2014-2015

Arts & Lectures Series
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
Robin Spielberg

ROBIN SPIELBERG is one of America’s most beloved pianists and composers. With an impressive tour schedule and hundreds of thousands of recordings sold, this Steinway Artist has been winning the hearts of listeners around the world. Her compelling melodies and sensitive piano techniques have been evident since debuting her first recording of original solos for piano, “Heal of the Hand.” Ms. Spielberg is a founding member of the Tony Award winning Atlantic Theater Company. She is also a Celebrity Spokesperson for the American Music Therapy Association.

Monday, October 20 • Marian Anderson Music Center • 7:00 p.m.

Staycee Pearl Dance Project
Performing Octavia

STAYCEE PEARL DANCE PROJECT exists to interpret and mirror the human condition through dance and dance-centered multimedia experiences. With diverse casting and programming, Staycee Pearl Dance Project explores innovative conceptual possibilities while participating in meaningful collaboration with a wide variety of multidisciplinary artists and creators. The group will perform Octavia. Author, Octavia Butler’s novels Kindred, where a 20th century black woman travels back in time to slavery, and Adulthood Rites, where humans and extra-terrestrials live together experiencing mystical and other worldly situations, inspire this performance. Staycee Pearl Dance Project creates a world colored by Butler’s storytelling sensibilities and an interpretation of Butler’s own life.

Monday, November 10 • Marian Anderson Music Center • 1:30 p.m.

Randy Lewis
Lecture and Book Signing

This event is presented in collaboration with the Chester County Workforce Investment Board

RANDY LEWIS describes himself as, Peace Corps volunteer, Arthur Murray dance instructor, Ernst and Young partner, Fortune 50 senior executive and accidental advocate. Before retiring in 2013 as Senior Vice President, he led Walgreens logistics division for sixteen years as the chain grew from 1,500 to 8,000 stores with the most advanced logistics network in its industry. Believing that people with disabilities could do more, he pioneered a disability employment model in Walgreens distribution centers that resulted in ten percent of its workforce consisting of people with disabilities (1,000+ PWDs). This employment innovation is changing the lives of thousands and serving as a model for other employers in the United States and abroad.

Randy will be available to sign his book, No Greatness Without Goodness which recounts the story of what led him to create the Walgreens Model and how he was able to garner the support to make it successful. Proceeds from this book signing will benefit the continuation of the Arts and Lectures Series at Cheyney University.
Black Violin

“The BLACK VIOLIN works hard, but makes it all look like play… Sometimes they play with the intense seriousness of orchestral soloists; at others they fiddle as if at a hoedown; at still others they strum the violin and viola like guitars.” N.Y. Times

It is hard to think of African-American violin players to make their mark in popular music, as classically trained South Florida twosome, Wilner “Wil B” Baptiste and Kevin “Kev Marcus” Sylvester, who go by the name Black Violin. They are a welcome revelation for their ability to meld high-brow and pop culture, “Brandenburg” and “breakdown,” into a single genre-busting act. The band’s most recent album, Classically Trained, is the follow-up to their 2007 self-titled debut on their own Di-Versatile Music Group label, which is a good introduction to their groundbreaking blend of classical, hip-hop, rock, R&B, and even bluegrass music.

This is the second appearance for Black Violin at Cheyney University.

Lula Washington Dance Theatre

The LULU WASHINGTON DANCE THEATER was founded by Lula Washington in 1980 with her husband Erwin Washington to provide a creative outlet for minority dance artists in the inner city. Today, Lula and her Company are revered across the United States and around the world. The Company has danced in over 150 cities in the United States, as well as abroad in Germany, Spain, Kosovo, China, and Russia.

Lula is admired as a teacher, leader, dancer, and choreographer with a unique style and approach to dance. Stylistically, Lula fuses African and Afro-Haitian dance. She also is admired as a teacher, leader, dancer, and choreographer with a very unique style and approach to dance. Stylistically, Lula fuses African and Afro-Haitian dance. She also incorporates the dance styles of gospel church, classical ballet, modern, street, theatrical, hip-hop, while drawing from various ideas and issues. Her works have been praised by critics for their strong political and social commentary, as well as their avant-garde composition and their roots in African-American culture.
Layon Gray’s Girls of the summer

LAYON GRAY is a theatrical artist who is captivating audiences with each play he writes. Layon has spent more than two decades writing, directing and developing stage plays and films that reflect a wide array of African-American cultural movements, creating new paradigms for the stage and motion picture industry. Since founding The Layon Gray Experience, he has guided the company’s growth from a privately held theatre company to one of the entertainment industry’s leading independent companies and a veritable box office force.

The Girls of Summer takes place in Chicago in 1945 and depicts the journey of a group of Negro women as they prepare for an exhibition baseball game against the all-white reigning champions, the Rockford Peaches. Two weeks into training, the coach of the all-Negro women’s team is found dead. Racism, deceit, and betrayal are brought to light as this powerful drama reveals the hidden story beneath the surface.

Layon Gray presented Black Angels Over Tuskegee at Cheyney University in 2013.

Route 66: Finding Nat King Cole

Route 66: Finding Nat King Cole is a phenomenal one-man show featuring the multi-talented film and stage actor Jeff Obafemi Carr (The Second Chance and Blue Like Jazz). This One-Act blockbuster takes us backstage to the dressing room of the actor tasked with bringing to life the music and memory of the great Nat King Cole, while struggling to maintain his own distinctive voice. The audience is taken on a remarkable journey filled with humor, and sentimentality. Carr reveals little known details about the life of Nat King Cole while singing his music in a way no other actor before him has. By the time he appears as the King himself, you will believe you are actually witnessing the second coming of the velvety-smooth crooner as he lays out a greatest hits list that includes When I Fall In Love, Straighten Up and Fly Right, Smile, and Unforgettable.
TICKET INFORMATION

All programs are free and open to the public. Doors open 30 minutes before the event and parking is free.

For more information, call 610-399-2057 or e-mail inquiries to scannon@cheyney.edu