

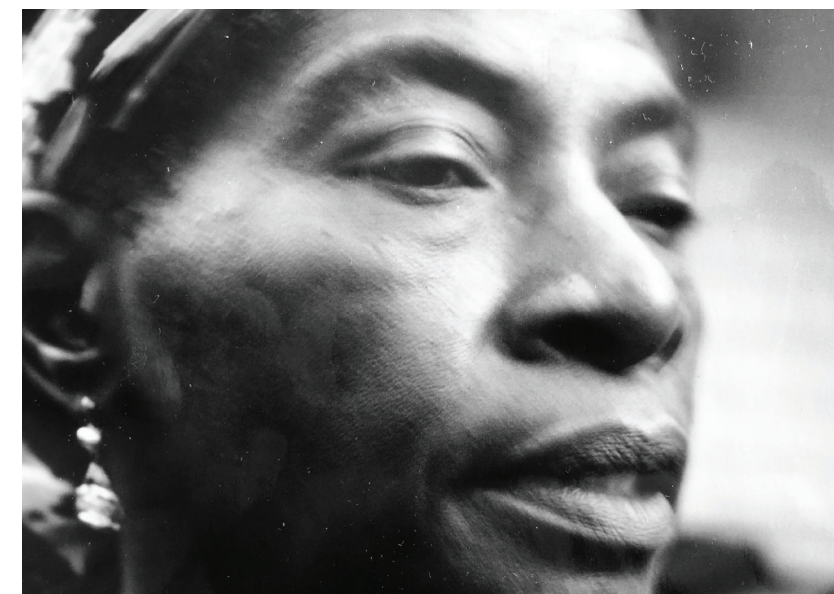
The Nashville Symphony and  
Giancarlo Guerrero, Music Director  
Present the World Premiere of

# THE JONAH PEOPLE: A LEGACY OF STRUGGLE & TRIUMPH

MUSIC AND LIBRETTO BY  
HANNIBAL LOKUMBE



April 13 to 16, 2023 | Schermerhorn Symphony Center



**For the Women of Jonah**

Photo: Lillian E. Peterson, courtesy of Hannibal Lokumbe

“The Jonah People: A Legacy of Struggle and Triumph  
was created to end the suffering of a people,  
who could then end the suffering of a nation,  
who could then end the suffering of the world.”  
— Hannibal Lokumbe

OVERTURE  
For Luther Gray

Chorus:  
Of Three Wombs Born  
We are not who you say we are  
We live not by the name you know  
We are born of the womb of The Eternal Flame  
We are born of the womb of a mother of flesh  
And we are born from the womb of wood, chains,  
cries and moans and blues  
Blues, mystical blues  
In time the sea will turn to ground  
In time the fire will turn to snow  
We are born of the womb of the Eternal Flame  
Womb of flesh and womb of wood and blues -  
magical blues  
We will return to the womb of the sky, never again  
to weep, never again to die  
Light to light we will all then be  
At last our souls forever free

I sing the blues for my people  
I sing the blues of a land

Basses:  
Throw it - catch it - hold it - be it - never-never

I sing the blues of the Elders  
Their blood still warm in the sand

I sing the blues of the fields  
Where they slaved from night to day  
I sing the blues of the words  
That they never got a chance to say

Hamer (Fannie Lou) - Evers (Medgar) -  
Newton (Huey) - Rosa (Parks) - Malcolm (Little) -  
Martin (King) - Chaney (James) -  
Tubman (Harriet) - Stacey (Abrams) - LeBron (James) -  
Sarah (Collins Rudolph) - Booker (Cory) -  
Sonia (Sanchez) - Barber (William) - Opal (Tometi)

Basses:  
Here now with us.

So I sing the blues of the ships  
In whose wombs they rocked and rolled  
I sing the blues of our children  
Shot down before they ever get old  
I sing the blues of my people  
I sing the blues of their soul  
I sing the blues of our people  
Their stories will be told

Basses:  
Live it, tell it.

I sing the blues of the oceans  
Which hold their bones and cries

Basses:  
Middle passage, bones and cries.

I sing the blues of our people  
Their spirits still roam the skies

Basses:  
Everlasting like the sky.

Celia (Cruz) - Toussaint (L'Ouverture) -  
Garvey (Marcus) - Yanga (Gaspar) -  
Racine (Mapou de Azor) - Zumbi (dos Palmares) -  
Pancho (Fierro) - Marley (Robert) - Edwidge (Danticat)

Marquez (Francia) - Eva (Ayllon) - Euzhan (Palcy) -  
Paula (Herrera) - Ulrick (Jean-Pierre) -  
Victor (Emilio Dreke Cruz)

Basses  
Still with us, still in us.

Sopranos:  
Breath is the pure gift of Love.  
From the Eternal Flame of life and it will return to it  
when once it leaves your noble house of flesh, bones  
and time

Altos:  
Breathe, I can't breathe; I can't breathe; I can't breathe.  
Life, I can't breathe. Life, I can't breathe (repeat)

Tenors:  
Breathe, I can't breathe. Life, breathe,  
Life, I can't breathe; Life, I can't breathe (repeat)

Basses:  
Breathe, Life, throw it, catch it. Breathe. Life, I can't  
breathe (repeat)

Choir:  
We are of three wombs born, born.

