



Library podcast

Avery R Young

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[00:00:36] My name Davida Ingram. Hey it's April 26.

[00:00:40] It is bright and shiny outside and as bright and sunshiny in here.

[00:00:46] I like that too loud because this is a live podcast so that means that in normal programs when you my razor hand. What are you going to do instead.

[00:00:59] Yeah you're going to make some noise.

[00:01:03] I happened to be the public engagement programs manager at the library. Did you meet my colleague Orlando. Yeah. OK let's. We're running just a few minutes behind but connection and public engagement is important.

[00:01:17] So I'd like for you to take the next two minutes share the time one minute for one person one minute for the other person. Turn to your neighbor and talk about what the power of word means to you.

[00:01:29] Because we're going to be looking at the power of words I want you to talk to your neighbor in two minutes.

[00:01:34] And if you could talk to someone that you don't know already all the better. So what does the power of words mean to you. So we need to hear some chitter chatter.

[00:01:49] Can we bring it back to center. How did it feel to chat with folks today feel good.

[00:01:55] Now remember we're being allowed right so did it feel good. There we go.

[00:02:00] All right. So I want to say welcome to tonight's program. Avery are young Chicago native Simon. As Seattle Central Library

[00:02:15] For those who are regulars and also for folks who are new it's very important for us to acknowledge that we are on Duwamish land throughout 2018. The library is doing something that I'm really proud of. We're looking to do programming that is native led and centered and celebrating Coast Salish and urban Indian experience. By the way we are doing a survey about the types of programs and services you would like to see at the library so we can tweet out the link for the survey but if you like programs like the one we do tonight and there will be a survey so please remember to do your surveys they're important to us. But the survey allows us to figure out how to serve you better. So your voice will always matter with us so please do the paper survey for tonight's program and also the online survey and we can make sure that that link weeded out to you. Tonight's program is made possible with support from the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Do we happen to have any donors or supporters in the audience or people who are planning to make some noise make some noise for our support. And I am about to tell you a little bit more about Avery and I'm delighted because I'm from Chicago so I couldn't be more proud tonight.

[00:03:40] But I want you to keep that same warm spirited love. There's a list of community partners so if we could clap at the end because there's a great list of people who help spread the word for us. So thank you to the African-American writers alliance. You speak Seattle. That's the one exception. The youth right now. The truth right now. So you speaks voices rising. Seattle's Seattle Arts and Lectures The Central District forum for art and ideas and the University of Washington Bothell and studio revolt. And I would be incredibly remiss if I didn't I give a special thank you to a Nitta yo Ali for the work that she did to bring this program to. Is an incredible artist she's also a professor at the University of Washington Bothell and our partnership with the University of Washington has allowed us to bring in talent that quite frankly are pretty modest budget and sometimes it's hard for us to get people to come from out of town. So these strong partnerships is what helps us do relevant programming so thank you to our community partners. I feel like I have to think here

[00:04:55] And then also did I call voices rising. I feel like okay great. I just wanted to make sure I'm looking at stormy as I was like I have to make sure we said voices rising because she's done iconic work. There are. Are you ready for Averys bio. Yes. So

[00:05:12] I love how hyped this crowd is really making my day.

[00:05:16] Avery are young uses his talents to speak stories of turmoil turn to triumph dub sunday morning juke joint Yangs performances and work in sound design merges spiritual and secular aesthetics with dramatic and comedic sensibilities. Averys work is in Doc's friend with 400 years of African-American experience. He Milt's history culture art blending phonetics linguistics hymns jazz and hip hop in his work. His influences include James Brown. Nina Simone Gil Scott Heron. By examining black American history and culture his art history celebrates social justice equity queer identity and body consciousness while challenging mass media and the racism and homophobia. Yawing is a card of Covay Canham fellow with poems and essays published in the breakbeat poets Haymarket the Golden Shovel anthology.

[00:06:24] You should also ask the library if we are hearing these in our collection because you can request that in us said Wilczek and also featured an award winning photographer Cecil McDonalds in the company of Black is sound design project called the colored signs explores myriad concrete poetry forms.

[00:06:43] In his new full length release Booker T.

[00:06:48] Solah train or race Rickett. Did I get that right.

[00:06:52] Soul Train. Thank you. I was like some tells me I didn't say that correctly and I know how to say Saltspring correctly so I had to fix that was created during his artist residency with the University of Chicago's Arts and Public Life Initiative.

[00:07:05] He now performs in tours with his band the deed. Let me get this right. The deacon board is a coast for the rebirth youth poetry ensemble. Without further ado let's make sure his mike is on. And Avery you're welcome to use that Mike over there. Let's welcome Avery are young

[00:07:32] You made me feel so important.

[00:07:38] Truly grateful and thankful to be here with you all this evening. I am having a good time with family my Davis Veeder VITTA either eat eat or

[00:07:56] Is in the village of stories in the building. Thank you again.

[00:07:59] As to the overvote master mining this master plan I am here as an artist in residence and the I've been teaching classes we do have some Pommies trying to get the people lives they know what the and filming short film. And I'm very happy and excited about Saturday at noon.

[00:08:42] Over in Tacoma where I would love to see all of you all here tonight with us as we Ilma for peace. Emmett Till remains. You that. You they and they what they at. As fast uncles. You A. When they brought them to is this is this is this is this is. This is this is this

[00:10:46] Is this is what you say.

[00:10:52] Well they name led them to the bar.

[00:10:58] Are you there. Well you there when they led them to the bar.

[00:11:04] Were you there when they picked up a breaking play touch down with them. They were you they may pick up a brick and play touch down with them.

[00:11:15] Oh were you then when they took the Fennville tied around a stake in tormenter rather.

[00:11:22] Why is that. Well it's been built around a second storm in a region where the body weight of water all night long.

[00:11:35] Well you then there film Body way all night long. Well you GM by the way

[00:11:49] All night long will you they let you spell them by the way.

[00:11:55] No warning them all day long but we're using you they will when I got a call.

[00:12:05] Are you.

[00:12:06] Well you when Momma got the call they got they got it.

[00:12:15] They got in May. They got they got in.

