

BYU Department of Theatre and Media Arts presents

NORTH STAR

by Gloria Bond Clunie



Streaming at BYUArts.com

MARCH 4-6

GLORIA BONNER'S
YOUR TRUE VOICE 
A SUPERIOR VOCAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Presented in association with YOURTRUEVOICE.COM

Original music in the pre-show by Maui Junior Bonner and Jonathan Keith

BYU COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND MEDIA ARTS

NORTH STAR

Written By
Gloria Bond Clunie

Artistic Producer
Julia Ashworth

Scenic Designer
Samatha Daynes

Prop Artisan
Katelyn Hales

Sound Designer
Conrad Smith

Dramaturg
Sydney Southwick

Production Stage Manager
Sariah Roberts

Directed By
Gloria Bond Clunie

March 4-6, 2021, 7:30 pm
Streaming at BYUArts.com

We invite you to join us each evening immediately following the performance for a brief post-show discussion with our production team via the link provided on screen.

Photography, video and audio recording, and screen recording are forbidden during the performance.

CHARACTER & CAST LIST

AURELIA TAYLOR

Payson Mitchell

RELIA TAYLOR

Sariah Lyles

MANSON TAYLOR

Stanley Charles

KATE TAYLOR

Nicole Newman

WILLIE JOE POOLE

Brooke Nielsen

MISS COOPER

Ellie Mellen

GRANMA

Debra Bonner

FRANKLIN

Haeley Christensen

HAWKINS

Harry Bonner

REVEREND BLAKE

Isaac Lyles

MR. CONNELL

Daniel Summerstay

JAKE

Spencer Birch

VOICE OF UNCLE FRANK

Harry Bonner

MUSIC CREDITS

“Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around” arranged and performed by Debra Bonner, Oba Bonner, Clotile Farkas, Yahosh Bonner, Conlon Bonner, and Oyoyo Bonner

Original music in the preshow by Mauli Junior Bonner and Jonathan Keith

THEATRE STEERING COMMITTEE

Producer	Wade Hollingshaus
Artistic Director	Adam Houghton
Design and Technology Area Head	Michael S. Kraczek
Theatre Production Manager	Jennifer Reed

Assistant Director	Sariah Lyles
Assistant Stage Manager	Samantha Daynes
Assistant Technical Director	Jeremy Rogers

Costume and Makeup Operations Manager	Jessica Cowden
Wardrobe Supervisor	Emily Collett
Costume Faculty Mentor	Dennis Wright
Lighting Operations Manager	Michael G. Handley
Lighting Crew Coordinator	Marianne Ohran
Lighting Faculty Mentor	Michael S. Kraczek
Technical Director	Travis Coyne
Scene Shop Manager	Ward Wright
Scenic Faculty Mentor	Rory Scanlon
Prop Shop Manager	Jennifer Reed
Sound Supervisor	Troy Streeter
Sound Engineer	Conrad Smith
Makeup Faculty Mentor	Jennine Hollingshaus
Dramaturgy Faculty Mentor	Shelley Graham
Stage Management Faculty Mentor	Jennifer Reed
Marketing Services Manager	Hadley Duncan Howard
Creative Services Manager	Ty Davis
Program Designer	Catharine Jensen

“**Rising Up: The Struggle Now and Then**” opening slideshow
created by Jeremy Rogers and Sydney Southwick

MEET THE CAST

Debra Bonner Granma

Debra Bonner is the recipient of the Governor's Utah Performing Arts Award and the Utah Juneteenth Freedom & Heritage Festival Trailblazer Award. She is the choral director and CEO of Debra Bonner Unity Gospel Choir and Unity Gospel Choir International. She is a Master Transformational Vocal Coach and has performed as a guest soloist for the Tabernacle Choir on Temple Square. Bonner is soloist / matriarch of The Bonner Family and the author of yourtruevoice.com, an online Superior Vocal Training Program.

