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THE SPIRITUALS PROJECT

in collaboration with



presents

Would You Harbor Me? Voices from the Broken Path



featuring

The Spirituals Project Choir

Bennie Williams, Artistic Director

John Hubert, Choir Director

Terry Jackson, Accompanist

with Guest Artistic Director

Stephen Brackett

Brer Rabbit of FLOBOTS

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JUNE SWANER GATES CONCERT HALL

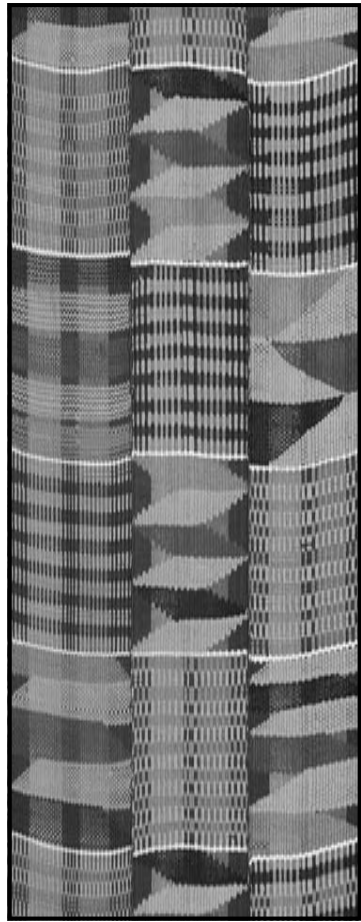
Our sincere thanks to composer

Ysaye Maria Barnwell

for permission to use the title of her song,

“Would You Harbor Me?”

Asante Kente



The colorful stoles draped over the hearts of members of The Spirituals Project Choir are known as *kente* cloth. The icon of African cultural heritage around the world, Asante kente is identified by its dazzling, multi-colored patterns of bright colors, geometric shapes and bold designs. Kente is made by the Asante and Ewe peoples of Western Africa and is the best known of all African textiles. Kente comes from the word *kenten*, which means “basket.” The Asante also refer to kente as *nwentoma* or “woven cloth.”

Historically, kente was the cloth of kings. The king (*asantehene*) controlled the production and use of kente, among his household, officials and political allies. Over time, the use of kente became more widespread. Unlike the royal family, however, an individual who owns kente today most likely owns one cloth that is worn on multiple occasions. Kente is comparable to an evening gown or tuxedo in Western cultures. Kente proudly worn or used at ceremonial occasions always brings honor and prestige to the proceedings.

In The Spirituals Project Choir, we have adopted the kente cloth designs as a symbolic reflection of our organization’s values. New choir members participate in a powerful ceremony before their first public performance, during which they are awarded their personal kente cloths. From that point forward, they are forever recognized as valued members of our unique community. The wearing of the kente cloth by every single member of our community symbolizes our common dedication to our mission, while the use of multiple designs reflects our strong belief in the power of unity through diversity.



THE SPIRITUALS PROJECT

A Message from
Dr. Arthur C. Jones, *Founder and Chair*
and Amani Ali, *Executive Director*

We are truly pleased that you have chosen to join us for our eighth annual Newman Center concert, once again featuring our multi-ethnic, multi-generational Spirituals Project Choir, conducted by **Artistic Director Bennie L. Williams** and **Choir Director John Hubert**. This year we have the honor of collaborating with **Guest Artistic Director Stephen Brackett** (aka Brer Rabbit) from Flobots.org, the non-profit arm of the internationally renowned hip hop band **Flobots**. With a special emphasis on young people, **Flobots.org** works to create positive social change, using music and poetry as a tool for empowerment, community building, leadership development and action. For tonight’s program Stephen Brackett has assembled a cadre of young artists to perform original poetic pieces that complement the music of the Spirituals Project Choir. He has also supervised the recording of videotaped interviews with diverse community leaders and students. Excerpts of those interviews will be interspersed with the music and poetry that you will hear tonight.

Our theme this year, **“Would You Harbor Me?: Voices from the Broken Path.”** is drawn from the title of a song composed by **Sweet Honey in the Rock** artist **Ysaye Barnwell**, which raises the challenging question, “Would You Harbor Me?,” particularly if “harboring me” would put your own safety or reputation at risk. In this vein, the search for a safe harbor or home in the face of injustice is a multi-layered human experience. It is an experience that spans centuries of American history, from the time of chattel slavery, when African women and men in bondage fought for their right to freedom, to the current struggles of immigrant families, seeking to find a way to live, love and work amidst a tangle of hostile barriers. Tonight we seek to illuminate the universally human dimensions of such experiences, from the emotional and spiritual extremes of despair and, paradoxically, hope.

