

Q&A

SMOOTH JAZZ KNIGHT

Saxophonist Gerald Albright pairs with his daughter to put their own stamp on Christmas classics

By Dan Reeves

Saxophonist and smooth jazz luminary Gerald Albright has made 18 solo records and received eight Grammy nominations. As a studio musician, he's played with funk artist Rick James, singer-songwriter Randy Newman and soul legends The Temptations. He's toured with a number of popular music's icons, including Whitney Houston, Phil Collins and Quincy Jones. This year, he released "A Not So Silent Night," a collection of Christmas classics with a twist of funk and soul, featuring his daughter and vocal sensation Selina Albright. The Los Angeles native talks about the next generation of jazz artists, his career highlights and, of course, his daughter.



Richmond magazine: How did the Albright Family Christmas tour come to fruition?

Gerald Albright: We've been talking about it for a long time and started doing it last year to broaden our portfolios with Christmas music, and everybody loved it. Since she was 11, Selina's evolved into what she is now: a great musician, great vocalist, great songwriter, producer and a great daughter!

RM: Any Rick James stories you can share? I had to ask.

Albright: Ha! The Rick that you [saw] onstage is the Rick that you [saw] in the studio. He's got the whole cosmetic thing going with the braids, the

leather pants. Rick was Rick. He lived in the fast lane, but he was a brilliant producer and a brilliant performer.

RM: Who is standing out among the younger set of jazz artists?

Albright: I feel there's a lot of great guys who have done the work in terms of learning the instrument and really trying to develop their brand. A gentleman named Marcus Anderson comes to mind. Eric Darius is doing a fine job, too. When it's time for all of us to sit down, there are some

great youngsters to keep this wonderful genre of music going.

RM: Tell me a little bit about your process as a writer and producer.

Albright: When I produce, I like my stuff to be thick and big. I like a lot of horns and a lot of percussion. Everything, like that spiritual beat right in your face. I always thought big in my production. There's nothing anorexic about my music, if I can say that.

RM: As a session musician for so many artists, touring

with the likes of Whitney Houston and making your own records, what has been the most fulfilling?

Albright: I think all those experiences leading up to 1987, when I released "Just Between Us," [served as] a springboard and precursor to being a recording artist — all those recording sessions, being a sideman on so many shows with different major artists. The beautiful thing about it is that the passion is still as strong today at the age of 62 as it was back in the '80s. I just have this rush and this anxious overtone to my personality to write a lot of music and keep the music fresh. It's a lifelong mission for me, and I feel like I just started, even at 62. **AL**


Gerald Albright with special guest Selina Albright comes to The Tin Pan on Dec. 8, at 7 p.m. \$70. tinpanva.com.



