



# NEW STAGE Theatre

**February 18—March 7, 2021**

**Exclusively Streamed Online**

*This program is financially assisted by the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Mississippi Humanities Council.*



**Place: Ruleville, MS**

**Time: Spring, 1976**

**Frank Kuhn\*** (Playwright/Director) directed *Last Night of Ballyhoo* and *Nixon's Nixon* at New Stage Theatre. He recently directed *Leah, the Forsaken* for Metropolitan Playhouse in New York City, a production praised by the *New York Times* as a "rare revival" and "a thought-provoking discovery, presented by a first-rate troupe." Other theatre work includes directing for McCarter Theatre, Princeton Rep, Delaware Theatre Company, Mill Mountain Playhouse, Warehouse Theatre, and numerous others. His production of *Godspell* for Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre in Pennsylvania was named best professional musical of 2011 by the *Lehigh Valley Press*; and he was named "Best Director" in the *Denver Post's* statewide Ovation Awards for his production of *Sweeney Todd* at Creede Repertory Theatre in 2006. Opera work includes productions for Sacramento Opera, Virginia Opera, OperaDelaware, Opera Festival of New Jersey, and Curtis Institute of Music. He is a professor of theatre at The College at Brockport (SUNY) in western New York.

**Sharon Miles** (Fannie Lou Hamer) is an actor, singer, director, playwright and the Education Director at New Stage Theatre. Her original script, *If Not Us Then Who: Freedom Rides to Freedom Summer* chronicling the Freedom Rides of 1961 and Freedom Summer of 1964- toured though out the state of Mississippi through New Stage's Theatre's award-winning education program. Born and raised in Mississippi, Sharon is an avid lover of Mississippi History and seeks to use theatre arts to teach character development, youth empowerment and empathy. Additional original Scripts include: *Who Are You Calling Ugly: A Modern Duck Tale*, *The Middle Passage* and *8:46* and most recently, *The Debate for Democracy*.

**Fannie Lou Hamer**, the daughter of sharecroppers, became a voting rights activist after being recruited by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1962. She soon became an important fieldworker and fundraiser for the SNCC. One of the founders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, she traveled with a delegation to the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City to present an ultimately unsuccessful challenge to the all-white, all-male Democratic delegation as not representative of the population of Mississippi. President Lyndon Johnson famously called a televised press conference in order to keep her testimony off the air. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Mrs. Hamer turned her attention to local efforts, developing a cooperative farm and building houses for the poor of Sunflower County. Fannie Lou Hamer died in 1977. On her grave in Ruleville, is inscribed her most famous quote: "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired."

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the Mississippi Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

\* Originally Contracted through the courtesy of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Inc. (SDC)

**New Stage Theatre Staff**

Artistic Director.....	Francine Thomas Reynolds
Managing Director.....	Dawn Buck
General Manager.....	Bill McCarty III
Marketing Director.....	Melissa Tillman
Marketing Associate.....	Shannon Frost
Education Director.....	Sharon Miles
Lighting Designer/Production Manager.....	Bronwyn Teague
Scenic Designer/Technical Director.....	Richard Lawrence
Scenic Designer.....	Dex Edwards
Sound & Projection Designer.....	Alberto Meza
Videographer.....	Mosaic Media
Resident Stage Manager.....	Clara Seitz
Resident Costume Designer.....	Caleb Blackwell
Box Office Manager.....	Alisa Price
Box Office Assistant/Education Consultant.....	Betty Wong

A premiere public reading of *Let It Shine! A Visit with Fannie Lou Hamer* was presented in October, 2017, at New Stage Theatre in The Mississippi Plays Series as part of the Eudora Welty New Plays Series.

The production premiered in March, 2018 for a three performance run in the theatre’s Hewes Room Theatre.

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**

New Stage will host a virtual panel discussion titled  
**“America’s Freedom Fighting Woman: Exploring Fannie Lou Hamer”**  
**Wednesday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m.**

Panel participants will include Actress Sharon Miles, Fannie Lou Hamer Scholar and Author of *Fannie Lou Hamer: America’s Freedom Fighting Woman* Maegan Parker Brooks, and Fannie Lou Hamer Scholar and Civil Rights Activist Dr. Leslie B. McLemore.

New Stage will host a virtual question and answer session with Sharon Miles  
**Thursday, February 25 at 8:15 p.m.**

For more information and to register for these FREE events please visit [www.newstagetheatre.com](http://www.newstagetheatre.com) or our social media pages.

.....

**We’d love your feedback!**

Visit our website to fill out a survey after viewing the show to give us some valuable insights into the production.

[www.newstagetheatre.com/survey](http://www.newstagetheatre.com/survey)

**The staff of New Stage would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support to this production.**

Dawn and David Buck, Bucky and Holly Crystal, Vangela Wade—Mississippi Center for Justice