

# She Persisted

## *The Musical*

Script and Lyrics by  
**Adam Tobin**

Music by  
**Deborah Wicks La Puma**

Adapted from the Book written by  
**Chelsea Clinton** and  
illustrated by **Alexandra Boiger**

Published by Philomel Books

Directed by **Desirée Dabney**

**FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 12, 2023**



Illustration © Alexandra Boiger

SEASON SUPPORTERS:

**Artistic Director of Community** Desirée Roots  
**Artistic Director of Education** Todd D. Norris  
**Artistic Director of Programming** Rick Hammerly  
**Managing Director** Phil Whiteway

VIRGINIA **rep**

# She Persisted

## The Musical

This play was commissioned and first produced by Bay Area Children's Theatre during the 2018/2019 season.

**SHE PERSISTED** is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).  
 All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)

Scenic Design **Mercedes Schaum**      Lighting Design **Matthew Landwehr**  
 Costume Co-Design **Sue Griffin** and **Marcia Hailey**      Choreography **Liam Storm**  
 Music Director **Billy Dye**      Stage Manager **Hannah Hoffert**  
 Direction **Desirée Dabney**

### CAST

Naomi **Khadijah Franks**  
 Time/Ms. Chan **Amber Fe Armstrong**  
 Sonia Sotomayor/Juno **Amber Marie Martinez**  
 Harriet Tubman/Florence Griffith Joyner **Jianna Hurt**  
 Dr. Virginia Apgar/Sally Ride **Emily Dandridge**  
 Ruby Bridges/Bailey **Florence Babatunde**  
 Understudy **Tia-Monet Flores**

### CREW

Projection Content Created by **Will Fisher**  
 Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Kimoto**  
 Light Board Operator **Hannah Hoffert**  
 Sound Engineer & Projection Technician **Dennis Cheeks**  
 Wardrobe Supervisor **Tajma Graham**



**Amber Fe Armstrong** (Time/Ms. Chan) Amber Fe's recent roles include Betty #3 Understudy in *Collective Rage: A Play in 3 Betties* (Richmond Triangle Players), Brie in *Something Stupid* (Scripps Onstage), and Carrie in *Unbecoming* (Coalition Theater), as well as Spider in *James and the Giant Peach* and Pantalone in *The Dentist* (VCU Theatre). Amber Fe extends a big thank you to all of cast and crew for making this process so easy and most importantly she sends thanks and love to her friends and family, "Mahal kita, kapantay ang langit sinta" (Piliita Corrales). You can find Amber Fe on [insta @fe.armstrong.official](https://www.instagram.com/fe.armstrong.official)



**Florence Babatunde**, she/her, (Ruby Bridges/Bailey) is thrilled to have her first show with Virginia Rep — and it's her first musical to boot! She's an actor, multi-instrumentalist, teaching artist, multifaceted theatre collaborator and songwriter. DMV Theatre Credits: Arts on the Horizon, Faction of Fools, Smithsonian's Discovery Theater. She's worked on-set with her favorite productions *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Wonder Woman 1984*. In her free time, find Florence fiddling with her Irish Breakfast Band, practicing Romance languages and trying out new places to munch in RVA. Remember you can be a protagonist in your own life. [florencebabatunde.com](http://florencebabatunde.com)



**Khadijah Franks** (Naomi) is happy to be returning to the stage at Virginia Rep's new Center for Arts and Education. A graduate of TheatreVCU, her other Virginia Rep credits include *Pipeline* (u/s Jasmine) and *Santa's Enchanted Workshop* (Swing.) You may have also seen her in VCU's filmed production of *Spring Awakening* (Thea), VCU's *In The Red* and *Brown Water* (Mama Moja), or TheatreLAB's *An Octoroon* (Dido). She would like to thank her family for their continued love and support and the entire *She Persisted* crew for such a wonderful experience. Enjoy the show!



**Emily Dandridge** (Dr. Virginia Apgar/Sally Ride) is honored to be part of this production! She recently performed as The Suspects in Swift Creek Theater's *Murder For Two* for which she won RTCC's award for Best Lead Performance in a Musical. Typically she would use the remaining space to list other theater accomplishments, but instead, she'd like to use the space to dedicate this show to her two daughters, Eleanor and Charlotte — "My sweet girls, my 'Little Acorns' — I hope you are inspired by this show, and by the women performing on this stage today. Be brave. Be strong. Be kind. Be YOU. 'She believed she could, so she did.'"



**Tia-Monet Flores** (Understudy) An Alexandria, VA native, Tia-Monet Flores is a triple threat performer who energetically undertook being the swing for this production. With a firm foundation in dance, Tia-Monet never imagined that she'd find a career in musical theatre, but she is so glad she did! Offstage, Tia-Monet serves as the Head Coach of Gar-Field High School's Lady Reds Dance Team, undefeated area competitor in Toastmasters International, and caretaker for her disabled mother. A princess by day and night, she is the creative director for La Reigna Princess Party Experience, where she makes every child feel confident and royal on their birthday.