VEIL I  
ILE-HOME

SCENE ONE: “ATONEMENT”  
For Kendrick Lamar

Choir:  
Ile (ilay) REPEAT

Choir:  
I will never leave you  
I am your song  
I am coming for you; I am your peace  
I am your prophesy – your blood, your flesh and bone  
I am your mother, your father, your sister, your brother  
I am your salvation  
I am your soul  
I am your nation  
I am your tongue  
I am your freedom  
I am your God

The Griot:  
This garment I wear not of my name, strange to my songs,  
I no longer claim. Garment of my captor, garment of my  
pain, garment of my delusions, garment just the same.  
The garment of my ancestors I now seek to wear, bold in  
colour, free of a noose; at one with the wind. Rich with  
a language long stripped from my tongue. A garment  
woven of Kente, indigo and the memories of home.

Choir:  
I love you. I love you.

SCENE TWO: “THE GRIOT”

Griot:  
I see a time when the land is not crying.  
I see a time when death is overcome with  
words and roots.  
I see a time when bodies are dressed in  
earthen reds, and deep plant greens.  
I see a time when the people did not dread  
the coming of another day  
This I see, this I see and more.

I taste a time of yassar ganar and baskets full of darcase.  
I taste a time of sedem and guyap, chere and chep.  
I taste a time of fresh rains and thick black lips.  
I taste a time of dust where once the feet  
of the elders stood.  
This I taste, this I taste and more.

I smell a time of cedar rooms and violets along  
the veins of the Nile.  
I smell a time of fresh ink on the papers in the  
books of Timbuktu.  
I smell a time when the fires of Benin first revealed the  
spirits that lived in bronze and iron.  
This I smell, this I smell and more.

I hear a time when bells, whistles and drums  
make bodies fly.  
I hear a time when the griot and the kora write  
stories on the pages of the wind.  
I hear a time when the elders speak things that  
only God could know.  
This I hear, this I hear and more.

I feel a time when we are at peace with ourselves.  
I feel a time when the children stand tall and strong,  
their bellies full of mboka, their minds full of the sky.  
I feel a time of soft earth beneath our feet, new air in  
our lungs, and the full breast of our wives in the mouths  
of our children.  
This I feel, this I feel and more.

Choir:  
Ile, Ile, Ile

I have lived before there was time.  
I have lived beyond the sickle of death.  
I have lived between the night and the day.  
I have lived before the greed of man and  
long after his fall.  
This I have lived, this I have lived and more.

Choir:  
Ile, Ile, Ile, Ile, Ile

SCENE III: “HARVEST”

Choir:  
Olurun, the storehouse is full of corn,  
wheat and yams and darcase.  
Once again, your love has prevailed  
over hunger and death.  
So we dance this dance of life and we sing these  
songs in your praise. Thank you Spirits for this bounty.  
Thank you for this harvest of life.

Composer’s Note:  
In the libretto for The Jonah People, Hannibal Lokumbe  
has noted the symbolic significance of several of the  
characters and production elements. Find out more  
about the role of The Griot and The Mask of The Lost  
Soul by visiting TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto

VEIL II  
“THEY SWALLOWED  
THE OCEAN FOR ME”

Please Note:  
This veil contains sounds of screaming indicating  
rape and torture in the belly of the ship as well as a  
depiction of one of the enslaved men taking his own life.

Yemaya Deity:  
I am with you, my children. From your death, there will  
come life. From your pain, from your blood, new realms  
are formed. In them you will be free. From three wombs  
born...

Ship’s Captain, George C. Stevens:

My Dear Mary,

The thought of you keeps me from the brink of absolute  
despair. Yet, given the dastardly truth of my profession, in  
the buying and selling of these strange black creatures, I  
gain some note of pride knowing that from such lucrative  
trade, our family has thrived to such a degree as to be  
held so highly in the eyes of our magnificent society.

I recently purchased one hundred of the pitiful souls from  
a Portuguese trader, at a considerable discount, given  
the superb physical qualities of the men. A number of the  
women are with child which, of course, greatly increases  
the potential profit at the auction block provided the  
offspring is not born during the voyage and succumbs to  
the unimaginable filth and squalor in which their mothers  
now linger. From time to time, we bring them up in small  
numbers from their hideous hole and afford them the  
mercy of what can come from a bucket of water, and a  
glimpse of god’s good sky.

I cannot comprehend, to any reasonable degree, as to  
how these poor creatures can survive such an ordeal  
as what they now face; in some cases for nine months  
or more. I am apt to find confidence in the fact that  
our most benevolent and merciful god will direct our  
decisions in matters concerning their fate. Were this not  
the case, he would not have afforded us such prosperous  
opportunities as have arrived from subduing them. I am  
inclined to believe that we were given the merciful task of  
freeing them from their former state of darkness.

In two days time the ship will reach the harbour of Port-  
au-Prince, the most magnificent city my eyes have beheld.  
Its mansions rival those of our majestic southern England.  
Sugar cane plantations stretch as far as the eyes can see.  
Truly, it is aptly named, “The Pearl of The Caribbean.”