Harry Bonner Hawkins & Uncle Frank

From Cincinnati, Ohio, Harry Bonner is an actor-director. His credits include Jim in *Big River*, Reverend Sykes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Booker T. Washington in *Ragtime*. Harry has been involved in multiple film documentaries. His directing credits include the musical *Raisin* by Lorraine Hansberry, *No Place to Be Somebody* by Charles Gordone, and *Chamber Music* by Arthur Kopit. Currently, Bonner is the Director of Operations for Your True Voice.

Stanley Jean Charles Manson

From Boston, Massachusetts, Stanley Jean Charles is a lawyer at Morgan Stanley and a stand-up comedian / impressionist. During law school, he was a member of the BYU Trial Advocacy Team, President of the Black Law Student Association, and a negotiations finalist. Moreover, he has played in *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth*. Charles received a bachelor and juris doctorate degree from Brigham Young University.

Haeley Christensen Franklin

From Gilbert, Arizona, Haeley Christensen is a Korean-American sophomore majoring in English and minoring in Political Science. She is currently on the writing staff for the BYU Political Review. Christensen was previously a member of Arizona's All State Jazz Clinic Choir and has other performing credits from high school and community theatre, including Kate in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Lucinda in *Into the Woods*, and Sally Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.

Isaac Lyles Reverend Blake

From Canyon Lake, California, Isaac Lyles is a junior with a major in English Teaching. Lyles participated in theatre while attending his high school, Dehesa Charter. Some of Lyles' credits include The Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, Jafar in *Aladdin*, and Inspector Javert in *Les Miserables*.

Sariah Lyles Relia

Hailing from Lake Elsinore, California, Sariah Lyles is a Music Dance Theatre major at BYU. Lyles made her debut as Mercutio and the Prince in *Romeo y Julieta* in 2018. Recent credits include Viola in *Twelfth Night* with Renaissance Now, Mrs. Muller in *Doubt* at BYU, and Ismene in *Antigone* with DAM Good Productions.

Elyna Mellen
Ms. Cooper

Elyna Mellen, from Mundelein, Illinois, is a freshman in the Pre-Acting program, also studying psychology. She's been keeping busy this school year, as *North Star* is her second show with the BYU Theatre Department thus far. She was most recently a part of last semester's production of *An Ideal Husband* as Lady Basildon, and later this semester she is excited to be playing The Governess in the Illusionary Tales mainstage performance, *Turn of the Screw*.

Nicole Newman
Kate Taylor

Nicole Newman is from the Washington D.C. area and is in her fourth semester at BYU. She returned home from serving a mission in France about a year ago and is currently majoring in French and minoring in Sociology. Newman had a lot of fun playing the role of Gabrielle in the musical *Cinderella* her senior year of high school, and has always loved the performing arts. This is her first role and involvement with the theatre program at BYU, and she is very happy to be a part of this experience!

Brooke Nielsen
Willie Taylor

Brooke Nielsen is a sophomore at BYU from Scottsdale, Arizona. She is declared as a pre-Music Dance Theatre major and hopes to double minor in communications and design thinking. This is her BYU theatre debut!

Daniel Summerstay
Mr. Connell

Daniel Summerstay is a first year acting pre-major by day and an aspiring bootleg toaster delivery man by night. He has previously performed in the TMA Department's *An Ideal Husband* as Lord Caversham and *Illusionary Tales* as Henry, as well as the 24 Hour Theatre Project's *Goldfish Ghost* where he played the title role. He would like to apologise in advance to all the people who can do the accent better.

MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Julia Ashworth
Producer & Artistic
Director

Julia Ashworth is an associate teaching professor in the Theatre and Media Arts department at BYU. She has worked in the field of arts education—as an artist, administrator and K-12 educator—for over two decades. Her duties at BYU include serving as artistic director for Young Company (BYU's theatre for young audiences touring group) and area head for the Theatre Arts Education K-12 program. Ashworth's work focuses primarily on inclusive and diverse initiatives in both theatre for young audiences and applied theatre practices.

