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ARTIST. ACTIVIST. REBEL. VISIONARY.

If you only know "A Raisin in the Sun,"
then you don't know Lorraine Hansberry.

Sighted Eyes | Feeling Heart

HB
STUDIO

Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart:
Art & Activism of an
American Icon

HB Public Conversation
March 13, 2021 | 4:00PM
Held online via Zoom

HB Studio presents

HB Public Conversation
Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart:
Art & Activism of an American Icon

Presented in collaboration with
The Arts Ministry of Marble Collegiate Church

March 13, 2021

4:00 PM

with:

Chiz Schultz, Executive Producer of SIGHTED EYES/FEELING HEART
Mario Sprouse, Arts Ministry Coordinator of Marble Collegiate Church

Edith Meeks, Executive & Artistic Director
Lauren Ritter, Production Manager
Lorraine de Silva, Zoom Tech



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Dear Friends,

Today marks a year from the day HB Studio closed its physical doors. We have learned that a church is its people, not its real estate. In this time of pause, this time of grief, we have felt, and we are facing, how swift and fragile life is. And we have felt deeply, and with shame, how this country's structures set different values on different lives. Within that context it seems right to contemplate the swift, fragile, urgent, brilliant life of Lorraine Hansberry.

In the fall with Pat Golden's scene study class and this winter with her lab project exploring Hansberry's play *Les Blancs*, and through Tracy Strain's documentary *Sighted Eyes, Feeling Heart*, we have had opportunities to meet Hansberry: to learn about who she was, how incisively she wrote, with what fierce clarity she spoke to her times, and how deeply she has left her mark.

Our histories commit sins of erasure and of omission. For years HB's community knew that Uta Hagen played in *Othello* with Paul Robeson, but perhaps we did not know, or emphasize, that Robeson produced the play. That it was directed by a woman, Margaret Webster, who was queer. That the FBI kept files on all of them, but the most lasting, devastating damage was done to Robeson.

Yesterday there was a \$27 million settlement for George Floyd's murder. I think of the landmark 1940 Supreme Court case brought by Lorraine's father, Carl Augustus Hansberry, Sr., which opened new homes to Blacks in Chicago, and also of Hansberry's statement that the legal win did not and could not defeat segregation. As allies, our efforts must be tireless, and we must reflect deeply on what we know and what we think we know.

Hansberry engaged in an active dialogue of ideas with other writers. If we will engage in dialogue now with her ideas, we may find ourselves challenged, devastated, charged and inspired.

Deep thanks to Mario Sprouse and Chiz Schultz, who will dialogue today about the documentary *Chiz* executive produced on Hansberry, *Sighted Eyes, Feeling Heart*. This conversation began in February for Black History Month through Marble Collegiate Church's Monday evening series, and Mario and Chiz accepted our invitation to continue it here with HB as we remember together that Black History is American History, Women's History is American History, Queer History is American History – and celebrate Hansberry's lasting contribution at the intersection of all three and as a citizen of this world.

Edith Meeks
Executive & Artistic Director



Chiz Schultz

Chiz Schultz has enjoyed a long and illustrious career in film and television. He is a two-time Emmy® nominee who has collaborated with filmmakers such as Spike Lee, Norman Jewison, Hal Ashby, Bill Duke and Sidney Poitier. He co-produced Lee's DA SWEET BLOOD OF JESUS (2015), a contemporary version of Bill Gunn's landmark 1972 film GANJA & HESS, on which Schultz served as producer. He was an executive producer on Jewison's A SOLDIER'S STORY (1984), which netted three Academy Award nominations including Best Picture. Chiz developed and produced PAUL ROBESON: HERE I STAND, a two-hour "American Masters" series documentary for PBS, with Ossie Davis, Harry Belafonte, Uta Hagen, Paul Robeson, Jr. and Pete Seeger among others. It premiered February, 1999 and won "Best Documentary Strand Award" from International Documentary Association in 2000.



Mario Sprouse

Mario Sprouse was musical director for BLACK NATIVITY - A GOSPEL SONG PLAY by Langston Hughes (Obie Award winner), directed by Jesse Wooden Jr.; LENA CALHOUN HORNE - THE CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY OF A NEGRO WOMAN, written by Wendi Joy Franklin, directed by Lillie Marie Redwood (2003) and Micki Grant (2011). He was the arranger/orchestrator of the Off-Broadway musical TAKE IT EASY, written by Raymond Fox at the Judith Anderson Theater, in which he also produced the original cast album. Mario

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recently won an AUDELCO "Viv" award for Outstanding Musical Director for THE DARK STAR FROM HARLEM - THE SPECTACULAR RISE OF JOSEPHINE BAKER, which was performed at La Mama Experimental Theatre in 2019. Mario is the Arts Ministry Coordinator of Marble Collegiate Church. He is the co-founder, along with Dale Robert McCausland, and Artistic Director of the Theatre Upstairs – Downstairs at Marble.