As always, we are indebted to all of our sponsors. Please find them all listed in the program. Through the quality of our work, we aim consistently to honor their generous contributions. Additionally, we are deeply grateful to **Helen Thorpe**, author of *Just Like Us: The True Story of Mexican Girls Coming of Age in America* and the honorary hostess of tonight’s program. (Ms. Thorpe is also First Lady-Elect of Colorado!). Beyond serving as hostess tonight, Ms. Thorpe gave her valuable time to participate in interviews, excerpts of which you will view tonight.

A most enthusiastic “thank you” goes out to our staff, our Board of Directors and the numerous volunteers who continue to make it possible for us to do what we do. We also thank Spirituals Project Program Committee Chair **Yvette Keesee**, and **Jami Duffy**, from **Flobots.org**, who skillfully organized the planning for our special Friday evening youth preview program. The **Denver Mayor’s Office for Education and Children** also awarded a generous grant to support additional preliminary programming for some of the children attending the Friday night program.

Finally, we can’t say enough to thank the women and men from all walks of life who comprise the **Spirituals Project Choir**, rehearsing diligently week after week and serving as dynamic ambassadors in spreading the word about the continuing significance of the spirituals in the twenty-first century.

We invite you to visit our website (**www.SpiritualsProject.org**) to learn more about the programs and initiatives of The Spirituals Project, and we hope to see you at future events.

Would You Harbor Me?

Voices from the Broken Path

Bennie L. Williams
Artistic Director

John Hubert
Choir Director

Terry Jackson
Accompanist

Stephen Brackett
Guest Artistic Director

**Panama Soweto, Bobby LeFebre, Adrian Molina,
Isis, Matt Zambrano, Jessica Lopez**
Guest Poets

Program

Drum Invocation

Poetic Response

City Called Heaven

I'm Building Me a Home

arr. Hall Johnson

arr. Uzee Brown, Jr.

performed by Sankofa

Claurice McCoy and Anne Comstock, soloists

Poetic Response

Would You Harbor Me?

Ysaye M. Barnwell

performed by SPC Ensemble

I'm Determined to Walk With Jesus

arr. Raymond Wise

Poetic Response

Walk Together, Children

arr. Moses Hogan

Poetic Response

Sweet Home

Luann Dodge and Duane Smith, soloists

Adrian Molina, spoken word

arr. Wendell Whalum

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

arr. Rosephanye Powell

Dide ta Deo

arr. Uzee Brown, Jr.

Translation: "That we are back home, Good Father, we give thee thanks.

We journeyed safely, we arrived safely; we praise thee, Jesus Christ."

Intermission



THE SPIRITUALS PROJECT

ARTHUR JONES BALM IN GILEAD SOCIETY

The Arthur Jones Balm in Gilead Society is comprised of individuals who are dedicated to the mission of The Spirituals Project and have contributed significant financial support to the organization. Founding members denoted by *.

2010 Members

Norman & Pam Anderson*
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Founder and Chair

Arthur C. Jones

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Dee Galloway, *Program Coordinator*
Bennie L. Williams, *Artistic Director*
John Hubert, *Choir Director*
Terry Jackson, *Accompanist*

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Charles Fortney,
Choir Council Representative
Aimee Justice-Lundt,
Choir Council Representative

Our Gratitude and Thanks

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Dee Galloway
John Hubert
Arthur C. Jones
Claurice McCoy
Bennie L. Williams