[00:12:20] They got in. That's why. They got him

[00:12:28] That way. But they show. You. When. They show up. Make sure. To go. What. You

[00:12:51] Got. We can and me. Well. You

[00:12:57] See all dressed in black. What

[00:13:00] Were you there. Justin. Says. She

[00:13:19] Says a fake blue. Why. Were you there. When that white boy

[00:13:26] Back down with him it done. What are you there. Why are you

[00:13:31] Here. Why. Well done. Hey. I got a nigga. Got a nigga. Got. A green. Nigger. Nigger Nigger. Nigger nigger. Little

[00:13:49] White women why you that.

[00:13:55] When the jury came back and said Not guilty. Where are you you they when the jury came back said not guilty all law. Do. Not tell

[00:14:27] Me.

[00:15:11] Very smart.

[00:15:12] Oh of. Oh. Raul. Oh.

[00:15:38] Miriam. Oh girls oh yeah. Bury My holds with baby girls. All. Right. There we go with baby girl. RAZ boy came in

[00:15:59] On the moderate list. We hit a white hey Jim live we head of white and dream

[00:16:20] We head of. And was dancing to. Also was

[00:16:30] So narrow we don't know that none.

[00:16:37] I've owned a share and just enjoy it say oh let them get into you life so that when you live in.

[00:17:08] Very close. Hello.

[00:17:21] Scribal 3 0 0 0. Carpel still. Saenuri

[00:17:47] To notice me. Walking down.

[00:17:53] You say black boring Blackboy. What are you doing on my stream.

[00:18:00] I didn't come here to bother nobody. I just came here to see my law.

[00:18:07] All law and deed law. Just let me get to the Dhobley as they want to know what claim in watch

[00:18:21] One is Guy Blackboy.

[00:18:25] Why are you standing there seeing him.

[00:18:28] Shouldn't you use this time around Saenuri to watch three beat me down on her stree she said all that she say.

[00:18:44] Won't you please go call the polling. I come here to bother nobody. I just came here to see my love.

[00:18:56] Oh God dear God don't let these fools kill me. Essaying just kick in and stay in once in my while it

[00:19:10] One took my key one said Hold it home. Stop it Hall nigger teaches us poetry

[00:19:46] 1884 song is released as the leading song on the soundtrack to a movie called Footloose and The Song is a song that is recorded sorry written and produced by Julius.

[00:20:05] And there's a quarter by young lady of our name with the nice Williams and the song is let's hear it for the bully and I just really like this song.

[00:20:19] And one time I was in the gangway.

[00:20:22] So in Chicago there you see it is called gangways which is just basically spaces in between homes that get you from the front yard to the back yard or maybe the side door is I have no idea why they call it a gangways I research it I'll get back to you later. Why is it called the gangway as opposed to the side of the house.

[00:20:46] The in-between I don't really where the gangway and I'm singing I'm singing the song. Let's hear the boy and my uncle who is like Hey why you sing in a and I was like

[00:21:05] What you mean. Well I'm thinking of the song on the radio.

[00:21:09] I was like boys don't sing that song. And I was like wow boys don't sing that song. Said boys just don't sing that song. Waits don't say here for me.

[00:21:19] And I didn't know what it meant.

[00:21:22] Then you know I was just like a vote you know like what in the movie Kevin Bacon is really dancing.

[00:21:37] She's a cheerleader. You know. He's like singing so I would say this I want to take this opportunity to sing the song and I sing the song. Because

[00:21:54] I'm a grown up. Not singing Hey my baby don't talk Suy.

[00:22:07] He ain't got much to say.

[00:22:15] Oh my baby. Don't talk sweetie.

[00:22:21] Main much to say my baby don't talk see the guy.

[00:22:36] Much to say but I'm in love and LOL BYE.

[00:22:49] He loves him.

[00:22:58] And maybe you don't address fire.

[00:23:04] I don't really know.

[00:23:10] Listen to me.

[00:23:19] Oh yes. Let's hear it from my boss

[00:23:31] Asking that both hands.

[00:23:37] Oh let's hear from baybay. You know you got gotta stay.

[00:23:50] Oh maybe I'm no Romeoville but the Wii the one man show. Let's hear it for Bolla.

[00:24:19] Hey my baby may not be.

[00:24:28] But why.

[00:24:34] Oh I swear my baby got no mine.

[00:24:42] So we'll watch your dad now at home store.

[00:24:52] They ain't got no money. So watch it live at home.

[00:25:02] Oh Ty Jones him.

[00:25:07] Men love me.

[00:25:09] We always have a really good at home.

[00:25:18] I swear. What he does he does so away may see me.

[00:25:41] Hey I don't know.

[00:25:47] Let's hear it. My

[00:25:50] Baby. No you guys stay.

[00:25:58] Oh oh.

[00:26:03] Maybe him no wrong. VO que him.

[00:26:11] Love that show. Let's hear it for town.

[00:26:19] Oh well hey ho let's be real for ball mom and my mom should go with the mambo and y'all want hear about Progresa hours.

[00:26:49] That show and I did the song right. And he was in the band. This is

[00:27:15] Me. Look what you do.

[00:27:25] He was painted Hallenbeck that I sure love painted on the order of a blues record. Blues Record at and that's good

[00:27:38] Enough. That's crazy right.

[00:27:43] I grew up on the West as cargo and I was the splain and so I've been at schools at that school schools but Lincoln Heights which is in a coma. And. And I could see it reminded me of the grassy

[00:28:06] Grassy yes yes yes the grassy grassy Junior High. Everybody was something to take your money and never give up.

[00:28:18] Ok I'll show my age right now.

[00:28:20] But the head Drake was somebody the phone he was Treyc babywearing there was Sopwith explaining to the folk how and why I am writing poems and what art what I will call it poems and what I've decided to do with the poetry is not restrict myself with the material right.

[00:28:55] I wouldn't desire to restrict myself with the materials of paper ink.

[00:29:02] I decided to use voice use body wisdom tape whatever it is and express myself just like I don't want to write a poem.

[00:29:13] Take this piece of wood writing it and so is always a good material and userspace as material everything is material.

