



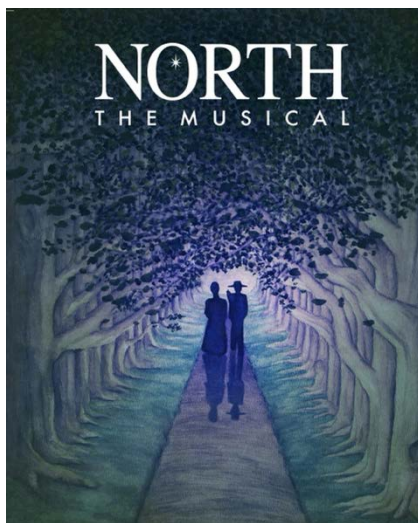
**CHANDLER ONE OF 4 U.S. CITIES TO COMMISSION AND PREMIERE NEW
MUSICAL BASED ON UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**

NORTH

T H E M U S I C A L

**TO PREMIERE NOV 4 AT
CHANDLER CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

**TICKETS FOR CHANDLER PERFORMANCES
ON SALE JUNE 20**



(Phoenix, Ariz.) Chandler Center for the Arts proudly announces it will premiere **NORTH**, a vibrant new musical theater production conceived and created by writer and composer Ashli St. Armant, in November 2022.

Set to a powerful score filled with jazz and historically Black music genres rooted in New Orleans, **NORTH** tells the story of Lawrence and his mother, Minnie, as they escape the Deep South and travel North through the Underground Railroad, to seek freedom.

NORTH THE MUSICAL has been co-commissioned by four performing arts centers from across the U.S.: the Lied Center of Lawrence, Kansas, Chandler Center for the Arts in Chandler Arizona, the Segerstrom Center in Costa Mesa, California, and Playhouse Square in Cleveland, Ohio.

Set in the 1850s, **NORTH** is based on actual accounts of slave escapes through the Underground Railroad network, as well as Ms. St. Armant's personal family history of overcoming slavery in Louisiana. In this beautifully crafted musical, **NORTH** brings forth the full experience of freedom-seekers: optimism, bravery, playfulness, wonder, suspense, and mystery.

On Oct 25, **NORTH** will premiere in Lawrence, Kansas, an important historical location of the Underground Railroad in the 1800s and one featured prominently in the story. The production then

moves to Chandler, where it will premiere at Chandler Center for the Arts, 250 N. Arizona Ave. Audiences attending the 2022 premiere performances will be the first to see **NORTH THE MUSICAL** prior to its 2023/24 Tour, which is setting its sights on Broadway.

Chandler performances of NORTH THE MUSICAL are November 4 at 7:00 pm, November 5 at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm at Chandler Center for the Arts, 250 N. Arizona Ave.

Tickets go on sale June 20 at 10 am at chandlercenter.org or by calling 480-782-2680. Tickets are \$42 & \$32 with \$15 tickets for youth. The musical is intended for intergenerational audiences (ages 10 and up).

Surrounding the public performances, Chandler Center for the Arts will hold discussions and events related to the creation of the new musical. The production will also be part of Chandler Center for the Arts educational programs with study guides, educator workshops, classroom visits and a student performance for area schools.



"*North* is a testament to the ingenious, enduring, and multifaceted lives of Black folks throughout our nation's history," says St. Armant. "In our own family lineage, I learned that there were people who survived the unimaginable in the most creative ways, and they deserve to have their stories told. I want my children to know that their ancestors were more than just a line item on a bill of sale."

Ms. St. Armant created the original score to reflect the musical legacy of her roots in New Orleans. "You can't tell the story of the people of New

Orleans without our music. This music is the glue that has held us together throughout the centuries."

To complement the story, the musical genres in **NORTH** 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.

The commissioning of **NORTH THE MUSICAL** is part of Chandler Center for the Arts' efforts to give voice to new works and artists through its community engagement and audience development programs.

"Ashli St. Armant has captured through the intersection of music, storytelling and history a brilliant and uplifting piece of musical theatre. Chandler Center for the Arts believes that new work which reflects the stories of people of color are vitally important to people of all ages and ethnic backgrounds," says **Michelle Mac Lennan, General Manager**. "This piece in particular speaks to the history of Black Americans during slavery, but also helps us relate to the characters as individuals with their own dreams, doubts and unique personalities."

For more information on **NORTH THE MUSICAL** visit chandlercenter.org/North

MEDIA:

[NORTH High-Resolution Images](#)

[NORTH Trailer](#)

MORE

NORTH

THE MUSICAL

CREATIVE TEAM

Ashli St. Armant, Creator / Playwright, Lead Producer

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



MORE



**About Ashli St. Armant,
Creator/Playwright/Lead Producer**

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

NORTH is Ms. St. Armant's debut theatrical production.

Chandler Center for the Arts

250 N. Arizona Avenue

Box Office:

M - F: 10am - 5pm

Sat: Noon-5pm

chandlercenter.org

About Chandler Center for the Arts

The Chandler Center for the Arts is an engaging, welcoming, innovative space serving a diverse community. Located in the vibrant center of Downtown Chandler, it is a continually evolving location using creativity and inspiration to bring people together through performances and exhibitions. Chandler Center for the Arts presents a full calendar of performances and exhibitions, from blockbuster international performers to emerging local artists. For more information about programs, performances and exhibitions, visit chandlercenter.org.

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