Gloria Bond Clunie
Playwright &
Director

Gloria Bond Clunie is an award-winning playwright, director, and educator. She is a founding member of the Playwriting Ensemble at Chicago's Regional Tony Award-winning Victory Gardens Theater, where her plays *North Star*, *Living Green*, and *Shoes* premiered, and the founding artistic director of Evanston's Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre. This Northwestern University graduate (BA, Theatre; MFA, Directing) has received numerous awards including a Chicago Jeff, NEA, Illinois Arts Council Fellowships, and the Evanston Mayor's Award for the Arts.

Samantha Daynes
Assistant Stage
Manager & Scenic
Designer

Born in Hong Kong and raised in Singapore, Samantha is a senior in the Theatre Education program. In the theatre department at BYU she has been an actor (*Hamlet* and *Comedy of Errors*), stage manager (*Suffrage* and *Thumbelina*), dramaturg (*Suffrage*), costume designer (Mask Club productions), and playwright (selected for production at Microburst Theatre Festival). She loves what she does and has also worked the deck crew at Moonlight Amphitheatre in San Diego. Daynes currently works as a writer for the BYU Radio show "The Apple Seed."

Katelyn Hales
Prop Artisan

Katelyn Hales is currently a sophomore and is residing in Vineyard, Utah. She is a Theatre Art Studies Major, emphasizing in props. She has participated in many theatre productions including the Lyrical Opera Theatre Company's *Rigoletto*, BYU's *Little Shop of Horrors*, Syracuse High School's *Pirate Queen*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Cinderella*, and Syracuse City's production of *Hairspray*.

Sariah Roberts
Production Stage
Manager

From Chantilly, Virginia, Sariah Roberts is a Theatre Arts Studies major with a minor in Art History. This is her first time stage managing a theatre production. Other stage management experience has been assistant stage manager on *Illusionary Tales* (fall 2020), and several dance performances (2017-2018).

Jeremy Rogers
Assistant Technical
Director

From Fernley, Nevada, Jeremy Rogers is a senior in Theatre Education with a minor in mathematics education. *North Star* is his first role as production staff for BYU. He performed in *Robin Hood* as Little John at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, R.I.

Conrad Smith
Sound Designer

Conrad Smith is a senior in Linguistics. Recently he has worked on BYU's production of *Letters From Cuba*, and BYU's upcoming production *Escape From Planet Death*.

Sydney Southwick
Dramaturg

From Lake Elsinore, California, Sydney is a senior in the theatre arts education program at BYU. This is her first time working as a member of the production team for a BYU Mainstage show.

NORTH STAR



Study Guide

by **Sydney Southwick**, dramaturg
and **Laynie Calderwood**, research assistant



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Keep an eye out for
bubble questions
throughout the
study guide!

★ GLORIA BOND CLUNIE ★

"There really is a North Star!
We just have to find it!"
-Aurelia, North Star



The energy sparked by the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins spread through the South like wildfire. Within months, demonstrations sprang up in towns and cities across the South. The courage of four young men ignited kindling that had been laid ready by years of hard work, organization, dedication, and hope.

As a small child growing up in North Carolina in the sixties, I faintly remember the "colored" signs and vividly recall my mother refusing to eat in a store where Blacks had to stand and Whites could sit at the counter.

I also recall searching the night sky for the North Star with my father. Whether a Black rite of passage or a personal idiosyncrasy, I will never know. But I do remember the power of that huge dark sky filled with billions of brilliant stars. Stars which made you "look up and wonder; held you in reverence; demanded you see them—stars which made you accountable for taking up space under their brightness!"

The voices of *North Star* rumbled through my mind, finding their way only on scraps of paper until the Council of Basic Education in 1993 provided a grant which in essence said, "Tell your story!" The play is not, however, by any means autobiographical. My courage extends only to the filling of a blank page, while the characters I write about represent people who dared to physically face more diabolical enemies—the historical prejudice of a segregated South and the bigotry that still exists in this country. While facing the darkness of ignorance and hate, they fought to maintain self, family, community, and that "universe of light" which stretches across time and exists in all of us.