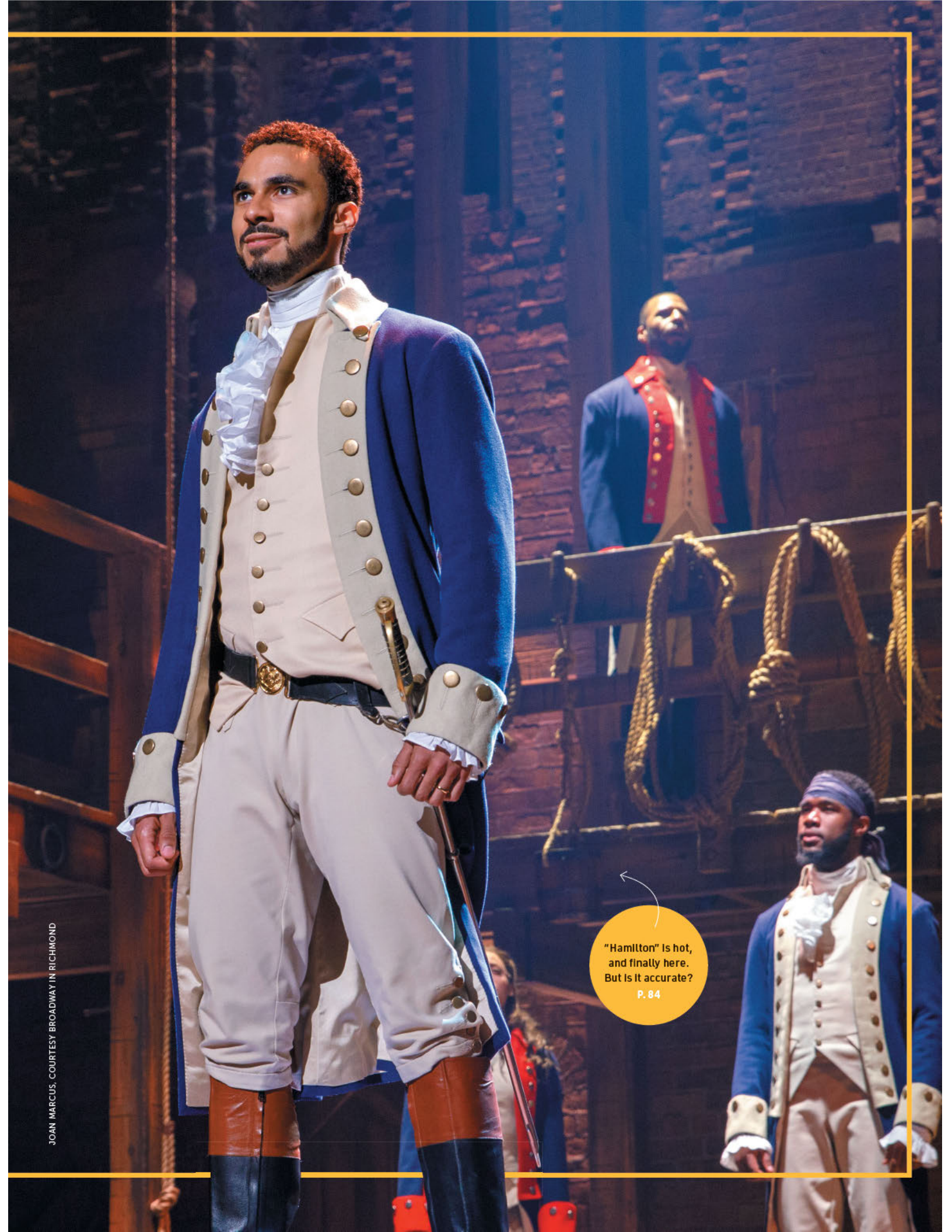
ART P.78 MUSIC P.80 FILM P.82 THEATER P.84

HARVEST OF THE ARTS

Art is bountiful in Richmond in autumn. The pages that follow include a preview of the events, exhibitions, art, films and people you won't want to miss.



"Hamilton" is hot,
and finally here.
But is it accurate?
P. 84



Art

The ADA Gallery
booth at the 2017
Current Art Fair



OCT.
24-27

CURRENT ART FAIR

BON SECOURS WASHINGTON
REDSKINS TRAINING CENTER

THE CURRENT ART FAIR BEGAN IN 2016, where most things do these days, in Scott's Addition.

The 2017 edition landed at Main Street Station and a Current Book Art event was held in March 2018 at Studio Two Three. How Current should proceed became a question that BJ Kocen and Jennifer Glavé sought to answer.

The couple operates Glavé Kocen Gallery, and as Kocen observes, "Jen and I met as event planners in 2000. It's what our partnership grew out of." After an extensive location search, they strode into Level 2 of the Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Center and caught a vision. The WTVR Channel 6 tower, used as Current's logo, looms above the center with a panorama of Scott's Addition beyond. The 250 parking spaces helped.

"This was easily the best rental facility, technically and aesthetically, that we could find," Kocen says. "And so many people haven't been here yet."

Perhaps, then, this is one issue the art fair can tackle: bringing an audience to the sports palace where art is introduced into what may seem an unlikely space.