There I will gladly sell sixty of what I have found to be the  
most obstinate of the slaves to Monsieur Henri who, I am  
certain, will receive a superb price for them at the auction  
block. I will deliver to him as well two crates of wooden  
and metal masks and other artifacts confiscated during  
the raiding of the villages in Africa. I have two crates to  
deliver to Professor Highbridge, at Oxford, upon my  
return to London as well, for which I will be handsomely  
paid. I fail to see the undaunted interest or the value in  
such obvious idolatry as these objects seem to be. The  
remainder of the poor souls, I will sell during my stops in  
Jamaica, Mexico and New Orleans. With funds received  
from such efforts, I will purchase barrels of molasses to  
sell in New York.

Enough of such trivialities; barring no mishaps, I shall  
arrive in time for our dear Willam’s commencement  
ceremony at Oxford. Such a splendid achievement it is.  
A fine barrister he will make, indeed.  
Give Sarah and Michael my warm regards.

Until my much anticipated arrival home, I reluctantly  
close.

Sincerely, your husband,  
Captain George C. Stevens

Enslaved African, Boukman:  
Tenga, have you abandoned us? Ancestors do you no  
longer pray for us? What have we done to see what no  
eyes were made to see; hear what no ears were made to  
hear; smell what no nose was made to smell; taste what  
no tongue was made to taste and feel what no soul was  
made to feel. It is a pain greater than death.

On the day of Asase’s eighteenth year of birth, she and  
the village awakened to the first glow of the sun. Her  
mother showed me the birthday beads to be wrapped  
around her waist. Before running out into the courtyard  
towards the talking drums and the laughter of her sons,  
she stopped for the first time, ran back to me, and looked  
deep into my soul with those full moon eyes of hers and  
whispered into my ear, ‘I love you poppa.’ The beauty of  
the morning pulled her young body out of the doorway of  
our home. It was the last I saw of her. The last time I held  
my wife. The last sight of my seed before the evil came. In  
a cloud of red dust, blood and screams she disappeared.

Now swallowed up in the belly of this wooden fish, I am  
kept alive by the dream that my arms will once again  
be her nest. The heaven that we lived, will be no more.  
Something even rare to the gaze of the sun, moon and  
stars has been set loose into the universe. Something  
unholy to the trees, grass and oceans. Something which  
steals life from the air. A new evil has come from the  
bowels of man; one that will pollinate the path of beings  
for ages to come.



**Choral Text:**  
Cord of light, of sound, of love  
Connected to the placenta of God  
Now come once more to feed us the food of Eternal life

Cord of light, of sound, of love  
Connected to the placenta of God  
Now come once more to feed us the food of Eternal life

**Marabout:**  
To the universe I now speak. To all that lives beneath the sky I now declare. To the immortal seed free of these chains I proclaim; from our collective fear a new courage will prevail. From our shattered lives and broken spirits, a new joy will come. And, from this, our womb of horror, a New Being will be born from whose spirit and soul will come a force that will heal nations and reveal to them the true face of heaven.

**Enslaved African Male:**  
My dear brother, If we drink enough water, we could drain the ocean and walk back home.

**Choir:**  
Ahh...

**Composer’s Note:**  
Find out more about the symbolism of the **African Crow** by visiting [TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto](http://TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto)

## VEIL III SEARCHING – “NA LELAKOLE”

“Music is everywhere. When you listen closely enough, you can even hear it inside of you; even in the movement of the clouds”.

### SCENE ONE: “REPARATIONS”

**Please Note:**  
This scene graphically depicts the dehumanizing of Africans as they are sold into slavery, including the disrobing of an enslaved male and the whipping of Asase.

**Choir:**  
No rest here; only the pain,  
only the pain,  
the pain  
When can we have rest  
When will this hell be done

**Slave Auctioneer:**  
Well, mesdames et messieurs, as we near the end of our auction, I want to thank you for your patience and for making this the most profitable auction that I can remember in the selling of these creatures.  
To that end, I have saved the best of the young bucks and fertile winches for now.

The last of this lot of fine human flesh is ready and able to increase your fortune, and to work from sun up to sun down in your mansions and your fields of cane.

Here, let’s start with this one.

Oh, don’t be misled gentlemen, he is the strongest of all the bucks. The strongest I have ever seen. However, he had to be taught the lesson of subjugation by his former Jamaican master, Sir Winston Hightower. He was caught one time too many reading his Koran, it was said to have been, and he was stripped naked and staked upon the ground whereupon Sir Winston had the wretched book burned to ashes upon his chest. Thus, he acquired the name, Boukman.

So, what do I hear for Mr. Boukman? Let’s start with 300. Three, three, three, three hundred, now four, four, four, four hundred. That’s it!

**Choir:**  
“When can we have rest?”  
“When will this hell be done?”

Can I get five hundred? Five, five, five hundred for this savage scholar?

Now,  
Six hundred, six, six, six!

