

Capital One City Parks FOUNDATION
SUMMERSTAGE

**Capital One City Parks Foundation
SummerStage Anywhere Presents:
"Rodney King" Film Conversation with
film star Roger Guenveur Smith &
author Dr. Stephanie Leigh Batiste**



Premiering Next Thursday, 2/11 at 7:00 PM ET

**Additional Black History Month Performances Every
Thursday Throughout February**

FEBRUARY 3, 2021 - NEW YORK, NY – Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage Anywhere is celebrating Black History Month with commemorative performances throughout February, kicking off with a presentation of a **"Rodney King" film conversation** with film star **Roger Guenveur Smith** and author **Dr. Stephanie Leigh Batiste** on **Thursday, February 11 at 7:00 PM ET**. The event will stream on [SummerStageAnywhere.org](https://www.summerstageanywhere.org) and across SummerStage socials:



[Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitch](#). In advance of the conversation, the film will be available to view for free courtesy of Netflix from February 1 - February 28; details available at SummerStageAnywhere.org.

This conversation will focus on the 2017 film "[Rodney King](#)" directed by Spike Lee, a 2017 one-man show written by and starring Smith who performs a multiplicity of voices, alternately taking and opposing Rodney King's side. The film won a Bessie-Award, New York Dance and Performance honor, for solo performance which was filmed at SummerStage in Manhattan's East River Park. The conversation will feature **Smith** speaking with academic, author, and performance artist **Dr. Stephanie Leigh Batiste**. They will dive into the performance's early improvisational roots, international theatrical runs, and its screen adaptation, focusing on the continued resonance of Rodney King in a new decade that has been tragically fraught with unresolved issues of state-sanctioned violence. The film gives voice to the man at the center of the brutal police beating that helped fuel the 1992 Los Angeles uprising.

After the film's Netflix release in 2017, on the 25th anniversary of the state court acquittals of the four LAPD officers who were videotaped beating King in 1991, the film was heralded by **Los Angeles Times**, **The Hollywood Reporter**, and more. **The Guardian** described the performance as a "*preacher's howl of anger and frustration at the personal and political forces which crushed King – racism, alcoholism, depression, crime, poverty, alienation and his own poignant unpreparedness for a media maelstrom – as well as his rejection from some following his well-intended plea for everyone to 'get along'.*" Speaking to *Variety*, Smith shared that his desire for the project came after King's death in 2012, "*When he died, I was struck with how much I was moved, how much this tragic figure mattered to me.*"

Following the rise of Black Lives Matter protests across the country last year, "**Rodney King**" was made available to stream for free as part of Netflix's Black Lives Matter Collection. The film is still currently streaming on Netflix for subscribers and in advance of the conversation, the film will be available to view for free courtesy of Netflix from February 1 - February 28; details available at SummerStageAnywhere.org.

Roger Guenveur Smith is the author of the Obie and Peabody Award-winning "A Huey P. Newton Story", currently streaming on Hulu. He has also staged studies of Frederick Douglass and Christopher Columbus, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley,



iconoclast artists Jean-Michel Basquiat, Simon Rodia, and Charles White, and baseball greats Juan Marichal and John Roseboro. Roger studied at Yale University and Occidental College and has taught at both institutions as well as Cal Arts, where he directs his Performing History Workshop.

Dr. Stephanie Leigh Batiste is Associate Professor of English, Black Studies, Theater and Dance, and Comparative Literature at University of California at Santa Barbara and Director of the Hemispheric South/s Research Initiative. Professor Batiste's current research focuses on affect and feeling in relation to violence and death in Black millennial performance in Los Angeles.

SummerStage Anywhere will be also presenting several additional performances to celebrate Black History Month throughout February:

● **February 4: "Lift Every Voice"** (encore on [SummerStageAnywhere.org](https://www.summerstageanywhere.org)) at 7:00 PM ET. Originally premiered during the 2020 season, this dance and music performance film featuring **Khalia Campbell** of Alvin Ailey, **Desmond Richardson** of Complexions Contemporary Ballet, and **Angie Swan** of David Byrne's *American Utopia*, with creative direction by **Danni Gee**, SummerStage dance curator will feature new content. Celebrating 150 years of writer and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson's legacy, **"Lift Every Voice"** this performance will feature a new introduction from playwright **Elizabeth Alexander** and a recitation of the poem by Emmy-nominated and Tony-Award winning actress/singer **Phylicia Rashad**.