The 20 arts organizations included in the fair come from the region and beyond, including Les Yeux du

Monde of Charlottesville, Linda Matney from Williamsburg and Virginia Beach's Bojuart. Long-established Richmond galleries making their Current debut are artspace (1988) and the Crossroads Art Center (2002). They join the 40-year-old artist run 1708 Gallery, and the taste-setting Reynolds Gallery. Organizations such as the Richmond Street Art Festival and RVA Makers will be present along with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' VMFA on the Road artmobile and Art on Wheels.

In the midway section of the fair, would-be artists of all ages can participate in various demonstrations directed by artists. A theater space will host films curated by Enjoli Moon of the Afrikana Independent Film Festival; "Antiques Road Show" appraiser Ken Farmer will tell stories from

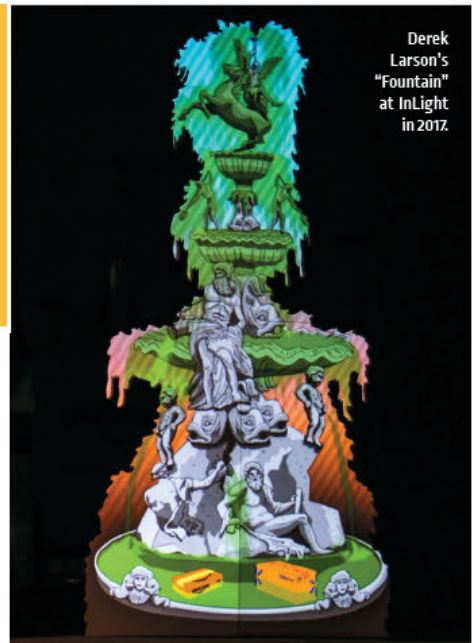
the road; and Shockoe Artspace will present a documentary called "The Builder" about a Richmond contractor who collects art. That dovetails into the Current concept of collect and create.

For early arrivals, there'll be Himalayan bowl singers for mediation and on Sunday, a jazz brunch.

Art fairs strive to present quality paired with quantity. Curiosity and a little sense of adventure help, too. "People don't know how robust our art community is; this gives a snapshot to people who've not collected, or seasoned collectors who want to see something new," Kocen says.

—HARRY KOLLATZ JR.

Preview Party Oct. 24 at 6 p.m., \$55. Oct 25-26 noon to 8 p.m. and Oct. 27, noon-5 p.m. General admission, \$10 per day, with weekend passes for \$15.



Derek Larson's "Fountain" at InLight in 2017.

3 MORE ART EVENTS

OCT. 26 - FEB. 23

EDWARD HOPPER AND THE AMERICAN HOTEL

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
This exhibition features paintings by Hopper and others depicting settings at hotels, motels and boarding houses. This is the exhibition's only East Coast showing. \$10-\$16.

NOV. 15 - 16

INLIGHT CHIMBORAZO PARK

This year, the light-based art and performance event lands in Church Hill's Chimborazo Park. The event will feature art referencing the park's complex history as a Confederate hospital and a community for formerly enslaved African Americans. Free.

NOV. 22 - 24

CRAFT + DESIGN MAIN STREET STATION

A long-running juried show that showcases contemporary crafts from local and national artists at the renovated train shed at Main Street Station. \$10 to \$80.

Music

Mavis Staples performs at the Richmond Folk Festival in 2018.



OCT.
11-13

RICHMOND FOLK FESTIVAL

BROWN'S ISLAND

FIRST PRESENTED AS PART OF THE National Council for the Traditional Arts National Folk Festival from 2005 to 2007, the free Richmond Folk Festival will celebrate its 15th year as an annual celebration of cultural diversity held over seven stages and three days. The event is helmed by Venture Richmond's Director of Events Stephen Lecky with the support of more than 1,000 volunteers.

"We are essentially building a small city for 200,000 people," Lecky says. "Food, water, [portable toilets], trash, recycling, power.... these are all things (among hundreds of others) that need to be planned. When logistics go well, they're invisible."

Things don't always go according to a plan for an outdoor event, and the first few years of the Folk Festival were a challenge.

