43RD ANNUAL USC CELEBRATION OF
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

NOBODY KNOWS

(Un)Muted Voices

FRIDAY • JANUARY 19, 2024
7 PM • BING THEATRE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

USC Visions & Voices | USC Thornton | USC School of Dramatic Arts | USC Rossier | USC BLACK STAFF & FACULTY CAUCUS | USC Student Affairs
Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs

ORGANIZED BY RONALD C. McCURDY (MUSIC), ANITA DASHIELL-SPARKS (DRAMATIC ARTS), AND BRANDI P. JONES (EDUCATION).

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PROGRAM

Welcome | Dr. Ron McCurdy & Professor Anita Dashiell-Sparks

Land Acknowledgment | Professor Anita Dashiell-Sparks

Invocation | Reverend Brandon Harris

Opening Montage

Program 1

Hymns & Protest | Kayla Campbell, Malika Dinan, Leilani Rodriguez

America | Terrencé Smith Jr.

Pacific Theater/Green Card | Paula Shin

My Story | Rocío Romero

A Strange Becoming | Day Fuller

Pretty Boy | Nate Riel

The Gaze | Mysha Amir

Bridges | Lara Botha

Panel Discussion | Featuring Artists and Dr. Brandi P. Jones, Dr. Naddia Palacios, Reverend Brandon Harris, Dr. Quade French

Program 2

The Bible Belt | Cassidy Martin and Malika Dinan (short film)

Letter to the Patriarchy | Ella Donnelly

This Is How We Say I Love You | Jamie Gallo

The Only Thing I Knew About You Was The Feeling I Had For You | Nash Rahman

This Is Me | Leilani Rodriguez

Cycles | Byron Mason II

You Think You're a Monster Once You Turn Fifteen | Madeline Holloway

Golden Dreams | Tricia Lim Castro

South Central L.A. | Abraham Gutierrez

A Celebration of Filipino Culture & Ancestry | Maya Sta. Ana

Freedom Songs | Azmera Hammouri-Davis

What Is It That Nobody Knows About You? | Interactive Audience Group Poem/Word Cloud

Company: I Too, Am America Poem | Closing Montage

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

FROM THE ORGANIZERS

Reflecting the experiences, joys, and challenges of moving through the world with a specific identity, intersectional identity, or body of representation, *Nobody Knows* reflects and celebrates our shared humanity through art, music, and storytelling. To explore and better understand the rich diversity of experiences, thoughts, people, faiths, communities, and cultures that Dr. King adamantly believed in and fought for, the following list of themes and terms was compiled from resource materials shared by ArtEquity in collaboration with the art schools of USC.

Ableism: A system of oppression based on ability, ableism is any attitude, action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power that subordinates people because of their perceived ability. It is any social relations, practices, and ideas that presume that all people are without a disability. The mere presumption that everyone does not have a disability is effectively discriminatory, often creating environments that are hostile to people with disabilities.

Agency: The capacity to make choices and the ability to impose those choices on the world.

Ally: Someone who understands the many layers of oppression, can identify positions of privilege that they hold, and actively works to rectify inequity. Active allyship is a consistent practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person of privilege or holding systemic power seeks to end oppression in solidarity with a marginalized group of people.

Anti-Blackness: The inability to recognize Black humanity. Stemming from the legacy of slavery, it locates Black people as property, inhuman, and disposable. Anti-Blackness is a fundamental component built into the culture, value system, and creation of the U.S. that incorporates society's hatred of Blackness and justifies violence against Black people.

Antiracism: Works with the complexities of difference and continually challenges the pretensions of racial and racist discourses. Given the relational aspects of difference, antiracism necessarily touches on the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and other forms of difference.

Bias: A conscious or unconscious preference that inhibits a person's capacity for impartial judgment.

Bigotry: Holding blindly and intolerantly to a particular creed, opinion; narrow-mindedness; intolerance; prejudice.