[00:29:25] Anyway so I'm in third grade and appellant's in the spelling sense. And I ours. I'm sorry you a couple hours of hours and the I get hundred on the says what's happening in this classroom is that when you just scores on a test whatever score you get as it gets a star and the star has a certain number of points at the end at the end of the school year the teacher added up all the points and then the person with the most points got a prize which was a candy bar which I still didn't like because it was

[00:30:11] The candy bar was melted like a piece of shit. Because what you don't is what I get

[00:30:21] You don't have enough sense to go to the store this morning. And give me a candy bar and chocolate milk right now.

[00:30:36] Idiolect about so this particular situation or this particular test I had up until this time myself and this young lady the other white a white student not another white so no way.

[00:30:51] But she says that she and I were running like neck and neck but instead she failed miserably I got 100.

[00:31:02] So that put me in front of her. So I was like Ah I'm pretty

[00:31:07] I. Your life is abysmal right now. You know me I'm winning and

[00:31:19] She saw to cry and the teacher was like What is wrong.

[00:31:26] Why are you crying. And she was like making fun of me. And she was like don't cry.

[00:31:38] Averys me the dirt and you're made of Saint what are you talking about Willis.

[00:31:53] In all I read is that she called me dirty and I was like and I was like oh my mommy daddy daddy home Mommy Daddy Daddy see no better than me.

[00:32:07] I'm the one with the hundred and she said go to the office.

[00:32:15] I got to the office to get 900 on my so I go to the office because I'm like OK this is what they do here at the school they say and the children want hundreds to the office of the principal office.

[00:32:29] I guess it runs off as I get him a letter that you gave me you know and he looks at the letter reads the letter and he calls my mother not yet understand big mama had already gave me the rule the first day of school. She said do not have these white people called my house

[00:32:48] And say you have a nice day. She has say look both ways across the street. She knew it was much more dangerous when I told you how you have to go

[00:33:04] So they called it and they said it will say it to her it's quite unfortunate to have to call you to let you know that Averys did speak appropriately you're in class he is talking about. He's talking about sexual intercourse and intercourse.

[00:33:22] What's that I say six months I said did it. And I

[00:33:34] I can't spell sexual intercourse. What's going on.

[00:33:40] And in the end.

[00:33:43] So as the story goes I go home and I get in trouble.

[00:33:48] And then I decided I'm going to write a poem but write this form and this poem and I will write this poem. And this one is going to be about how I'm black and I'm not dirty and I'm just like don't read FUF feel.

[00:34:02] You don't like I was like like Zebra Katz.

[00:34:10] Marina MARINA Marie. Marie. Marie. Marie. Yes I am going to you up and down when I get to school the next day.

[00:34:20] So I get to school next day.

[00:34:22] I said I have a apartment I would like to read. And she was like OK go ahead Avery read the poem and I'm reading Nepal at the end of the and she was like That's beautiful oh

[00:34:43] It was not supposed to happen. You're supposed to start crying. About the

[00:34:59] You wrote a and made me cry. You know how very she was.

[00:35:07] Oh that is beautiful. Did you write that all by yourself. I'm with I guess I did.

[00:35:13] But as you were all supposed to not like it you're supposed to be offended. You know I had some private moment so

[00:35:27] Right.

[00:35:31] She just threw in my poems and stories in a contest. And I was when they get the medals and I was like Wait hold up so if I could show as out my rhyme with the you'll let me cut you out

[00:35:50] Basically. Yeah. Basically yeah I'm like OK

[00:35:56] I could do this shit.

[00:36:00] Cabela and this theory right now Palombo and is still rank near porn.

[00:36:11] I had been let go of trying to make a crack because she did.

[00:36:18] I haven't wrote the poem it's the point that's gone make white women all of it away from because we didn't know them sales Firedoglake and B to stop.

[00:36:34] That's not my goal at all. It didn't work. First time I really like it.

[00:36:39] I learned my lesson. You know I have.

[00:36:47] I was working. I am what I did. I finished working on a book when I was working on a book the summer.

[00:36:52] I was I had fooled myself that I was gonna write this book and I was going to be about black men in America and I'm going to print you know but my editor was like Hey I went to work I laid on the flow. They had all out of running.

[00:37:10] Make to start making the decisions and then when I made the poll was out on the floor I looked out way about me why did I think I was going to write a book.

[00:37:34] Paintings about being black in America and it not be about me. I'm an expert

[00:37:42] On makes the black dude since June 26 1974.

[00:37:53] So I'm figuring it and I'm looking at it and I was like I had to give myself permission because I mean you are teaching kids in black and brown kids what long time and I've always felt like when I was writing cause I was writing the pause for their so that they feel good about being an black and brown and and understand that that they can know that poetry and art didn't mean they had to question anything about their ads to does it and make them theirs. It didn't make them that all they did was make them keepers of their humanity.

[00:38:48] Right.

[00:38:50] You know because I grew up from the west as Chicago you know into many black boys Amy Avery single in a gang way here for my boy. Right and he wrote me white women regret that it happened to all

[00:39:14] Of up at a joint. Right. And it was something about those words being in front of me that

[00:39:27] I was like wow that little boy in very gray Bybee's pongs am again and I also was happy because the audience is not the White one.

[00:39:44] Right. Told him not to get off the plane. The audience that joined me I had to remind myself that I am alive and in my lap because I was loved like

[00:40:03] I'm alive because I spoke to myself that day when she told me I was made out of on No I'm not gold pure gold.

[00:40:17] Come on now I'll go pure gold. That's what I hear. This. All. Moment. Yesterday. And. This. Has

[00:40:41] Worked. I'm so excited.

[00:40:46] I figured it out. And in a word. And I'm like.

[00:40:50] And I'm glad to be here at this moment. And as a patrol I'm going to do another piece and then I will bring my friends to me.

[00:40:57] We're going to talk some. That's all I. Think. Now. This. This within this. Warm within this. Is Onoe we'll have to do the HIMYM Gamay they call dirty because of this issue. Of a knitter they'll call a dirty warm if you ever get any issue. The. Issue with. New or her

[00:43:15] Nasty Hanby they all put Joe hanging gold. And don't worry

[00:43:55] Make it go away. That's what she'll go say back home. Way too long. I want to say. I want to say

[00:44:15] I can't see her right now.

[00:44:21] Oh I can see her right now.