"The first year we didn't grasp the full scope of the festival," Lecky recalls. "It rained, hard, for two and a half days. It was a mess. Things have gotten easier and

smoother since."

Volunteers have much to do with the festival's success. They're a part of the event that can't be ordered or booked, like other essentials such as talent, stages or vendors. Some volunteers return every year, and some now have more than a decade of experience carrying those orange donation buckets, collecting recyclables, selling merchandise, recording performances and performing other duties. Helpers range from Girl Scouts to octogenarians, but during the last two years their numbers have

FOLK FEST FACTS

A typical festival is three days, with seven stages and about **1,300** volunteers.

The festival has grown from **70,000** attendees to an estimated **220,000** in 2018.

In 2016, a couple who volunteers at the annual event, held their **WEDDING** at Folk Festival.

This year, the festival is releasing its first **ALBUM** made from recordings spanning its 15 year history.



decreased. This year, the festival needs more volunteers.

“The volunteer experience has brought me good friends,” says Tim Fite, a veteran volunteer. “It feels like a family, but with a really great mission instead of a weird uncle.”

Perks for volunteers include free parking, a staff party and merchandise. Not to mention an insider’s view of the festival’s top-notch performers. Previous festivals have included R&B singer Mavis Staples, country musician Roseanne Cash, saxophonist Maceo Parker, the Filipino gong orchestra known as the Palabuniyan Kulintang Ensemble, and an eclectic selection of world music makers, dancers and artists. This year Lecky is excited about the CASYM Steel Pan Orchestra.

“The Folk Festival programming committee has talked for years about presenting a steel pan orchestra,” Lecky says, “but the logistics of working with a large group were challenging. We prioritized it for the 15th anniversary.”

Also on the bill this year is country crooner Dale Watson, a hard-touring headliner who’s poured his slinky baritone over Fender guitars for decades, and who appeared at 2008’s Richmond Folk Festival. But the handle rolling off music cognoscenti’s tongues this year is Bombino. The Saharan guitarist, born Oumara Moctar, is hard to put in a musical box — unless you happen to be familiar with the North African desert blues that Bombino has brought to world attention, winning fans such as The Rolling Stones. Bombino’s lyrics are soulful, romantic and, at times, political. They’re backed by his godly dexterity on guitar that hitches the spirits and abilities of Jimi Hendrix and Jerry Garcia together in a stormy jam of windswept vocals and pyrotechnic strumming. The

New York Times dubbed him the “Sultan of Shred.”

Music from all of the shows is recorded by a team of 50 volunteer music loggers, led by Fite. This year some of those recordings will be available on the festival’s first compilation album, “All Together Now: 15 Years of the Richmond Folk Festival,” to be released on Spacebomb Records on Oct. 11. National Council for The Arts Artistic Director Julia Olin culled more than 1,300 hours of archived recordings for the release, which will be available at the festival. Not every artist made their performance available. Lecky wanted to include Rosanne Cash’s 2012 show on the CD, but issues related to publishing rights got in the way. The artists that did allow their music to be included represent the diverse sounds that have made the festival such a unique event: Clinton Fearon and the Boogie Brown Band, Maggie Ingram & The Ingramettes, Nathalie Pires, Peter Rowan Bluegrass Band, Mariachi Los Camperos de Nati Cano, The Quebe Sisters, Lunasa, Altai Kai and The Holmes Brothers.

Lecky would like to release a compilation every year, like the festival’s poster series, but first he must sell the 650 vinyl records, which include 300 “tie dye” collectible discs. The album will also be available as a CD and digital download. Merchandising tents will sell the record at the festival as will several local record stores. Proceeds benefit the folk festival.

Another way of supporting the free event is with digital donations. This year, cashless attendees can use a Text to Give option at 24365, by typing FOLK. Lecky suggests a \$15 donation in celebration of the festival’s 15th anniversary. “You’d be hard-pressed to find any world-class show, much less a three-day event, for that kind of money,” he says. —GENEVELYN STEELE

3 MORE MUSIC EVENTS

OCT. 5–6

2ND STREET FESTIVAL
JACKSON WARD
Go-Go pioneers E.U. headline the two day festival of music, food and heritage. Local favorites Legacy Band also performs, in addition to four stages of live music offering a soundtrack to the walking tours and shopping. Free.