Classism: A system of oppression based on class status. Classism is any attitude, action, or institutional practice that subordinates people due to their economic condition. A person's class is determined by access to a mix of resources including, but not limited to, money, culture, contacts, and formal education. Class includes food, clothing, language, cars, entertainment, work, and much more.

Colonialism: The domination/enslavement of one people or nation by another people or nation for the sole benefit of the oppressor nation/state. Colonialism actively removes people's access to independence by denying them avenues to create and maintain ownership and/or control over products, family, and culture. This process occurs through, but is not limited to, the exploitation of people, labor, land, and resources.

Disability: A socially constructed experience that identifies systemic barriers, negative attitudes, and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) as contributory factors in disabling people. This social model definition promotes the notion that while physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychological variations may cause individual functional limitation or impairments, these lead to disability only if society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences. The social model further recognizes disability as a community and a culture.

Discrimination: An action or behavior that favors some people and disadvantages others.

Diversity: Recognition of individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, nationality, language, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic background.

Equity: The state, quality, or ideal of being just. Using the principles of fairness and ethics to apply justice to circumstances.

Heterosexism: A system of oppression based on one's sexual orientation and/or not conforming to a gender binary (a social construction of gender allowing only two gender expressions). Heterosexism is any attitude, action, or institutional practice backed by institutional power that subordinates people because of their sexual orientation and/or a gender presentation/identity that does not maintain the gender binary.

Homophobia: The fear or hatred of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or queer people. It is also fear of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer and/or fear of being perceived as any of those identities.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of the diversity of an organization, system, and/or community in order to create equal access, well-being, and a sense of belonging for all members.

Islamophobia: Fear and hostility towards Islam and Muslims. Such fear and hostility leads to discrimination against Muslims, exclusions of Muslims from mainstream political or social process, stereotyping, the presumption of guilt by association, and hate crimes.

Jewish Oppression: A combination of historical and cultural practices that marginalizes, blames, and alienates Jewish people. Such practices include cultural invalidation, punishment, pogroms, concentration camps, and forced assimilation. Jewish is a term that covers ethnicity, culture, and religion. It is possible to be connected to any one without the others or to be all three. By extension, it is possible to experience discrimination and oppression in any (or all) of these categories. Jewish oppression has come to be synonymous with antisemitism.

Microaggression: A small act of mostly non-physical aggression. The term was first coined in the early 1970s. More recently, psychologist Dr. Derald Wing Sue (2007) described microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults" toward marginalized groups. Microaggressions take many forms. Some behaviors include objectification, use of biased language, assumptions of inferiority, denial of other feelings and experiences, invisibility, and jokes.

Misogyny: Hatred, dislike, contempt, and/or ingrained prejudice against women and/or girls.

Oppression: Any attitude, action, or institutional structure that subordinates a person because of their membership in a targeted group. Examples of target groups include women, transgender people, Asians, African Americans, Latino/as, individuals with disabilities, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, Jewish individuals, Native Americans, the elderly, and children. Oppression can be intentional or unintentional.

Power: The ability to exert control and influence over institutions, resources, and cultural norms.

Prejudice: An unfair pre-judgment of an individual based on real or perceived group membership and bias.

Privilege: Operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, systemic, and institutional levels and gives advantages, access, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of marginalized groups. In the United States, privilege is granted to people who have membership in one or more of these social identity groups: white people, non-disabled people, heterosexuals, males, Christians, middle/upper/owning class people, middle-aged people, cisgendered, and English-speaking people. Privilege is commonly invisible to or taken for granted by people who have it. People in dominant groups often believe that they have earned the privileges that they enjoy or that everyone could have access to these privileges if only they worked to earn them. In fact, privileges are unearned, and they are granted to people in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent.

Racism: A system of oppression that consists of racial prejudice and discrimination—supported by institutional power and authority—used to the advantage of one race and the disadvantage of another race or races. The critical element which differentiates racism from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support white supremacy, reiterate prejudices, and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systematic ways with far-reaching outcomes and effects.

