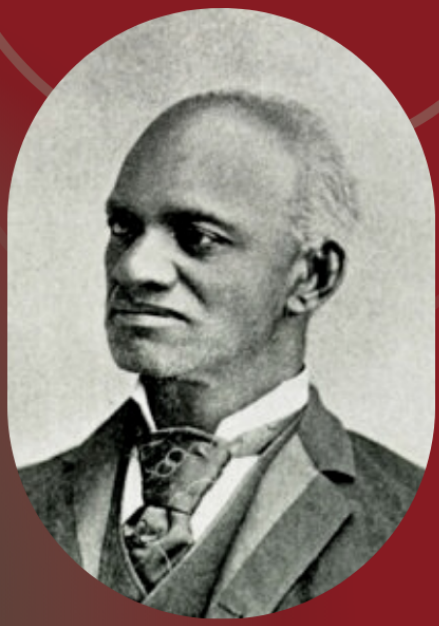
KENT CULTURAL ALLIANCE

ISAAC: A MUSICAL JOURNEY

AT THE REACH, KENNEDY CENTER

MAY 22-26, 2023

On May 22nd 2023, "ISAAC: A Musical Journey "will arrive at The REACH, Kennedy Center for a week-long residency as part of the Social Impact Theater Development Program
Here the cast and musicians will workshop this musical and end the week with two performances for an invited audience.



The composition "ISAAC: A Musical Journey "is based on the published autobiographical narrative "Life of Isaac Mason as a Slave." Mr. Mason was enslaved by the Mansfield Family who lived at what is now 101 Spring Avenue, Chestertown, Maryland. He delivered coffins for Mr. Mansfield, a local minister and carpenter, but also landowner. Mrs. Mansfield was particularly brutal and violent to Mr. Mason. Facing the threat of being sold south, Isaac escapes and journeys to freedom. This house where Mason was enslaved is now the home of The Kent Cultural Alliance (Which commissioned and produced this work). Marlon Saunders himself is a native of Kent County, Maryland.

WRITTEN BY
MARLON SAUNDERS

The musical work is a juxtaposition of time, for Isaac's life is a riveting story; the light of hope and darkness of slavery, and its haunting effects continuing to play out in society today.

The script is broken into fragmented hip hop/spoken word cadence, traditional monologue and inner/outer conversation intertwined with African spirituality intersecting and overlapping Black Church tradition.

The music weaves through the lens of Black music, which gives the musical journey a space of warmth, tenderness and complexity. "This affected my writings of music and text deeply," says playwright/composer Marlon Saunders.

The REACH expansion, designed by Steven Holl Architects, adds much-needed rehearsal, education, and a range of flexible indoor and outdoor spaces to allow the Kennedy Center to continue to play a leadership role in providing artistic, cultural, and enrichment opportunities.

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