Musical Directors

Bennie L. Williams
John Hubert

Accompanist

Terry Jackson

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Goin’ Home

Antonín Dvořák

words and adaptation by William Arms Fisher

Arthur C. Jones, soloist

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Margaret Bonds

Poetic Response

I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

arr. Stacey V. Gibbs

Poetic Response

We Are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder

arr. Horace Clarence Boyer

Poetic Response

I Don’t Feel No Ways Tired

James Cleveland
arr. The Spirituals Project Choir

Claurice McCoy, soloist

- END -

Youth Education Night Participants

Friday, November 19, 2010

Schools	Organizations	
University of Denver	Ken Caryl Middle School	Denver Children's Home
The Women’s College	Lakewood High School	El Centro Humanitario
Social justice Living & Learning Community		Ethnic College Counseling Center
DU Student Video Participants		Housing Colorado
Denver Public Schools	Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.	Advocacy Programs
Cole Middle School	Denver Chapter - I.V.Y. League	Mile High Youth Corps
Denver School of the Arts		Savio House
East High School		Urban Peak
North High School	Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.	Veterans of Hope Project
Lake Middle School	Denver Alumnae Chapter - Rhoer Club	Ambassadors of Hope
Rachel B. Noel Middle School		Youth on Record
Place Bridge Academy	African Community Center	
Skinner Middle School	Agape Christian Center	
Jefferson Public Schools	Challenge Denver	

Would You Harbor Me?

Program Guide

The message in our program tonight comes through the interplay of singing, personal testimony, and spoken word art. In this tri-part artistic mix, we seek to illuminate the now centuries-old story of women and men seeking to find refuge in a place called “home,” even as they suffer experiences of brutality, humiliation and depersonalization. “Home,” of course, is multi-layered. It’s a physical place. It’s a symbolic place. It’s a place of comfort and solace that often resides in the center of the human spirit. And the story – seeking home – joins through time the experiences of such seemingly disparate communities as African Americans in slavery, immigrants across the globe seeking refuge from poverty and oppression, and all those in all places and all times who struggle to find a way out of victimization, oppression and injustice.

1st Half

The spirituals, in essence, are the songs passed down to us from women and men in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries who were wrenched away from their homes in Africa and forced into bondage in North America. In the first half of tonight’s program, the choir performs contemporary choral arrangements of old spirituals that express, again and again, a desperate yearning for a welcoming home in the midst of a spiritually barren landscape. “I heard of a City called Heaven,” the first song exclaims, for example, and “I’ve started to make it my home.” Another song expresses the joy accompanying the decision to be in charge of the metaphorically home-building task: “I’m building me a home!” And yet another elaborates on what it would be like to move in: “Sweet home!” At the same time, the singers are grounded in the enormity of the emotional task: “Sometimes I feel like a motherless child!”

In the middle of all of this is a contemporary song, “Would You Harbor Me?,” from which the title of tonight’s program is drawn. It was written by Ysaye Maria Barnwell, singer and songwriter for the famed women’s a cappella singing group *Sweet Honey in the Rock*. Barnwell’s song offers a challenge to any of us who might be tempted to remain in the protective harbor of our own homes while there are others among us who are left unprotected. The challenge is to *you*, and to *me*, and to *us*! “Would you harbor me? . . . Would I harbor you?” Listen carefully . . . Who would you harbor? Who would I harbor? And who not?

The women and men we interviewed for tonight’s program expressed many different ideas about what home means to them. We’ve captured some of their comments in video clips. Listen to their words, and also think about what you would say. What does home mean to you?

The first half of the program ends with the choir singing a Nigerian Christian folk song, “Dide ta Deo,” which is a celebratory song about returning home after a long journey. Its connection to tonight’s theme is so strong that we couldn’t resist including it. The words, in translation, are: “That we are back home, good Father, we give Thee thanks. We journeyed safely, we arrived safely; we praise Thee, Jesus Christ.”

As this program guide went to press our spoken word artists were listening to all these songs and recorded testimonies, and were creating their own poetic responses. Tonight they are performing their finished works for us. Again, listen carefully. Add their poems to the mix of sounds, symbols and words that you are taking in. Think about what they are saying, and what you might say in response!

2nd Half

Ultimately, the ability to find hope in the midst of despair is aided by the forging of empowering communities. Coming together in community creates an insurmountable force for collective healing and social justice. In parallel to songs about community, our spoken word artists offer collective, rather than individual poems.

In the middle of this section of the program the choir performs an original song by the African American composer Margaret Bonds, written to the text of the famous Langston Hughes poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers.” The song, and Hughes’ poem, speak not only to the strength of a contemporary communal voice, but to the added power that stems from a relationship with the community of the ancestors. As he encounters the ancestors of his African heritage, Hughes exclaims that he has “known rivers, ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.”

