

**CAP UCLA presents
Octavia E. Butler's
Parable Of The Sower
Created by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson
Reagon**

March 7 at Royce Hall



"When the plot of a dystopian novel and the daily churn of the news cycle start overlapping, admiration for a given author's prescience may make way for alarm." —The New York Times

UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) presents an operatic version of *Parable Of The Sower* created by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon on Saturday, March 7, 2020, at Royce Hall. Tickets starting at \$28 are available now at cap.ucla.edu, 310-825-2101 and the Royce Hall box office.

It's as if Octavia E. Butler predicted the future with her book *Parable Of The Sower*. Even though Butler's work is science fiction, her post-apocalyptic America draws many parallels to today. The plot, centered around a young woman who wanders a drought-stricken landscape, planting the seeds of a new empathy-fueled religion, comments on the unhoused, increasing incarceration, gentrification, dwindling natural resources, food and water scarcity, the marginalization of indigenous culture, the rise of the far-right, among others.

Butler's book is "a map of possibilities," Reagon said. "I thought it was important to put this story out because I think theater and music are great ways to communicate difficult topics and to inspire people to actually take notice and face them."

More than a favorite book for Reagon, this performance marks a third joint opera for the mother and daughter duo. Both musicians, Johnson Reagon is a founding member of Sweet Honey in The Rock, an all-woman a cappella ensemble, which she led to international acclaim for thirty years until retirement. Toshi Reagon releases several of her own records collaborating with artists such as Meshell Ndegeocello, the Baldwin Peace and toured the Bessie Award-winning *The Blues Project* with Michelle Dorrance and Dorrance Dance.

The staging of *Parable Of The Sower* is a mesmerizing theatrical work of rare power and beauty that reveals deep insights into gender, race and the future of human civilization.

CAP UCLA's special event programming continues with *Among Us—UCLA* (April 18 - May 10, UCLA Campus), John Cameron Mitchell's *The Origin of Love Tour* (April 11, The Theatre at Ace Hotel), *Choreography for Reading Aloud* (May 1 & 2, Powell Library) and David Sedaris (May 10, Royce Hall).

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAP UCLA presents

[Octavia E. Butler's](#)

[Parable Of The Sower](#)

[Created by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon](#)

Sat, Mar 7 at 8 PM

Royce Hall, UCLA

10745 Dickson Court, Los Angeles, CA 90095

Program:

Based on the novels *Parable Of The Sower* and *Parable Of The Talents* by Octavia E. Butler, this genre-defying work of political theater featuring a powerhouse ensemble of 20 singers, actors and musicians' harnesses 200 years of Black music to give musical life to Butler's acclaimed science fiction novel. *Parable Of The Sower*, set in 2024 and published in 1993, presciently grapples with many of the same issues we face today—global warming, corporate influence over government, a destabilized economy, water scarcity, food scarcity, the privatization of social services, homelessness, public safety, a return of long-forgotten diseases and the profit-making machine that runs the medical industry.

Credits:

Created by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon
Music and Lyrics by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon
Directed by Eric Ting

Funds for the CAP UCLA performance of *Parable Of The Sower* were provided in part by the Ginny Mancini Endowment for Vocal Performance and Royce Center Circle Endowment Fund. This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. A component of the creative development of *Parable of the Sower* was provided through CAP UCLA's annual artist residency partnership with the Ucross Foundation. CAP UCLA creative development initiatives are funded through the generous support of Susan & Leonard Nimoy and the Good Works Foundation.

Tickets:

Tickets: Starting at \$28

Online: cap.ucla.edu

Phone: 310-825-2101

UCLA Central Ticket Office: 310-825-2101, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Royce Hall box office: open 90 minutes prior to the event start time.

Artists website: [Toshi Reagon](#) | [Bernice Johnson Reagon](#)

About Toshi Reagon

A talented and versatile singer, composer, musician, curator and producer with a profound ear for sonic Americana—from folk to funk, from blues to rock. While her expansive career has landed her at Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House and Madison Square Garden, you can just as easily find Toshi turning out at a music festival, intimate venue or local club. She has collaborated with many artists including Carl Hancock Rux, Ani DiFranco, Lenny Kravitz, Elvis Costello and Nona Hendryx. As a composer, she has worked with Katori Hall, Urban Bush Women and The Jane Comfort Dance Co., among others. She is currently touring Bessie Award-winning *The Blues Project* with tap dancer Michelle Dorrance and Dorrance Dance. She founded WORD*ROCK*&SWORD, a community festival that takes place throughout New York City every September. Together with her mother Bernice Johnson Reagon, she has created two operas with director Robert Wilson, *The Temptation of St. Anthony and Zinnias*, *The Life of Clementine Hunter*. Toshi co-composed music for two Peabody Award-winning films and received a NYFA Award for Music Composition, the 2010 OutMusic Heritage Award and The Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance. She is a National Women's History Month honoree and was named a 2015 Art of Change Fellow by the Ford Foundation.

About Bernice Johnson Reagon

A scholar, singer/songleader, activist. For over half a century she has been a profound contributor to African American and American culture. Born in Southwest Georgia, her singing style and traditional repertoire is grounded in her experiences in church, school and political activism. As a composer, she has created a narrative of her social and political activism through her songs and larger compositions. She performed as a member of the SNCC Freedom Singers during the sixties; she founded an all-women a cappella ensemble, The Harambee Singers, during the Black Cultural Movement; she founded and led the internationally acclaimed Sweet Honey in the Rock for thirty years until retirement. Paralleling her work in music, Reagon is one of the leading authorities in African American Cultural History. She is a recipient of the Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities, a MacArthur Fellowship and the Presidential Medal and Charles E. Frankel Prize for Contributions to the Public Understanding of Humanities.

About CAP UCLA

[UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance](#) (CAP UCLA) is dedicated to the advancement of the contemporary performing arts in all disciplines — dance, music, spoken word and theater, as well as emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms — by leading artists from around the globe. Part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, CAP UCLA curates and facilitates direct exposure to artists who are creating extraordinary works of art and fosters a vibrant learning community both on and off the UCLA campus. The organization invests in the creative process by providing artists with financial backing and time to experiment and expand their practices through strategic partnerships and collaborations. As an influential voice within the local, national and global arts communities, CAP UCLA connects this generation to the next in order to preserve a living archive of our culture. CAP UCLA is also a safe harbor where cultural expression and artistic exploration can thrive, giving audiences the opportunity to experience real life through characters and stories on stage, and giving artists an avenue to challenge assumptions and advance new ways of seeing and understanding the world we live in now.

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