**Choir:**  
“When can we have rest?”  
“When will this hell be done?”

**Slave Auctioneer:**  
Oh, come now! He is as strong as an ox. Now, seven hundred, seven, seven, seven, seven. Good!  
Now, do I hear eight hundred? Eight, yes, eight. There’s eight, eight, eight, eight, eight. There’s lots of little nigger bucks still to come from those loins.  
Can I get 9, 900, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9? Now we’re talking! Let’s have 1000. Look at that muscle tissue.  
He even has all of his teeth!  
Come gentlemen, can I hear 1500, 15, 15?  
Let’s have 1500 for this magnificent stud.

Ok, going once, twice...  
SOLD to Monsieur Henri Dauphin for  
Fifteen hundred francs.

**Madame Dauphin:**  
And what shall you name him, my good husband?

**Monsieur Dauphin:**  
I will brand him with my name and subdue him with my god. And, he and his descendants will fight to the death to keep them both.

With my whip, I will own his body and with my name and my god, I will own his soul.

**Choir:** “DONE”

**Slave Auctioneer:**  
And now we’ve come to the cream of the crop,  
Mesdames et Messieurs.

Let’s start with six hundred francs for her, Mesdames et Messieurs. Six!

**Asase:**  
GOD, come  
There is no time  
There is no death  
Stars are not blind  
Winds are now still  
GOD, come  
Chord of my womb  
Sound of my heart  
Sulphur and Iron  
Sunlight and Sea  
GOD, come  
Eye of the Lamb  
Tongue of the beast  
GOD, come  
Mother now gone  
Father now dust  
Never to die  
Never to die  
Never to die  
Never to die  
Never to die  
Never to die

**Choir:**  
You cannot destroy me; my GOD lives within me  
You cannot destroy me; my GOD lives within me

**Sopranos and Altos:**  
You cannot destroy me; my GOD walks within me  
You cannot destroy me; my GOD speaks within me

You cannot destroy me; my GOD sings within me  
You cannot destroy me; my GOD weeps within me

**Tenors**  
Neva, neva, neva, neva

**Bass**  
When will you learn?  
When will you learn?  
When will you learn?  
When will you learn?

**Choir:**  
You cannot destroy me;  
my GOD lives within me  
You cannot destroy me;  
my GOD lives within me  
You cannot destroy me;  
my GOD lives within me  
You cannot destroy me;  
my GOD lives within me

**Slave Auctioneer:**  
Six, six, six, six hundred; six hundred? Six hundred. Six hundred. Come now! Six hundred. Six. Good! Now seven! Seven hundred. Seven. Seven. Seven hundred. Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven hundred. Come now! Come! Seven hundred! Seven. Seven. Seven. Seven hundred. Seven hundred. Oh, come now gentlemen. Look at those legs; strong and sturdy! Good. There’s seven. Now, can I get eight? Eight, eight, eight, eight. Let’s have eight hundred. Oh, gentlemen, just imagine how many more can come from this fertile young breeding machine. Oh, she’s ready for it, too!

Oh, come on now ladies and gentlemen. There’s 800! She will keep you warm when you’re cold and lonely. Now, 1000. 1000 francs! There’s 1000. Now 1200. Said to be the best cook of them all. 12. Come, come. Now, do I hear 12, 1200? 12. 12. 1200. 12. 12. 12. Do I hear 12? She’s worth it, ladies and gentlemen. Said to be the best cook of them all. Come, come. Come Now there’s the 12. Now 2, 2000. 2. 2. 2. Last call for 2000 francs. 2, 2000 going once, twice...

**Slave Auctioneer:**  
Sold to Monsieur Henri for 2000 francs.

**Asase:**  
Kunanamui, thank you for gathering up the stars and creating with them a path for my soul to see what my eyes are now too filled with the dust of this world to see. Upon this ground which holds the weeping blood of my children and the feet of those now strangers to your love, you have chosen to crawl with me and guide me toward your eternal vision, a timeless, painless realm of being.

To follow you is to become you  
To follow you is to become you  
To follow you is to become you

Where now am I to go on this endless journey of pain? My fate but a fading ember before me as I am now given to traverse the shadows of this painful world.

**Choir:**  
Divine, (4x)  
Divine light of GOD

For pa wor wor elle  
(I will never leave you)

**Composer’s Note:**  
The incidents in Veil III are based on the true stories of Hannibal Lokumbe’s ancestors that were passed down through generations. Visit [TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto](http://TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto) to learn more about Asase and the atrocities she suffered as well as the story of Hannibal’s great great grandmother and her sons being sold into slavery.

SCENE TWO: “RED COFFEE”

Asase:  
Oh, maman Fatiman!

Fatiman:  
It will not be long, my daughter.  
We are not alone or forgotten by the  
God of life. It will not be long before  
the blood of freedom will run red in  
the fields, rivers and streams. Soon it  
will run red in the cups of those who  
sip away, without care, the blood of  
our lives.