OCT. 11–12

LAKE STREET DIVE
THE NATIONAL
This Boston-based band that plays soulful pop and rock earned a faithful following in Richmond before making it big. There’s something special about the group that their albums don’t quite capture and you have two nights to see it. \$29.50 – \$33.

NOV. 1

OLETA ADAMS
TIN PAN
Singer Oleta Adams is best remembered for covering “Get Here,” which became an anthem during the Gulf War. The Grammy nominee has released 10 records since then, without compromising her understated approach and style. Get there. \$52.50–\$57.50.

SEPT. 12
- MAY 2020

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

WEINSTEIN JCC

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

stands before Congress and denounces a newspaper publisher for his indictment of the executive's pet project as "colonialist overreach built on a \$40 million cover-up." The president accuses the publisher of libel and threatens him with imprisonment.

The newspaperman is Joseph Pulitzer who came to the United States as a Hungarian Jewish immigrant with few prospects. He became a major proponent of the free press as publisher of the New York World. Pulitzer is the one the prize is named for. The president was Theodore Roosevelt.

Director Oren Rudavsky's "Joseph Pulitzer: Voice of the People" screens at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 17 during The Jewish Film Festival at Weinstein Jewish Community Center. The 85-minute film narrated by Adam Driver features the voices of Liv Schreiber as Pulitzer, Tim Blake Nelson as Roosevelt and Rachel Brosnahan as the adventurous Nelly Bly.

In his director's statement, Rudavsky describes Pulitzer's passion for distributing information. "He published everything he thought was news. He didn't care whom he harmed. He was a guy you could like if he weren't such a difficult guy ... He was impressive to me because he came over as an immigrant, became fabulously wealthy, but maintained

his progressive ideals."

Trouble began when a tipster informed The World about the dealings of the Roosevelt administration spending \$40 million to acquire the assets of the failed French firm, the New Panama Canal Company. The contemporary story was that the French government received the funds to distribute to investors. Instead, the source said, financier J.P. Morgan spread \$15 million to the liquidator. Another fat amount — perhaps \$12 million — went 'round to U.S. hands. The two lead investors were Roosevelt's brother-in-law, Douglas Robinson, and Clark P. Taft, brother of Teddy's vice-president, William H. Taft.

The World hired an attorney to hunt for the company and its backers — finding no trace. Roosevelt thundered that The World's stories were "scurrilous and libelous, and false in every essential particular" and that for the sake of the country, Pulitzer needed to face justice. Pulitzer and The World went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court — and the film gets into that fight. A talkback is scheduled after the showing.

The Jewish Film Festival offers a variety of films and conversation: Sept. 12 at 7:30 p.m. director Max Lewikowicz is on hand for his documentary about the impact of "Fiddler on the Roof," "Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles," in November comes Natalie Portman's "A Tribute to Amos Oz: A Tale of Love and Darkness," about the Israeli novelist and essayist, with a discussion following. —HKJ

\$12 general admission. Visit weinsteinjcc.org for the full schedule.



3 MORE FILM EVENTS

SEPT. 12-15

AFRIKANA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

This year's festival includes the documentary, "The Remix: Hip Hop X Fashion," followed by a chat with fashion icon Dapper Dan. Also, music enthusiast Questlove brings the Virginia premiere of "Hip Hop Songs that Shook the World."

OCT. 20 & OCT. 26

48 HOUR HORROR FILM FESTIVAL

THE BYRD THEATRE

If putting a movie together in two days wasn't scary enough, this year filmmakers try to complete a horror film in 48 hours. Screenings will include discussions with the filmmakers.

NOV. 21-24

POCAHONTAS REFRAMED

THE BYRD THEATRE

This film festival features Native American-associated classic and recent films at the Byrd Theatre. This year, in addition to the films, a class on Native American code talkers is offered. Tickets: TBA

Theater

Actors Austin Scott (left) and Carvens Lissaint of the national tour of "Hamilton."



