadow Ensemble..... KIARA HALEY

Shadow Ensemble .....SHALEESE MCCLAIN

Shadow Ensemble ..... CORINTHIUS GILES

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SETTING

South Carolina Plantation 1854

Scene 1..... Plantation Home/Slave Quarters

Scene 2..... Plantation Home/Slave Quarters

Scene 3..... Plantation Home/Slave Quarters

Scene 4.....Bridge

Scene 5..... Woods

Scene 6.....Strauss Pharmacy

Scene 7..... Woods

Scene 8.....Ms. Melissa Home

Scene 9.....Elijah McNaul Tannery

Scene 10.....Farmhouse

Scene 11..... Woods

Scene 12.....Jack's House

Scene 13..... Woods

Scene 14.....Quaker Farm/Train

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CAST

DERONTAY ALEXANDER (**Joe/Shadow Ensemble)** from Greensboro, NC, has degrees in Theatre and Graphic Design from NCCU. He was last seen on NCCU's stage in *Drums of Sweetwater.* He would like to thank the Theatre Department for giving him the opportunity to follow his dreams. He also thanks his family and friends for their support.

PAUL DARGAN (Pa/Shadow Ensemble), a Durham, NC native and NCCU Theatre graduate, is happy to take the stage once more. His work includes Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Police Captain and Prisoner #1 in *The Producers* at NCCU and Chevalier in *Conversations with Four Abolitionists at United Strings of Color and Cinderella* with Raleigh Little Theatre. He hopes everyone finds inspiration in the retelling of Jane Kristoff's story.

JONATHAN 'JD' DREZNER (**1st Neighbor/Old Man/Patrol**), a Durham native, has graced the stage since his sophomore year at C.E. Jordan High. He attended UNCG and since returning to Durham has been (gratefully) involved in three amazing productions with NCCU Theatre directors in the NCCU theatre program including *A Need Fulfilled*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Chicken & Biscuits,* and currently *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

CORINTHIUS GILES (Shadow Ensemble) from Goldsboro, NC, has studied Junior Theatre Performance Concentration at NCCU. He was last seen on NCCU's stage in *Chicken and Biscuits* and is currently plays Tea Cake in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. He has been acting since childhood and has a true passion for music, dance and acting. He believes he can truly make a difference through his artistic pursuits.

A**RIANA GRAY (Stage Hand/Shadow Ensemble)**, from Durham, NC, is a recent NCCU Theatre Graduate. She was last seen as Pit Singer in *Fame* the Musical (2025), Old Lady in *The Producers* (2024) and in Little Y in *Don't Hang Up* (2022). She served as Assistant Stage Manager for *Murder Most Fouled Up* (2024).

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CAST

KIARA HALEY (Ms. Melissa/Shadow Ensemble), from Nelson, NC, is a Freshman Theatre Performance Concentration Major. Kiara is seen as Young Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Having extensive stage work in high school, she is excited about her artistic journey at NCCU.

KENNETH HINTON (Jack), is an educator, actor, stage & video director, and playwright. He directs plays at Shaw University, NCCU and Agape Theatre Project. He earned his MA in Dramatic Art from the University of California, Santa Barbara with an emphasis on producing and directing television adaptations of theatrical stage productions. Some directing credits include: *You Ain't My Daddy* by Ken Hinton and "Homegirls" by Karen K.D. Evans, and "Steal Away" by Romano King. He is the Founder and Artistic Director of Agape Theatre Project.

SAMYA HOWARD (Mama/Young Man/Mrs. Weber/2nd Neighbor/ Shadow Ensemble), from Marion, SC, is a Senior Theatre Performance Concentration Major. She is seen as Pheoby in Their Eyes Were Watching God, Ms. Sherman in *Fame the Musical* (2025), Women 1 in *Mad at Miles* (2025), multiple roles in *The Producers* (2024), Ensemble in *Midnight Theatre* (2024), and Brianna in *Chicken & Biscuits* (2023).

DONTEZE JOHNSON-COOPER (**2nd Man/Shadow Ensemble)**, from Charleston, SC, is a Junior Theatre Performance Concentration Major. He was last seen as Prisoner in *The Producers* (2024) and currently plays Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. He also works diligently behind the stage serving as Set Designer for *Home* (2026). He is a proud new member of the Alpha Alpha Phi Cast of Alpha Psi Omega Theatre Honors Society.

