

# EBONY ROOTS

DECEMBER 2

PART 1

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## BRANDON THORNHILL: Vocalist

African-American bass-baritone Brandon Thornhill is a well-rounded and diverse musician, performer and professional voice actor. He has performed principal roles in Burnaby Lyric Opera's productions of *La Bohème* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He also performed the roles of the Sergeant in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Flora's servant in *La Traviata* with Vancouver Opera. In 2017, he performed the role of Coalhouse Walker Jr. in Fighting Chance Productions concert production of the musical *Ragtime*. Brandon is co-creating *Ebony Roots* with Sound The Alarm Music Theatre which is a project that celebrates black voices and the history of black music. Brandon has voiced ads for MLB, the Toronto Raptors, Google and DoorDash among others. He received his Master's degree in opera at the University of British Columbia and his Bachelor's degree in music at the University of North Florida. In addition to his voice-over work, Brandon performs at retirement residences across the Lower Mainland.

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## CANDUS CHURCHILL: Vocalist

BC Entertainment Hall Of Fame Star Meritus inductee, Candus Churchill was born into a musical family in Louisville, Kentucky. Her family played instruments and Candus was the singer. At sixteen, Candus and her family moved to Washington, D.C. While in high school, she joined a band called The Passion Flowers and performed at local clubs. After graduating from high school, she attended Montgomery College in Maryland. While there, she joined another band aptly called Destiny. It was then she realized her true calling as a professional vocalist. Soon Candus was hired by Candi Staton, a popular R&B singer and recording artist to tour the United States and Canada.

After being on the road for some time with Candi Staton, Candus moved to Los Angeles where she worked for Motown Records and Paramount Recording Studios. She soon joined the rock/funk group DragonFly and toured extensively, ending up in Canada in 1983. In 1986, Candus resigned from DragonFly to pursue a solo career in Vancouver.

Candus branched out into acting in theatre, television, and film. She has 100 acting and soundtrack credits for television/film since 1988 including *The Good Doctor*, *Supergirl*, *The X Files*, numerous Hallmark Movies and more. Some of her theatre credits include *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Wang Dang Doodle*, *The Black and Gold Revue*, *Santa's Got Soul*, and *The Colored Museum*.

In 1991 Candus, along with Hall of Fame recipient, Marcus Mosely, created Vancouver's contemporary gospel music scene. They were joined by Hall of Fame recipients, Sibel Thrasher and Lovie Eli to form The Circle of Voices, Vancouver's first contemporary black gospel group. Under Candus' administration, they became The Gospel Experience, a seminal force in

Vancouver gospel music for over two decades. Candus supports an extensive list of BC and global charities, a history of service stretching many years.

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CARLOS JOE COSTA: Percussion/Flute

Carlos is a percussionist, flutist and music producer originally from the San Francisco Bay Area and currently living in Vancouver, BC. In 1970, he was recruited by his mentor, Jazz Trumpeter and big band director, Dr. Fred Barry. as a percussionist for the Downbeat Jazz Magazine award winning College of San Mateo Jazz Big Band.

He became the house percussionist for the prestigious Pacific Recording Studio headed by music producer Paul Cursio (Sly Stone, Metallica, Doobie Brothers and Herbie Hancock). He also recorded for Fantasy Records (Berkeley) and Sausalito Studios for producer Narada Michael Walden.

He has performed and recorded with such notables as Santana, Pete Escovedo, Armando Peraza , Taj Mahal, Neal Schon (Journey), The Wailers, Tripoli Steel Drum Band, Elvin Bishop, Lenny Williams (Tower of Power), Louie Bellson and many more.

He released his first CD in Vancouver , African Science, in 2010 and co-produced with singer songwriter and former lead singer of The Ohio Players, Dutch Robinson on his FREEDOM CD in 2013. Carlos dropped his 2nd CD in 2019 featuring his jazz flute, Renaissance Now.

Carlos is currently the percussionist and flutist for Vancouver hip-hop R&B singer-songwriter, Tonye Aganaba. He is also a film and television actor here in Vancouver.

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HENRI BROWN: Guitar/Vocalist

Henri Brown is a multifaceted artist with a passion for music, acting, and film production. Born into a family of entertainers, including his mother Black Cultured Pearl, and his aunt, Canada's First Lady of Jazz, Eleanor Collins and cousin, legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix, Henri was destined for a life in the arts. Since 2011, Henri has been a part of "The Experience Hendrix Tour", which brings together some of America's finest blues and rock musicians. In 2019 alone, they covered 48 cities in the US. Throughout his 4-decade career in the entertainment industry, Henri has always approached life with fire, passion, and a smile. He continues to embrace his life journey, and the world eagerly awaits his next artistic endeavors.