NOV. 19
- DEC. 8

'HAMILTON'

ALTRIA THEATER

PATRICIA HERRERA FIRST SAW "HAMILTON" in 2015 when the musical was playing off-Broadway at New York's Public Theatre. "The same night I was there, they announced it was going to Broadway, and so I got a ticket and saw it again," she says. Herrera, an associate professor of theater at University of Richmond, has now seen the production, based on the life of American founding father Alexander Hamilton, three times. "I was

enamored by it, I am still enamored by it," she says.

Yet, she cautions that the musical — a show so big it produced an unlikely hit song about Yorktown — should not be taken as history.

"It is a great vehicle to begin a conversation about history," she says. "It's theater so the artists can imagine other things and other possibilities. I think it's a great starting point. But you should go deeper."

In a recent book, "Historians on Hamilton: How a Blockbuster Musical

is Restating America's Past" (Rutgers University Press), Herrera is one of 16 scholars who offer pointed thoughts on the historical, artistic and educational impact of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Tony-, Grammy- and Pulitzer Prize-winning spectacle, coming to Richmond for the first time Nov. 19 to Dec. 8. The book of essays examines everything from the ongoing revisionist revival of "founder's chic" — a few great men did everything — to the play's often fast-and-loose depiction of its hero, a Revolutionary War veteran who co-wrote the U.S. Consti-

JOAN MARCUS, COURTESY BROADWAY IN RICHMOND

JUST THE FACTS, HAM

WHAT THE MUSICAL GETS WRONG¹

Hamilton's wife Elizabeth **NEVER** wrote to General Washington, begging to have her husband sent home from battle.

John Adams **COULDN'T** fire Hamilton from his cabinet because he had been out-of-office for two years.

Aaron Burr **NEVER** attended Hamilton's wedding.

Jefferson **WASN'T** a boastful scoundrel but was described as quiet, contemplative and nonconfrontational.

tution and helped build the nation's financial system.

Herrera is delighted by the musical's use of hip-hop, and how it immediately captured the attention of young people — no mean feat for a contemporary musical. "I was struck by how much my children connected to it and how they identified with some of the lyrics. I was really proud as a parent that they were responding so favorably to these themes of immigration and valuing them."

But then she listened harder. "What makes the musical so incredible is that there's this multi-racial cast that is representational of what we want America to be, and then it uses a hip-hop vocabulary that you don't often see in theater," she says. "Because you are bombarded and saturated with all of these possibilities, however, you begin to lose sight of other things." Like, she says, the very real institution of slavery. "The audiences gets to imagine the possibilities of America, but it becomes a problem when you stop there. What an opportunity it would've been to include the narratives of the slave people."

Claire Bond Potter, historian at the New School in New York, and the co-editor (with Renee C. Romano) of "Historians on Hamilton," says the inspiration for the book was their awareness that many teachers were using Hamilton in the classroom to spark conversations about the themes of the American Revolution. "There were all of these debates about the history that the play represented and there wasn't one book that people could read where they could engage with those discussions," she says.

What Hamilton does, Potter says, is grab us with a story that is human and emotional. "But it may not exactly be the right story," she adds. "It may either leave certain kinds of history in place that aren't being questioned or insert new historical themes that aren't really appropriate ... People need to be informed, and students hopefully will learn to distinguish between actual history and historical fiction."

One of the main debates surrounding the musical, in the essays and elsewhere, is whether the real Alexander Hamilton was an abolitionist or not. "He's positioned that way in the musical," Herrera says. "But it really lets him off the hook. It lets a lot of the founding fathers off the hook because the country was created on the backs of enslaved people and that's the conversation that is not heard."

"Hamilton draws on history but it's really art," echoes Potter. "And art has to do something that historians don't have to do. It has to bring the audience in and keep them there with a minimal storyline while we historians can afford to highlight contradictions and point out ironies and give our audience liberal amounts of evidence to back ourselves up."