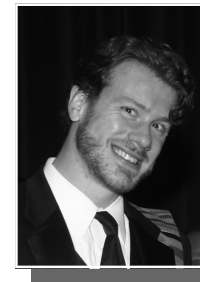
We conclude by raising the question of how it is possible for oppressed people to sing, triumphantly, “I don’t feel no ways tired!” This is a question we hope you will grapple with for yourself as you leave the hall tonight.



Bennie L. Williams

Artistic Director

Bennie L. Williams was born and educated in Marshall, Texas and graduated from Bishop College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in piano. Later, she received the Master of Music Degree in Choral Conducting and Piano from Indiana University at Bloomington. She began her teaching career in Dallas and moved to Denver in 1970. After a rewarding career teaching vocal music in the Denver Public School System at Hamilton and Merrill Middle Schools and George Washington High School, she retired in 1998. Ms. Williams was a recent recipient of an annual award given by the National Association of Negro Musicians, recognizing years of contribution to the musical education and encouragement of young people.



John Hubert

Choir Director

John Hubert is the Director of Music at the First Universalist Church of Denver and teaches private voice lessons through his studio, Make a Joyful Noise! John received a bachelor’s degree in music from Truman State University and a master’s degree in music from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has performed extensively throughout the Denver metro area as a soloist and operatic/musical theatre performer. John also serves on the board of directors for JUC Live!, a performing arts series in Golden, Colorado.



Terry Jackson

Accompanist

Terry Jackson is a Denver native and comes from a rich musical heritage. His great-grandfather was a St. Louis jazz great, and his aunt is an accomplished gospel and classical pianist. He enjoys several genres of music and has worked with various choral groups along the Front Range as soloist, conductor and accompanist. Terry holds a bachelor’s degree in Electrical Engineering from Colorado State University and an MBA from the University of Denver, but expression through song is his passion and purpose.



Dee Galloway

Program Coordinator

Dee Galloway is a "very-nearly" Denver native who attended Denver Public Schools. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English with a minor in Business from the University of Denver, where Dr. Art Jones was one of her professors. Dee is a gifted poet whose poem, “They Slice the Air” was commissioned by The Spirituals Project in 2006 to commemorate the founding of the Balm in Gilead Society. She is also an accomplished choral performer who has sung with the New York Choral Society, The Colorado Chorale, and the Denver Women Chorus. She currently performs with the Southern Journey ensemble. Dee finds that the spirituals continue to sustain her through good times and bad, and she considers them to be a vital element in the foundation of her life.



THE SPIRITUALS PROJECT

HONORING OUR PAST, HEALING OUR PRESENT, TRANSFORMING OUR FUTURE
WITH POWER, PASSION AND PURPOSE

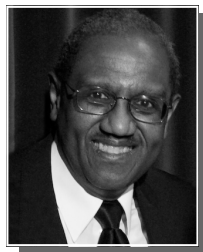
Mission

To preserve and revitalize the music and teachings of the sacred songs called “spirituals,” created and first sung by enslaved Africans in America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Guiding Vision

The Spirituals Project is a broad-based initiative to explore the many, varied dimensions of African American spirituals as art form, tradition and tool; and to invite all people to experience the joy and power of this dynamic music and gift from African Americans to the world.

Spirituals uplift in times of crisis, heal, comfort, inspire and instill hopes and dreams, thereby transforming individuals, communities, and whole societies. Our goal is to ensure that the spirituals will be passed on for many generations to come.



Dr. Arthur C. Jones - Founder and Chair

Dr. Arthur C. Jones brings his unique combination of experience as a scholar, clinical/community psychologist, and singer to The Spirituals Project, as well as a deep love for the spirituals and the lessons they teach. He earned his doctorate, in Clinical Psychology, from the University of Iowa in 1974 and in 1987, at age 41, he returned to singing – his childhood love – and studied voice for 14 years with Anne Van Etten in Aurora, Colorado. He is currently Clinical Professor of Culture and Psychology at The Women’s College of the University of Denver. He is also the faculty director of the university's Social Justice Living and Learning Community. Each year he teaches courses on African American music culture, including a course on the Spirituals and a course focused on the multi-layered cultural interconnections between all African American music genres. His book *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals* earned a First Time Author of a Book Award from the Catholic Press Association of America and he co-edited, with his brother Ferdinand Jones, *The Triumph of the Soul: Cultural and Psychological Aspects of African American Music*. Since 1991 he has presented lecture, concert and workshop programs on spirituals in university, church and community settings throughout the United States. Assisted by a dedicated group of community volunteers, Dr. Jones founded The Spirituals Project in 1998.



