

Portland Center Stage at

**THE ARMORY**  
PRESENTS

*His Eye is on the Sparrow*

Written by Larry Parr

Directed by Timothy Douglas

**February 4 – March 19, 2017**

**In the Ellyn Bye Studio**

Artistic Director | Chris Coleman

Portland Center Stage at

**THE ARMORY**  
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***His Eye is on the Sparrow***

**Written by Larry Parr**

**Directed by Timothy Douglas**

**Music Director/  
Piano Player  
Darius Smith**

**Scenic Designer  
Scott Bradley**

**Costume Designer  
Alison Heryer**

**Lighting Designer  
Peter Maradudin**

**Sound Designer  
Casi Pacilio**

**Stage Manager  
Kelsey Daye Lutz**

**Production Assistant  
Kristen Mun**

**Casting  
Harriet Bass**

**With Maiesha McQueen as Ethel Waters**

**Performed with one intermission.**

The photo, video or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

*The Actor and Stage Manager employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

# SONG LIST

## ACT I

### HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW

1912, Civilla D. Martin, Charles H. Gabriel

### MASCULINE WOMEN, FEMININE MEN

1926, E. Leslie, J. V. Monaco

### FRANKIE AND JOHNNY, traditional

### HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW, reprise

### I DON'T DIG YOU JACK

Jack Wilson

### SWEET GEORGIA BROWN

1925, Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard, Kenneth Casey

### THIS JOINT IS JUMPIN'

1938, J. C. Johnson, Andy Razaf, Thomas Waller, Chappell & Co.

### LITTLE BLACK BOY

1934, J. C. Johnson, George Whiting, Record Music Publishing Company

### OLD MAN HARLEM

1933, Rudy Vallee, Hoagy Carmichael, Southern Music Company

## SONG LIST CONT.

### ACT II

#### DINAH

1925, Sam Lewis, Joe Young, Harry Akst

#### TAKING A CHANCE ON LOVE

1940, John La Touche, Vernon Duke, EMI

#### AM I BLUE?

1929, Grant Clarke, Harry Akst, Warner/Chappell Music

#### STORMY WEATHER

1933, Ted Koehler, Harold Arlen, S. A. Music Co.

#### SUPPERTIME

1933, Irving Berlin, Irving Berlin Music Co.

#### CABIN IN THE SKY

1940, John La Touche, Vernon Duke, EMI

#### BLACK AND BLUE

1929, Fats Waller, Harry Brooks, Warner/Chapell Music

HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW, reprise

## A LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

### Chris Coleman

My first recollection of Miss Ethel Waters was hearing her sing with the Billy Graham Crusade. I was probably 11 or 12, and our church prepared for months to travel downtown to the Atlanta stadium every night for a week. My folks were singing in the ‘choir,’ and I think my sister and I learned some of the songs as well. I don’t recall much about the sermons, but I do remember the warm humanity of Waters’ songs: deep, resonant, truthful, joyful. My mom (whose vocal range was similar to Waters’) sang “I sing because I’m happy” around the house for months.

Only many years later did I learn that this same woman had been one of the early pioneers in the American blues and jazz scenes, one of the most successful recording artists in the world in the 1920s and 30s, the highest-paid performer on Broadway at one point, only the second black woman nominated for an Academy Award, and the first to be featured on a television show.

She was a pioneer, and pioneers are not always rewarded for their courage. What I find exciting about *His Eye is on the Sparrow*, is that we not only get to revisit so many of this extraordinary musician’s memorable tunes, but we also get a real window into the intense challenges she faced along her journey.

Together with *Hold These Truths* and *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin* this season, we continue our conversation about our culture’s relationship with the outsider.

Enjoy.