Religious Bigotry: Holding blindly and intolerantly to a particular religious creed, opinion, prejudice, or narrow-mindedness.

Sexism: A system of oppression based on prejudice against one's gender. Any attitude, action, or institutional practice—backed up by institutional power—which subordinates people because of their (real or perceived) gender.

Social Justice: The promotion of a just society by challenging injustice. Social justice exists when all people receive equitable treatment, have their human rights upheld, and receive a fair allocation of community resources. In conditions of social justice, people are not discriminated against, nor are their welfare and well-being constrained.

Stereotype: A generalization about a group of people that may or may not be based in truth, most commonly used to unfairly categorize people. Everyone stereotypes. Although stereotypes can be perceived as both negative and positive, they have long-lasting negative impacts on both targeted and non-targeted groups.

Transphobia: The irrational fear, loathing, hatred, and discriminatory treatment used to take power away from people whose gender identity or gender representation (or perceived gender or gender identity) does not match, according to social conventions, the sex they were assigned at birth.

BIOS

Organizers

Anita Dashiell-Sparks is the Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Vice Chair of Performance; and Burns Professor of Theatre Practice in Acting at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. As an actor, she is a veteran of the Broadway stage, Off-Broadway, and regional theaters across the country including the Geffen Playhouse and Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. In addition, she has directed *Safe Harbor* (Lower Depth Theatre), as well as *Letters from Zora* at the Tony Award–winning Crossroads Theatre and two critically acclaimed engagements at the Pasadena Playhouse, among others. She has received local, state, and national grants for her artistic scholarship and arts education including a recent Creative Art Placemaking Grant from the California Arts Council.

Brandi P. Jones, professor of research at the USC Rossier School of Education, is a national thought leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion whose research centers on the experiences of minoritized and marginalized communities in science and engineering. As chief of staff and chief operating officer for the USC Race and Equity Center, she partners with corporations and educational organizations to illuminate, disrupt, and dismantle racism and inequities.

Ronald C. McCurdy is a professor of music and Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the USC Thornton School of Music, where he served as chair of the jazz department from 2002 to 2008. He has served as a consultant to the GRAMMY Foundation and the Walt Disney All-American College Band and continues to tour the *Langston Hughes Project*. McCurdy has also created or co-created several interdisciplinary productions including *Letters from Zora (Hurston)* and *Shanghai Jazz: A Cultural Mix*.

Performers and Artists

Day Ajose is a recent graduate of USC, where she specialized in Theatre Performance and Screenwriting. Additionally, she broadened her horizons by studying Theatre in London at the British American Drama Academy. Her ultimate aspiration is to craft art on a cross-cultural scale that embraces and represents all voices in a spirit of inclusivity.

Mysha Amir is a second-year student at USC whose major is Psychology and minor is Law and Social Justice. Mysha is heavily involved with the Muslim Student Union and enjoys writing, reading, running, painting, and hanging out with friends.

Lara Botha is currently a BFA Acting freshman. She has received training in the UK at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and RADA. Her most recent productions include *The Tempest* at South Africa's National Children's Theatre and the television series *Spoorloos: Heksejag*.

Kayla Campbell is a junior Theatre major with a Comedy emphasis and a minor in Musical Studies. She is excited for everyone to see the pieces that have been created for this wonderful and important performance.

Tricia Lim Castro (she & they) is a storyteller, dancer, and researcher passionate about creating art to remember, heal, and love. Presently, Tricia is a fourth-year undergraduate student and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow at USC, pursuing a Narrative Studies BA with minors in Dance and Natural Science.

Malika Dinan is a producer, actress, filmmaker, and singer. She is currently a student at the School of Dramatic Arts and will graduate in May with a BFA in Acting for Stage, Screen, and New Media.

Ella Donnelly is a junior in the BFA Acting for Stage and Screen major. She seeks to use art as a vessel for joy, change, and understanding across all mediums.

