

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

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[Press Room](#)



Images of Damien Sneed are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
WE SHALL OVERCOME
A CELEBRATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
FEATURING DAMIEN SNEED
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Berkeley, January 22, 2020 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley celebrates Black History Month with composer, conductor, producer, and pianist **Damien Sneed** in *We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.* on Thursday, February 20 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall. Sneed leads an ensemble of five vocal soloists and a live band, and is joined by the **Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir** in a program of timeless African-American music, including traditional spirituals; classic and contemporary gospel songs; and soul, R&B, Broadway, and jazz selections. The musical

works evoke the struggles and triumphs of the civil rights movement, and will be interspersed with excerpts from Dr. King's recorded speeches.

This performance is a featured event in UC Berkeley's [400 Years of Resistance to Slavery and Injustice](#) initiative, which honors and celebrates the extraordinary intellectual, social, and cultural contributions of African Americans to the United States; examines the long-lasting impacts of slavery; and explores the roots and consequences of continued discrimination, bias, and inequality in our society.

Damien Sneed has worked with many of the leading lights of contemporary music, freely crossing between the worlds of classical music, gospel, jazz, and musical theater. Much of his career has been behind the scenes, as a music director, conductor, and accompanist for Grammy-winning touring and recording artists. Sneed has conducted major works for trumpeter Wynton Marsalis; was a regular accompanist for opera star Jessye Norman; collaborated with tenor Lawrence Brownlee; and has toured extensively with Diana Ross, Aretha Franklin, and the Clark Sisters. He is a 2014 recipient of the Sphinx Medal of Excellence, which is presented annually to emerging African-American and Latino leaders in classical music. His opera *Marian's Song*, based on the life and career of Marian Anderson, will premiere at Houston Grand Opera in March 2020.

Founded in 1986, the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir is a treasured Bay Area institution, named Best Community or Church Choir by the Bay Area Gospel Music Awards (2019) and Best Arts Organization by *Oakland Magazine* (2015). Led by artistic director Terrance Kelly, the choir has performed with a wide range of groups, including the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and can be heard on Grammy-winning albums by Linda Ronstadt, MC Hammer, Tramaine Hawkins, and others. Kelly has contributed choral arrangements to albums by Ronstadt and the Kronos Quartet, and received an Emmy Award for his choral arrangement of the choir's 1995 KGO-TV public service announcement.

Musical selections on the program include hits by Aretha Franklin, Duke Ellington, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Donny Hathaway, and Nina Simone, as well as music from Broadway's *The Wiz*. Joining Sneed on tour is an ensemble of multi-genre vocalists and instrumentalists including vocalists Chenee Campbell, Anitra McKinney, Alicia Peters-Jordan, Matia Washington, and Linny

Smith. The musicians include Joel Tate on drums; Arthur Sutton on bass; and Marquéz Cassidy on keyboards.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *We Shall Overcome: A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.*, featuring Damien Sneed on Thursday, February 20 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$28–\$56 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Thursday, February 20, 8pm

***We Shall Overcome*
A Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.,
featuring Damien Sneed**

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street,
UC Berkeley campus

Program: Composer and pianist Damien Sneed's tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrates a living lineage of African-American music and culture that ranges from gospel, spirituals, and classical music to jazz and Broadway. Sneed, who has collaborated with Wynton Marsalis, the Clark Sisters, Aretha Franklin, and Jessye Norman, is joined by five singers, the Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, and a live band for a performance of iconic songs by Franklin, Duke Ellington, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, and Nina Simone, as well as traditional spirituals that evoke the struggles and triumphs of the civil rights movement. The music is interwoven with excerpts from Dr. King's recorded speeches.

Tickets: \$28–\$56 (prices subject to change)