Despite the critiques, Herrera and Potter, like most of the other essayists in "Historians on Hamilton," praise the show as powerful entertainment. Both of them say, at times, they wept with emotion.

"Don't let the criticisms of the musical keep you from enjoying it," Potter says with a laugh. "Everybody enjoys it. You'd have to be a very curious sourpuss not to like it." —DON HARRISON

3 MORE THEATER EVENTS

SEPT. 4 – OCT. 18

'PASSING STRANGE'

FIREHOUSE THEATRE

This former Broadway rock musical and Spike Lee-directed film tells the story of a young man discovering himself in Europe in the 1970s. It's part comedy, part drama. \$20 to \$45.

SEPT. 27 – OCT. 20

'A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER'

VA REPERTORY THEATRE

When Monty finds out he's ninth in line to become Earl of Highhurst, he will stop at nothing to ensure his place in the family that rejected him. This Tony-Award-winning musical was based on the 1949 film "Kind Hearts and Coronets." \$36 to \$63.

OCT. 10 – NOV. 12

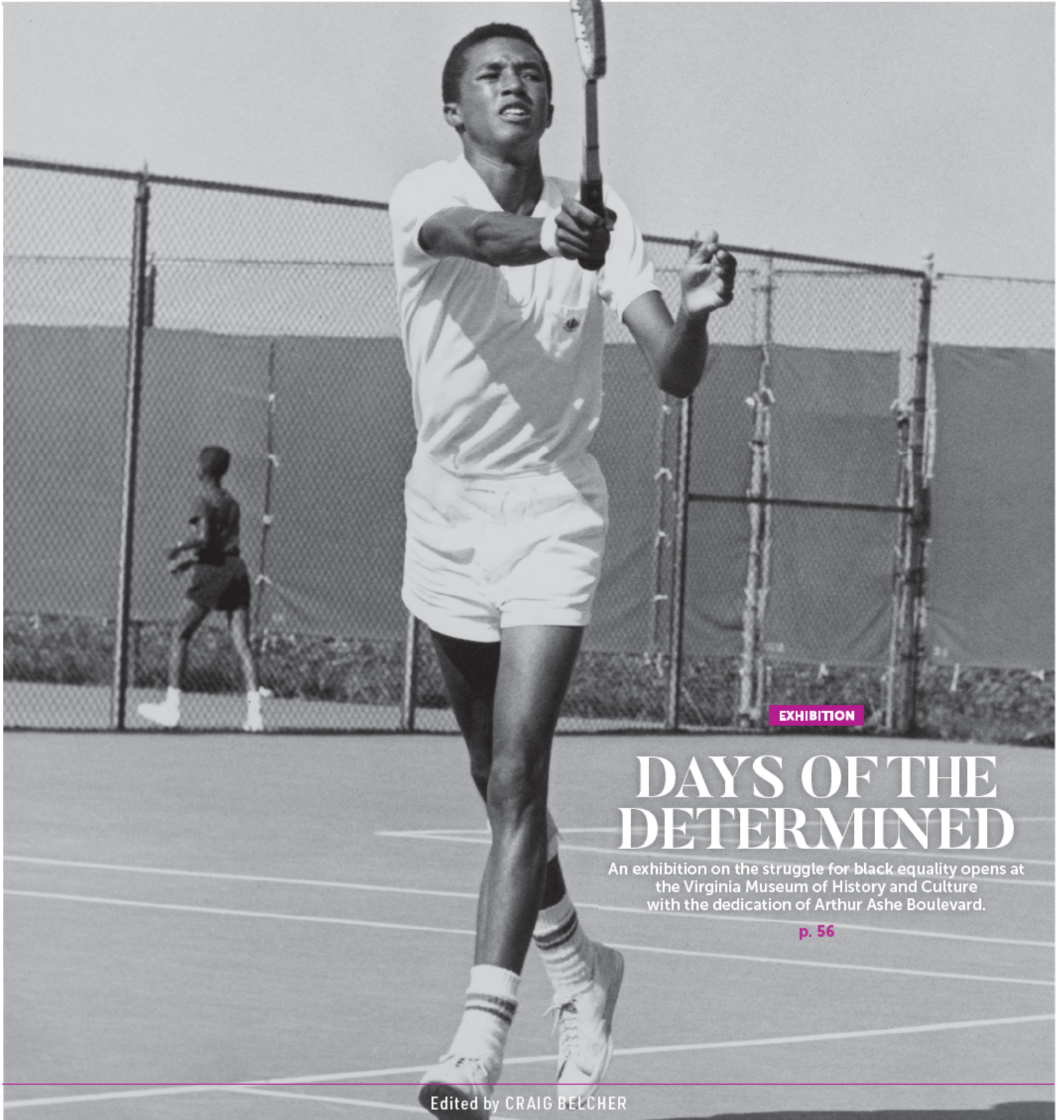
'LOST BOY FOUND IN WHOLE FOODS'