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KRYSTLE DOS SANTOS: Vocalist

Krystle Dos Santos is a 2x Western Canadian award winning singer/songwriter and performer. Her award winning self titled album was released in 2008, followed by Fame Fatale in 2011. BLOOM|BURN, her 3rd studio release, awarded her the WCMA for R&B artist of the year in 2020. From singing on stage with Stevie Wonder and Michael Buble to theatre performances on stages all around North America, Dos Santos brings her eclectic style, powerful vocal prowess and magnetic charm to every performance she delivers. Catch her sharing the story of

Canadian civil rights icon Viola Desmond in her original co-creation, Hey Viola!, or with her new country/rock project Orchard Sky in venues across our beautiful country.

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LANGSTON RAYMOND: Trumpet

Langston is a local musician based in Vancouver born in Kingston Jamaica. His musical journey began in Bella Coola, where he picked up the trumpet in elementary school and played in the jazz and concert bands throughout high-school. Upon graduation, Langston traveled across Europe with the Canadian National Honour Band which helped gel his passion for music. After studying at the University of Michigan, Langston started focusing more on trumpet and guitar, studying with local and international musicians and attending the University of Stanford and Port Townsend Jazz programs.

As a multi-instrumentalist, composer and arranger, Langston keeps busy with many local musicians and artists recording and playing vario samba, reggae, jazz, classical, hip-hop and RnB. Recently Langston has released an album titled “Doc Ramone and Corduroy Kid present Dirty Bottom”. Langston plays trumpet, guitar, bass and sings with the album’s “live” band. The band has produced two western Canadian tours, supported a film soundtrack and played numerous festivals.

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LEO D.E JOHNSON: Vocalist/Guitar

Leo D.E Johnson (They/Him) is a Trans masc, non-binary, Black Scotian rock n' roll artist whose music encompasses a unique blend of soulful soundscapes and heartfelt lyricism. Drawing on his personal experiences and culture for lyrical inspiration, Johnson crafts thought-provoking songs that explore issues of identity and belonging, creating an emotional sonic experience unlike any other. His work celebrates the power of art to move listeners and himself, inspiring them to think differently about themselves and their place in the world. With a passion for pushing boundaries musically and conceptually, Johnson's lyrics are as ambitious as they are thoughtful – and his live performances are nothing short of spectacular. Sit back and enjoy the reflection

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MARION LANDERS: Dancer

Marion Landers is a mixed South African and Irish Canadian actor, choreographer and teacher from Vancouver. She has danced with Zab Maboungou/Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata, (Montréal/Congo), Balet Brazil, Laura Monteiro (Vancouver/Brazil), Afro-Jazz Drum & Dance Ensemble, Thelma Gibson, (Vancouver) and Umoja! The Spirit of Togetherness, Thembi Nyandani (South Africa). Marion choreographed, danced and acted the role of Josephine Baker in: Welcome Back to Harlem! A Hellfighter’s Story, Diane Roberts/Marsha Regis,

Rooted Theatre, Amelia Douglas in James Douglas: an Opera, Obediyah Jones-Darrell, SoundBodyCulture, Welcome to Thebes, Brian Parkinson, United Players and the Vancouver premiere of Emilia, Lois Anderson, United Players. Marion was choreographer on Once On This Island (Best Choreography Broadwayworld.com 2018), Damon Jang/Mary Littlejohn, Fabulist Theatre, we the same, Sangeeta Wylie, Advanced Works, Ruby Slippers and choreographic advisor on Mx, Lili Robinson, Vancouver Fringe Festival. Marion is a Sessional Instructor at the School for Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University, where she received a BFA in Dance & English. Marion also has an MA in Theatre from the University of British Columbia. Marion's full-length dancetheatre work includes I Live Still, co-produced by the National Congress of Black Women Foundation and the Vancity Office of Community Engagement with support from the BC Arts Council and For Coloured Girls Out of the Womb, inspired by Ntozake Shange's choreopoem and Marion's own heritage as a first-generation daughter of the 'Coloured' People of Cape Town, South Africa. Performances include 2017's The Heart of the City Festival, 2020's Black Scholarship, Art & Performance Conference, UBC, curated by Dr. Annette Henry and 2022's Vancouver International Dance Festival's Livestream Series. Film & TV credits include principal roles opposite Shelley Long on The Wedding Chapel, opposite Tisha Campbell in Simone Biles: Courage to Soar as well as Jordan Peele's reboot of The Twilight Zone. Marion was recently the Active Listener on the Vancouver premiere of Jackie Sibblies-Drury's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, Fairview, The Search Party, Mindy Parfitt & Kwaku Okyere – where she supported the cast around the difficult themes contained in the play.

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#### OLAF DE SHIELD: Guitars/Vocalist

Olaf de Shield is an established musician residing in Vancouver B.C., Canada. His main musical bags are Soul, Rhythm & Blues, Jazz, and Blues. He is an accomplished guitarist, vocalist, and arranger, and has played and recorded with a host of regional and international artists over the years. Olaf currently performs with some of Vancouver's top local artists and bands including Billy Dixon's Soul Train Express, Gabriel Mark Hasselbach, Soultrax, Jayleen Stonehouse, Dave Quinn, Guilty Pleasures and many others - playing in venues such as The Fairview, Enigma, Federico's, Pat's Pub, and Frankie's Jazz Club.