**Jianna Hurt** (Harriet Tubman/Florence Griffith Joyner) is incredibly excited to be a part of Virginia Rep's *She Persisted*! She is a hardworking performer and is excited to further her wonderful career in the industry. These days you will find her working at her day job, producing a self tape, or working to connect with her community and promoting a new up and coming Theatre Company called Yes. And! Theatrical Co. Her most recent credits include Virginia Rep's *Mamma Mia!* (Female ensemble/Swing), *Beehive: The '60s Musical* (Wanda Track), and so much more. She would like to thank her family and friends, the cast and crew, and you — the wonderful supporters!



**Amber Marie Martinez**, she/her, (Sonia Sotomayor/Juno) is a professional theatre artist. Recent credits include April Anderson in *MAN: The Live Podcast* (Firehouse Theatre), Dr. Martinez in *A Christmas Kaddish* (Richmond Triangle Players, RTCC Nominee- Best Supporting Role in a Musical, RTP), Myrtle in *The Great Gatsby* (Quill Theatre); Ashlee in *Dance Nation* ( RTCC Award - Best Actress in a Supporting Role, TheatreLAB); Kristine Linde in *A Doll's House* (TheatreLAB); Barbara Pitts in *The Laramie Project* (RTCC Awards for Best Play & Best Acting Ensemble, RTP); Abbie Putnam in *Desire under the Elms* (Firehouse). She is the Arts in Education Manager for Virginia Rep and an adjunct professor of theatre at VCU.

**Desirée Dabney** (Director) is a professional actor, singer, director, theatre educator/activist and executive director of Theatre Diva Productions in Richmond, VA. She has recently been seen in a National Commercial for Google and First Auto, *Everybody* (Love) at Cadence Theatre/Virginia Rep, *Times Square Angel* at Richmond Triangle Players, *Warm* (Ensemble) a Firehouse Theatre production, Quill Theatre *Taming of the Shrew* (Hortensio), University Of Richmond *Caroline* or *Change* (Caroline), Quill Theatre *Red Velvet* (Connie), Virginia Rep *Pinkalicious* (Dr. Wink), and more. Desirée received her B.F.A. in Acting from Shenandoah

### MUSICAL NUMBERS

<b>Perfect/Not</b> .....	Naomi, Ensemble	<b>Another Solution Reprise</b> .....	Sonia Sotomayor
<b>They Changed the World</b> .....	Ms. Chan, Naomi, Ensemble	<b>Run My Race</b> .....	Florence Griffith Joyner, Naomi, Ensemble
<b>Perfect/Not Reprise</b> .....	Naomi	<b>Isn't It Cool</b> ..	Sally Ride, Naomi, Time, Ensemble
<b>Another Solution</b> .....	Sonia Sotomayor	<b>Walk On</b> .....	Ruby Bridges, Naomi
<b>That's the Score!</b> .....	Dr. Apgar, Ensemble	<b>Perfect/Not Second Reprise</b> .....	Naomi
<b>Hope</b> .....	Harriet Tubman, Naomi, Ensemble	<b>Walk On Reprise/Finale</b> .....	Company

Conservatory in 2014 and in 2022 was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from SU. She has been in over 100 productions including commercials, films, TV Shows (Apple TV and CBS), musicals, and plays. Professor Dabney is Head of Musical Theatre at VCU, Board Member of the Virginia Theatre Association, Richmond Triangle Players, and Yes. And! Theatrical Co., Owner and Executive Director of Theatre Diva Productions, and on the board for Fine Arts Education (Theatre) Virginia Department of Education.

**Billy Dye** (Music Director) His most recent musical direction was with Firehouse Theatre's world premiere of the musical *Gabriel*. He previously provided music direction for Cadence Theatre's *Annie Jr*, and consultation and original compositions for The Firehouse production of *Oedipus - a Gospel Myth*. His music direction can be heard in other local productions including, *Pinkalicious*, *Taffetas*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, and *Beehive*. Billy also has an extensive onstage performing resume having appeared in musicals and plays including *Once on This Island*, *Crowns*, *The Color Purple*, and *Dreamgirls*. He also directed local productions of *Closer Than Ever*, *Blues in the Night*, *Working*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and many touring shows for Virginia Rep. He directed *Songs from the Soul*, a show that he also wrote for Virginia Rep. Billy teaches at the prestigious Henrico High Schools - Center for the Arts.

**Liam Storm** (Choreographer) is thrilled to be choreographing for Virginia Rep! He recently graduated from VCU with his B.F.A. in Theatre. He has performed in various VCU productions, as well as Richmond Shakes. He was the assistant choreographer for *Spring Awakening* at VCU, as well as the choreographer for *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*. He has performed at various theme parks across the coast and has choreographed for local drag queens as well as dance studios. He hopes you are inspired by the show!

