



Three pathbreaking artists perform at BAM's 2024 Spring Benefit honoring Solange Knowles and Mikki Shepard

Evening features Alva Puppet Theater, Beverly Glenn-Copeland, and Nailah Hunter

Lovie spins soul, disco, and house music for the afterparty



L to R: Beverly Glenn-Copeland, Nailah Hunter, and Alva Rogers

April 17, 2024/Brooklyn, NY—An all-female and trans lineup will perform on May 1 as BAM honors two iconic trailblazers; the multi-hyphenate artist, **Solange Knowles**, and legendary arts producer and advocate, **Mikki Shepard**, for their indelible influence, inspiration, and contributions to the performing arts.

Taking place at BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, the enchanting multi-genre evening will stage intimate performances from **Alva Puppet Theater**; pianist, vocalist and activist, **Beverly Glenn-Copeland**; and transformative harpist **Nailah Hunter**. The night will be capped off by an afterparty in the Adam Space featuring the sonic talents of DJ **Lovie**.

Funds generated by this event help secure a sustainable future for BAM as it continues its mission to be a home for adventurous artists, audiences, and ideas. BAM's President **Gina Duncan**, BAM Interim Artistic Director **Amy Cassello**, and BAM Board Chair **Diane Max**, are the evening's hosts. **Richard E. Feldman** and **Jon C. Nathanson**, and **George C. Wolfe** are the Benefit Chairs. Benefit Committee members include **Kabir Ahuja**, **Bloomberg Philanthropies**, **William I. Campbell & Christine Wächter Campbell**, **Janel Callon**, **Natasha Chefer**, **Richard Feldman**, **Steven Felsher**, **Rita & Alex**, **Hillman Foundation**, **Darnell-Moser Charitable Fund**, **Diane Max**, **Depelsha McGruder**, **Robin Maxwell** and **James Wilentz**, **Scott McDonald**, **Joseph Stern**, **Alexa & Marc Suskin**, **Brigitte Vosse** and **Nora Ann Wallace**. Honorary Committee members include **Hanif Abdurraqib**, **Camille, Brown**, **Peter Born**, **Paul Lazar**, **Spike Lee**, **Mark Morris**, **Ruth Negga**, **Tiona Nekkia McClodden**, **Okwui Okpokwasili**, **Annie-B. Parson**, **Huang Ruo**, **Abdel R. Salaam**, **Whitney White** and **Jacqueline Woodson**.

About the performers:

Beverly Glenn-Copeland is a singer and songwriter who was born in Philadelphia and moved to Canada in 1961. Glenn-Copeland began his musical career in the 1960s, when he studied classical singing at Montreal's McGill University and performed at Expo 67. A classically-trained vocalist, he started his career making folk music, while composing and acting on children's television series including *Mr. Dressup* and *Sesame Street*. For more than 40 years Copeland wrote plays, composed soundtracks and wrote music that channels and celebrates the varied cultural influences of his own background. Glenn-Copeland's 1984 self-released electronic album *Keyboard Fantasies* was reissued in 2016, its visionary approach resonating with the ears of a new generation. A documentary about his life directed by Posy Dixon, *Keyboard Fantasies: The Beverly Glenn-Copeland Story*, was released in 2020. He's performed at MoMA PS1, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and ISSUE Project Room among others around the world.

Nailah Hunter is an LA-based multi-instrumentalist and composer who has been recording mystical folk and ambient-inspired music since 2019, releasing a series of singles and two EPs: *Spells* and, most recently, *Quietude*. Now signed to Fat Possum, *Lovegaze* is Hunter's debut full-length, an enthralling album that draws listeners into her enchanting cosmology. As the daughter of a Belizean pastor, Hunter began her musical journey in the church where she played drums, guitar and sang in the choir. She continued to study music at CalArts, where she studied vocal performance and was given her first harp lesson. Associating the instrument with fantasy, psychedelia, and dream worlds, Hunter became an immediate devotee, locking herself in a room for six hours a day to practice the instrument.

To make *Lovegaze*, Hunter decamped to a small coastal city along the English Channel where she began recording demos with a borrowed celtic harp. After being introduced to London-based producer Cicely Goulder, Hunter returned to England a year later to further develop the songs. The resulting collection, *Lovegaze*, is a bewitching testament to the resiliency of the natural world.