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International Black Theater Festival

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A NC Black Rep Experience

2026 Forsyth County Commissioners

Denise Price, Deputy County Manager
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CAST

SHALEESE MCCLAIN (Shadow Ensemble) is a Sophomore Theatre Performance Concentration Major. She is Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2026) and played Hyena in *Midnight Theatre* (2024). Her previous roles at Hillside High School include Main Villager in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* (2022) and Mrs. Phelps in *Matilda* (2023). She is thrilled to be on the University Stage again with this amazing cast.

MALACHI MOORE (Pastor Prentice), from Cary, NC, is a Graduating Senior Theatre Performance Concentration Major. He has plays Logan in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Previous NCCU roles include Mr. Shienkopft in *Fame* (2025); Franz in *The Producers* (2024); and Dr. Shelton in *Drums of Sweetwater* (2023). He is a proud member of the Gamma Gamma Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

DAVION PERSON (Amos), from Raleigh, NC, is a Sophomore Performance Concentration Major. He was seen in on NCCU stage as Schlomo Metzenbaum in *Fame the Musical* (2025) and Leo Bloom in *The Producers* (2024). He plays Joe in *Their Eyes are Watching God*. He wishes to thank his parents for their support.

JASMIN PEREZ (Will/Shadow Ensemble), from Youngsville, NC, is a Senior Pharmaceutical Science Major with a passion for theatre production. She has worked backstage as a Prop Mistress for *Skeleton Crew* (2024) with Justice Theatre Project, and *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (2025). Jasmin is also seen as Ms. Turner in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. She wishes to thank her family and friends for their enduring support.

ABRIANA REED (Mrs. Strauss/Shadow Ensemble), from Rock Hill, SC, is a Freshman Theatre Performance Concentration Major. This marks her debut performance on NCCU's stage. She is thankful for her new Theatre family and for her parents for showing her that she can accomplish her dreams.

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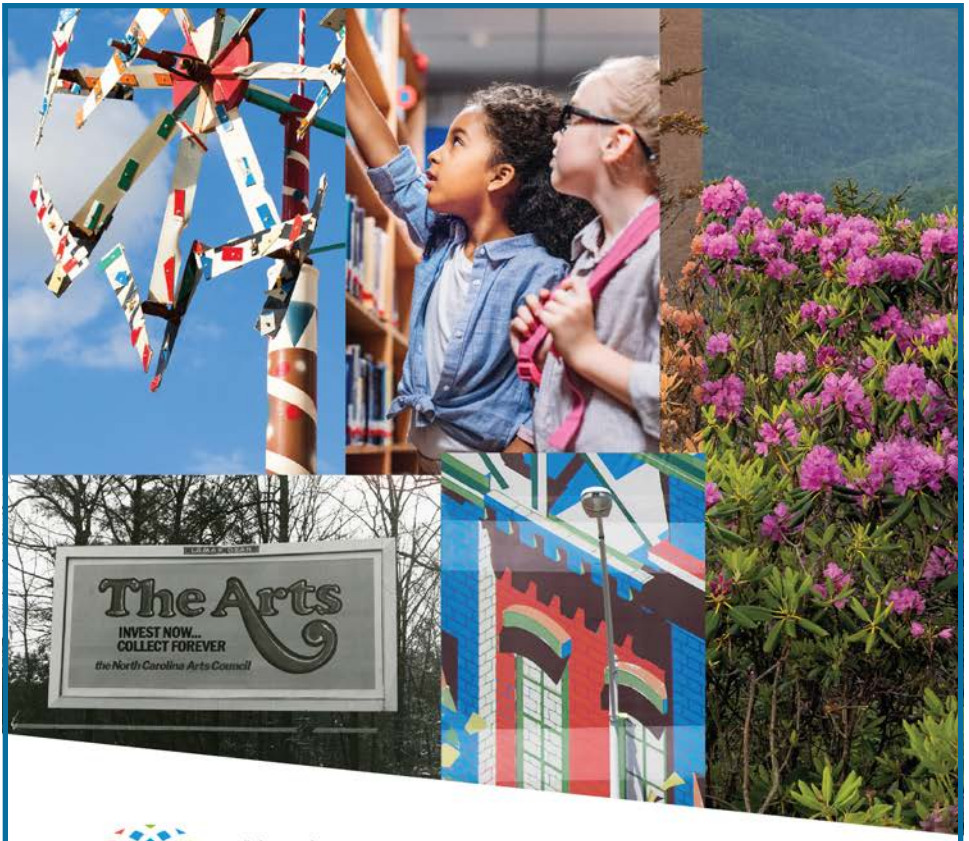
CAST

MATTHEW SALAS (**Edgar/Elijah McNaul/Jud/Man with Gun)**, is an actor, director, letter carrier, and cruciverbalist from Fort Lauderdale, FL, who now proudly calls Raleigh, NC, his home.