Song: “Red Coffee”  
Lead singer:  
Is it sweet enough  
Your ebony drink  
Black gold in your porcelain cup

Choir:  
Can you taste my sweat  
Can you taste my pain

Lead singer:  
The cane no longer drinks  
The rain from the sky  
It has become addicted  
To the sweat of my brow

Choir:  
Can you taste my herbs  
Can you taste my smoke

Lead singer:  
Upon the blade of my machete  
The dance of sun and moon  
never ends

Choir:  
Can you taste my skin  
Can you taste my bone

Lead singer:  
In my hand it sings the song of steel  
Against cane, wind and bone

Choir:  
Can you taste my dreams  
Can you taste my tears

Lead singer:  
The cane now grows  
Thick and tall like trees  
Climbing up from the fertile soil  
Mixed with the blood of me  
Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my soul

Choir:  
Can you taste my blood  
Can you taste my LIFE

Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my soul

Can you taste my blood  
Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my sweat  
Can you taste my pain  
Can you taste my herbs  
Can you taste my smoke  
Can you taste my skin  
Can you taste my bone  
Can you taste my dreams  
Can you taste my tears  
Can you taste my blood  
Can you taste my life

Entire Choir:  
Can you taste my sweat  
Can you taste my pain  
Can you taste my herbs  
Can you taste my smoke  
Can you taste my skin  
Can you taste my bone  
Can you taste my dreams  
Can you taste my tears  
Can you taste my blood  
Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my blood  
Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my life  
Can you taste my soul

INTERMISSION

SCENE THREE:  
“THE LAST SUPPER”

Choir:  
Live now.

Silas, the eldest son of Asase:  
Mother, it is only Monday and you  
have cooked meat and rice. There are  
mangoes and bread. You have made  
a feast. You look more beautiful than  
the sky, yet you can’t stop crying.  
What’s wrong, mama? I am scared.

Mother, what is to become of us?  
You are all we have in this world.

Choir:  
Who knows the last meal to share?

Asase:  
I must leave this place, my angels  
...so that you might live.

Choir:  
Live now.

Silas:  
But mother, we would die without you!  
You are all that we have. What...do you  
mean? We are coming with you, right?

Asase:  
I must go alone, Silas. Where I am to  
go; what I am to face, even the beast  
could not endure.

Choir:  
Mercy!

Asase:  
Children, you must be strong.  
Let us now eat this meal. It is a meal of  
two worlds; the world to pass and the  
world yet to come.

This meat is of the world to pass.

And this meat, which I will now share  
with you, is the meat of the world yet  
to come, the undying world. And, it  
will sustain you both in your time of  
joy and in your time of pain.

Choir:  
Who knows the last time. Live the life  
that is now.

Asase:  
That meat is your name, which is your  
blood and the history that lives in it.  
It is the name which was given to you  
from the mouth and from the soul of  
your kind father.

Choir:  
Blood of truth.

Asase:  
Kerkula is your true name, my sacred  
son. It means, you have come from  
greatness. It is the name given by your  
father and was the name given to him  
by his father, the chief musician of our  
nation, who possessed the power to  
play ancient parables upon the drums.  
His spirit of song could harness the

power of both the sun and the moon,  
the lion and the butterfly. He would  
sing words that would heal our people.  
The power of his music helped to  
guide you into this world. And, it will  
never leave you and will live in your  
seed yet to come.  
Whisper this name when you labor  
without hope in the cane fields; when  
the flame of life grows dim in your  
soul. Go to the river alone and scream,  
and shout and cry out this name.  
There your father, your people and I  
will always be.

You are now the father and it is your  
duty to give your newborn brother an  
ancestral name to protect him as well.

And you, my tall piece of heaven, it  
is the name Flomo which your good  
father sang into you when you were  
still in my womb. Taller than the sky  
you are. Each time you look upon it,  
there we will be to help sculpt the  
clouds and entice the stars.

My sons, who I love without measure,  
never forget your names. Each  
time you speak them our people  
will live. Beyond the whip, they will  
live. Beyond treachery, they will live.  
Beyond death, they will live. Live! One  
day your seed will come for those  
names. They will need them to stay  
alive as they fight against the plans of  
the wicked.

And you will know me by the  
reflection of the sunlight each time it  
kisses the moon. With this light I will  
always cover you with my spirit and  
my love.

Choir:  
Now is eternal.

Asase:  
Now, let us finish this the last of our  
meals together in this world, whose  
days are numbered.

Choir:  
Yes, you are the single mind source  
made from the seed of perpetual light  
and sound.

See now  
Feel now  
Be now  
Smile now  
Love now  
Pray now  
Dance now  
Sing now  
Shout now  
Paint now  
Plant now  
Stand now  
Seek now  
Know now  
Breathe now  
Live now (4x)

Tenors:  
Now is the gift of forever  
Make peace with the everlasting light  
within you  
For the gift of now is all we have

Choir:  
Now is the gift of forever  
Make peace with the everlasting light  
within you  
For the gift of now is all we have

Henri Dauphin:  
Where is your mother?

Silas:  
She ran away. Why do you want her?

Henri Dauphin:  
To beat her! You stay with them while  
I find her.

Choir:  
The sky is not big enough to hold the  
suffering of our people and it could  
never be big enough to hold my love  
for you.

Now is the gift of forever  
Make peace with the everlasting light  
within you for the gift of now is all we  
have.