[00:44:27] I can see her. Oh. I

[00:44:33] See right now. She will say. She. Could for. It. I can see her

[00:45:18] Oh that's it. No you of him. He. Said. He said stop some bad

[00:45:39] Weather.

[00:45:43] So many people who heard you get outside to the black. So many people say they see your race the.

[00:45:53] These people these people make the late.

[00:46:00] These people don't get death. So I'm sure somebody. Gets to. Hear

[00:46:17] Him say no no. I mean somebody turns to me. You don't know this thing and somebody just maybe. Somebody put something in me. To get something out of

[00:46:58] Nancy. The significance of that particular mayor was that the agency within her had all the stories split up from the as it was called for this particular situation. She knew that the power was not any with the power the ticket issue of blood Hagenow that's why that's like my favorite Myracle because the power is

[00:47:53] Everywhere young everybody.

[00:48:17] All right we're just Halvey formal for a second because it's a podcast and I'm excited that we have Avery with all of his splendor in conversation with a local artist. Stormy weather stormy as a poet an interdisciplinary artist an absolutely ferocious. She creates blues inflected socially engaged text installations and images. She also recently had a very gorgeous exhibition at the Art Museum called Cassino a palimpsest when a local critic said that Cassino considered the intangible properties by which art and poetry are connected to family ancestry language and public memory revealing intergenerational underground histories of resilience so you can see already she and Avery are about to have an amazing conversation. We have about 30 to 40 minutes for them to take the floor and take us wherever they want to go. If we're really good we'll have space to have probably about two or three questions at the end. If you love this program you can also use social media. Tag the library on Twitter at SPL buzz and you can use our hash tag for tonight. Avery are young SPL s and Seattleism and public Ellen as in library and Stormie and Avery. Whenever you're ready.

[00:49:44] Hey how are you doing stalling.

[00:49:47] That's why we are stormy stormy. Is this working. Yes. Is this thing on its side. As

[00:49:56] I have said the red I'm trying to gather myself back together. That's what did you do with your life because

[00:50:06] Oh my goodness you know I really do have to come back to reality must I know you'll have to come back.

[00:50:15] You don't have to come back. Oh my gosh. So sometimes I just want to say what a blessing.

[00:50:22] What a blessing.

[00:50:24] Is so much right now I don't know about you but it makes it difficult to be fully in this world. And so I could catch myself and I like come back and maybe just

[00:50:40] You know brought me back.

[00:50:44] And you know that's some serious medicine right there. So I met Avery about seven years ago. I'm proud to say I brought Avery to Seattle to perform with mommy watch who they had met one another and was like queer writers

[00:51:04] Yes I'm sorry. I was I was trying to think yes I was trying to do something but not on them like oh they don't kill me.

[00:51:14] Someone else will kill me if I don't know the name of the book. It is.

[00:51:19] It was the book confidence that leads to more desire and I side.

[00:51:24] Come on now if you. Don't let us don't be like them to people remember that movie about the man who wrote precious Lord take my hand.

[00:51:32] Yeah. Man somebody so people they go way back to.

[00:51:38] It was 19. You wouldn't

[00:51:41] Know what you're going to get. Yes.

[00:51:46] No. Can I just say so.

[00:51:48] So I'm really fighting that fire and ice fire fire fire fire.

[00:52:01] I'm so glad you said fire that I stay. I was like that's a chainsaw.

[00:52:08] Fire divided by the dog.

[00:52:13] Yes it is game of thrones. We get together.

[00:52:16] You know Coach we're driving now. I just have to say so I just your performance is so remarkable. OK.

[00:52:25] You know and it's so unique and in seven years ago we were at the little church out there in Columbia City. I forget what it's called now but that's where we perform.

[00:52:35] And I hadn't seen anyone do what he does.

[00:52:39] You know he's across to me like you're so you're so in that you're in the black tradition you know in the sacred black tradition of preachers and preachers saying this isn't my experience but this is what I've studied as I study my culture and medicine people because it's medicine what you're doing. So I guess I would just like to begin by asking you to just share a little bit with us about the ways in which you consciously work with these ancestral energies. You know these wisdoms and this is also something that Devita had ask about you know in this time. I find it so strengthening to reflect upon the power of our ancestors and I feel as though that we have that in common with our work and that the native medicine people have a thing they say and when they pray and I don't mean to be facetious to not know which nation says this but it is something that I read where they would say please let me be a hollow bone.

[00:53:47] And I feel as though you are a hollow poem you are able to stand aside somehow from your from your ego and allow the spirits to come through you. And I'd like to know a bit about how you got how you found that how you came to think you want to say it's good it's all good.

[00:54:09] I mean I always I mean I say I that a lot today with the with the kids the the poem just wants to be heard.

[00:54:19] Right.

[00:54:22] And so that the poem is very real unconcern of your fear. And the and of your adjective.

[00:54:34] It wants to be heard and your service to the bomb so a lot of folks here so I always believed that my work is I'm in service right.

[00:54:52] And that's like a double entendre.

[00:54:56] Right. That the work is service. But the work should be a service. Right. And that ways in which it comes out is just really just two years of me trying to figure out or being fascinated with the with the black preacher who would take the story from the King James book with all those leads in Dial's half is and put words in his or her bomb you know and watching the minister do that and then watch the reaction of the congregation. Right. Who needs that right. Because in the space of the spaces of America where black folk are really allowed to see their bodies to dance love and spiritual practice. Which is really crazy because all those three spaces are so oppressive the places in which they practice these faith can be under the umbrella of these things can be extremely oppressive. Right. But these spaces that the advocacy is there by the ownership of their body found the most right.

[00:56:41] When you get into this country when you come to this country and nothing of you know limb belongs to you you know juicy belongs to you.

[00:56:56] Danson belongs to you.

[00:56:59] Praise belongs to you especially Yagyū and the system that says you have no soul. You know I'm going to tell you who the Jews I'm I'll tell you what the Jews know niggas dancer. Foolery. There's no construct to it. They just move and they just flap and way way the bell and so all had to be discarded.

[00:57:43] The whiteness right until it makes somebody some money right.

[00:57:54] And for us to own and for that PRISA that Minister for those people for those people who come to church on Sunday morning to load the week and trust whoever that is is going to help them rejuvenate for the next seven days.

