

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

Presents a world premiere Kennedy Center commission,  
part of the *Women's Voices Theatre Festival*

***Digging Up Dessa***

**Written by Laura Schellhardt**  
**Directed by Rives Collins**

**February 3–18, 2018**  
**in the Kennedy Center Family Theater**

**[PHOTOS: Alina Collins Maldonado as Dessa and Jackie Reneé Robinson as Mary Anning explore “The Last American Dinosaurs” at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.](#)**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts presents a world premiere Kennedy Center commission, ***Digging Up Dessa***, running February 3–18, 2018 in the Family Theater. This insightful and humorous play follows Dessa, a 21st-century girl with no shortage of struggles, secrets, and mysteries to solve. With the help of a remarkable friend—the pioneering 19th century English paleontologist Mary Anning—she sets out to dig up some super-sized discoveries.

*Digging Up Dessa* is written by **Laura Schellhardt** with music by **Deborah Wicks La Puma** and direction by **Rives Collins**. As a part of the *Women's Voices Theatre Festival*, this new play about a girl who raises her voice in support of women scientists and insists on truth—both in her own life as well as in the public sphere—joins performances around Washington, D.C. highlighting the wide-ranging scope of stories told by and about women. The cast

features **Alina Collins Maldonado** (the Kennedy Center's *Where Words Once Were*) as Dessa, **Jackie Reneé Robinson** as Mary Anning, **Alyssa Wilmoth Keegan** as Dessa's mother, Esther, and **Chris Stinson** as Dessa's classmate, Nilo.

*Digging Up Dessa* includes scenic design by **Deb Booth**, lighting design by **Martha Mountain**, costume design by **Jen Gillette**, projection design by **Patrick Lord**, sound design by **Kenny Neal**, properties by **Audrey Bodek**, and dramaturgy by **Grace Overbeke**.

*This production is most enjoyed by ages 10 and up.*

### **Ticket Information**

*Digging Up Dessa* will be performed on Saturday, February 3 at 1:30 and 4 p.m.; Sunday, February 4 at 1:30 and 4 p.m.; Saturday, February 10 at 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 5 p.m.; Sunday, February 11 at 1:30 and 4 p.m.; Wednesday, February 14 at 12:30 p.m.; Thursday, February 15 at 12:30 p.m.; Saturday, February 17 at 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 5 p.m.; and Sunday, February 18 at 1:30 and 4 p.m. Tickets for the performance are \$20 and are currently on sale. For more information please visit the Kennedy Center website, in-person at the Kennedy Center box office, or call (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

### **Funding Credits**

***Bank of America** is the Presenting Sponsor of Performances for Young Audiences.*

*Additional support for *Digging Up Dessa* is provided by **James & Alice B. Clark Foundation; The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation; Paul M. Angell Family Foundation; and the U.S. Department of Education.***

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*Major support for educational programs at the Kennedy Center is provided by **David M. Rubenstein** through the **Rubenstein Arts Access Program.***

*Kennedy Center education and related artistic programming is made possible through the generosity of **the National Committee for the Performing Arts** and the **President's Advisory Committee on the Arts.***

### **About Education at the Kennedy Center**

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, [Education at the Kennedy Center](#) offers programs and events

that strive to reflect the nation and communities and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From performances and exhibits on the Center's stages and in the community, to classroom and community partnerships, including the recent addition of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Turnaround Arts initiative, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the exploring student of any age, the teacher and teaching artist, and even the local and national infrastructure—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change. As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center's Education utilizes the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and to activate and support the Citizen Artists in all our audiences. For more information, please visit [kennedy-center.org/education/](https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/).

Discover the [Kennedy Center](https://www.kennedy-center.org/) on social media:



#DiggingUpDessa  
#KennedyCenter

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**TICKETS & INFORMATION**

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