

# HARVARD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

FROMM PLAYERS AT HARVARD present:

## ***PERLE NOIRE: MEDITATIONS FOR JOSÉPHINE*** **MAY 3 AT OBERON, 10PM, FREE**

*One of the most important works of art yet to emerge from the era of Black Lives Matter.*  
—*New York Times*

*Their darkly captivating show offered a haunting investigation into the psychological shadows and public constructions that shaped the career of a woman who was “no more primal than Princess Grace,” as Ms. Bullock says in the piece, but for whom the most direct route to entertainment royalty and a chateau in the Périgord meant donning a banana skirt.*—*New York Times*

*...a singular theatrical experience brimming with grief, resilience, and fury.*  
San Francisco Classical Voice



Soprano Julia Bullock. Photo by Christian Steiner.

*Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine* brings together the astonishing talents of several of today's most innovative artists. Conceived by director **Peter Sellars and Julia Bullock** and premiered at the Ojai Music Festival in June of 2016, *Perle Noire* is a collaboration with, soprano **Julia Bullock**, percussionist-composer **Tyshawn Sorey**, and poet **Claudia Rankine**, performed by **International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)**.

The evening spotlights Baker's iconic songs re-composed by Sorey and sung by world renown soprano and activist [Julia Bullock](#), who sees her work on the show not as an impersonation of Baker, but as a tribute. Tyshawn's music, which includes composed as well as improvised pieces, is melancholic and mournful, and alludes to the racial struggles of both Baker's time and our own.

Says Sorey In a *New York Times* interview in August, 2016 "I identified more with Baker as a figure of the civil rights movement, with the lyrical and emotional content. I wanted to recompose the music so that it would match that." Adds Bullock, "These issues, they're always on my mind. When Michael Brown was killed, that happened 20 minutes from my home in St. Louis. All these issues are things I live with and think about daily. Yes, I understood the timeliness of what we were writing. Hearing her [Baker] sing "Si J'Étais Blanche" ["If I Were White"] in 1925 is just as relevant as singing it now."

*Perle Noire: Meditations for Joséphine* plays one night only, Friday, May 3 at 10:00 pm at Oberon, 2 Arrow Street in Cambridge. **The performance is free but ticket reservations are required**, online at <http://www.cluboberon.com/>, or from the Loeb Drama Center Box Office, Brattle Street, 617.547.8300. The Loeb Box Office is open 12-5, Tues-Sun. Limit 2 per person. All tickets are will-call, and will be valid until 9:45pm. If sold out, a waiting list will begin at the door.

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