JADIN LAMAR TALLEY (**1st Man/Conductor/Shadow Ensemble**), from Richmond, VA, is a Junior Theatre Performance Concentration Major. He discovered his love of theatre in High School where he honed skills in dance and music. He currently plays Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and was most recently seen as Goody in *Fame the Musical* (2025), Ridgely in *Murder Most Fouled Up* (2024), and Boo in *Livin' Fat* (2025). He is a proud member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

AMARI SMITH (Obadiah), is a Sophomore Theatre Performance Concentration Major at NCCU. He plays Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2026) and was Ensemble Member in *Home* (2025). He is grateful to continue learning and maturing as a performer. He thanks his family for their love and support.



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PRODUCTION CREW

DR. ASABI (S. HOWARD) (Producer/Chair) is Professor and Chair of Theatre at North Carolina Central University and recipient of the Mabel P. Robinson Lifetime Achievement ACE Award. A director and playwright, her works include *God Spoke My Name: Maya Angelou*, *Reaching for God with Dirty Hands and Tainted Blood*, and *Distorted Beauty*.

DR. NADIA BODIE-SMITH (Director/Prop Designer) from Nassau, Bahamas, is an Assistant Professor in Performance Studies at NCCU. She was recently awarded Departmental Awards for Excellence in Teaching (2023) and Outstanding Service (2025). Recent directing projects include *Dreamgirls* (2021), *Ain't Misbehavin' (2023)*, *Drums of Sweet-water (2023), The Producers* (2024) with NCCU, *Present Laughter* with Switchyard Theatre (2023) and *Skeleton Crew* with The Justice Theatre Project *(2024)*. Other professional pursuits involve her work as editor of the ENCORE Theatre Journal for the National Association for Dramatic and Speech Arts (NADSA) and as Production Designer for Sweet Unknown South Film Studios. Her work as a Production Designer is showcased in the 2022 action film, 'A Day to Die' starring Bruce Willis, available on streaming services.

ARTHUR REESE (Technical Director) is Technical Director at NCCU and a 2026 recipient of the Departmental Award for Excellence in Research. An MFA graduate of the University of Virginia, he has served IBTF for over 20 years and designed for Maya Angelou, Samuel L. Jackson, the Negro Ensemble Company, and many others. He is co-author of *The African Diaspora of Theatre*.

LYDIA HOUSTON (Costume Designer) has more than 40 years of sewing and costuming experience. She has designed for the African American Dance Ensemble, Collage Dance Company, Suah African Dance Theatre, and others. A former wardrobe assistant for Cirque du Soleil's *Amaluna*, she owns ExtremelyLydia Sewing Company.

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CREATIVE TEAM

EVAN REDFEARN (Lighting Designer) is a freshman Technical Design major at NCCU from Durham, NC. After serving as Shadow Projectionist for *Steal Away Home* (2026), he makes his lighting design debut. His previous technical theatre credits include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *SpongeBob the Musical*, and *Annie* at Hillside High School.

RYAN GREEN (Light Designer), is from Charlotte, NC, and a Junior General Theatre Concentration Major at NCCU, They recently designed lights for *Livin' _Fat*(2025) and worked as the light technician for *Murder Most Fouled Up*(2025) . They are driven by a passion for design and although they are focused on light design they plan to explore different areas of creation in the future.

MARLIE HOWIE (Stage Manager), from Kannapolis, NC, is a Senior Theatre Performance Concentration Major. She is seen as Townsperson in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2026), *Fame the Musical* (2025), as an Old Lady in *The Producers* (2024), Ms. Mead in *Murder Most Fouled Up* (2024) and received the Thespian Award from the International Thespian Society for Superior Performance in Group Acting (2023).