He works in several other formats as well - in a Pop duo, as a Solo act (playing Pop, Motown, Blues, and Jazz), and with his own band The Grooveline.

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#### RUSSELL JACKSON: Bass/Vocalist

Russell Jackson has more than five decades under his belt as a master of both acoustic and electric bass. He's fluent in many styles and was the first to employ the slap bass in a blues context, over time earning the moniker, "the Groove Guru". A disciple of the legendary Willie Dixon, Russell continues to champion the tradition of the stand-up bass.

Memphis born, as a young man Russell Jackson moved to Chicago to hone his craft. He was soon hired by one of the blues city's greats, vocalist Otis Clay. During this time, he was spotted by none other than Mr. B.B. King, who invited him to join the B.B. King Orchestra. He spent the next seven years traveling the world with the legendary 'Ambassador of the Blues'. Memorable moments include performing with the B.B. King Band for a New Year's Eve (2016) television production of Austin City Limits, and the induction of B.B. into the Austin City Limits Hall of Fame.

With dual citizenship, Russell works regularly on both sides of the border. His Austin roots go back to the 80's, when he established himself as an in-demand session player and busy band member for Katie Webster, Lucky Peterson, Kenny Neal, Matt Guitar Murphy and Luther Tucker. It was then the original Silent Partners were formed, with Russell on bass, guitarist Mel Brown (Bobby Blue Bland Band), and drummer Tony Coleman (B.B. King Band). The trio recorded an album *If It's All Night, It's All Right* (1989), on the famed Antone's record label. Silent Partners also toured with Charlie Musselwhite for six months in (1987). From 1989-90, Russell toured with Youngbloods Of the Blues, (Kenny Neal, Lucky Peterson, Tony Coleman and Boney Fields), opening for Buddy Guy. In Canada, Russell has been a fixture on the scene since the early 90's, spending 1993-94 with the Powder Blues Band. He tours Canada regularly with his Russell Jackson Band, and can also be found touring globally with Canadian based blues & boogie giant, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne.

Russell's solo releases feature all originals, including *The Alley Man* (1994), *Becoming Blue* (1999) and *Have Mercy* (2007). He's also heard on numerous notable artist's albums, including Otis Clay, B.B. King, Albert Collins, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, Kenny Neal, Luther Tucker, Long John Baldry, Frankie Lee, and Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, among them.

In 2021, Russell Jackson and Tony Coleman, two founding members of Silent Partners, reunited to create a sound that has become a foundation for many artists' recordings and tours. The reinvigorated Silent Partners hit the studio to create *Changing Times* (2022). The album hit the top of the charts and was nominated for Blues Blast's Contemporary Blues Album of the Year and the Sean Costello Rising Star Award, while Russell was nominated Bass Player of the Year and Tony Coleman for Drummer of the Year.

An in demand session player, Russell is equally at home in the studio or providing bass tracks remotely. His long and lengthy discography is a testimony to the huge library of music (and still growing) featuring Russell on bass.

Russell's been sought out to be a Music Director in a number of settings, including his work with Touring Chicago Bluesfest from 2005-10 that featured Willie Hayes, Shakura S'Aida, Tasha Taylor, Wayne Baker Brooks, Kenny "Blues Boss" Wayne, Eddie Taylor Jr. Wilbert Crosby, James Armstrong, Sandra Hall, D.C. Bellamey and more.

<https://russellbjackson.com/home>

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### SAM CHIMES: Hip Hop Artist

Sam Chimes is a multi-talented Afro Canadian musician. Chimes' music has been influenced from a mix of his years moving around the world, and his experience as a sound technician in the film industry. He was Born in Africa, lived in Brunei, South East Asia, and he now resides in Canada. With his jazzy, soulful vibes, he uses a looper and a microkorg synthesizer to create

instrumentals on the spot, layers his voice, and performs for his audience. Chimes has performed in over 13 countries outside of Canada. He recently came back from his fourth international tour, performing at shows in Australia, South of France, South Korea, to name a few, and street performing in between. He is now working on studio recordings and music videos soon to be released. Sam Chimes will leave you mesmerized and inspired.

[www.samchimes.com](http://www.samchimes.com)

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WAYNE STEWART: Keyboard/Vocalist

Wayne Stewart is a musician, actor and emcee. He is a veteran of the Vancouver music scene as a singer, composer, pianist, and guitarist. Although he focuses on jazz and R&B, he has played a wide range of music, from rock to Latin, folk to the avant-garde.

Wayne performs regularly as a solo artist, with his jazz quintet Curio, and with a variety of groups. Most recently, he co-wrote and plays keyboards on an upcoming album by Curtis Clearsky & the Constellations, an Indigenous hip-hop band.

Wayne has written keyboard music for silent films and accompanied the films live. He scored and produced the 150th retrospective of the films of Georges Méliès, and scored 'Treasures of the Archives', and 'Vintage Vancouver', both collections of films from the City of Vancouver Archives. He appeared in Tim Burton's film "Big Eyes" and plays several pieces on the film's soundtrack including a piece he co wrote for the film.