



# MAYERS CONSULTING

**INTRODUCING NORTH - A POWERFUL DEBUT MUSICAL  
FROM ASHLI ST. ARMANT  
FOLLOW THE JOURNEY OF FREEDOM SEEKERS THROUGH THE  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD  
*A HEART-FELT STORY OF OPTIMISM, BRAVERY, PLAYFULNESS AND  
WONDER***

This fall, in her debut theatrical production, **Ashli St. Armant** presents ***NORTH***, a powerful new musical about a teenage boy and his mother who escape slavery in the deep south through the Underground Railroad. ***NORTH*** is a moving story that explores the multi-faceted reality of Black life during the antebellum period and which aims to bring out the full range of experiences of freedom seekers. While acknowledging the realities of slavery, the narrative and original musical compositions by St. Armant explore themes of optimism, bravery, playfulness, wonder, suspense and mystery. The musical is intended for intergenerational audiences (ages 10 and up) and is setting its sights on Broadway.

Inspired by true accounts of escape through the Underground Railroad, the story begins in Vacherie, Louisiana in the middle of the 19th century where a precocious teenage boy Lawrence and his cautious mother, Minnie are making the best of their lives, enslaved on Mr. Newsome's plantation- the only reality they've ever known. When Minnie makes a shocking discovery that Lawrence's life is in jeopardy, they make the harrowing decision to run away that very night. While navigating the complicated relationship between mother and son, and Lawrence's emerging promise of manhood, the pair must also find their way through the intricate network of the Underground Railroad. Together, they discover more about the world and themselves than they ever would have had they never left the plantation. But will their new understandings and their bond be enough to carry them all the way to freedom? Relationships, grit, betrayal, ingenuity, finding joy and ultimately humanity drive the story.

Ms. St. Armant's own ancestors were enslaved in Vacherie, Louisiana, and her research for this project led her down many paths where she discovered incredible connections to her own family and experiences. Many of those findings influenced the final story, including characters like Tham The Brave, a real-life leader in a Maroons community who had been enslaved on the same plantation as Ms. St. Armant's family members in the 1780's. The set design and the song "Oh What These Trees Have Seen" come from her personal experience visiting the area where this plantation had been located.

To complement the story, the musical genres in this show are equal parts jazz, musical theatre, and St. Armant's own signature style. For inspiration she drew from an array of musical heroes, including Nat King Cole, Mahalia Jackson, Fela Kuti and Stephen

Sondheim. Songs include “Never”, “Git On Board”, “Oh What These Trees Have Seen”, “On The Run”, “Head Straight, Shoulders Back” and more.

*“This play is bigger than me, and it’s a part of me.” says St. Armant “I hope the audience feels the humanity in these characters because they’re alive. For myself, the creative team, and the actors, we’ve all said that being part of creating this piece has changed us — we’ve all grown as people. I hope the audience feels this too.”*

The show will debut the fall of 2022 in a run of performances with the show’s commissioning partners: Lied Center of Kansas (Lawrence, KS), Segerstrom Center for the Arts (Costa Mesa, CA), Chandler Center for the Arts (Chandler, AZ) and Playhouse Square (Cleveland, OH). *NORTH* is produced by Sarah McCarthy, Dandelion Artists, and Ashli St. Armant. A special thank you to the SBA SVOG program which has given the presenters and creator the resources to move forward with this project.

#### **NORTH CREATIVE TEAM:**

Isaiah Johnson, Director  
Rodrigo Varandas, Assistant Director  
Christopher Scott Murillo, Scenic Design  
Jojo Siu, Costume Design  
Tim Swiss, Lighting Design  
Monik Jones, Choreographer  
Tristan Dolce, Sound Engineer  
Chris Schlarb, Music Producer, Big Ego Studios  
Alex Sadnik, Music Arranger

#### **ABOUT ASHLI ST. ARMANT**

Jazz vocalist, composer, musician and musical theater playwright Ashli St. Armant is known for her award-winning work in children's education and entertainment, including her band, Jazzy Ash and Leaping Lizards, and her Audible mystery series, Viva Durant, which includes New York Times bestselling story, Viva Durant and the Secret of the Silver Buttons.

#### **NORTH DEBUT PERFORMANCE DATES:**

##### **Lied Center of Kansas -Lawrence, KS**

October 25, 2022 - School Performances

October 26, 2022 - School Performance, Public Performance

##### **Chandler Center for the Arts- Chandler AZ**

November, 4- School Performance, Public Performance

November 5 - Public Performances

##### **Segerstrom Center for the Arts- Costa Mesa, CA**

November 9 – November, 11, 2022 - School Performances  
November 12, November 13, 2022 - Public Performances

**Playhouse Square- Cleveland, OH**

Jan 30 - Feb. 1, 2023- School Performances

**For more information, contact Stephanie Mayers at Mayers Consulting  
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