



A New Musical

Book and Lyrics by Joan Ross Sorkin
Music by Randy Klein

Jazzheads - KK7060 - 009819706028

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Jazzheads Announces Release of "Black Swan Blues - The Concept Album"

A New Blues-Infused Musical

New York, NY - Jazzheads, the NYC-based music label, proudly releases the concept album for the new musical *Black Swan Blues*, composed by Randy Klein, with book and lyrics by Joan Ross Sorkin. This album, with its blues-infused score and memorable songs, promises to captivate audiences with its story of love, racial injustice, and redemption, set in the sultry ambiance of New Orleans, 1963. "Black Swan Blues - The Concept Album" is also a giant step in the development of the musical, one that will energize its listeners to clamor for a full production.

The Journey

Recording this album turned out to be a yeoman's job. The recording was made prior to any public reading of the show, so it is a credit to the star power, energy and sheer talent of the cast, led by Christian Hoff, Lilli Cooper, Aurelia Williams, Karen Mason and Jerry Dixon. All of the vocalists bravely rehearsed and recorded the album in the summer and fall of 2021, smack in the middle of the pandemic. Special precautions were taken to isolate the soloists along with socially distancing the ensemble singers throughout the rehearsal and recording process. Countless hours were devoted to mixing the vocals and mastering the recording to create a fully integrated sound.

Selected Songs

Inspired by the story of the iconic ballet "Swan Lake," *Black Swan Blues* follows Shep Chandler, an idealistic journalist from privilege who falls in love with Ori Fontaine, a street-wise member of The Swans, a mixed-race singing group at The

Black Swan, a blues club on Bourbon Street. When the lovers meet secretly at the levee, Shep (Tony-winner Christian Hoff) and Ori (Tony-nominee Lilli Cooper) sing the very liftable love song “Anything Can Happen” with its heartfelt message of living your dream. Yet sometimes love needs a little New Orleans voodoo magic, and they get that from Papa Legba (the incomparable Jerry Dixon) who sings “That’s The Way It’s Always Been,” with its visceral R&B rhythms, with Richard Baskin, Jr. James Jackson, Jr. and Kwame Michael Remy as a tight, cool-sounding backup trio. Velvet (powerhouse Aurelia Williams), the impresario of The Black Swan, sings two knock ‘em dead numbers: “This Boy” with its haunting reverie, and “Black Makin’ Babies With White” with its pulsating rhythm that communicates the torment and heartbreak of this story about race and white privilege in America.

Shep’s racist mother, OLYMPIA, is portrayed by the eloquent Broadway and cabaret star Karen Mason who sings “If Grayson Were Here,” wishing her deceased husband could be there to guide their son Shep away from the dangerous course he has set for himself. To add a note of levity to the show, “The Kangaroo,” led by Melody Bowers (Broadway’s Jillian Louis) could spawn a new dance craze, if not here, then in Australia!

At the top of Act II, in a split scene, one of The Swans, Jasmyne (the brassy “full-of-attitude” Soara-Joye Ross) leads a fun, blues-grooved club number, “Doin’ It My Way - Do It For Love,” and Papa Legba and his Voodoo Trio follow by singing a hypnotic melody to urge Ori to follow her love. Later in the act, after Velvet’s voodoo spell has torn the lovers apart, Velvet has a nightmare, which comes to life in a colorful and powerful musical scene. “Truth Is Gonna Set You Free,” sung by the company, takes the listener from the depths of hell to Mardi Gras to the initiation of Shep into the Ku Klux Klan, and finally to the ghost of Velvet’s beloved husband Jack, who implores her to admit to the voodoo spell she placed on Ori. After a shocking plot turn at the end of the show, the company sings the final inspirational anthem, “Hope.”

Song Titles with Cast List

(songs not in show order)

1. **My Rock, My Strength, My Hero** - SHEP - Christian Hoff; OLYMPIA - Karen Mason; PAPA LEGBA - Jerry Dixon; VOODOO TRIO - Richard Baskin, Jr., James Jackson, Jr., Kwame Michael Remy; ENSEMBLE - Kayla Davion, Jonathan Long, Jillian Louis, Celeste Rose, Soara-Joye Ross, Bruce Sabath, Carla R. Stewart
2. **Anything Can Happen** - SHEP - Christian Hoff; ORI - Lilli Cooper
3. **Voodoo On You** - VELVET - Aurelia Williams; ORI - Lilli Cooper; JASMYNE - Soara-Joye Ross; MONIQUE - Kayla Davion; LILA - Carla R. Stewart; PAPA LEGBA - Jerry Dixon; J.P. - Jonathan Long
4. **A Better World** - SHEP - Christian Hoff
5. **Black Makin’ Babies With White** - VELVET - Aurelia Williams
6. **That’s The Way It’s Always Been** - PAPA LEGBA - Jerry Dixon; VOODOO TRIO - Richard Baskin, Jr., James Jackson, Jr., Kwame Michael Remy
7. **The Kangaroo** - MELODY - Jillian Louis; ENSEMBLE - Jonathan Long, Celeste Rose, Bruce Sabath
8. **This Boy** - VELVET - Aurelia Williams
9. **We’re Not The Same** - SHEP - Christian Hoff; ORI - Lilli Cooper
10. **Doin’ It My Way - Do It For Love** - JASMYNE - Soara-Joye Ross; MONIQUE - Kayla Davion; LILA - Carla R. Stewart; PAPA LEGBA - Jerry Dixon; VOODOO TRIO - Richard Baskin, Jr., James Jackson, Jr., Kwame Michael Remy; VELVET - Aurelia Williams
11. **Living’ A Lie** - ORI - Lilli Cooper; VELVET - Aurelia Williams
12. **Truth Is Gonna Set You Free** - COMPANY - Richard Baskin, Jr., Lilli Cooper, Kayla Davion, Christian Hoff, Jerry Dixon, James Jackson, Jr., Jonathan Long, Jillian Louis, Karen Mason, Celeste Rose, Kwame Michael Remy, Soara-Joye Ross, Bruce Sabath, Carla R. Stewart, Aurelia Williams
13. **If Grayson Were Here** - OLYMPIA - Karen Mason
14. **Hope** - SHEP - Christian Hoff; ORI - Lilli Cooper; PAPA LEGBA - Jerry Dixon; ENSEMBLE - Jonathan Long, Jillian Louis, Celeste Rose, Bruce Sabath
15. **Anything Can Happen (Pas de Deux)** - SOLO PIANO - Randy Klein