Silas:  
Mother, mother, please help me.

Help me, please come back.

Choir:  
Who knows the last time to break bread  
Who knows the last time to embrace

Asase:  
Remember my son, when the pain of  
the world comes for you, cry, shout  
out your name and there I will be.  
Then the hands of your grandfather  
will float like black butterflies upon  
the skin of his sacred drum.

Silas:  
Kerkula – Kerkula – Kerkula

SCENE FOUR:  
“WIND AND BONES”

Please Note:  
Scenes four and five depict the  
silhouette of a hanging corpse.

Choir:  
Searching for the peace

Asase:  
O wind, you are the only one who  
chooses to dance with me now that  
my feet can no longer follow the  
rhythm of the drum, now that my  
mother’s comb has fallen from my  
hair, and my children are left alone to  
wander this brutal land.

In this, the last dance of my bones you  
have looked beyond the red stains  
on my dress, the missing smile of my  
perfume. Lead me as you will, but  
gently I pray, so that my father is able  
to take me from this place and lay me  
unbroken in my eternal bed of rest.

I have no choice but to follow you. I  
can hear the birds pleading for you to  
leave me, to find another partner, so  
that they might have their turn.

Choir:  
Of three wombs made.

Asase:  
It will not be long, father before our  
people are free. I love you and I now  
wait for the miracle of your arms.

Choir:  
Forever born of three wombs

**Composer’s Note:**  
The spirit of Asase appears to Boukman in a powerful dream instructing him to search for her. The power of the dream compels Boukman to leave the plantation to begin his search.  
Read more at [TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto](http://TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto)

SCENE FIVE

**Boukman:**  
Now I will come for you, my sacred daughter. In the dream, you said that the spirit of the Ancestors would be my guide, and promised that the fireflies would light my path to you.

Have you seen my beautiful daughter?

**Choir:**  
Womb of pure light  
Light of eternal realm

**Boukman:**  
Oh daughter, your mother, her face more beautiful than the Sun, chose death over the rapist’s sperm. She greeted the blade of their sword like a falling leaf would greet the wind.

The marabout, flawless in his vision, told us long ago of these times of broken souls; when the fire of human hatred and greed would steal the wind and scatter us to the ends of the Earth. A timeless season of pain our dowry would become and would last until the awakening of the New Being who would once again, teach the ancient songs to the world. Songs that would give rest to the stolen souls who seek to come up from the depths of the oceans, the rivers, lakes and seas. Those who seek to leave their watery graves and have their stories be told; their nations restored; their God acknowledged and praised.

The marabout went on to prophesize, my eternal daughter, that until such things are manifested, the world will not know peace. And the tears of those whose souls continue to weep in the waters of the world will be too much for the bosom of the land to hold.  
Have you seen my daughter, her eyes more beautiful than freedom?

**Choir:**  
Where  
Of three wombs made

**Boukman:**  
Even death could not keep you from the warmth of my arms.

**SCENE SIX: “BOIS CAIMAN”  
(ALLIGATOR FOREST)**

**Please Note:**  
This scene depicts a battle during the Haitian Revolution and contains sounds that simulate gunfire.

**Female voice:**  
Libretad!

**Boukman:**  
No force can keep me from my peace  
My freedom  
This I proclaim with my heart, hands, soul  
with my life  
My death  
By my divine right to be free

**Choir:**  
[Shouts words denoting freedom in African languages]

**Composer’s Note:**  
The Haitian Revolution was the first succesful armed rebellion against European domination in the world. To learn more, visit: [TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto](http://TheJonahPeople.com/Libretto)

VEIL FOUR  
THE NEW BEING

SCENE ONE: “SO MANY FIELDS, SO MANY FORTUNES, SO MANY SOULS”

**Grand Father:**  
Our Dear Heavenly Father, once again we gather to offer you our thanks for your goodness and your mercy. You saw fit to wake us up again today, in our right mind.

**Field Hands:**  
Yes, Lord!

**Grand Father:**  
You put food on our table.

**Field Hands:**  
Thank you, Jesus.

**Grand Father:**  
Clothes on our backs and joy and love in our hearts.

**Field Hands:**  
Thank you, Lord.

**Grand Father:**  
Only you know what is to come of us, and of every man.

**Field Hands:**  
Amen. Amen.

**Grand Father:**  
Only you could heal the scars on our backs and on our troubled souls.  
Walk with us, Lord; only your grace could turn our pain and our suffering into the songs of heaven.

**Field Hands:**  
Thank you, Lord. Thank you; thank you.

**Grand Father:**  
Songs sweeter than milk and honey.

**Field Hands:**  
Oh yes, yes sir!

**Grand Father:**  
Songs more powerful than the sun.

**Field Hands:**  
Mighty, mighty, mighty!  
Yes lord, speak it, speak it, speak it.

**Grand Father:**  
Songs that are greater, much greater than the devil’s plan.

**Field Hands:**  
Lord God Almighty!

**Grand Father:**  
You made the sky to be free, Lord.

**Field Hands:**  
Yes you did; yes you did, Lord.

**Grand Father:**  
You made the birds and the whales and the turtles and the lions to roam free.

**Field Hands:**  
Yes, master, yes Lord.

**Grand Father:**  
And, Almighty God, I know you made us, your children who love you and praise you. I know your will is for us to be free.