[00:58:13] I always thought that was amazing. I was found it really interesting. I never thought the game when I was writing poems that I ought to be writing sermons anything of that nature until I got to James Weldon Johnson I and I was like oh this creation.

[00:58:35] And then I was like I was doing it on what I read back in them don't put it that story in place and then let the it from your bomb right.

[00:58:45] So when you say how bomb I'm like Okay cool I received that so I recognize the story is through me and I recognize that and I recognize that every thing I carry every thing with me right. When I'm telling that story because I wanted to do that work you have to enter the space as your whole self right. And I was I guess I've never when hate when you tell a boy during the day you know your mom and dad did he got some type of compassion for like Thompson.

[00:59:28] Right.

[00:59:29] And and I always do.

[00:59:32] This is the honor right do with his father.

[00:59:37] And I know the work of their ancestors right is to guide and carry so they must be because they don't move out the way and let them do what they gotta do.

[00:59:56] If I did it wouldn't happen no mo. You said if I did if I didn't. If I wasn't if I wasn't honoring them or honoring the story right. It would mean they wouldn't come to me and they wouldn't come like that right. You know there is it this way and I feel like again I'm in service to the peace. It's always about it's always about the peace.

[01:00:29] And I'm like you and I just I just have this inclination that the route to the two poing people I'm just I just hope come out of here.

[01:00:45] Warm souls love them all. All that because of it it takes all of that to take all of that to even get the you know I think it's true.

[01:01:00] No I feel that this show I did last year was just like an ancestor residency of almost 50 pictures of my relatives in a room with an altar and a bunch of other things were going on there as well. When I first began to work with those photographs I was going to show them the first time I went to show them was NBC at the queer arts fest and I was going to put them up and I had to go buy lace to cover them at that point because I wasn't ready just to put them out there like that and then leave them and be in Vancouver and come back and it came to me as I was walking to go get the days.

[01:01:30] It's like they said to me ancestors have rights too you know. And I had to when I before I did this show last year I had to have a conversation with them and say Is this OK.

[01:01:40] Is this something that you want to and I totally concur with you. If if they don't want you to do it you can. But obviously you're doing. You are doing their work. And I feel it's so holy too because Fran Liebowitz said a funny thing when she said take away I think you could add you could add and

different people would like take away the indigenous people the black people the immigrants from this country and you have let's make a deal and you don't say

[01:02:08] You have let's make a deal. No for real. So so you know so like all these racists in this country take away black people from this country what are you. Are you kidding me. What in the world. What would you what would you want with that world. You know.

[01:02:24] And so by you by you reminding us of this power like this Mobey guy he took he took something. I would like to see you go back to those recordings that Moby got to work with.

[01:02:35] Remember that song.

[01:02:38] Well we we it all home home home home home.

[01:02:45] That one for you go give them records. Avery go make with that because this is this is a national treasure.

[01:02:55] You know if you want to get black people out of this country you're saying Tara the soul out of this country and leave us here in the dust. That's what racism is. You really ready for that.

[01:03:06] You know so anybody that doesn't agree with that. No matter your where you come from.

[01:03:10] You've got to step up now. You got to step on this man.

[01:03:16] He's a white man too. God bless him and he said you know Nazis marched last weekend when you're in the country and Nazis aren't afraid and black people are afraid.

[01:03:26] You better wake the fuck up. The thing is this one two U.S. soldiers. The Nazis were Nazis and the police are defending the Nazis from antima didn't kill nobody.

[01:03:41] The Nazis killed people in this country in so men that can't get no women to sleep with them. What the hell is that.

[01:03:48] What the hell is that. What happened to me. Listen here. There's always been men that didn't get couldn't get women. That's why their sex workers baby like you know something was wrong with you. Best of. Luck. Out

[01:04:09] There. Let me get back to my

[01:04:15] Notes. So. What's on my mind. I don't know what won't go into step right up.

[01:04:34] If we don't go to the bathroom go do you have a bathroom. OK. OK. Oh

[01:04:46] Ok here we go. Here we go. OK. So let me see let me see self defense as a form of intelligence your process.

[01:04:54] The paradox of the blues aesthetic speaking. You consider yourself a blues island just like you. You go I say I'm a preacher who of the blues man who prays

[01:05:07] That's the song. And he put his whole. Right. And that's why I'm definitely.

[01:05:14] And you know that's why Bobby Gill called several Blues out because he said that it was narrative that he was telling stories.

[01:05:21] So I definitely am inclined to say that yes I'm a Blues ologist just like Bob Gill right.

[01:05:32] What makes him or what I always like him. Babic Geel into his work was how complete his work was right. You have

[01:05:50] The same pull with the who are right. No not the famed poet who wrote the revolution not the Taliban.

[01:05:57] But it the same point Covay who wrote about his daughter wrote letters his daughter is just like Baba Oscar Brown right. They were completely right.

[01:06:10] It's a lot of times when especially since we were coming up with the fiftieth anniversary of the Black Panthers a lot of that lot of that those images of those panthers are just these star solid so to join.

[01:06:32] You know you know and you don't get one of my favorites that Malcolm X of a picture of him laughing are my favorite images of Malcolm X or the picture of him smiling and laughing because it was because it was.

[01:06:56] And people don't know how many women and I understand that most of the Panthers were women but they they would they would come all night. And obviously the men and the women had to have Warner Brothers to play their part in them.

[01:07:12] But that's a whole other conversation to the brothers played a part in that too right.

[01:07:16] I got to see mama.

[01:07:18] Kathleen Cleaver at the University of Chicago right.

[01:07:26] And she spoke to the work in which the women did it. I mean culturally culturally when I think about church I think about the demographics at church right. I've never been in a church where I was born me and me and outnumbered the women and there's a lot of gay brothers right.

[01:07:59] This is where I'm taking my tea.

[01:08:01] That's where I see my teeth. Yeah in front and behind the pulpit.

[01:08:12] But again you know that's the master.

[01:08:16] That is the debt is a problem that's the complication of institution right.

[01:08:30] I will I will use your service but I don't want to hear your voice right.

[01:08:39] And that's that's what institution does. OK. You ok. As long as you direct them to quiet

[01:08:47] Don't walk into the motherfucking next Sunday with your boyfriend.