## FEATURE | FLY AWAY HOME

### ETHEL WATERS & “HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW”

By **Literary Manager Benjamin Fainstein**

In a poignant scene from the 1952 film adaptation of Carson McCullers’ novel *The Member of the Wedding*, Ethel Waters, in the role of Berenice Sadie Brown, cradles two dejected children while singing “His Eye is on the Sparrow” without accompaniment. She quivers with complication. From her throat comes the silvery and exact vocal tone that entranced listeners throughout her nearly 60-year career, but her musical phrasing hints at a private pain soon confirmed in her wistful gaze. The camera zooms in, the children disappear from view, and Waters’ face fills the screen.

“Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home,” Berenice sings, “when Jesus is my portion?” Her eyes grow dewy, but Waters teeters on the edge of sentimentality without falling over. She hints at, but does not explicitly disclose, Berenice’s complexity of emotion. The camera pulls back when Waters reaches the lyrics “I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free.” The cinematic framing of the scene strongly suggests that the white children pressed to Berenice’s bosom have not picked up on their black housekeeper’s depth of feeling, and Berenice moves on from her bittersweet reverie.

“His Eye is on the Sparrow” meant a great deal to Waters offscreen as well, and she masterfully captured the existential tug-of-war embedded in the song. The lyrics bespeak a character trying to reconcile a profound sadness with the recognition that her faith inherently protects her from that very same anguish. The song was

brought to light by two white musicians in 1905, composer Charles Hutchinson Gabriel and Civilla Durfee Martin, who penned the lyrics after Martin was moved by the resilient faith of a bedridden friend. The words took inspiration from the Book of Matthew, when Jesus advises that since God cares for each little sparrow and “ye are of more worth than many sparrows,” there is every reason to take heart and trust in the Lord. The tune soon became a staple of African American gospel music, and while the legendary Mahalia Jackson’s recording was the one inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2010, it was Ethel Waters who was most closely associated with the hymn until the late 1950s.

Waters, who lived from 1896-1977, titled her first autobiography after the song in 1951. In the early decades of the 20th century, she had risen to fame as a singer of jazz, blues and ragtime standards. She became a celebrity of the Harlem Renaissance, then began appearing in films and on Broadway. In 1949, Waters became the second African American to be nominated for an Academy Award. In 1957, after a period of personal and professional turbulence, she sang at her first Billy Graham Crusade at Madison Square Garden. Graham’s popularity had been growing at an exponential rate, and his evangelist revival meetings attracted millions of followers. Graham had opposed racial segregation amongst his crowds, saying in Mississippi in 1952 that Christianity was neither white nor black, and that Christ belonged to all people. After Waters’ first appearance for Graham’s church, she remained an important member of his circle and sang at his Crusades until 1976.

Gospel music was indelibly marked by “His Eye is on the Sparrow,” which has been recorded by scores of artists, including Whitney Houston, Lauryn Hill, Rosetta Tharpe and Gladys Knight. The song

acknowledges that agony is a part of human life, yet still insists on hope and faith. Looking back on Ethel Waters' life, it seems clear she did the same.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Maiesha McQueen**

#### **Ethel Waters**

Maiesha McQueen is honored and thrilled to be returning to The Armory in *His Eye is on the Sparrow*. She was last seen on The Armory main stage in the 2015 production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Regional credits include: *'Da Kink in My Hair* (Horizon Theatre, Atlanta); *Sirens of Song* (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); *Chasin' Dem Blues* (True Colors Theatre, Atlanta); *Black Nativity* (Dominion Productions, Atlanta); *In the Red and Brown Water* (PG Entertainment, GA); *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Show Boat*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Guys and Dolls* (Forestburgh Playhouse, NY). Film credits include: *DayBlack* (ArtistDirector Media), *Down to Earth* (Paramount Pictures). Maiesha has traveled the globe as a leading ensemble member and musical composer for the touring company Progress Theatre, whose work has been presented at spaces such as The Public Theater, 14<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse, The Kennedy Center, The Apollo Theatre and World Music Festival in Amsterdam. She holds a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, a master's in education from Fordham University, and has spent over a decade teaching in both public and private sectors. Maiesha would like to thank her family and "tribe" for their unconditional love and support! [maieshamcqueen.net](http://maieshamcqueen.net)