5TH WALL THEATRE

Christine, recently divorced in Pittsburgh, meets Gabriel, a former Sudanese "Lost Boy" working in the produce section of Whole Foods. Touched by his story of struggle, she invites him to live with her and her daughter. \$15 to \$32.

For more on "Historians on Hamilton," visit rutgersuniversitypress.org; 1: "Alexander Hamilton: The Graphic History of an American Founding Father."

A&E



EXHIBITION

DAYS OF THE DETERMINED

An exhibition on the struggle for black equality opens at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture with the dedication of Arthur Ashe Boulevard.

p. 56

Edited by CRAIG BELCHER

"Determined" continues through March 2020 at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture.



"Slave Auction, Virginia," an 1862 painting by LeFevre Cranstone, is part of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture's "Determined" exhibition.

EXHIBITION

DETERMINED TO STAND

Exhibition focuses on African-Americans' struggle for equality

By Harry Kollatz Jr.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture's massive exhibition, "Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality," traces African and African-American lives in Virginia. It's a complicated history that takes time to tell. Curator of Exhibitions Karen Sherry, who joined the staff in 2017, headed the dozen-member advisory team that guided the process.

"We had to balance the importance of that history with what we could expect from the visitor in terms of their endurance and what knowledge they might bring to the presentation," Sherry explains.

The exhibition seeks to demonstrate the myriad ways black people fought for freedom from enslavement, for equal justice under the law and against discrimination.

"Determined" is a legacy project of Virginia's "American Evolution"

commission formed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of key historical events stemming from Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence the nation today. That year, the first Africans arrived in Jamestown; the General Assembly — Virginia's legislature — formed; and 147 women joined Jamestown's male settlers who had arrived in 1607, building permanency in the colony.

With the commemoration date of 1619 looming the museum discerned how best to approach the subject. "Determined" features 100 objects and artifacts, but Sherry and her "brain trust" chose 30 individuals to put faces on complicated subjects from four centuries of culture and life.

One story that serves as an example of the era is that of Sam, who in 1688 led a Westhampton County uprising that rather than leading to freedom, caused him to be sentenced to wear a "punishment collar" or be killed. The museum doesn't own such a device, but borrowed

one from the African American Historical Society of Portsmouth. The "collar" is a headpiece made of iron, curved at the top with four spikes. The brutality of the collar raises Sam from 17th century court records and demonstrates the evolution of systemized enslavement within a century of African presence in Virginia.

Creating "Determined," which runs through March 2020, involved casting a wide net, "and then reeling it in to see what you get," Sherry explains. "It comes down to what's available, what you may already have in the museum's collection, what you hope to borrow.

The title is adapted from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have Been to the Mountaintop" speech, delivered the night before his assassination in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. "Let us stand with a greater determination," he stated. "And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge to make America what it ought to be."

The June 22 opening includes the 11 a.m. dedication of Arthur Ashe Boulevard, with John Lewis, a Georgia Democrat and longtime civil rights activist. The free event occurs on the VMHC's front lawn. Also complementing the exhibition are a series of talks and other events. virginiahistory.org **■**