[01:08:52] Don't do they don't do that.

[01:08:57] That's died of service here. Right. So it's it's it's it's it is. It has always been amazing to me the way in which it which is very much. Hope that a lot of queer folk come out sadly especially in the context of what we are talking about because our black folk fight for liberation in this country has always been on the backs of its LGBT brothers and sisters.

[01:09:35] Rustin come on now by arrest. Does anybody know who Bayard Rustin was. Can you can you speak by arresting weighs civil rights leader.

[01:09:49] Grave humanitarian. He basically organized the march on Washington.

[01:09:59] And he was.

[01:10:04] Dr. King is in Memphis favor of buyer right. At the time of the assassination you know why of course it was so vague. We need you to come talk come down and deal with the sanitation workers.

[01:10:18] And he had to really also understand too why there was such a thing ever because sanitation workers when a big story right when you're talking about this do five years prior lay folk to the Washington Monument right and go sit and talk about what's going on with the sanitation workers.

[01:10:45] Over here Memphis. So that was a very big ask but there was there was a buyer's understanding of liberation that nothing was big or small that if one is oppressed and all is oppressed before people knew what intersectionality was he was really living it out.

[01:11:07] Really he was. Yeah. And he went because he had he had been a communist a socialist when he was just a young man and he had worked for so many different organizations and come up to work with Dr. King actually. I understand he went to and he was me out

[01:11:26] There to stand out the courage the courage.

[01:11:32] I'm inspired by the strength that arises in people when they've been through things.

[01:11:38] You know I'm inspired by that a lot. And I thought of that as well.

[01:11:43] And when you perform and also the tradition of our artist being activists Gil Scott Heron Aretha Franklin was going to pay Angela Davis bail.

[01:11:53] People don't know this but she said I'll pay her bail when Angie was in under the possibility of being put to death.

[01:12:07] Audrey Lord Pat Parker Pat Parker asado Sains Donald Woods BlackBerry Ryan. I see you very much.

[01:12:14] Essex Hemphill in that line in that tradition carrying them forward.

[01:12:19] We lost a lot of those people during the AIDS crisis.

[01:12:23] Yeah. I mean my thing is I'm coming from a tradition and our black folk art.

[01:12:30] Right. Well to advocate our humanity. So Nina Simone who's very funny to me. You know I'm a classical pianist you know and that was it wasn't my mother Lorraine Hansberry.

[01:12:46] I was like No I know time being a classical pianist. Wow I didn't know that.

[01:12:53] Just do that just do that.

[01:12:56] What that's just been and you singing Strange Fruit the way you singing Strange Fruit. Were you singing I love Porgy the way you singing I love you. You just came down Bob. As a pianist. Right. And that she again wasn't necessarily her. She was right to do that but it was Lorraine Hansberry who convinced Yeah yeah you know you got work to do right. You can do the Pops Staples right. And La MaMa Mavis.

[01:13:43] And then they had Ben-Haim unifying folk and fortified folk and galvanized folk to the music they understood that this was what they were doing right.

[01:13:58] And it is and it's not. I mean it's muscle memory right. We didn't get to the cotton fields without humming and rocking. We said we were the Copperfield's new we went in the kitchen of new

we went on the train tracks the. Him all the way through all the way through with all his muscle memory. To me this is my practice and this is actually what I would say.

[01:14:42] I don't know how you figure that. All right.

[01:14:46] And a way of acting I can't figure how you think you can do that.

[01:14:54] You know Amy I like to think of any it doesn't have. I mean it's up to the artist to say this is what they're doing or not doing but asking me how can I not feel like that.

[01:15:14] My art is at the Vaishnav just to just to feel just to feel.

[01:15:22] I think it's the profoundness in this culture at this moment. Just to feel because it's such an overwhelming at times experience. And to feel those roots those roots of power. I would just like to say that I think it's so important that you are teaching a large part of your practice is teaching so you're bringing this to the young people so it's not lost it's you know it's it's a superpower and you're giving them different images of how to be a man.

[01:15:54] Right. And how to be a queer black man and yourself and a creator. And I would just like to ask a final question for you if you would have could have anything you wanted your ideal your ideal situation as yourself as your creative self. What would it be.

[01:16:15] I am really trying to get myself in a place where I can live more like Jay boogie and Jay. I mean bad grain's following you know go somewhere over the seas. Kim Beazley. The

[01:16:35] You know come on am an art right.

[01:16:46] And because I'm also just teasing it's been a way to make sure that I'm not I'm not on the streets or in a cardboard box but I definitely see or love the idea or the aspect or the robbery sentence about myself.

[01:17:07] When I was like you know grammar school the idea I was just kind of living the life as James Baldwin and Nina Simone and Josephine Baker which was just as an international citizen right.

[01:17:20] That's that's my deal. That's the question. National or International Citizen traveler Mager you can figure out my black boum is enhanced in spaces and see what it does. Right. See how that space informs what's coming out of my black box right.

[01:17:46] So let it be. All right. Is we're just some questions from you are we're going to pass by.

[01:17:53] We'll pass the mike around. This has been in response to Una.

[01:18:03] Hi thank you.

[01:18:04] I was just wondering sir can you.

[01:18:09] I was just wondering if you could speak a little bit to your recorded music. I love the sound of all of your vocals but also of your band and I can tell you've put a lot of thought into not only instrumentation but just like the sonic fabric of your music.

[01:18:31] And I was just wondering if you could speak to Yeah the music for me was an art it was a part of the program my artist in residence program.

[01:18:47] So sound design on.

[01:18:54] I am a very keen to those low backs recordings.

[01:19:07] Those the sound of that am down Sunday night church broadcasts.

[01:19:18] Well it sounds like you don't workers.

[01:19:28] So a lot of it was me wanting to implement that.

[01:19:35] You know just put a little bit more grease on my ears.

[01:19:37] Boy you got some Kriesel Colette's.