Amani Ali - Executive Director

Since his arrival a little over a year ago, Amani Ali has been moving The Spirituals Project at warp speed. He created The Spirituals Project’s new signature event, “The Red Gala,” which has quickly become a favorite in the fundraising community. Working with The Spirituals Project Board of Directors, he has re-branded the front office and created the Educational Institute - with a focus on young people - relocating it to the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver. In embracing a vision for the future, he is formulating The Spirituals Project’s new National Center for Performance and Research, to be located in the historic Mary Reed Hall on the DU campus, which will target specific groups for collaborative projects. Amani attended Howard University, studied law and is currently winding up his graduate studies for a MBA degree in strategic management at Regis University. He is married to popular multi-media journalist and CBS4 commentator Gloria Neal.

The Guest Artistic Director



Stephen Brackett

Stephen Brackett (*Brer Rabbit of Flobots*) is a co-founder and lead emcee for the internationally acclaimed hip-hop group **Flobots**. He is also a co-founding board member of **Flobots.org**, the non-profit arm of Flobots. With a special focus on young people, Flobots.org works to create positive social change, using music and poetry as a tool for empowerment, community building, leadership development and action. Brackett has long believed that the arts are a vital component of any movement. His work is a reflection of this belief, from his emceeing duties in Flobots, to his poetry performances across the city, and his new role as Chair of the Art 2 Action after school program committee at Flobots.org. Brackett first worked with the Spirituals Project

Choir in a collaborative performance piece during the finale of TedXDU, held at the University of Denver in the spring of 2010. This is Brackett’s first role as artistic director for the Spirituals Project.

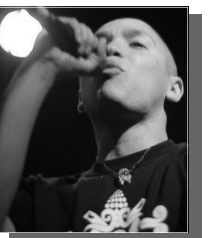
The Poets

Panama Soweto has been a part of the Denver Hip Hop scene since the mid-90’s. Graffiti and emcee’n have been his artistic focus since his youth. With a small recording workspace he creates a classic Hip Hop sound that has earned him a decent reputation as a producer. His beats are a mix of Jazz and classic boom bap Hip Hop, and have allowed him to spit rhymes and feature his style from Las Vegas to Minneapolis. He has also been involved in slam poetry since 2004. He earned a spot on the 2005 Denver Slam Team and recently was a member of the Denver Slam team that won the National Poetry Slam in Austin, Texas. He loves words, and follows them everywhere they go, from comics, to the daily news.



Bobby LeFebre is a Denver-born spoken word artist, actor, and activist. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology from Metropolitan State College of Denver in 2005, he became a Social Caseworker specializing in working with youth ages 12-18 that are on probation in the city of Denver. LeFebre's talent is not limited to just poetry. He is an actor with Denver's only Latino theatre, El Centro Su Teatro, and has performed in countless productions as an actor for the last ten years. Combining his passion for education and performance, LeFebre is founder of Cafe Cultura, Denver's largest monthly open mic and artistic expression event serving Denver's Latino community. The event was voted “Best Open Mic” in 2007, and has showcased both local and national talent.

Adrian Molina is a veteran Hip-Hopper, philosopher, college lecturer, and all-around human bridge. He is nationally renowned for his eclectic music collaborations and his work as a poet, storyteller, and youth advocate. Prolific and empowering, Molina carries mainstream appeal as a rapper while focusing his artistry on ideas and themes that defy the typical. From venue stages to cultural festivals to the university ballroom, the Denver resident hits the road regularly to share his work with audiences as diverse as his sound and his rhymes.





Isis presents herself and poetry honestly so that all can see the beauty and the scars that have made her a woman. She has been performing poetry professionally for 5 years, and has become synonymous with excellence. Isis poetry explores universal themes of empowerment, reclamation, love, abuse and the mistakes we all make. She has a tenderness at the center of her work, which comes thru in her performance. Isis' work has been described as, "a meritage of Saul Williams' passion and Maya Angelou's eloquence with an incendiary tongue." The grace and power she exudes from any stage are unparalleled. Each word interlocks to weave a tapestry of teaching, living, healing, and loving.