INAEDE MARUGHU (Sound Designer), from Montclair, NJ, is a Junior Theatre Technical Concentration Major. This is his first show working as a Designer. He would like to thank his parents and friends for their endless support.

EVAN REDFEARN (Shadow Projectionist), from Durham, NC, is a Freshman Technical Design Concentration Theatre Major. He worked in technical theatre at Hillside High School for shows like *Little Shop of Horrors* (2024), *Sponge Bob The Musical* (2024), and *Annie The Musical* (2023). He is grateful for the support of his family, friends and professors.

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ENT 211 AD

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In this play, a single line continues to echo in my mind: when young Amos turns to one of the people guiding him north and says, "We can't read." _That moment is quiet, almost understated, and yet it contains the weight of a system designed not only to exploit bodies, but to suppress minds. In the world of the pre–Civil War South, literacy was power—and it was deliberately withheld. For those of us who live and work in spaces devoted to learning, it is almost impossible to comprehend a reality in which the simple act of reading was forbidden. Education is not merely academic; it is agency, identity, and voice. To deny it is to attempt to erase a future.

As we worked through rehearsal, I kept returning to this idea: what does it mean to move through the world without access to words? How does that shape the way a person listens, remembers, hopes? Amos and the boys in this story are navigating not only physical terrain, but also an imposed silence. Their journey on the Underground Railroad is a literal passage to freedom, but it is also a symbolic journey toward knowledge and self-determination.

At the same time, this story asks us to consider those who chose to act. The individuals who aided freedom seekers risked their

A remarkable scene to behold

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homes, their livelihoods, and their lives. They made a conscious decision to stand against an unjust system. History often highlights the overt villains of slavery, but it also compels us to examine the bystanders—the many who valued comfort and "order" over justice. As Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, "…the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice…" This play is not simply about the past; it is about the choices individuals make in the face of injustice.

Visually, we sought a theatrical language that could hold both the danger and the dream of the journey. The shadow projections that serve as transitions be-tween scenes are central to this vision. Shadow work is an ancient and enduring form of storytelling, but here it becomes an extension of the narrative itself. The shadows do not merely fill time; they carry memory. They suggest presence and absence, pursuit and protection, fear and hope. Just as the Underground Railroad operated in secrecy and darkness, the shadows remind us that much of this history unfolded just beyond the light.

It is my hope that audiences experience this production not only as a historical account, but as an invitation to reflection. Whose voices are denied access today? Who chooses comfort over courage? And how might we, in our own time, step out of the safety of the shadows and into the work of justice?

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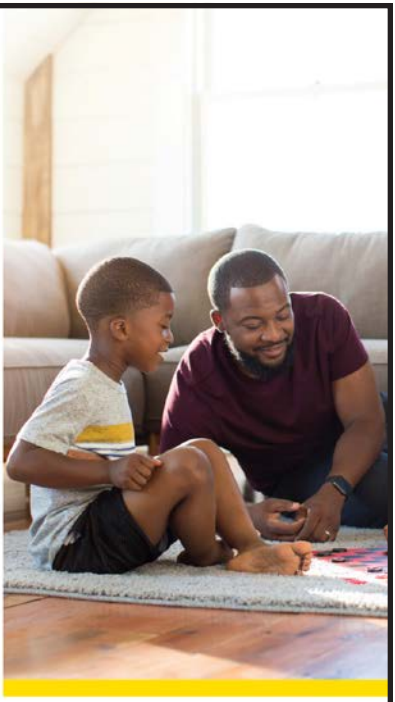

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RFP

Celebrating 50 Years of Piedmont Opera

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

PIEDMONTOPERA

September 2026
Renée Fleming in Concert
Sponsored by Novant Health

November 2026
The North Carolina premiere of Another Sunrise and Before It All Goes Dark. Originally commissioned by Music of Remembrance, by Grammy Award–winning composer Jake Heggie and Pulitzer Prize–winning librettist Gene Scheer.

