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ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage Announces *Special Opening Acts for Select Performances of BREATH & IMAGINATION*

Emerson/Paramount Center Mainstage, Boston Now Playing through February 8, 2015

*The press performance for Breath & Imagination is Thursday, January 29, 7:30pm. Email to RSVP.
Email for high-resolution images.*

BOSTON, MA – January 27, 2015] In the spirit of community and celebrating artists finding their voices through breath and imagination, ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage proudly features area artists as special opening acts for select performances of **Breath & Imagination**. Written by Daniel Beaty and directed by David Dower, the play with music is now playing through February 8, 2015 at the Emerson/Paramount Center Mainstage (559 Washington Street in Boston’s historic theatre District). Tickets, from \$25-\$79, are on sale now at www.artsemerson.org or by phone at 617-824-8400. Group, student, and senior discounts are available.

"We're thrilled to feature such an array of talented artists from Boston," says David Dower, Artistic Director of ArtsEmerson and Polly Carl, Creative Director. "This idea of including opening acts was initiated by our Audience Development Manager, Akiba Abaka, and is very much in the spirit of Daniel Beaty's work. Similar to our recent "Winter Rock & Roll Weekend," it also helps provide opportunity for local artists to perform in downtown Boston proper, but with a whole other range of artistry including gospel, R&B and spoken word."



Lori Dow



Vernon C. Robinson



Jeannie Gagne



Lisa Lee

[Lori Dow](#), vocalist, featuring David Coleman
 Vernon C. Robinson, spoken word artist
[Jeannie Gagne](#), vocalist, featuring [Jiri Nedoma](#)
[Lisa Lee](#), spoken word artist

Wednesday, January 28, 2015	7PM
Friday, January 30, 2015	8PM
Saturday, January 31, 2015	8PM
Sunday, February 1, 2015	2PM



New England Gospel Ensemble



April Stanford



Regie Gibson



Neiel Israel



Arthur Collins

[New England Gospel Ensemble](#)

[April Stanford](#), vocalist

[Regie Gibson](#), spoken word artist

[Neiel Israel](#), spoken word artist

Arthur Collins, spoken word artist

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Friday, February 6, 2015

Saturday, February 7, 2015

Sunday, February 8, 2015

7:30PM

7:30PM

8PM

8PM

2PM

About Breath & Imagination

Before there was Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson, there was Roland Hayes – the first world-renowned African-American classical vocalist. Born the son of a slave in Georgia, Roland discovered his voice as a young boy singing spirituals in church. **Breath & Imagination** is a musical play that renders the life of his amazing journey from the plantation in Georgia to singing before kings and queens in Europe and becoming the first African-American soloist to perform with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Employing spirituals and classical music, **Breath & Imagination** is an inspirational exploration of one man’s determination to be an artist despite seemingly insurmountable odds. Created by celebrated artist Daniel Beaty (**Emergency**) and starring award-winning actor Elijah Rock— reprising his role as Roland Hayes for which he received the NAACP Theatre Award for Best Performer in 2014.

About Elijah Rock

Born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, Elijah Rock is an award-winning actor, singer, writer, producer and entrepreneur. He is the 2014 NAACP Theatre Award recipient for Best Male Equity performer in **Breath & Imagination** staged in Burbank, CA. Latest credits include Rock as a recurring guest star in the second season of *Masters of Sex* (Showtime). Rock’s short film *Lunch with Jeremiah* is currently making the film festival rounds and he is co-producing and starring in the biopic film *Lincoln Perry* to be directed by the award-winning writer/director, Antwone Fisher. As a recording artist, he released *Elijah Rock Preacher of Love. Vol 1., That First Time*, and *Elijah Rock LIVE in Hollywood*. Also a professional tap dancer, Rock resides both in California and New York.

About Playwright Daniel Beaty

Daniel Beaty is an award-winning actor, singer, writer, and motivational speaker. His critically acclaimed plays *Through the Night*, **Emergency**, *Mr. Joy*, and *The Tallest Tree in the Forest - Paul Robeson*, have been performed at venues ranging from Lincoln Center to the White House, and garnered numerous awards including an Obie Award for writing and performance and two NAACP Theater Awards. Beaty has worked throughout the U.S., Europe, and Africa speaking and performing on programs with luminaries such as Deepak Chopra, Hill Harper, Jill Scott, Donnie McClurkin, and Ruby Dee. In fall 2013, Beaty launched a nationwide initiative using the tools of storytelling to help individuals and communities heal trauma funded by W.K. Kellogg and Ford Foundations among others. He holds a BA with Honors in English and Music from Yale University and an MFA in Acting from the American Conservatory Theatre. His poem *Knock Knock* became an internet sensation receiving millions of views and has been transformed into a children's book, also titled *Knock Knock*, published by Little Brown Books. Penguin-Random House published his empowerment book *Transforming Pain to Power* in March 2014.

About Director David Dower

Now the Artistic Director, David Dower joined ArtsEmerson in 2012, having spent six seasons as Associate Artistic Director at Arena Stage, where he directed the Artistic Development team and founded the American Voices New Play Institute (AVNPI), the precursor to The Center for the Theater Commons now located at Emerson College. He served as the Artistic Producer on Arena's offerings from 2007 - 2011, including the Tony/Pulitzer-winning *Next to Normal*. Prior to joining Arena he was the founding Artistic Director of The Z Space (a theatre development center focused on new plays) and a founder of its predecessor, the producing ensemble The Z Collective, both in San Francisco. He has directed plays around the country, including at Arena Stage, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle's Intiman, and dozens of world premiere productions in the Bay Area.

About ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage

Founded in 2010 by Rob Orchard (currently ArtsEmerson Creative Consultant), ArtsEmerson seeks to redefine the relationship between artist and audience, and the impact of theatre on community. Through performance programs, ongoing artist residencies and repeated engagements with ensembles, audiences see how our work evolves over time and, as a result, connect to artists' deeper ambitions and processes. This investment not only strengthens the bond between artists and audiences but allows for a highly interactive exchange that helps to realize the full potential of the arts in the life and character of the city of Boston.

ArtsEmerson is the presenting and producing program of the Office of the Arts, which exists within Emerson College to serve students, faculty and staff, the Greater Boston community, and the field of performance practice. In its entirety, the work of the Office of the Arts prioritizes community engagement with its Boston neighbors, creating a national dialogue, sharing field-wide learning and developing curricular engagement that connect students with its work. For more information visit www.artsemerson.org.

About Emerson College

Located in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,660 undergraduates and 829 graduate students from across the United States and fifty countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than eighty student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its study and internship programs in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., the Netherlands, London, China and the Czech Republic. The College has an active network of 32,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communications and the arts. For more information, visit emerson.edu. For more information, visit www.emerson.edu.

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