**Field Hands:**  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

**Grand Father:**  
And so we gonna hold on to your unchanging hand.

**Field Hands:**  
Yes Lord!

**Grand Father:**  
Till that freedom day comes and washes over us like a mighty storm of rain.

**Field Hands:**  
Thank you, thank you.

**Grand Father:**  
I just want to thank you, Lord. Thank you for your goodness, your mercy and your love. We pray these words in the mighty name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.  
Amen. Help us, Lord.

**Susie:**  
I am the power to make things right.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of the day and the night.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of the moon and the sea.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power that will always be.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of stone and sand.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of the sky and the land.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of death and of strife.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power, the power of life.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Choir:**  
I am the power to make things right. I am the power of the day and the night. I am the power of the moon and the sea. I am the power that will always be.

**Susie:**  
I am the power of stone and of sand.



**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of the sky and the land.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power of death and strife.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
I am the power.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
The all power!

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
The power!

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
Living power.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
Holy Ghost power.

**Choir:**  
POWER

**Susie:**  
The all power.

**Choir:**  
POWER  
**Susie:**  
Of

**Choir:**  
Of

**Susie:**  
Of my life

**Choir:**  
Of my life

**SCENE TWO: “MINTON’S PLAYHOUSE, 1950s”**

**Master of Ceremonies:**  
Welcome ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming out again to witness music history here at Minton’s Playhouse. Without further delay, please join me in welcoming these five innovating geniuses of sound.

**Trumpeter:**  
Greetings ladies and gentlemen, it is always beautiful to see you and to play for you. Here is something special we hope you will enjoy. I composed it while contemplating the gravitational pull of the sun upon the planets, and upon human thought. The tonality is of course rooted in the Blues.

**Composer’s Note:**  
The art form known as Jazz, as was played in Minton’s Playhouse, represents the highest plane of physical, mental and spiritual function. It is no less than the capturing and the subsequent deciphering of matter into a form of sound that is present in all of creation.

**SCENE THREE: “PROPHECY”**

**Seer:**  
O Creator of us all, who do you say that we are? Those and the descendants of those stolen from Africa, chained in a wooden womb of terror and shipped to all lands of the earth to live and to die as slaves. I ask that you speak to me the essence, the aura, the bone, and the marrow of you.

**Choir:**  
Free!

**Creator:**  
Like Jonah you are. In the womb of a ship, he like you, wrestled with both his faith and his fate. His ship was followed by seagulls. Your ship was followed by sharks. And you are

to never forget that those and the descendants of those whose ships were followed by sharks are born of three wombs; the womb of me, the womb of a mother and the womb of a ship. And from such wombs has come the new being. Those like you whose only desire is to overwhelm the world with beauty.

**Seer:**  
Those born of three wombs are now dying and suffering as never before, my Lord. They are set upon in the schools, in the concrete bowels of prisons. They are even slaughtered in the houses built to honor and worship you. Greater grows their suffering by the hour it grows. Make straight their way. Make clear their path out of this bondage. With the sum of my life, I beg you, Creator of all, to show me what it is I am to do.

**Creator:**  
They are to seek the name, the face and the ways of the first Mother, whose flesh has yet to rot, whose blood is yet like the wind. From her spiritual breasts they must now feed. Her wisdom will free them. And, they are to seek the name, the face and the ways of the first man whose flesh has yet to rot and whose blood is yet like the wind to heal themselves, to make whole their suffering. This I give them to do. They are to go to the land called Alabama. There they will find the bones and the spirits of those last to come by way of a wooden womb followed by sharks. And this place, they should all care for as they would care for the air in their lungs. There they should gather, all of them, from lands far and near. This they should do each season at the first light of day. There they are to pray and sing and dance and look into the faces, and into the hearts of one another and be reminded of the wealth of their souls and their suffering will be cared for by the luminous bones lying beneath their feet. And they will be transformed. And they will thrive as a people never before.

Here is your sign; the sign of your tribe, the tribe of Jonah. It is the sign of a ship carrying your people. Above it are those who survived the passage, both male and female. Below it are those who perished, both male and female. Yet, they are joined forever by way of perfect will and by the womb of spirit, flesh and wood. And this prayer is given to them upon greeting each other in whatever land they might live and whatever tongue they might speak. It is a prayer of both memory and healing. “The sky is not big enough to hold the suffering of our people. And it could never be big enough to hold my love for you.”

**SCENE FOUR: “HEALING”**

**Seer:**  
When I look at you I can see the life of me. I am your smile. I am your pain. I am your cry. We are one by way of the oceans our fathers were made to cross. The milk from the breasts of our mothers holds the same power of song, of history, of beauty and of grace.

At last we meet, our kindred souls in this sacred space made and kept by the reverent bones of those last to come by way of chains, greed and wooden ships. We, from three wombs made, have long fed the world with our blood, our mind and our love. So, let us come each year to this our holy ground and rejoice and heal and feast upon the miracle of our lives.