## **Larry Parr**

### **Playwright**

Larry Parr has had hundreds of regional productions and is a Dramatist Guild member. Awards and honors include: *Hi-Hat Hattie* – Kansas City’s Drama Desk Award for Best Musical, Florida Individual Artist Recipient, American Cinema Foundation’s First Prize for Screenwriting; *My Castle's Rockin'* – Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre’s ScriptFest, the first play by a white playwright produced in the history of the National Black Theatre Festival; *Invasion of Privacy* – 1999 Gold Coast Players Best Play Award, The National Arts Club’s Playwrights First Award in Manhattan, Ashland New Play Festival, Theatre Conspiracy’s New Play Competition, Florida Individual Artist Recipient, DeZart Performs Audience Favorite+; *Sundew* – Southern Appalachian Repertory Theater’s Annual Play Competition; *His Eye is on the Sparrow* – Florida Individual Artist Fellowship Recipient, The Sarasota County Arts Council’s John Ringling Fellowship Grant, Daytony Award for Best Overall Production; *Shunned* – Southern Appalachian Repertory Theater’s ScriptFest Winner, Utah Shakespeare Festival, New American Playwrights Project, Julie Harris Playwright Award Finalist; winner of Florida Studio Theatre’s Short Play Competition nine years in a row; winner of Stages 1993; winner of the 1994 Porter Fleming Playwriting Competition; and a recipient of the Barbara Anton Playwriting Award from Florida Studio Theatre, 2000 and 2010. [larryparr.info](http://larryparr.info)

## **Timothy Douglas**

### **Director**

Timothy Douglas returns after directing the productions of *Anna in the Tropics* and *A Feminine Ending*. He is a New York based theater director who currently serves as an associate artist at Cincinnati

Playhouse in the Park, where he has staged seven productions, including the world premiere of Keith Josef Adkins' *Safe House*. Recent credits include *Seven Guitars* for Yale Repertory Theatre; *Disgraced* and *King Hedley II* for Arena Stage; *Father Comes Home from the Wars, parts 1, 2 and 3*, for Round House Theatre; *Richard II* for Shakespeare & Company; *BRONTE: A Portrait of Charlotte* presented Off-Broadway; and the development of Ione Lloyd's *Eve's Song* for Sundance Theatre Institute/MENA Lab in Morocco. Timothy has directed nationally and internationally and counts among his many productions the world premieres of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* for Yale Repertory Theatre; Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect* for Silk Road Rising (2013 Jeff Award for Best New Work); *Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea* (six Helen Hayes Award nominations) for Theater Alliance; the Off-Broadway premiere of a new translation/adaptation of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*; as well as his critically acclaimed Caribbean-inspired *Much Ado About Nothing* for Folger Shakespeare Theatre. He was the associate artistic director at Actors Theatre of Louisville, 2001-2004, where he directed 16 productions including three Humana Festival premieres. The list of theaters Timothy has made productions for include American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Cleveland Playhouse, Downstage (New Zealand), Guthrie Theater, Juilliard, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Pioneer Theatre Company, Pittsburgh Public Theater, Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre (associate artist, 2001-2005), PlayMakers Repertory Company, South Coast Repertory, Steppenwolf Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and many others. Timothy earned his M.F.A. from Yale School of Drama. [timothydouglas.org](http://timothydouglas.org)

