



**INVISIBLE THEATRE - PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Invisible Theatre Continues its 47<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season  
with the Tucson Premiere of  
BLACK PEARL SINGS!**

by

**Frank Higgins**

**February 13\* - 25, 2018**

**\*Tuesday low cost preview**

*(January 23, 2018, Tucson, Arizona);* Invisible Theatre continues its 47<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season with **BLACK PEARL SINGS!** by Frank Higgins, directed by Susan Claassen, and starring To-Ree-Nee Wolf and Katherine Byrnes. Alberta “Pearl” Johnson has inherited from her African and American ancestors a soulful collection of rare folk songs. Stuck behind bars in a Texas prison for murder, her music is her lifeline to her family and future. Enter Susannah, an ambitious collector of songs for the Library of Congress. To advance her career, Susannah wants to record Pearl singing her extraordinary repertoire. Pearl sees Susannah as a possible escort to freedom. Their story is one of two women tied deeply together by their personal search for respect and love. Featuring over 20 distinctive songs, **BLACK PEARL SINGS!** is a transcendent tale about the bridges that can be built through the power of song.

**Made possible in part through the generous support of  
Kristi Keller and Bernie Bauer**

**“BLACK PEARL not only sings, but soars.”  
–Broadway World**

**“... a five-star, standing-ovation spectacular which will inspire laughter, cheers, and reflection.”  
–DC Metro Theatre Arts**

**“...a very powerful and emotional experience.”  
–Talkin’ Broadway**



**BLACK PEARL SINGS!** by Frank Higgins will play from February 13-25, 2018 with the official press opening on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 7:30 PM. A low cost preview (\$20) takes place on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 7:30 PM. The Invisible Theatre is located at 1400 N. First Avenue (at Drachman), Tucson, AZ 85719.

The single show ticket price for **BLACK PEARL SINGS!** is \$34. Discounts are available for groups, seniors, active military and students. Rush tickets are available for purchase at half-price one half hour prior to performance time and are subject to availability.

Tickets are available for purchase by calling the Invisible Theatre Box Office at (520) 882-9721 and are also available 24/7 on-line through OvationTix at [www.invisibletheatre.com](http://www.invisibletheatre.com).

The running time is two hours, with an intermission.

**BLACK PEARL SINGS!** is appropriate for mature audiences.

## THE INVISIBLE THEATRE

The Invisible Theatre (IT) of Tucson, a 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to producing quality theatre and arts education experiences for all facets of the community in an intimate setting that showcases local professional talent and guest artists. IT takes its name from the invisible energy that flows between a performer and audience, creating the magic of theatre. Started in 1971 as an arena for local playwrights, the theatre has expanded its programs to include adaptations of classics and recent Off-Broadway plays and musicals, while continuing to encourage new playwrights through both full productions and staged readings.

Under the leadership of Managing Artistic Director Susan Claassen, Associate Artistic Director James Blair, and PR Director Cathy Johnson, IT is strongly committed to community service and outreach programs. The company's current season includes a six play Main Stage season, many special events, student matinees on March 2 and 12, 2018, a world class cabaret series, organizational collaborations, educational tours, seminars that encourage community dialogue and Project Pastime – an educational theatre program for mentally challenged youth.

The Invisible Theatre, the recipient of the first Arizona Theatre Association Award for Best Producing Theatre Company, is a member of the Theatre Communications Group and has long enjoyed both local and national recognition for its strong leadership role in the arts community. Productions take place in an intimate 80-seat converted laundry building. IT celebrates its 47<sup>th</sup> season with an even greater commitment to professionalism, artistic excellence, accessibility, freedom of expression, diverse programming and creative challenge – thus making the Invisible Theatre a very visible force in Tucson's cultural community.

## ABOUT THE PEOPLE

**KATHERINE BYRNES** (*Susannah Mullally*) is an award-winning vocalist. Katherine is very excited to act on the IT stage again! She has toured the world singing Jazz, Broadway, Rock, and Classical genres. Her projects have taken her as far as China with Art.if.act Dance Project, all across Europe with Blue Note recording artist Amos Lee, and throughout the United States with her original band, Sweet Ghosts, a blend of Americana writing and synthesizer textures. Raised in the Sonoran Desert, Katherine is a proud contributor to the eclectic Tucson Arts scene. She is production manager and choreographer at the Gaslight Theater, a proud collaborator with Invisible Theatre's Sizzling Summer Sounds series, and assistant director/choreographer of the Pastime Players (an IT program for children with special abilities to build confidence through singing, acting, and dancing). She has featured local Tucson artists as host of In Tune on Arizona Public Media (AZPM) and has guest sung with the Tucson Pops Orchestra and local luminaries, Calexico. For more information on Katherine's upcoming shows, please visit her website at [www.katherinebyrnes.com](http://www.katherinebyrnes.com).

