



# **SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK®**

## **CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AND BEYOND**

### **VOCALS**

Nitanju Bolade Casel

Aisha Khalil

Carol Maillard

Louise Robinson

Rochelle Rice

**ACOUSTIC AND ELECTRIC BASS** Romeir Mendez

**ASL SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION** Barbara Hunt

In Association with Crossroads Theatre Company

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Zellerbach Theatre

Sunday, October 27 @ 7 PM

There will be an intermission.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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**Sweet Honey in the Rock®** was founded in 1973 by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon as part of the D.C. Black Repertory Theater Company with Carol Maillard, Louise Robinson and Mie. The group has evolved into international ambassadors of a cappella vocal and lyrical excellence, as well as musical missionaries of equality, empowerment, education, peace, love, solidarity and nondenominational spirituality. Revered most for their live performances, the ladies have recorded 24 albums, with several specifically for children. Their most recent double CD, *Sweet Honey in The Rock: A Tribute...Live! Jazz at Lincoln Center* (2012), paid homage to their kindred sisters: vocalists and activists Abbey Lincoln, Odetta, Miriam Makeba and Nina Simone. This CD found the group singing with a jazz trio of "Honey Men" comprised of musical director and pianist, Stacey Wade; acoustic and electric bassist, Parker McAllister; and drummer and percussionist, Jovol Bell.

Sweet Honey in The Rock has performed in many of the world's most prestigious venues on almost every continent for royal command concerts and festivals. In 2015, the group embarked on four U.S. Embassy tours with performances and community outreach in Ethiopia, Peru, Jamaica and Swaziland. In Swaziland, the group was one of the headliners of the internationally acclaimed 9th Annual Mountain Bushfire Music Festival (which attracted 20,000 people) and was featured at the 11th Annual Festival of Voices in Hobart, Tasmania, as part of a tour that also included Launceston, and Melbourne and Sydney in Australia. The group's February 2016 appearance at New York's Carnegie Hall, with noted guest artists trumpeter and bandleader Terence Blanchard and violinist Regina Carter, holds the distinction of being its 32nd performance at that historic venue.

Recent milestones and accomplishments include being commissioned by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Company to compose a score for *Go in Grace* as part of its 50th anniversary program in 2008. In 2012, the group debuted its first orchestral collaboration, writing original lyrics for composer William Banfield's "Symphony No. 10: Affirmations for a New World", a thirty-minute work that was co-commissioned and presented by the National Symphony Orchestra (Christoph Eschenbach, Music Director) and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.; the Minnesota Orchestra (Osmo Vänskä, Music Director) at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis; and the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Millennium Park with the Sphinx Orchestra (conducted by Mark Russell Smith) in Chicago.

The group also had the honor of performing at the national memorial service for Nelson Mandela at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. In acknowledgement of its efforts, Sweet Honey in The Rock was recently presented a distinguished award by the Search for Common Ground organization and the Keeper of the Flame award by the national Delta Sigma Theta sorority at its 100th anniversary celebration. Also, not surprisingly, it was a favorite group of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, having performed by request at the White House.

The subject of two PBS television specials, including *American Masters*, Sweet Honey in The Rock is a beloved performance ensemble that, in its over 50-year history, has maintained a resilient spirit and found a way to successfully fuse the talents of the 24 women that have graced the Sweet Honey in The Rock stage into its patented sound, without ever skipping a beat. In 2017, the group released the holiday single and video, "Silent Night" in support of the annual Sweet Honey in The Rock, Celebrate the Holydays program of spiritual music from around the globe. Stay abreast of the group's travels on Facebook, Twitter and at [sweethoneyintherock.org](http://sweethoneyintherock.org).