James Donovan is an editor, actor, filmmaker, tenants' rights activist and affordable housing advocate. He graduated from USC in December 2023 with BA degrees in Law/History/Culture and Theatre. To join the fight to solve our housing crisis, visit www.acceaction.org and www.saje.net.

Luc Eldridge is a Composition student in the USC Thornton School of Music, currently studying under renowned composer Andrew Norman. He has also studied under other composers such as Derricke Skye and is expected to graduate in 2027.

Jamie Gallo is a senior studying Theatre and Dance at USC. Leading with compassion, integrity, and drive, their work elevates process over product, people over profit, and justice over entertainment. Jamie hopes that *Nobody Knows* can generate compassion and conversation in our deeply divided times.

Abraham Gutierrez is a current student at USC who grew up in the surrounding neighborhood. An avid skateboarder, he explores themes of gentrification, commuting, and other aspects of his life through creative writing.

Azmera Hammouri-Davis is a spoken word poet, writer, producer, and spiritual care consultant from Kea'au, Hawaii with a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University. She sees creativity as a catalyst for healing and

received her dual BA in Visual and Performing Arts, and Social Sciences Psychology from USC in 2016.

Makenna Harding-Davis is a freshman studying Music Composition at the USC Thornton School of Music. Besides composing for concert and film, she enjoys playing oboe in the Student Symphony Orchestra, giving campus tours as a Student Ambassador, and playing on the USC Ultimate Frisbee Team.

Madeline Holloway is a senior English major specializing in Creative Writing with a minor in Theatre and Two-Dimensional Studies. She hopes to use her art to evoke emotion and empathy. (Or, on lighter topics, a good chuckle.)

Jackson Irvine is a multi-instrumentalist and composer thriving in Los Angeles. Passionately creative, his music has inspired audiences through its uses in television, film, theater, podcasts, and collaborative performances. He is an eight-time *DownBeat* Student Award winner who has performed across the United States.

From New York with Colombian roots, **Julián Juaquín** cultivated his art in the Big Apple, studying acting at the Stella Adler Studio and studying film at St. John's University. After receiving his masters at USC, he is now a professor teaching Cinema Studies in the Drama department. Julián understands that the work is never done and we must always learn from each other.

Denali Kauffman is a trombonist, pianist, and composer in his third year of undergraduate Jazz Studies at USC Thornton. He is extremely grateful to be a part of this project and he hopes that his unique background in jazz and classical music will shine through in his scores that accompany these compelling narratives.

Ramon Lyons is a filmmaker (MFA '25) from Orlando, Fl. His voice as a storyteller is a unique vision influenced by music, action, thriller, and mystery. He is passionate about being able to show that there can be, and are, more stories about us.

(Future Dr.) **Cassidy Martin** is a Nashville native and spoken word artist of 10 years. As a First Waver and Southern Word alum they have taught spoken word and performance to a variety of ages. Their true passion lies in decolonizing education using art as liberation. Cassidy is currently a doctoral student at the USC Rossier School of Education.

Byron Mason II is a third-year graduate student in the School of Cinematic Arts from Chicago, IL. His work largely focuses on people of color and horror. His work has been featured at Frieze Los Angeles through Ghetto Film School, and he recently finished *Price*, a short horror film made through an SCA advanced capstone program.

Alex McNab is a screenwriter and director telling stories rooted in African diaspora folktales. Before starting his MFA in film production at USC, Alex worked as a video journalist in Hanoi through a Princeton in Asia media fellowship and was a freelance ghostwriter, primarily engaging testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

Nash Rahman is a first-year BFA Acting for Stage and Screen student. *All I Knew About You is the Feeling I Had for You* captures the tender dynamic of a platonic love that is bordered by both deep affection and pain sensitivity.

Nate Riel is an interdisciplinary performer currently obtaining his BA in Theatre (Acting) as well as minors in Dance in Entertainment and Musical Theatre. A competitive color guard performer, Riel went on a national tour with the Sacramento Mandarins, a world class drum corps, in 2022.