● **February 18: The Rewind: A Celebration of Black Culture featuring highlights from the 2020 SummerStage Anywhere Season with an introduction by Greg Tate** (encore on [SummerStageAnywhere.org](https://www.summerstageanywhere.org)) at 7:00 PM ET. This roundup will feature a highlight reel of Black music and dance artists including **Femi Kuti & The Positive Force**, **Shabaka Hutchings**, **Dallas Black Dance Theatre**, and many more from our first-ever all-digital SummerStage season with a special introduction by Harlem-based journalist and Black Rock Coalition co-founder, **Greg Tate**.



● **February 25: Michael Mwenso: Hope, Resist & Heal, performance and conversation with Shannon Effinger**, in association with New York Music Month Extended Play, an initiative of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Entertainment (debut on SummerStageAnywhere.org) at 7:00 PM ET. Musician, artist, and social commentator Michael Mwenso offers his unique and ancestral perspective on Black music and its power to heal us. As an African-born queer man growing up in London and New York, Mwenso will dive into a wide range of his discoveries while shedding light on the Black experience through interludes of his music. This live studio recording with Mwenso and the Shakes and commentary with arts journalist **Shannon Effinger** (*New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *NPR Music*, *Pitchfork*) will take us on a ride through the continuum and power of Black roots music. He will be joined by his group, Mwenso and the Shakes, a multicultural New York jazz group.

Following in March will be a celebration of **Women’s History Month** on March 8 with **RISING TIDES, a celebration of International Women’s Day** in association with Consulate General of Canada in New York, New York Music Month Extended Play, an initiative of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Entertainment and four/four presents. This music and dance presentation features a new generation of women leaders with a rebroadcast of “**Becoming Mother Duende: An Ode to New York**” by social engagement performance artist Arielle Rosales and the world premiere of “**four/four presents: All That I Am**” featuring new music by **La Force** (AKA Ariel Engle, vocalist and newest member of critically-acclaimed indie collective Broken Social Scene) and dancers from Canada and the United States, celebrating the strength, beauty, and power of women working together to lead us in the present and into the future.

All performances will be streamed on SummerStageAnywhere.org and all SummerStage social channels ([Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitch](#)).

Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage is a proud member of the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA).

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Day	Date	Time	Performance	Program Type	Platform
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SUMMERSTAGE[®]

Thurs	2/4/21	7:00 PM ET	ENCORE: "Lift Every Voice"	Black History Month Celebration	SummerStageAnywhere.org and SummerStage Facebook/YouTube/ Instagram/Twitch
Thurs	2/11/21	7:00 PM ET	"Rodney King" Film Conversation with Roger Guenveur Smith and Dr. Stephanie Leigh Batiste	Black History Month Celebration	SummerStageAnywhere.org and SummerStage Facebook/YouTube/ Instagram/Twitch
Thurs	2/18/21	7:00 PM ET	ENCORE: The Rewind: A Black History Month Celebration featuring highlights from the 2020 SummerStage Anywhere Season and Intro by Greg Tate	Black History Month Celebration	SummerStageAnywhere.org and SummerStage Facebook/YouTube/ Instagram/Twitch
Thurs	2/25/21	7:00 PM ET	Michael Mwenso: Hope, Resist & Heal, performance and conversation with Shannon Effinger	Black History Month Celebration	SummerStageAnywhere.org and SummerStage Facebook/YouTube/ Instagram/Twitch

SummerStage Social Media

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YouTube: [NYCSummerStage](https://www.youtube.com/NYCSummerStage)

Twitch: [SummerStageNYC](https://www.twitch.tv/SummerStageNYC)

Official Hashtags: #SummerStage #SummerStageAnywhere

Capital One is the title sponsor of Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage Anywhere. Supporting Sponsors Bloomberg Philanthropies, Nestle Water (Perrier).



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In all of its programming and activities, City Parks Foundation partners with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to activate neighborhood parks.

About City Parks Foundation

At City Parks Foundation, we are dedicated to invigorating and transforming parks into dynamic, vibrant centers of urban life through sports, arts, community building and education programs for all New Yorkers. Our programs -- located in more than 400 parks, recreation centers and public schools across New York City -- reach 300,000 people each year. Our ethos is simple: thriving parks mean thriving communities.

About SummerStage

Capital One City Parks Foundation SummerStage is New York's largest free outdoor performing arts festival. SummerStage annually presents approximately 100 performances in 15-18 parks throughout the five boroughs. With performances ranging from American pop, Latin, world music, dance and theater, SummerStage fills a vital niche in New York City's summer arts festival landscape. Since its inception 34 years ago, more than six million people from New York City and around the world have enjoyed SummerStage. Capital One is the Title Sponsor of SummerStage. For more information, visit www.SummerStage.org.

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