**Sopranos and Altos:**  
The truth lies at the base of your brain. The light, the dark, the gift, the sum, the proof of life  
Of three wombs made.

**Tenors:**  
Never give up. We will never give up. We can never give up. The proof of life  
Of three wombs made.

Please feel free to join in this annual ceremony honoring the lives of Matilda “Redoshi” McCrear, Cudjoe “Kazoola” Lewis and the other 108 survivors of the Clotilda, the last slave ship to transport enslaved people from the continent of Africa.

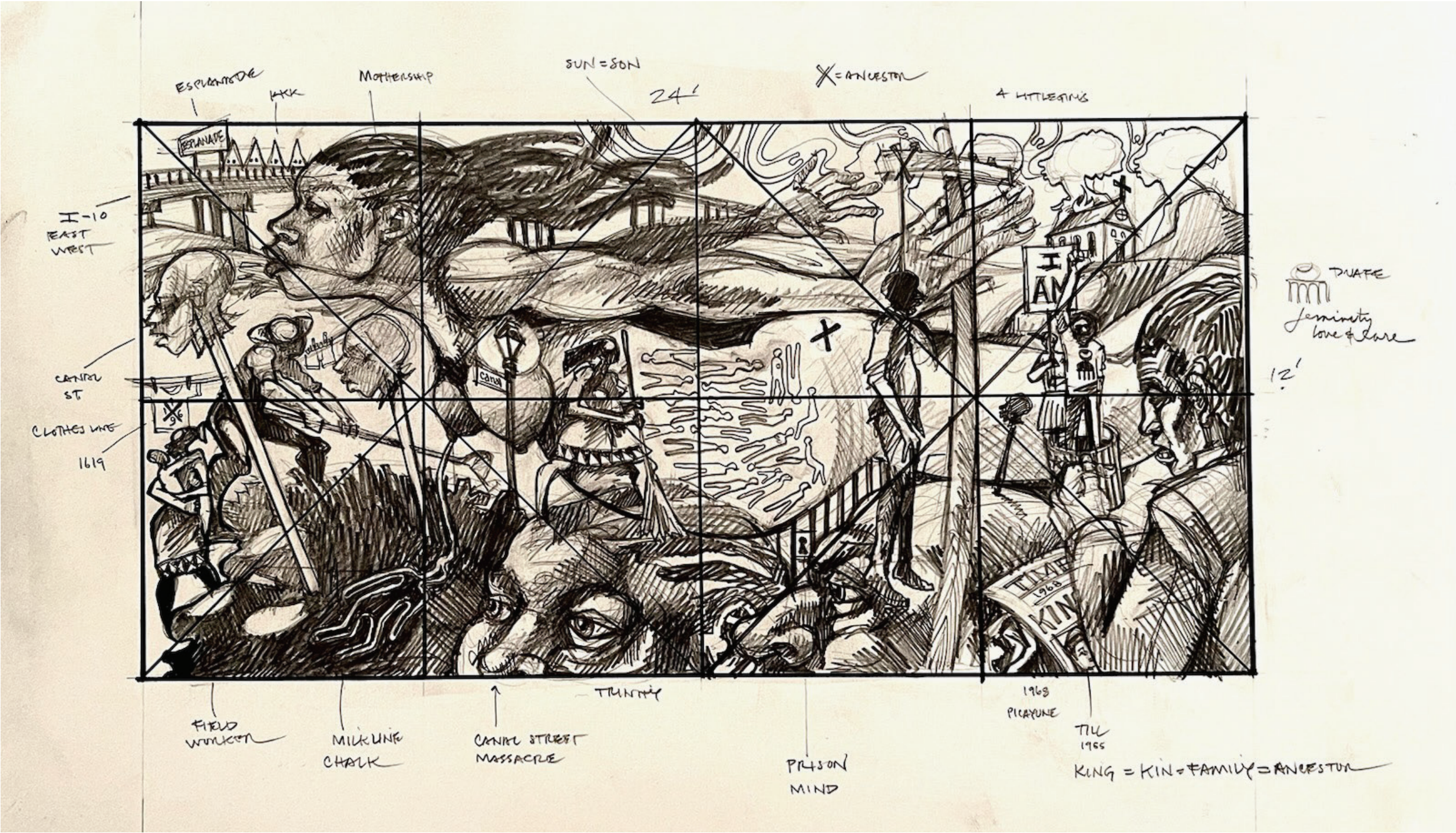
**Basses:**  
Know the womb from which you came. Never will you be the same. Skies will then smile. Trees will dance. Peace will then claim all you know. There will be no hell to fear. There will be no wasted tear. Then you will know Heaven now. Life to live. Life to die. Of three wombs made.

**Blues Singer:**  
The sky is not big enough to hold the suffering of our people. I said the sky is not big enough to hold the suffering of our people and it could never be big enough to hold my love for you.

**Hannibal Lokumbe © 2020**



Original sketch by fine artist Steve Prince in preparation for the mural that appears in The Jonah People: A Legacy of Struggle and Triumph



**Mothership Sequel**  
Acrylic on canvas  
12' x 25'  
Steve Prince © 2023



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