February 2027
A series of performances with the Camel City Jazz Orchestra, featuring The Great American Songbook

March 2027
Rossini's The Barber of Seville

PiedmontOperaAt50.org

North Carolina Arts Council

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WHEN THE NIGHT IS STILL YOUNG

DRINK SPECIALS
LATE NIGHT THEATRE MENU
COMPLIMENTARY VALET PARKING FOR DINERS

EXTENDED HOURS:

MON - SAT JULY 27-31 & AUG 1

BRUNCH/LUNCH	11A-3P
DINNER	3-9P
LATE NIGHT	9P-12A
BAR/LOUNGE	12P-1A

DOWNTOWN
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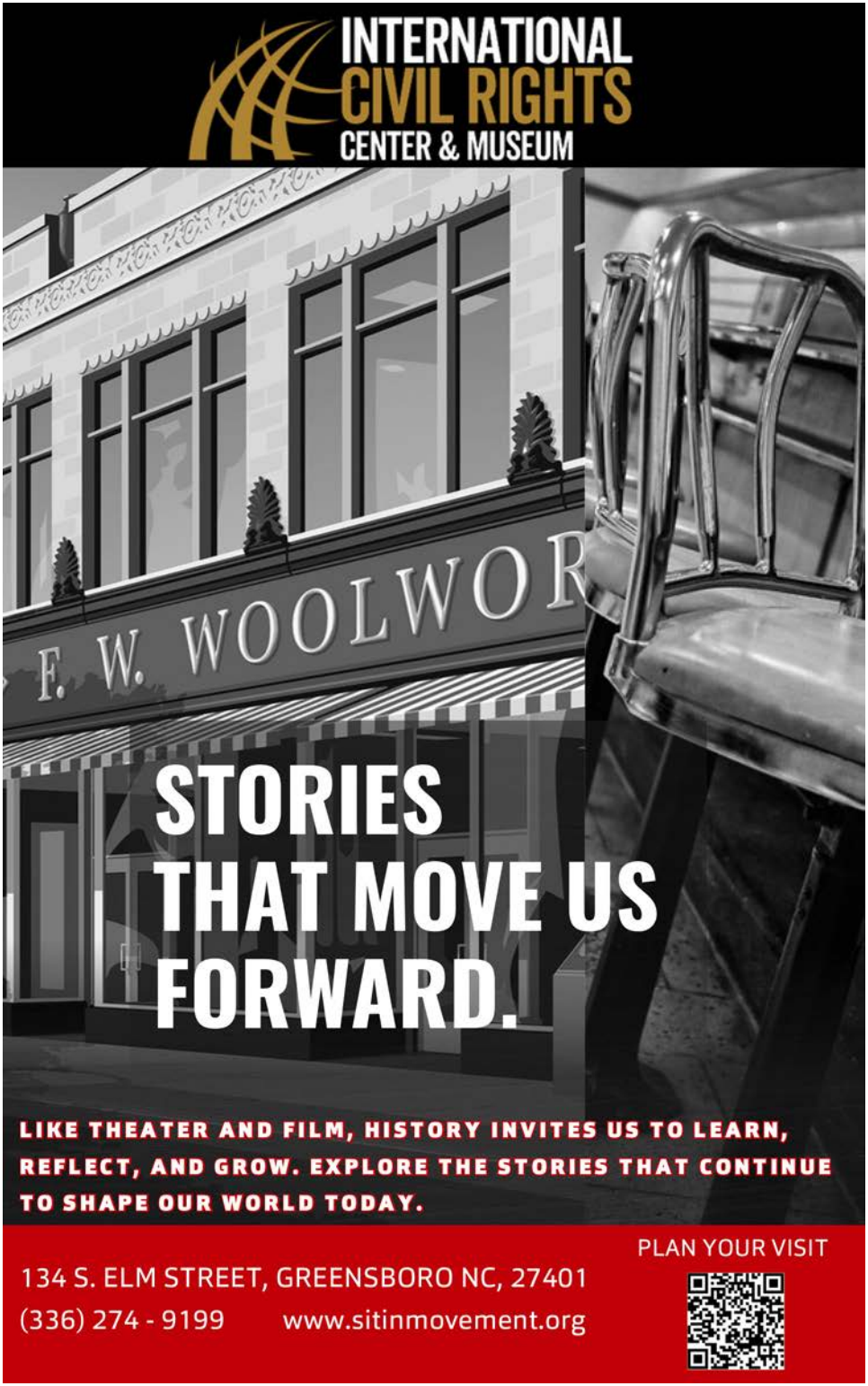
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Nico Amortegui, *Be a Wildflower*, 2025. © 2025 Nico Amortegui. Courtesy of the artist.