Alva Rogers, Artistic Director of ALVA PUPPET THEATER, is a dramatist, puppeteer, and multi-disciplinary artist. Rogers' most recent work, *Topsy-Turvy*, an installation and performance featuring puppetry and music was presented at New York's Museum of Modern Art in February 2023. Rogers began inventing worlds at Just Above Midtown, where she performed with Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris and in Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees's *...And He Had Six Sisters* (1984). She has written plays and musicals; has participated in several collaborations, including work with the performance collective Rodeo Caldonia; and has been a muse/model for visual artists including Whitfield Lovell, Fred Wilson, Lorna Simpson, Dawoud Bey, Tina Barney, Lona Foote, Daryl Turner, Coreen Simpson, and Julie Dash, among others. Born and raised in New York City, she has received degrees from Brown University (MFA), New York University (MFA), and Bard (MAT).

Lovie's music discovery was born in the digital music age: a young lover of local radio and after-school MTV marathons, her early mixes took shape in the form of burned CDs she composed for friends. In relocating from her hometown of Washington, D.C. to New York in August of 2020, Lovie's unique selection swiftly ushered her into New York's local music scene; she had yet to play beyond the confines of her bedroom when she pitched a show to The Lot Radio, and her show Summer School Radio quickly garnered a devoted following amongst music lovers and local DJs alike. Within a year, she'd earned a Lot Radio residency; and has since become a regular at notable venues throughout the city, a resident of the

beloved Coloring Lessons party by musclecars, and a cofounder of Soul Connection. Lovie's sets guarantee a sweet, soulful, and spiritual selection, as she interweaves soul, disco, and house into a sound that creates warmth, and makes you move.

About the honorees:

Each honoree distinctly embodies BAM's adventurous spirit and commitment to elevating culture, and each has contributed to BAM's vision of supporting outstanding achievements in the performing arts. Knowles was first at BAM in spring of 2013 when she headlined the *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry* music festival. In the spring of 2023, she returned to the organization to present *Eldorado Ballroom*—a sold-out performing arts series that celebrated the intergenerational expressions of experimental and transcendent Black performance through the decades. Shepard has produced more than 25 programs for BAM including *Steps in Time* and *Tappin' Uptown*, *DanceAfrica*, and the landmark *Dance Black America: 300 years of Black Dance in America*. In 1988, she founded Brooklyn's 651Arts—an organization committed to developing, producing, and presenting performance and cultural programming rooted in the African Diaspora, with a primary focus on contemporary performing arts—which was headquartered on the BAM campus for more than three decades.

Solange Knowles is a Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter, and visual artist whose multi-disciplinary practice is spiritually rooted in world building for future generations. With the release of her critically acclaimed albums, *A Seat at the Table* and *When I Get Home*, Solange has invoked themes of identity, empowerment, grief, and healing that have resonated with millions of voices. This coupled with her work in other artistic mediums has led to a defining career of music, visual art, and activism. Solange has conducted performance art shows across the globe including at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2019), The Getty Museum in Los Angeles (2019), Guggenheim Museum in NYC (2017), the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas (2017) and the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg in Germany (2019).

In 2002, Solange's debut album *Solo Star* interpolated Urban Contemporary elements into traditional R&B and ushered in a refreshing transformation that shaped the genre's evolution. Proudly owning her unique sound, she continued expanding the boundaries of radio-friendly hits by blending Jazz, Funk, Electronica and R&B/Soul elements in 2008's *Sol-Angel* and the *Hadley St. Dreams*, followed by the highly-treasured 2012 *True* EP.

In 2016 Solange's *A Seat at The Table* album debuted at #1 on the Billboard Top 200 Chart, Apple Music, and iTunes Overall Top Albums Charts. The record's success led to her performing for President Obama at the White House, and birthed her vision for the *Orion's Rise* performance series which included two sold-out shows at Radio City Music Hall, as well as shows at Hollywood Bowl, the Kennedy Center, the Greek Theatre, and Orpheum Theater. In June of 2018, Solange performed the album to four sold-out shows at the legendary Sydney Opera House in Australia.

