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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.

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**About Education at the Kennedy Center**
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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.

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