[01:19:40] It is so so very very intentional to add those things because you know I'm very partial to those dial nights nice church broadcast and they had like everything is my Chris and clear right. There's some level of distortion. To anything in it I think it also makes you listen harder. Right. It was just Monday. The set design is over at the school where they had the bricks with the names of a lot of folks who had been murdered by the police and that the decision to write these names in Council as opposed some or use flannelette lettering was very intentional by the art part of the students in the art department because as one audience member pointed out it requires you to walk to what I call the altar. It required you to walk to the altar as opposed to being able to it be an easy thing to do to sit back and recognize the day that you had to walk to the brig and engage to break in order to recognize the man which is to me as is which to me. And it was powerful so those that added sound that I have. And I'm always trying to do some type thing I'm crate Ty Cartier's is a sound engineer and he always thinks I'm crazy I say wait a minute let me go outside and record the dog you like. He's like well take a microphone and say. I'm recording off my phone and then I will use the microphone and put the microphone in here and I'm playing it in the other room don't catch it. Like

[01:21:50] That. I don't want the dog to sound like the bass

[01:22:00] But without it all if you put the phone over here and put the mike in there and I'm like so I like the basement as opposed to you know wherever else or where but either way it go you know stuff like that you know there's a song called Road and it was just like house.

[01:22:27] We had recorded a song like oh shit ain't no drums. And the song so fuck it

[01:22:37] I got a. I went to the store and bought a clothesline. Come on now.

[01:22:44] Come on now. And I just. Closed. Clotheslined they'll go to drum

[01:23:03] Next question. Both sounds exciting right. Well sounds exciting so. Look at you

[01:23:13] Guess any other OK so thank you.

[01:23:23] Thank you for sharing your soul. Thank you. And your enthusiasm. I am amazed by your ability to conjure up the confidence at the age you were at to understand that you weren't dirt at that age. Your teacher saying oh your teacher saying that you know she's Sange or dirt right. And you know Winningham like does it come from ancestors.

[01:24:00] Grace you said something about you personally.

[01:24:04] All that. All of us. OK so so when I was born my feet were like upside down. And the doctors told my big mama are you not going to walk. And then I started walking and then they was like what you need to cut his feet off and she was like for what he was.

[01:24:34] Go go go. So that joy in my bones forever.

[01:24:41] That that dad that I will pop a little harder. Go tell me I came home.

[01:24:46] Do we do a little harder that my uncle had already had the at that point when I was a kid or he had already had the mommies and daddies to talk. Right.

[01:25:07] So I really knew I just wasn't made of dirt. I was I was informed with that too and I just I can't had enough gumption.

[01:25:15] To speak at that at that age. But you will be surprised.

[01:25:21] I mean I work with third grade and for what they say you'll be surprised with second and second this right here. I'm the street level and you'll be surprised when her spirit is bold enough to announce right is there.

[01:25:43] You know it's just you know like I said it but I've seen what you're speaking to. I've seen somebody's been told it was dirty and ate. And indeed the reverse right.

[01:25:59] It defeated them but I was just like it was on two sides and so on. Is that true. You know that was you know that was.

[01:26:08] But those things are came on to me or that spirit inside me.

[01:26:16] Wait wait wait wait. This one right here.

[01:26:23] Here we go.

[01:26:25] Hi and thank you for all of your energy. I definitely needed it today actually. So thank you for all that I wanted. I wanted to ask you a little bit. Could you talk a little bit more about your art and how it is an active service. Have you always known that it was an act of service as an artist sometimes I feel that it being my own personal therapy that sometimes it's seen as selfish you know when as a as a woman of color I feel like any time I stand up and do what I want to do wholeheartedly always seen as being selfish. You know when did you know wholeheartedly that you what you were doing was for everyone to be women must serve first started reading poems and a space in Chicago called it X right and lit X and that art is like a mirror.

[01:27:26] We were just we were what we would do when we were babies. And you know so it was just like we were spaces where the poetry the politics coexist. It was separate right. The the person that was leading the to me March was also a poet.

[01:27:51] So we learned about me freedom me a march at the poetry reading. And so now we are with our homies because we like free will me right. And I'm 20 it I matter what my day life. Right. What else. And I mean was it worth seeing. I mean that answer your question it was me and it was the me as an artist. As a younger person as an 8 year old with self all about self care which I think is what you are talking about right. Totally self care right. I wrote that poem because the woman had said something that she that was designed to make you feel bad about myself something that I'm going to write this poem to let her know you can't do that to me. Right. So I'm going to write these things and read them all create these poems are my shield of protection. So as a younger person that was total self care.

[01:29:02] But when I became more active with the poetry community everybody that I knew that was signing the open mike.

[01:29:13] Liz and the video you can attest to this is Chicago where people who were active in the community and political Well I mean the countless dinners we've had you know sitting up discussing what we don't do right and not you don't Porgie workshops right.

[01:29:39] Countless millions of artists came together to say what are we going to do.

[01:29:46] Right. That's not that has nothing to do with writing a poem or singing a song or playing on the guitar.

[01:29:51] Be the draw.

[01:29:52] What are we going to do. That weighs 96 97 98. So my dad that that was just my entry in and I didn't think that Nelse of it right. Other than just two to do it and again not necessary.

[01:30:13] But I'm also like get up into that point and love Aqeel Sky area and say it loud I'm black and I'm proud right. I'm in love when I'm in love with me the most black his moment in history is Aretha Franklin screaming

[01:30:35] Black or White. Oh. She did that she made. And this is like being young black

[01:30:55] And where we were when I was little was singing this song and it seems to be like I said I won't kill. Yes thank you Jesus.

[01:31:06] Right now everybody would laugh because you know that was coming for years. So yeah when I came in adult I got involved in the Porgie community. That was it was just hand in hand it was no way of escaping it. Right. That's why I went you see to see the Malcolm Lundy's and the Crips gang of and the and the chance of rappers and their involvement in politics. It happens because the mentors did the same thing. The people who talk their did the same thing you know you know they are a lot smarter than us because they said we didn't fail are we going to be stars and political actors. We say we're going to be political activists for me and stars. They said Oh we couldn't be more of a political activist if we become stars because I reach it's brought out a waste of time.

[01:32:12] No name in chance. And all of them will always smart for doing that. Right now I'm just talking about those. Chicago I'm not even talking about sassy black kid and all these these young folk

[01:32:24] Who really understand the voice and bandwidth in a way that when I was 20 to be live was you know that's my that's my baby girl right there. That's what baby girl does. I'm proud papa bear. When I talk about you or me to watch a meal when I met you.

