



SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Spoleto Festival USA to Celebrate Charleston's Newly
Renovated Dock Street Theatre at April 1 Gala**

Featured artists include soprano Natalie Dessay, violinist Geoff Nuttall, pianist Pedja Muzijevic, cellist Christopher Costanza, violist Caroline Blackwell, actress Heather Gillespie, and artists from *Flora, an Opera*.

January 30, 2010 (CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA)—Nigel Redden, General Director, announced today that Spoleto Festival USA will hold a special gala concert on April 1 to celebrate the reopening of Charleston's historic Dock Street Theatre following a three-year renovation.

In keeping with Spoleto Festival USA tradition, the gala program will feature world-renowned international artists alongside emerging artists. Among the evening's performers are the incomparable French soprano Natalie Dessay, the renowned violinist Geoff Nuttall, and a greatly talented young violist making her Spoleto Festival USA debut.

The festivities will commence at 6:00pm with a champagne reception, during which guests can explore the restored public spaces. The concert begins at 7:00pm followed by a seated dinner. A photographic exhibition of past Spoleto Festival USA performances at the Dock Street will be mounted in the Wadsworth Room, providing a retrospective of Festival highlights.

Singer Natalie Dessay, one of today's leading sopranos, will perform various arias including "Sempre Libera" from *La Traviata*. Geoff Nuttall, Spoleto Festival USA Director of

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Spoletto Festival USA to Celebrate Dock Street Theatre Reopening at April 1 Gala

Chamber Music, will be joined by the prominent chamber musicians Pedja Muzijevic (piano), Christopher Costanza (cello) and Caroline Blackwell (viola). Repertoire to be performed by the ensemble will include a new work specially commissioned for the occasion from composer Jonathan Berger, 2010 Spoleto Festival chamber music Composer-in-Residence. The audience will also be afforded a sneak preview of the upcoming Spoleto Festival production of *Flora, an Opera*, the ballad opera that was first seen at the Dock Street Theatre in 1736.

Actress Heather Gillespie will also make a return visit to the Dock Street stage; Gillespie offered an unforgettable performance as Hagar in Target Margin Theater's production of Dubose Heyward's *Mamba's Daughters*, performed at the Dock Street during the 1999 Spoleto Festival. For the April 1 program, Gillespie will perform Dubose Heyward's prologue to *The Recruiting Officer*, penned by Heyward for the reopening of the Dock Street Theatre following a renovation in 1937.

Ticket prices begin at \$250 for pre-concert champagne and the concert. \$500 tickets include the above plus a seated post-performance dinner in the third floor salon of the Dock Street. \$1,000 tickets include champagne, premium concert seating, and dinner on stage with the evening's featured artists. Tickets can be purchased by calling 843.579.3100 or online at spoletousa.org.

When the Dock Street was completed in 1736, it was America's first building created solely for theatrical purposes. Today the theatre is a beloved Charleston landmark and one of Spoleto Festival USA's most favored stages, with hundreds of opera, theater and dance performances and over 1,000 chamber music concerts presented there since the Festival's inception in 1977.

About Spoleto Festival USA

For 17 days and nights each spring, Spoleto Festival USA fills Charleston's historic theaters, churches and outdoor spaces with over 140 performances by world-renowned artists and emerging performers in opera, theater, music theater, dance, and chamber, symphonic, choral and jazz music. Spoleto Festival USA 2010 will take place May 28 through June 13 and information and tickets can be found online at spoletousa.org or by phone at 843.579.3100. Beginning April 19, tickets may be purchased in person at the Spoleto Festival USA box office at Gaillard Municipal Auditorium, 77 Calhoun Street.

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