## **Darius Smith**

### **Music Director/Piano Player**

Off-Broadway: *Futurity*, *Three Little Birds*. DC area: Signature Theater: *Jelly's Last Jam*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *Soon*, *Dreamgirls* (Associate Music Director); Olney Theatre Center: *The Producers*, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*, *Once on this Island*; Studio Theatre: *Choir Boy*, *Carrie: The Musical*; MetroStage: *Glimpses of the Moon*; Adventure Theater-MTC: *Petit Rouge*, *Go, Dog, Go*; *Charlie and the Purple Crayon*, *Big*; and many others in the DC area. Original works: *Marcus Nate is Alive and Great and Living in Detroit* (workshop), *The Snowy Day* (Best TYA Production Helen Hayes nomination); *U.G.L.Y.* (Signature Theater SigWorks MT Lab, Kennedy Center Page-to-Stage); *Songs in the Key of Chocolate* (Signature Theatre Summer Cabaret Series). Cabarets: with Helen Hayes Award winners, Nova Y. Payton and Natascia Diaz. Awards: 2016 San Francisco Theatre Critics Award - Outstanding Music Direction (*Choir Boy*), 2015 Signature Theatre Young Artist Citation, 2015 Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Competition Finalist. Upcoming: *Raisin*, *The Wiz*.

## **Scott Bradley**

### **Scenic Designer**

Scott Bradley previously designed *Fences* at The Armory. Broadway: premieres of August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* (Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for Best Set Design) and *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Drama Desk Award for Best Set Design). Recent openings: *Gloria*, NYU Tisch School of the Arts; *Love's Labour's Lost*, Boston Commonwealth Shakespeare Company; *A View from the Bridge*, Seattle Repertory Theatre; *The Crucible*, Cleveland Play House; *Brownsville Song*, Long Wharf Theater; *Much Ado About Nothing*, Oregon Shakespeare Festival;

*Chapatti*, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Other notable productions: world premiere of Samuel D. Hunter's *A Great Wilderness* (Seattle Repertory Theatre); *Eurydice* by Sarah Ruhl and *The Notebooks of Leonardo de Vinci* by Mary Zimmerman (Second Stage Theatre, Lucille Lortel nominations for both productions). Television: set designer for *Late Night with David Letterman*. Film: production designer for Ang Lee's *Pushing Hands*. Graduate of Yale School of Drama.

## **Alison Heryer**

### **Costume Designer**

Alison Heryer is a costume designer for theater, film and print. She is thrilled to be returning to The Armory, after designing costumes for *The Oregon Trail*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Our Town*, *Three Days of Rain* and *Threesome*. Other design credits include productions with Steppenwolf Theatre Company, 59E59 Theaters, La MaMa, The New Victory Theater, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Portland Opera, Artists Repertory Theatre and The Hypocrites. She has exhibited work at the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Austin Museum of Modern Art, and Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space. Recent awards include the ArtsKC Inspiration Grant, the Austin Critics Table Award and a 2016 Drammy. Alison is an assistant professor of art practice in the School of Art + Design at Portland State University and a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829. [alisonheryerdesign.com](http://alisonheryerdesign.com)

## **Peter Maradudin**

### **Lighting Designer**

Peter Maradudin is pleased to return to The Armory, where previous work includes *Great Expectations*, *Threesome*, *Othello*, *Ragtime*, *Crazy Enough*, *West Side Story*, *Anna in the*

*Tropics, Hamlet, King Lear and Terra Nova*, among many others. He is also the lighting designer for the lobby spaces of The Armory. On Broadway, he designed the lighting for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Kentucky Cycle*. Off-Broadway he designed *Threesome, Hurrah at Last* and *Ballad of Yachiyo*. Peter has designed more than 300 productions for such companies as the Guthrie Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Old Globe Theatre and South Coast Repertory. He is the studio director of the architectural lighting group StudioK1, and is the author, under his pen name Peter Alexei, of the novels *The Masked Avenger* and *The Queen of Spades*.