An exploration of origin, her 2019 album, *When I Get Home*, questioned how much of ourselves we bring with us - versus leave behind - throughout our personal evolution. To answer this, Solange returned to the city of her childhood, Third Ward Houston. Written, performed, and executive produced by Solange, the release resulted in her third Top 10 debut on the Billboard 200, reached #1 on iTunes, and kicked off a global tour. In addition to premiering an extended director's cut of the album's self-directed, interdisciplinary companion film at museums and contemporary institutions - including The Los Angeles County Museum of

Art (LACMA) in Los Angeles, Brooklyn Museum in New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London - a special director's cut of the film was added to Criterion's special features channel.

Solange's work in music and the arts has led to her being named Harvard University's Artist of the Year in 2018. At the 70th Annual Parsons Benefit, Solange was honored by The New School as a pioneering figure in fashion and the arts. In 2022, Solange received NYU's Global Trailblazer Award for Creative and Artistic Excellence. She has also been the recipient of *Glamour's* Woman of the Year Award and *Billboard's* Impact Award.

Mikki Shepard is a producer, presenter, funder, and arts consultant. She produced the first multidisciplinary festival *NYC FREE* to inaugurate Little Island, a new public park in New York City. Ms. Shepard advises national foundations on new program initiatives and arts and cultural institutions on organizational development and sustainability. She is an executive coach to foundations and non-profit arts organization leadership nationally and mentors emerging leaders and mid-career professionals in the performing arts field.

Shepard was the executive producer of the Apollo Theater from 2009–16. She created and implemented a new institutional vision and organizational infrastructure, informed institutional policy and direction, and led the Apollo's programming, marketing, and development activities. Under her leadership, the Apollo Theater's new artistic vision celebrated and re-envisioned its legacy with contemporary music, dance, theater, opera, performance art, comedy, and spoken word programming. A key aspect of her work was the development of the Apollo's 21st-century global program vision, creating large-scale productions and festivals, the revitalization of Amateur Night and its digital presence, the creation of the Apollo Music Café and Apollo Comedy Club, and international tours of original Apollo productions such as *James Brown: Get on the Good Foot*, *A Celebration in Dance*. Other major productions included *Apollo Club Harlem* and the Apollo's first global festivals, *Breakin' Convention*, *An International Festival of Hip-Hop Dance Theater Festival* and *WOW: Women of the World Festival*.

Prior to the Apollo Theater, Ms. Shepard was a consultant to major foundations and performing arts institutions including The Ford Foundation, Heinz Endowments, Doris Duke Charitable Trust, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, and Jacob's Pillow, to name a few. Her work focused on strategic planning, organizational restructuring, and program development/assessments. Ms. Shepard was the director of arts and humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation. As executive producer and co-founder of Brooklyn's 651Arts, she produced *100 Years of Jazz and Blues Festival*, *Sung and Unsung/Jazz Women*, *Dance Women/Living Legends*, and *Lost Jazz Shrines* and was the architect of the Africa Exchange Program, a major Ford Foundation international initiative.

Ms. Shepard is a member of the Mertz Gilmore Foundation's board of directors and served as its chair from 2010 – 21. She is also a member of The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation's board. Past board memberships include the BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP), Brooklyn Community Foundation, and Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone. She served as a Tony Awards Nominator from 2016 – 19. Shepard's awards include a 2017 Bessie (NY Dance and Performance) Award for her work in dance, APAP's 2017 Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service to the field of professional presenting, and the honor of being the first recipient of APAP's Halsey and Alice North Award for Committed Excellence and Service to the Field in 2014.

About BAM:

A world-class home for adventurous artists, audiences, and ideas, BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) is North America's oldest performing arts center, showcasing the work of emerging artists and modern icons. It is led by President, Gina Duncan.

For more than 160 years, BAM has been a thriving, urban multi-arts complex renowned for presenting an unparalleled roster of visionary and cutting-edge dance, theater, music, opera, visual arts, literature, and film engagements. Attracting more than 750,000 people annually to its home in Brooklyn, BAM provides a welcoming cultural stage and meeting place for global and local communities of all backgrounds. BAM's distinctive multi-theater campus is alive year-round with inspired new engagements and signature programs alike including the renowned Next Wave (one of the world's most influential festivals of contemporary performing arts, founded in 1983), the iconic DanceAfrica, an acclaimed repertory film program, and literary, archival, educational and humanities programs. For more information visit BAM.org.

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