Past Development and A Look to the Future

“Black Swan Blues” has been developed at The BMI Musical Theatre Workshop, The York Theatre, Music Theatre of Connecticut, and through the hard work of the creative team, honing the story, the music and the entire experience of

“Black Swan Blues” for contemporary audiences to enjoy. The score, embodied in this album, is a great ambassador for the musical, and serves as a ready platform for choreography since the writers envision dance to be a huge component of the storytelling of the show. The score begs to be translated into movement, as the world of New Orleans comes alive in scenes that include a traditional Dixieland band with second-line, a Mardi Gras parade, and memorable nightclub numbers, all exuding the passion, joy and exhilaration that is found only in The Big Easy.

Discover the magic of “Black Swan Blues” by joining this unforgettable journey of hope, resilience, and the yearning for equality, as the melodies and words of this promising new show echo long after the music stops. The writers Sorkin and Klein affirm that *Black Swan Blues* should be viewed as much more than a period piece; rather it illuminates the most troubling issues of our time, and by exploring the past through the transformative power of theatre, *Black Swan Blues* serves as a rallying cry for inclusion for all, now and in the future.

Credits

Vocalists - Richard Baskin, Jr. • Lilli Cooper • Kayla Davion • Jerry Dixon • Christian Hoff • James Jackson, Jr. • Jonathan Long • Jillian Louis • Karen Mason • Celeste Rose • Kwame Michael Remy • Soara-Joye Ross • Bruce Sabbath • Carla R. Stewart • Aurelia Williams

Executive Producers - Joan Ross Sorkin and Randy Klein
Music Producer - Randy Klein

Recorded at East Side Sound, New York City
August, September and October, 2021
Track Recording Engineer - Duff Harris
Mixed by Randy Klein and Duff Harris
Mastered by Duff Harris
Piano by Steinway

The Writers

Joan Ross Sorkin (Book and Lyrics): Musicals: *Isabelle and The Pretty-Ugly Spell*: Vital Theatre, Actors’ Playhouse (Winner, National Children’s Theatre Festival), NYMF (Outstanding New Family-Oriented Musical); *Dandelion*: Playhouse on Park (7 CT Broadway World noms. and published by Dramatic Publishing); *Black Swan Blues* and *Bordello* (York readings); *Monet*: CAP21 Writer’s Residency (Florence Gould grant, French Consulate, York readings); *Go Green! Prince Charming’s Quest for Love and Ecology in NYC*: NY Children’s Theatre Festival; *In The Theatre* (York readings); *The Real McCoy*: CAP21 Blackjacks Festival, Conservatory Show; NEO (Emerging Lyricist, York). Plays: *(mis)Understanding Mammy: The Hattie McDaniel Story* (Drama Desk nom., Capathia Jenkins), Chicago Humanities Festival, Jefferson Playhouse, Schoolhouse Theater; others presented in NYC/regionally; *This Is Serious* (Best-Play-of-the-Year nom., TheaterMakers Studio). Opera: *Strange Fruit*, Long Leaf Opera, Harlem School of the Arts/NYCity Opera (concert), NYCity Opera VOX; *The Reef*: Pellicciotti Prize Finalist, Berkshire Opera Festival workshop performance; *White Witch*: Symphony Space, Salem State University, Roulette (concert). Member: Dramatists Guild, BMI Musical Theatre Workshop, ASCAP, Opera America. www.joanrosssorkin.com

Randy Klein (Music): A multi-award-winning composer, pianist, Grammy-nominated songwriter, record producer, author, and music educator. Musical genres include symphonic choral works, musical theatre, EDM, piano improvisation, jazz, R&B, documentary scores, sound painting, and songwriting. Musical Theatre works: *Black Swan Blues*, *Speak*, *Twinkle’s Fairy Pet Day*, *Fancy Nancy: Splendiferous Christmas*, *Ever Happily After*, *Flambé Dreams*, *I Don’t Do Club Dates*, *Wise Men of Chelm*. Choral works: *Fanfare For Jerusalem* – performed at The Metropolitan Opera House, NYC, King David Hall, Jerusalem; *The Margaret Walker For My People* song cycle performed by Mississippi Symphony. Numerous recordings: improvising piano, songs, duo work, cast albums, and jazz productions available worldwide. Songwriting Coach - 18 years - Nashville’s SongU.com. Randy is a longtime member of The Dramatists Guild, Advanced BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, NARAS. APME, and Alumnus, Berklee College of Music. Exclusive Steinway Artist. www.randyklein.com

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Jazzheads is very proud of “Black Swan Blues - The Concept Album” and is pleased to be part of the show’s path to success.

[For further information](#)

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