## **Casi Pacilio**

### **Sound Designer**

Casi's home base is The Armory, where recent credits include *The Oregon Trail, Little Shop of Horrors, A Streetcar Named Desire, Great Expectations, Ain't Misbehavin', Three Days of Rain, Cyrano; Other Desert Cities, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, A Small Fire* and *Chinglish* with composer Jana Crenshaw; and ten seasons of JAW. National shows: Holcombe Waller's *Surfacing* and *Wayfinders; Left Hand of Darkness, My Mind is Like an Open Meadow* (Drammy Award, 2011), *Something's Got Ahold Of My Heart* and *PEP TALK* for Hand2Mouth Theatre. Other credits include Squonk Opera's *Bigmorgasbord-WunderWerk* (Broadway, PS122, national and international tours); *I Am My Own Wife, I Think I Like Girls* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Playland, 10 Fingers* and *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* (City Theatre, PA). Film credits include *Creation of*

*Destiny, Out of Our Time* and *A Powerful Thang*. Imagineer/maker of the Eat Me Machine, a dessert vending machine.

## **Kelsey Daye Lutz**

### **Stage Manager**

The Armory credits include: stage manager for *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin, Hold These Truths, The Pianist of Willesden Lane, Each and Every Thing, Forever, The Santaland Diaries, The Lion, The People's Republic of Portland* (second engagement), *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, The Typographer's Dream, The Last Five Years* and *A Small Fire*; and production assistant for *Clybourne Park, Venus in Fur, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The North Plan* and *Anna Karenina*. Kelsey Daye is a graduate of University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She would like to thank her pups for all their unconditional love, and Shamus for being wonderful.

## **Kristen Mun**

### **Production Assistant**

Kristen Mun is originally from Hawaii and graduated from Southern Oregon University with a B.F.A. in Stage Management. This is her fourth season at The Armory, where previous credits include: production assistant on *The Santaland Diaries* (2015 and 2016), *Hold These Truths, A Streetcar Named Desire, Each and Every Thing, Forever, Three Days of Rain, Threesome, LIZZIE* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Outside of Portland, she has worked at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Idaho Repertory Theatre and Actors Theater of Louisville. In Portland, she has worked as a production assistant and stage manager with theater companies including Artists Repertory Theatre (*And So It Goes ...* and *Red Herring*), Oregon Children's Theatre (*A Year with Frog and Toad, Charlotte's Web, Ivy and Bean* and *Junie B. Jones*) and Broadway Rose Theatre

Company (*Oklahoma!*). Outside of stage managing, Kristen is a fight choreographer and stage combat teacher. She is forever grateful to Adam and her family for their love and support.

## **Chris Coleman**

### **Artistic Director**

Chris joined Portland Center Stage at The Armory as artistic director in 2000. Before coming to Portland, Chris was the artistic director at Actor's Express in Atlanta, a company he co-founded in the basement of an old church in 1988. Chris returned to Atlanta in 2015 to direct the world premiere of *Edward Foote* at Alliance Theatre (Suzi Bass Award for Best Direction, Best Production and Best World Premiere). Other recent directing credits include the Off-Broadway debut of *Threesome* at 59E59 Theaters; a production that had its world premiere at The Armory. Chris has directed at theaters across the country, including Actor's Theater of Louisville, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, ACT Theatre (Seattle), The Alliance, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop and Center Stage (Baltimore). A native Atlantan, Chris holds a B.F.A. from Baylor University and an M.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He is currently the board president for the Cultural Advocacy Coalition. Chris and his husband, Rodney Hicks – who is appearing in the new musical *Come From Away*, which opens on Broadway in March – are the proud parents of an 18-lb Jack Russell/Lab mix, and a 110-lb English Blockhead Yellow Lab. For the past three years, Chris has had the honor of serving as the director for the Oregon Leadership Summit.

### **Portland Center Stage at The Armory**

Portland Center Stage at The Armory is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country.

Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since 2000. An estimated 150,000 people visit The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classical, contemporary and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. Eleven productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events — created in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 20 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. The Northwest Stories series was recently launched to develop and produce works about, or by artists from, the Northwest region. Home to two theaters, The Armory was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

### LEAD CORPORATE CHAMPION

#### **Umpqua Bank**

Actors take chances. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they don't. But none of these actors would be on stage tonight without taking chances. It's part of growth, and we're all made to grow. That's why we're such a proud supporter of Portland Center Stage. Let this performance inspire you to take the chances that power your own growth.