[01:32:41] Miller It was a somehow. I was serving for Marlon. Yeah I know what I was I was so for Marlon and I met Jimmy once. And she had to write a haiku 17 syllables 575. 575 as I teach my kids.
75

[01:33:07] 75 and she wrote that they had my could and I said what ever you do don't ever start writing what ever you do with them 17 syllables.

[01:33:24] I never to this day even as many I think so you say it is a haiku slave. Never to this day have I met somebody who took 17 syllables and moved me in such a way. To this day to this day and I looked at I knew she was writing

[01:33:51] Down.

[01:33:53] I don't ever stop writing what ever you do.

[01:33:56] As she listened she listened.

[01:34:01] She doesn't do that Bob. It took me the while. I mean it's such a such a. Okay so there I am alone brag a little bit about Chicago. That is what we do in Chicago.

[01:34:12] We understand that the work is service right. And like I said in these babies that are coming up they do it because a teachers taught them to do it right. It's a it's a crazy thing to be in a point you workshop let me introduce to me in a small way for women. Right. And let these young people know that they're not just hearing a story about four women to really dissect that joint and let them know what she what she is saying. About Black women. Right. And it's also let them know that this is the song.

[01:34:51] They've got a band from the radio because of weather nobody really for the third verse. Right. We talk about the last verse when you somehow kill. We are talking about the third verse which he says a silly when I'm on set.

[01:35:12] People like yes I've seen that get this crazy woman off the rail.

[01:35:19] And I heard she had Tommy and I heard she does and I heard she that she deserves she dead bye. And then we wondered why she said don't get the fuck out of here. I'm going to get up out of here. Oh.

[01:35:36] Oh don't get me your Kubicek and then I go stay long. I'm I'm dead. I'm nowhere man.

[01:35:47] I'll go see them hug them and going on about my business. So yeah. And I mean that I thought of Mom or Dad.

[01:35:53] That's how I talk to me and all of them all of them you know that's that's that's what I did. You

[01:35:59] Know and I just don't even talk like I don't know what I was told. My uncle put all that my uncle put me to church. Put all of those stories in me.

[01:36:10] So I'm just doing what I was taught to do.

[01:36:14] And I'm again I'm very very very very proud of this generation that's that's coming up that really understands again a band with which they have to stay in their reach.

[01:36:32] And they and they utilize it right in the baby girl.

[01:36:40] Jameela is has a song called Giovanni right referencing Nikki Giovanni right. And I guess I can say this about a new project a lot of work that the titles of the poems and the songs are the and the names of these bold women.

[01:37:07] I always I think it's interesting. I'm like OK you do that. I think I can say that she she like that. But I'm not just the to be around like young lady who believes who will cause i name is Jamila. Right so names will be important.

[01:37:41] Why you know we go.

[01:37:44] Pritchard put her name right in your mouth. Braggs Mealer Jameela Maila Jameela. Add that to had to grow up with that. Then to understand the significance of names and not on the women by titling this next group of songs by that name is because I hope it's just dope.

[01:38:14] Yes OK.

[01:38:16] Mogel coming from a middle.

[01:38:22] She's not going to answer this question. Dumais

[01:38:27] Avery. Hey Matt. Hi Stormie thank you for doing this in conversation too. I actually wanted to hear you talk about the ways in which you use and I actually would argue that you transform joy and humor into these very painful political poems and extremely painful poems.

[01:38:53] We think every time you offer us Emmett Till we were there and I see so many people in the audience in tears are on the verge of tears.

[01:39:08] Because you bring that rawness and that pain. But but you're also an extremely joyful and humorous person so I'm just wondering how you where's the room for that in the work.

[01:39:23] How do you navigate that for yourself.

[01:39:31] What was the whole point of the race record. Was the reason why the song about Trayvon Martin is them.

[01:39:44] Because I feel the joy joy doesn't exit when tragedy enters right. The

[01:39:58] End if anything that is temporary is the trash Joy is a way more permanent. The tragedy is in so and I think a lot of that too was infused in the doctrine of my growing up in church.

[01:40:19] Right.

[01:40:20] When the Joy is always being hammered right.

[01:40:29] Just like this the minister is talking about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. But are we glad he died for so Lanny his blood ran down.

[01:40:43] So there's that.

[01:40:44] It's press that I am talking about the murder of a political activist right.

[01:40:55] Because we all do understand in the context of his death. It was just because he was very political you know that he was a political prisoner. Right.

[01:41:06] The again this is no conversion to Christianity that nobody in the world but understand how this story is filtered to me and have shared with me or we're glad this dude died that we might lead.

[01:41:25] So when you grow up understanding or getting fed that is again it becomes part of the muscle memory that I can't talk.

[01:41:34] Well that is that it's late and right the like I said the presence of tragedy does not mean the exit of joy because Joy is a way more permanent situation.

[01:41:54] The tragedy is a way to part with his.

[01:41:58] That's what that's why the hashtags keep the names behind the hash tag you change with the hash tag remains.

[01:42:08] Stays there. Right. Right.

[01:42:16] This one but this one did but this one did this one day just one day just one day.

[01:42:23] One day just one day and the hash tag so that we remember we remember we remember her and we remember him we remember them right.

[01:42:38] The I guess what I'm actually also doing with the with the word is saying that you inspired it despite inspiring and despite we rocking it is.

[01:42:57] It's just like the other day when I was saying. There's a new there's a song that's got to be on the next record and this is the time to go ahead Mary.

[01:43:07] And we go ahead Mary and we go ahead Mary and we like the the right makes room for the Jodi the whole thing. Keep me makes you say you know. You know. I was going to. Say

[01:44:04] So please put June 14th on your calendars. Thank you everyone for coming out. Before you head out please turn in your surveys. Thank you so much to Stormie and Avery for this evening of

[01:44:21] Fabulousness with with Nitz with Jubilee with his three lead the library know of there are books that you think would help honor the conversation we had tonight.

[01:44:34] And thank you so much for coming out and come back for June 14. And also our community partner the Black Panther anniversary celebration at Langston and Washington Hall. Most of those programs are free and they are this weekend so please come out and support. Thanks for coming out.

[01:44:57] This podcast was presented by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.