Leilani Rodriguez is a sophomore BFA Musical Theatre major. Leilani is so excited to be able to share her stories with others through the magic of theatre and raise awareness of people with disabilities. Many thanks to Anita, Ron, and the whole *Nobody Knows* team!

Originally from Guadalajara, México, **Rocío Romero** is a passionate L.A.-based filmmaker who pursued a career in the USA in 2014. Her works are embellished with magical realism and tones of social justice. She graduated from USC with an emphasis in Directing and Cinematography in 2021.

Paula Shin, "Tha Balla," aka pthab, is a Jazz Studies major with roots in Seoul, LAUSD, Santa Barbara, and Harlem. They like to paint dogs for fun. They love to eat okra.

Faith Smith is a senior Media Arts and Practice student who's extremely passionate about video production, fashion, and digital communications. Academically, she thrives on exploring critical media studies and semiotics.

Born and raised in South L.A., **Terrencé Smith Jr.** studied English with a Creative Writing emphasis at USC and graduated in 2022. From church to community arts center to high school, Terrencé has always been heavily invested in the performing arts as a singer, dancer, and actor, and is thrilled to be able to help tell the stories of the oppressed and marginalized and to give them a voice!

Maya Sta. Ana is a junior at USC pursuing a BFA in Acting and a minor in Entertainment Industry/Film. She has previously studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA) and is also a two-time YoungArts winner in Theater (2021 Silver Finalist).

Mithrandir Wang, born in 2003, is a composer, conductor, and pianist from Beijing, China. He is currently studying composition at the USC Thornton School of Music and has studied with renowned composers and musicians Veronika Krausas, Brian Head, and Camae Ayewa (Dennis). He is now the assistant music director of USC Student Symphony Orchestra.

Panelists

Quade French is the Associate Dean and Chief Diversity Officer of USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. In his work, he centers relationship-building as foundational to any systemic change. He guides leadership, faculty, staff, and students to emphasize humility over hubris in the pursuit of equity, curiosity over certainty as

they work to build an inclusive community, and courage over fear to cultivate a positive culture at USC Dornsife.

The Reverend **Brandon Harris** is Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life at USC. Previously, he served as a Protestant Chaplain at Georgetown University, where he taught courses on African American religious thought, lived as a chaplain in residence, and served as the co-chair of Martin Luther King Jr. Initiative. Additionally, Reverend Harris is the youngest Senior Minister to ever lead the 131-year-old Peoples Congregational Church in Washington, D.C.

Naddia Palacios serves as the Assistant Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Student Equity and Inclusion, with a portfolio that includes Asian Pacific American Student Services, Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs, First Generation Plus Success Center, Latinx/Chicanx Center for Advocacy and Student Affairs, LGBTQ+ Student Center, Student Basic Needs, and the Veterans Resource Center. She acts as the campus-wide liaison for DEI issues that impact the student experience and leads student development programs and student-facing DEI services that focus on intersectionality, sense of belonging, and well-being among our students.

RESOURCES & SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

At USC

- **Campus Support and Intervention**
  campussupport.usc.edu
- **Office of Campus Wellbeing and Education**
  cwci.usc.edu/wellbeing-and-education
- **Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX**
  eeotix.usc.edu
- **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
  diversity.usc.edu
- **Office of Religious and Spiritual Life**
  orsl.usc.edu
- **Student Equity and Inclusion Programs**
  seip.usc.edu/centers

  Asian Pacific American Student Services, Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs, First Generation Plus Success Center, La CASA, LGBTQ+ Student Center, Veteran Resource Center, Culturally Affirming Lounges promoting Native American, Pasifika, Middle Eastern, and North African identities.

Los Angeles Community

- **ArtEquity**
  artequity.org

  A nonprofit organization that offers training and consulting services to individuals and organizations on creating and sustaining inclusive and equitable practices.
- **LA vs Hate**
  lavshate.org

  The LA vs Hate program/initiative is a community-driven approach to empower all residents of Los Angeles County to unite against, report, and resist hate.

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