Though written over two decades ago, *North Star* uniquely resonates with today's cries to end systemic racism. I'm graced to know that Brigham Young University Theatre will use my play to spark meaningful conversations about race in America today.

-Gloria Bond Clunie, playwright, director

★ LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN ★

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

As a former history major, taking on *North Star* felt like the perfect project for me. Like many of you, when I was growing up and learning about the Civil Rights Movement in school, we focused on key players like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. There is no doubt that they are important figures who brought about much-needed change in this country. But I never learned about Diane Nash, one of the leaders of the Freedom Riders. I never learned the name of Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till, who stood strong in the fight for justice after an all-white male jury acquitted her son's murderers. But the most striking realization to me was the hundreds of children who marched alongside their parents. There is something spectacular about young children having the drive to act against what is wrong. Their capacity for empathy and love is so much greater than we can imagine. As a current theatre arts education major and the dramaturg of this production, this has been the perfect project for me. I've found that there is much to be learned from the courageous children in both performances like this one and in my own life. Perhaps this is what Jesus Christ was speaking of when he asked us to "become like little children."



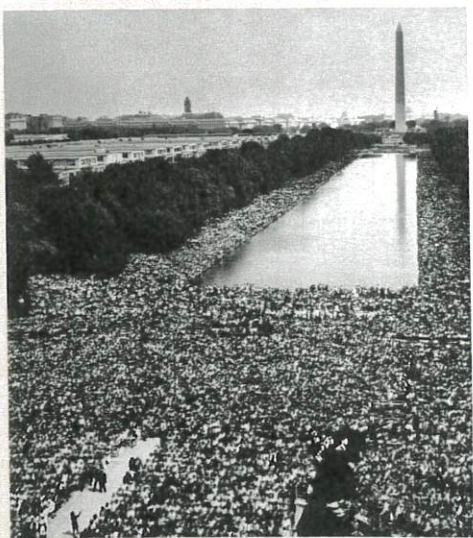
★ THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT ★

The end of the Civil War did not mark the end of racial discrimination against Black Americans. Soon after the liberation of enslaved persons in 1865, “Jim Crow” laws were implemented in the South. These laws restricted voting rights, outlawed interracial marriage, and marginalized Black people through segregation. In 1896, the US Supreme Court upheld “separate but equal” segregation in the [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) case.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement started to make progress. Some important demonstrations of that era include:

- Greensboro sit-ins
- Freedom Riders
- Montgomery Bus Boycott
- March on Washington
- Birmingham Campaign of 1963

These actions resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968, but these victories did not come without much pain and suffering from the bitter racism that still plagues the nation today.



What examples of civil rights demonstrations do you see in this play?



★ BLACK LIVES MATTER ★

In *North Star*, we hear the story of Relia's civil rights experience in the 1960s, but we also get a glimpse of the racism that persists in her present-day adult life. It is important to recognize how today's [Black Lives Matter](#) movement was born from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

In 2012, Trayvon Martin, a 17 year-old African-American, was fatally shot by George Zimmerman. In response to the acquittal of Trayvon's murderer, Black Lives Matter was founded in 2013. The following statements come from the foundation's website:

We are expansive. We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.

We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.

We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

We affirm our humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

"Of course Black Lives Matter! That is an eternal truth that all reasonable people should support."

-President Dallin H. Oaks, of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



★ CHILDREN'S PLACE IN ★ THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

In *North Star*, Relia Taylor (age 11) and her best friend Willie Joe Poole (age 12) long to be a part of the movement for change by participating in the lunch counter sit-ins in their town. Particularly in the 1960s, it was common to see college students, teenagers, and children alongside the adults at marches, sit-ins, protests, and even jail.

One of the many examples of children's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement comes from the Grenada, Mississippi boycotts and marches of 1966. For five straight months, activists marched daily to support desegregation and more Black voter registration. When they were met with vicious attacks from Mississippi state troopers, police, and KKK mobs, the demonstrators decided to "black-out" or boycott all White merchants. Several of these cruel attacks occurred when Grenada county began integrating their public schools. In an effort to protect Black students from the cruel KKK mobs lined up outside of schools, they were escorted inside for weeks.