**Mercedes Schaum** (Scenic Designer) is excited to be designing her second show at the Virginia Rep Center! Mercedes has been designing and painting in Richmond for 20 years. Family favorites including *Annie*, *Honk!*, *A Christmas Story*, *Mame*, *The BFG*, *Song of Mulan*, *Into the Woods*, *Bunnica*, *The Magic Flute*, and *It's A Wonderful Life* for Virginia Rep. *Peter and The Starcatcher* and *Little Shop of Horrors*, and many more for SPARC. She has a B.F.A. from JMU in theatre and an M.F.A. in set design from the University of Illinois. When she's not working in the theatre, Mercedes is raising four kids with her husband, Jason Alley, and looking for new challenges and prepping for crazy family adventures!

**Sue Griffin** (Costume Co-Designer) has headed up the Virginia Rep costume department for the last nineteen years. Over this time, the shop has produced costumes for more than 300 shows, from traveling fairy tales to major musicals. With the help of the full time shop, hundreds of costumes, wigs, shoes and hats are sent out on a stage or packed up on tour. Some of the most memorable shows include *1776*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Color Purple*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, and *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*.

**Marcia Hailey** (Costume Co-Designer) has been working in Richmond theatres for over 30 years, and now currently works in the costume shop at Virginia Rep as a Cutter/Draper. Some of her favorite shows she designed for Virginia Rep include *Beehive: The '60s Musical*, *Forever Plaid*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, *Miracle on South Division Street*, *Charitable Sisterhood*, *Charitable Sisterhood Christmas Spectacular*, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, and *Boeing Boeing*. She has also worked for the Richmond Ballet, Virginia and Utah Shakespeare Festivals, and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.

**Matthew Landwehr** (Lighting Designer) is a graduate of Minnesota State University-Mankato with a B.S. in Theatre Technology. After serving as the Associate Lighting Designer for Playhouse on the Square in Memphis, TN and the Lighting Director for the Historic Tibbits Opera House in Coldwater, MI, he moved to Richmond to serve at Theatre IV/Barksdale Theatre as Production Electrician and Lighting Designer. After a multi-year run as Technical Director for SPARC's Live Art concert series he now works for Henrico Theatre as Technical Director.

**Hannah Hoffert**, she/her, (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be part of the *She Persisted* team! This is her second season with Virginia Rep, and her previous credits include *Beehive: The '60s Musical*, *Mamma Mia!*, *Chicken & Biscuits*, and *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. Hannah is a proud alumnus of Carnegie Mellon University, receiving her B.S. ('16) and M.S. ('17) in Mechanical Engineering. When not at the theatre, she loves taking trips to Virginia Beach with her service dog, Olive, and walking along the beach. Hannah would like to thank her family, mentors and Olive who helped to make this dream a reality!

**Adam Tobin** (Script and Lyrics) Adam Tobin is the writer and lyricist of *She Persisted: The Musical*, adapted from Chelsea Clinton's children's book for Bay Area Children's Theatre. A Senior Lecturer teaching screenwriting and television at Stanford University, Tobin created the television series *About a Girl* and *Best Friend's Date* for Viacom's The-N network (now TeenNick), won an Emmy for writing on Discovery Channel's *Cash Cab*, and worked in script development for Jim Henson Pictures and The National Basketball Association. He has taught story seminars to Dreamworks Animation, Aardman Animation, and Blue Sky Studios. Tobin also performed with Los Angeles Theatresports and the comedy group The But Frankies, and was a founding member of the Stanford Improvisors. He holds a bachelor's degree from Stanford in English and an MFA from USC School of Cinematic Arts in Screenwriting.

**Deborah Wicks La Puma** (Music) A composer, music director and orchestrator, Deborah Wicks La Puma is one of the most produced Theatre for Young Audiences artists working today. With bestselling children's author Mo Willems she has created *Elephant and Piggie's: We Are In A Play*, *Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed: The Rock Experience*; and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical*. Her many and diverse works with playwright Karen Zacarias include *Ella Enchanted* (based on the book by Gail Carson Levine), *Olivério: A Brazilian Twist*, *Frida Libre*, *Looking for Roberto Clemente* and *Einstein Is a Dummy*. With playwright Adam Tobin she created *She Persisted* (based on the book by Chelsea Clinton), and the upcoming *What Do You Do With An Idea?* (based on the book by Kobi Yamada). Her adult works include the lyric opera *Dakota Sky* and the Mexican folk musical *Perdita* (based on Shakespeare's Winter's Tale) with Kathleen Cahill. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, her bachelor's degree from Stanford University, and studied folk music with ethnomusicologist Alfredo López Mondragón. Her honors include the Jane Chambers Playwriting Award, an NEA New American Works Grant, two Parents' Choice Awards, and a Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Musical Adaptation. A proud Mexican-American and "Navy brat" who grew up in Brazil, Portugal and California, La Puma is a member of TYA USA, ASCAP and The Dramatists Guild. Mother to three daughters and Mimi the Cat, La Puma lives in Southern California with her PR agent and loving husband, Chris.

Any video and/or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

### COMING NEXT

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