Matt Zambrano is a native poet, actor and playwright who is overjoyed to be part of this Spirituals Project event. He was part of the 2007 Mercury Cafe Slam Team, and was a semi-finalist at the National Poetry Slam. Matt works with area youth in writing and performing poetry, and is currently in his 2nd year of grad school at the National Theatre Conservatory.



Jessica Lopez was born in Paramount, California, now resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is pursuing her MFA at the University of New Mexico. She is the co-host of a writer's workshop at her local community center and is an active slam poet in the National and local scene. She is a former member of 2006 and 2007 City of Albuquerque Slam Team and the 2008 National Champion UNM Lobo Slam Team.



www.flobots.org

Founded in March of 2008 by the Denver band, **Flobots**, Flobots.org works to create positive social change by harnessing the power of music and the people who love it. Their innovative school and community-based programs combine music and arts outreach with social activism and leadership development. They provide hands-on training, education and therapeutic experiences to critical populations of youth, and equip young music lovers with the tools they need to foster positive community involvement. At the Flobots.org Community Space, kids and musicians, artists and community members come together to share, create and learn in a safe, inspiring environment. We invite you to join us!

Jami Duffy currently works as the Executive Director of Development and Resources at Flobots.org, a Denver-based social justice nonprofit that empowers youth through music, art and community organizing training. This fall, Duffy was awarded the Arthur C. Jones Community Award: The Spirituals Project “Sojourner for Excellence in Service to Humanity. Prior to joining Flobots.org, Duffy worked as the Social Justice and International Living and Learning Community Coordinator at the University of Denver.



Lockerpartners is a collaboration between **Emily Swank** and **Mary Grace Legg**. Together they write, direct, shoot and edit videos commissioned by organizations and individuals seeking a creative and contemporary way to promote and share their goals. The overarching feel and style of their filmmaking can be attributed to their fine arts backgrounds and shared love for documentary film/radio. Lockerpartners is honored to have worked with many focused and energetic people, and always strives to translate their client's characteristics in an artistic, honest, and intriguing manner.



2010-2011 Spirituals Project Choir



Bennie L. Williams **John Hubert** **Terry Jackson**
Artistic Director *Choir Director* *Accompanist*

<u>Soprano</u> Courtnee Brown * ◇ Harriet Butcher Minnie Cassell Joyce Cheatham * ◇ Patricia Cowan * Carole Devers ◇ Luann Dodge * Beryl Fanslow Katie Ferguson Marilyn Gilmore Nakita Kawal * ◇ Eva Klink Paleri Mann Vernesha Montgomery * ◇ Lois Petersen Sylvia Ransom Alice Rasberry Rebecca Revoal * Nicole Relyea Jennie Rucker Dorothy Slater Julia Thomas ‡ Gloria Viglione Lois Weber Shermita West	 Maggie Wright * Patricia Wright <u>Alto</u> Carol Albright Georganne Bley ‡ Daphna Brown * Christine Chao ◇ Anne Comstock * Marcia Dellacroce Faith Goins * ‡ Helen Gray Sue Herring Aimee Justice-Lundt Emma Livingston Linda Maich Claurice McCoy * ‡ Maureen McDonald Ardis Miller * ◇ Maxine Oliver Phyllis Rader Heather Revanna ‡ Claudia Roberts * Ruth Ann Rogers Kaati Ross ‡ Allison Smith	 Lynn Smith Jo Ann Soker Gwendolyn Sowell Julie Todd ‡ Sidra Smith Wahaltere * ‡ Ruthie Williams <u>Tenor</u> Don Allen David Anthony ‡ Raymond Anthony ‡ Edward Battle Ted Coffelt * Randy Friesen * Roger Fuehrer * Sarah Harman * ‡ Lorin Hunt * Mark Ingram Arthur Jones Randall Livingston ‡ Richard Pettis * John Piper * Dan Raybon * Duane Smith James Williams ◇	<u>Baritone</u> David Burrows Harold Fields * Charles Fortney * Bruce Marsden * ‡ George Nelson John M. Riley Charles Stevenson * Geoffrey Wodell * <u>Bass</u> Doug Blanz ‡ Russell Costen John W. Daniels Bob Davis * Tom Gilmore Raymond Jones * Derrick Montgomery * ◇ Ken Parks * Alan Pettis * Paul Staten * Tom von Reckers * * member Sankofa ‡ member SPC Ensemble ◇ Leave of Absence
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