Charleston Gaillard Center and MOJA Arts Festival Announce Gospel at the Gaillard

September 28, 2024


As part of MOJA Arts Festival's 40th anniversary season (September 26 – October 6, 2024), Gospel at the Gaillard will celebrate community and the rich tradition of gospel music in the South. Deeply rooted in Charleston's musical heritage, gospel music has long provided solace and strength for Black communities. Gospel at the Gaillard honors this legacy and highlights the enduring significance and transformative power of gospel music as it echoes throughout the Gaillard Center.

Opening the concert are two prominent “homegrown and nationally known” figures in the gospel music industry: Mike Brown & F.O.C.U.S. and contemporary gospel artist Kelontae Gavin—both from the Charleston area. Headlining the evening is Tasha Cobbs Leonard, a multi-hyphenate/multi-award-winning gospel artist with Southern roots and ties to South Carolina. Her profoundly moving voice and poignant lyrics promise an unforgettable finale to the event.

Lissa Frenkel, President and CEO of the Charleston Gaillard Center, expressed her enthusiasm for the collaboration: "We are thrilled to partner with the MOJA Arts Festival to bring such an inspiring lineup of gospel artists to our stage. Gospel at the Gaillard is a
testament to the power of music to uplift and unite, and we look forward to sharing this incredible experience with the community."

Charlton Singleton, Artistic Director of MOJA Arts Festival, added: "The MOJA Arts Festival has always celebrated the richness of African American and Caribbean cultures, and gospel music is a cornerstone of that heritage. This event is a wonderful opportunity to highlight spectacular talent, and we are excited to collaborate with the Gaillard Center to make it happen."

Download photos here.

Tickets on sale Tuesday, June 18, at 11 AM EST at gaillardcenter.org. Gaillard Center Members receive presale access! To learn more about our Membership program, please contact our Advancement Office at info@gaillardfoundation.org or (843) 718-1578.

The City of Charleston Community Services Section will celebrate the full announcement of the MOJA Arts Festival’s 40th anniversary season with a family-friendly Juneteenth on King Block Party on Wednesday, June 19, from 6 – 9pm on King and Ann streets. More information here.

ABOUT KELONTAE GAVIN
Kelontae Gavin, 23-year-old gospel music sensation, went viral as the “Cafeteria Singer” with celebrities like Steve Harvey and Yolanda Adams sharing the video. He is a Billboard-charting artist and a Stellar and Dove Award nominee. Behind the vibrant voice and pleasant personality is the victory and triumph of channeling testimony into transcendent moments of ministry. Kelontae's first single, 2017's "Higher," written by his mother Priscilla Smalls and produced by Myron Butler, reached Top 20 on Billboard Gospel Indicator.

Kelontae Gavin is hopeful and optimistic and stated that, “I love people and I love God. Because of that, I want to meet the needs of people. That's the number one thing I want people to know about me. I believe that when you are going through something, you need to use it as fuel for your destiny and your craft.”

ABOUT TASHA COBBS LEONARD
In less than a decade, Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Tasha Cobbs Leonard has become one of the most iconic artists in gospel music history. Two-time winner of the Billboard Music Award for Top Gospel Artist, her radio single, “You Know My Name (Live),” climbed to #1, while her career-launching hit, “Break Every Chain,” was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).
Tasha Cobbs Leonard’s 2013 debut album, *Grace*, continues to be one of the highest-selling albums of the past five years. With her 2015 follow-up, *One Place Live*, she earned another Grammy nomination and multiple accolades, including two Billboard Music Award nominations and a BET Award nomination.

In August of 2017, Tasha Cobbs Leonard released her most ambitious and intimate project to date, *Heart. Passion. Pursuit*. The unprecedented in-studio live recording made history in its first week, garnering more first-week streams than any gospel album in history (3 million). The project was the highest-selling new release of 2017. She recently earned her fourth Grammy nomination for *Heart. Passion. Pursuit.: Live at Passion City Church*, a live retrospective featuring standout live arrangements from the hit album, along with powerful stories and testimonies that have become the hallmarks of Cobbs Leonard’s live experience.

**ABOUT MOJA ARTS FESTIVAL**
The MOJA Arts Festival is a multi-disciplinary festival produced annually and directed by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the MOJA Planning Committee, an all-volunteer community arts and cultural group. Additional assistance and guidance is provided by the less formal networks of the MOJA Advisory Board, a group of civic leaders who assist with fundraising and advocacy, and the Friends of MOJA patron circle, representing individual and corporate donors.

Moja, a Swahili word meaning “One,” is the appropriate name for this festival celebration of harmony among all people in our community. The Festival highlights the many African-American and Caribbean contributions to western and world cultures. MOJA’s wide range of events include visual arts, classical music, dance, gospel, jazz, poetry, R&B music, storytelling, theater, children’s activities, traditional crafts, local foodways, and more. In addition to its myriad arts presentations, MOJA also includes an active and busy educational outreach component of workshops in the public schools and senior outreach in community centers.

**ABOUT THE CHARLESTON GAILLARD CENTER**
A leader in the performing arts in the Southeast, the Charleston Gaillard Center commissions, supports, and presents ambitious, multidisciplinary cultural programming and provides access to the best local, national, and global artists and companies on its stage. Deeply rooted in the community, the Gaillard Center is committed to elevating local and regional voices and partnering with Charleston institutions to reflect the city’s diversity, both on stage and off. Through programming on its public campus and extensive arts education initiatives, the Gaillard Center serves as a platform to participate in community building and essential dialogue.
Established as a nonprofit in 2015, its campus includes the 1,818-seat Martha and John M. Rivers Performance Hall; a 16,000 square-foot exhibition hall that is home to artistic activations, community and corporate events, and celebrations; and an adjacent park space that was recently activated for artistic presentations. Behind the scenes the Gaillard Center also fosters a culture of excellence and inclusion, employing a robust and talented staff, and providing opportunities for growth and engagement across the arts sector. Find more information and upcoming programming at gaillardcenter.org.

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