NOW OPEN DOWNTOWN

DISCOVER THE ART OF NOW IN NORTH CAROLINA

The North Carolina Museum of Art, Winston-Salem (formerly SECCA) is pleased to announce a new exhibition and program space, now open in the heart of downtown Winston-Salem.

Open Wednesday through Sunday, the space invites visitors to interact with art and artists, generate ideas and connections, and support our state's creative ecosystem.

GALLERY HOURS

WEDNESDAY	1PM	→	5PM
THURSDAY	1PM	→	7PM
FRIDAY	1PM	→	5PM
SATURDAY	11AM	→	5PM
SUNDAY	1PM	→	5PM

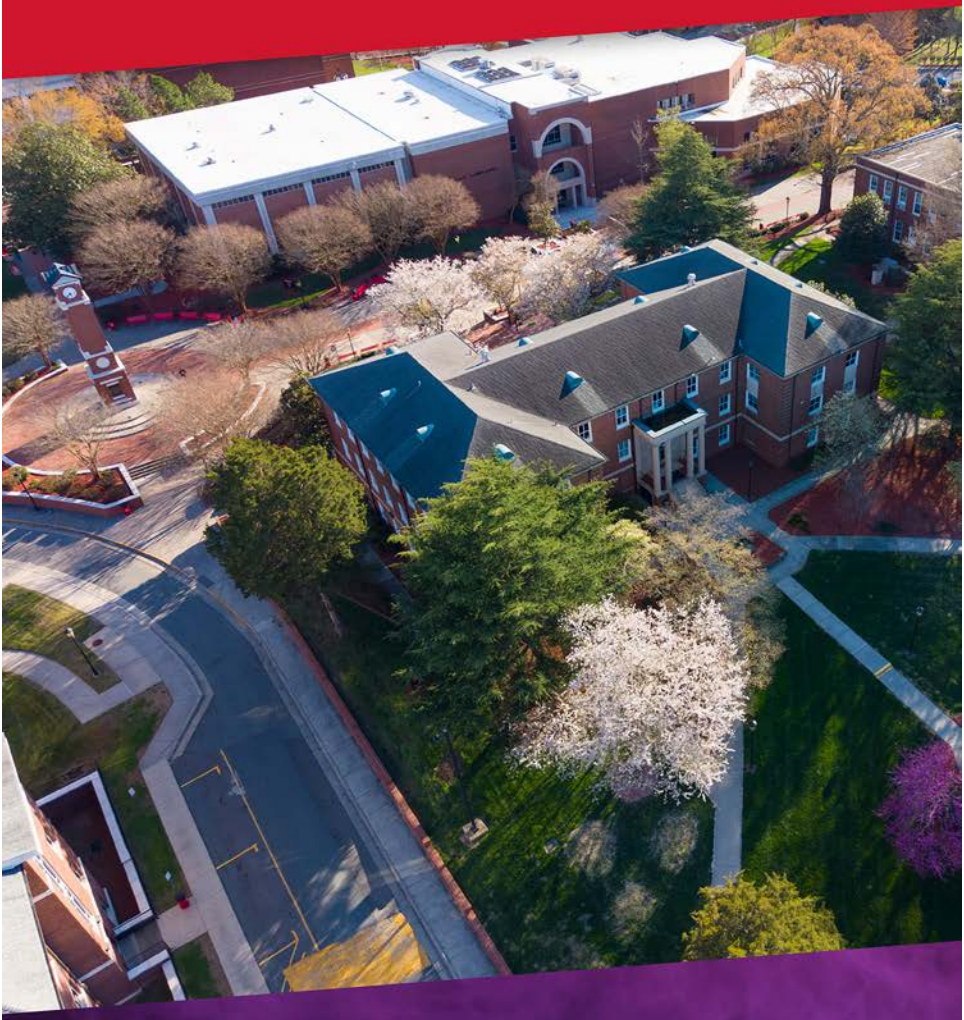
NCMA Winston-Salem Downtown is centrally located at
400 W Fourth St, Suite #130

Admission is free and open to the public. Learn more at
www.ncmawinstonsalem.gov

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

welcomes

the INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL



INTERNATIONAL BLACK THEATRE FESTIVAL®

A NC Black Rep Experience

WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

BTU
BLACK THEATRE UNITED
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TOWN HALL
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