How can you act against injustices you see in your community? Check out these [resources](#) from [TryingTogether.org](#) for more ideas!



★ GREENSBORO SIT-INS ★

From February to July 1960, Black protesters, often students, sat at the Woolworth Store lunch counter to protest against the store's racist policy of serving their staff and Whites only. The first sit-in was staged in Greensboro, North Carolina by four students at the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College:

1. Franklin McCain
2. Ezell Blair Jr.
3. David Richmond
4. Joseph McNeil

While the demonstrators peacefully sat at the counters with straight faces for long hours until the stores closed, counter-protesters would mock, harass, and assault them with violent acts and language. Demonstrators would often train with each other in preparation for the inevitable verbal and physical harassment from racist members of the community. Day after day, Woolworth's refused to serve them until July 26 when businesses finally agreed to stop segregating their lunch counters.



Demonstrations like these had a profound effect on the playwright/director. How does this information about the Greensboro sit-ins make you feel?



★ A TRULY PUBLIC LIBRARY ★

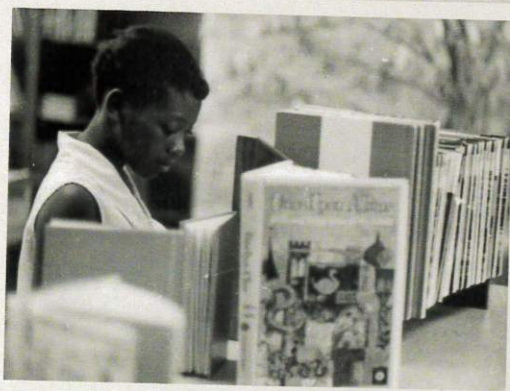
As gateways to knowledge and culture, libraries play a fundamental role in society. The resources and services they offer create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape the new ideas and perspectives that are central to a creative and innovative society.

—Ben White, Head of Intellectual Property, British Library

The library has always been a symbol of wisdom, learning, and expansion of the mind. Unfortunately, many public libraries have been run by segregationists, and as we learn from Relia and Willie in *North Star*, Black patrons were forced to attend separate “colored library branches.” Some facts:

1. People of color were denied access to most public libraries that were funded, in part, by their own tax dollars.

2. The first library for Black patrons opened in 1905.



3. Even libraries in northern states practiced segregation.

4. Library branches for Black people, like public schools, were often housed in rented or converted private facilities like old barns or run-down apartments.

★ CONNECTING FAMILY ★ THROUGH MUSIC

In *North Star*, we see the characters singing gospel music as a way to lift each other and boost morale before a big stance against oppression. Our production is fortunate to include original musical compositions by The Bonner Family.

Debra and Harry Bonner grew up with gospel music pulsing through their souls. Debra grew up singing gospel with a Black Baptist Church choir in Flint, Michigan. Harry's aunt was one of the early leaders of gospel music in Cincinnati. They met at the University of Michigan and together they built a musical legacy.

Debra is a renowned vocal coach known for "DebraTone." She has a commitment to helping each student she coaches find their true voice. In addition to being a soloist and performer herself, she is also authoring a book on her critically-acclaimed vocal technique. Harry himself benefitted from this technique and has had an illustrious career in musical theatre.

The family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints while living in Nevada. Together, the Bonners have eight children, and each one of them is a proficient vocalist and musician. Click [here](#) to watch and listen to the whole family sing "Charity" together. Many of their children have also chosen to pursue a professional career in music, whether performing on Broadway or coaching leading pop artists.

On what music means to their family, Debra and Harry's son, Junior, said, "There were two things that were constant for [our] family: the gospel and music" (LDS Living). The Bonners are a true example of how music, and especially music of the gospel, can bond a family together so tightly.

We, the production team of *North Star*, couldn't be more thrilled with this opportunity to have the Bonners compose music for our production and to have Debra and Harry Bonner as a part of our cast!



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