

## The Annenberg Center Presents We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr., January 17

### *Sphinx Medal of Excellence Musician Damien Sneed Leads Multi-Genre Performance*

(Philadelphia – January 8, 2020) — The [Annenberg Center](https://www.annenbergcenter.org) presents **We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr., Friday, January 17 at 8 PM**. Inspired by the words and actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., We Shall Overcome features repertoire from across African American music traditions that electrified generations of civil rights activists and defenders. Led by talented multi-genre musician **Damien Sneed**, recipient of the prestigious Sphinx Medal of Excellence, this performance weaves spoken word from Dr. King's speeches with a musical lineage that includes traditional gospel, modern gospel, classical, jazz, Broadway and spirituals to reinvigorate and inspire future generations. From Aretha Franklin to Wynton Marsalis, Duke Ellington to Stevie Wonder, Nina Simone to Donny Hathaway, and traditional spirituals and music from *The Wiz*, Sneed's unique understanding of each genre allows him to fluidly cover a wide span of musical ground in a single performance. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](https://www.annenbergcenter.org) for ticket information.

Performers joining Damien Sneed for We Shall Overcome include vocalists **Chenee Campbell, Markita Knight, Anitra McKinney, Alicia Peters-Jordan**, and **Linny Smith**; **Marquéz Cassidy** on organ; **Arthur Sutton** on bass; **Joel Tate** on drums; and singers from **New Spirit of Penn Gospel Choir** and **St. Thomas Gospel Choir**.

#### **Damien Sneed**

Sneed is a pianist, organist, conductor, composer, producer, arranger and arts educator whose work spans multiple genres. Sneed has worked with jazz, classical, pop and R&B legends including Aretha Franklin, Wynton Marsalis, Jessye Norman, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Ashford & Simpson, Lawrence Brownlee and many others. The multi-genre recording artist is a recipient of the prestigious Sphinx Medal of Excellence, which is presented annually to emerging Black and Latino leaders in classical music. Sneed is currently on a 36-city North American tour with We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The year 2020 marks the 37th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which was signed into law and made a federal holiday in 1983. Sneed recently joined the acclaimed staff of the Houston Grand Opera (HGO) as Music Director and Composer in Residence, and serves as cover conductor for HGO mainstage productions under Patrick Summers, Artistic and Music Director. He has been commissioned to compose a new work for HGO which will have its world premiere on March 5, 2020. [damiensneed.com](https://www.damiensneed.com)

#### **About the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts serves as a major cultural destination and crossroads connecting Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through innovative human expression in theatre, music, dance, and film, serving an annual audience of over 60,000. The Annenberg Center also serves as a key resource for the arts at Penn, connecting master artists with Penn students in support of and as an enhancement to the arts curriculum. Student performing arts groups are also key users of the Annenberg Center's multiple performance and rehearsal spaces, while also staffing many operational roles throughout the

academic year. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, the Annenberg Center emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence, diversity, and rigor in its presentations; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences, and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference, and meeting facilities; and stresses comprehensive event planning, production support, and customer service. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a major provider of performing arts access for school children and actively engages a broad range of primary, secondary, and post-secondary student audiences and inclusive constituencies from the campus, community, and greater Philadelphia region. Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org).

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## CALENDAR LISTING

### **We Shall Overcome A Celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Friday, January 17, 8 PM

Inspired by the words and actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *We Shall Overcome* features repertoire from across African American music traditions that electrified generations of civil rights activists and defenders. Led by talented multi-genre musician Damien Sneed, recipient of the prestigious Sphinx Medal of Excellence, this performance weaves spoken word from Dr. King's speeches with a musical lineage of gospel, jazz, classical and Broadway to reinvigorate and inspire future generations.

Bandleader, piano, keys, vocals **Damien Sneed**

Vocals **Chenee Campbell**

Vocals **Markita Knight**

Vocals **Anitra McKinney**

Vocals **Alicia Peters-Jordan**

Vocals **Linny Smith**

Organ **Marquéz Cassidy**

Bass **Arthur Sutton**

Drums **Joel Tate**

Singers from **New Spirit of Penn Gospel Choir** and **St. Thomas Gospel Choir**

Visit [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org) for ticket information.

[Photographs for We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

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