**TO-REE-NEE WOLF** (*Alberta "Pearl" Johnson*) is an internationally acclaimed award-winning artist, singer-songwriter and actor. She first graced IT's stage in BLACK BOY. She has also appeared in IT's productions of THE OLD SETTLER, HAVING OUR SAY, THE DELANY SISTERS' FIRST HUNDRED YEARS, MY SUNDAY DINNER WITH NORMA, her one woman WALKING BETWEEN WORLDS, and most recently LET'S LIVE A LITTLE! To-Ree-Nee was the lead in the feature film *Unsound* by Darius Britt. She most recently made her debut in *THE FISHERS WISH*, a multi-media production created by Flam Chen. To-Ree-Nee is also a member of "Stories That Soar". This talented Renaissance woman has had a national career in the field of visual arts that spans over thirty years. During the course of her career, she has been commissioned for eleven mosaic projects and created twenty murals. Known for her rich sense of color, evocative use of materials and attention to detail, To-Ree-Nee has created exquisite works of art for residential clientele, private business and municipalities.

**SUSAN CLAASSEN** (*Director/Producer/Designer*) is kicking off her 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary with IT. As Managing Artistic Director, she has produced over 400 productions and directed over 90 including SHEAR MADNESS (MAC award Nominee for comedy director) and most recently LEBENSRAUM and LET'S LIVE A LITTLE. Suz was nominated for the 2011 LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award and BroadwayWorld LA Award as Best Actress for her portrayal of Edith Head in A CONVERSATION WITH EDITH HEAD ([www.edithhead.biz](http://www.edithhead.biz)). She was most recently seen as Olive in IT's OLIVE AND THE BITTER HERBS (MAC Award Winner). Suz was selected as one of Arizona's "48 Most Intriguing Women", is a member of the League of Professional Theatre Women, was August's selection as "Notable Person" for *Tucson Lifestyle*, and has been a clown in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade since 2001. She has been a proud member of Actors' Equity Association since 1969 and dedicates her work to the living memory of her beloved mother, Goldie.

**FRANK HIGGINS** (*Playwright*) is the author of a number of plays, including BLACK PEARL SINGS! and THE SWEET BY 'N' BY, the latter produced with Blythe Danner and Gwyneth Paltrow. His work has been seen in New York and across the country at the Williamstown Theater Festival, the Old Globe Theatre, Ford's Theater in Washington DC, Northlight Theatre in Chicago, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Virginia Stage Company, the Barter Theater, Florida Studio Theatre, Stages Repertory Theatre of Houston, and other places. His plays have been published by Dramatists Play Service, Samuel French, Dramatic Publishing Company, and Pioneer Drama Service. His one-act play THE TRUE DEATH OF SOCRATES is included in Best American Short Plays of 2013, and BLACK PEARL SINGS! is anthologized in the Random House/Vintage anthology Plays For Two. Scenes from his play GUNPLAY were read on Capitol Hill prior to Congress passing the Brady Bill. He has also written plays for young audiences, including ANANSI THE SPIDER and the MIDDLE PASSAGE, and THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND. His most recent play, LOUIE LOUIE AND LA DOLCE VITA, has been developed during readings and staged readings at Kansas City Repertory and Florida Studio Theatre. It will open in the Midwest in 2018.

# FACTS ABOUT BLACK PEARL SINGS!

**WHO:**

Written by Frank Higgins

**DIRECTOR:**

Susan Claassen

**CAST:**

To-Ree-Nee Wolf (*Alberta "Pearl" Johnson*)

Katherine Byrnes (*Susannah*)

**WHAT:**

The Tucson Premiere of BLACK PEARL SINGS!

**WHERE:**

The Invisible Theatre

1400 N. First Avenue (at Drachman), Tucson, AZ. 85719

**WHEN:**

Season Ticket Holders will be seated first and then general admission.

Tuesday	February 13, 2018 at 7:30 PM	(Preview)
Wednesday	February 14, 2017 at 7:30 PM	(Opening)
Thursday	February 15, 2018 at 7:30 PM	(Seminar)
Friday	February 16, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Saturday	February 17, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Sunday	February 18, 2018 at 3:00 PM	

Wednesday	February 21, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Thursday	February 22, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Friday	February 23, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Saturday	February 24, 2018 at 3:00 PM	
Saturday	February 24, 2018 at 7:30 PM	
Sunday	February 25, 2018 at 3:00 PM	

**RUNNING TIME:**

Two hours with an intermission

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Mature audiences

**TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR INFORMATION:**

- To charge tickets by phone, call our Box Office at (520) 882-9721.
- You may also visit the Box Office in the Invisible Theatre Lobby (1400 N First Avenue at Drachman).
- To buy tickets online 24/7, go to [www.invisibletheatre.com](http://www.invisibletheatre.com) and click on the Ovationtix logo.
- Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express are accepted.

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:**

The Invisible Theatre is fully accessible to patrons using wheelchairs or with other mobility challenges. Seating areas to accommodate persons using wheelchairs are located in the theatre. If patrons require special seating they should inform the Box Office at (520) 882-9721.

**ABOUT THIS PRESS RELEASE:**

This mailing list is for members of the professional media and allied organizations who have requested e-mail press releases from The Invisible Theatre. If you no longer wish to receive e-mail press releases or if there is someone else with your organization that should be added to our list, send a message to [cathy@invisibletheatre.com](mailto:cathy@invisibletheatre.com) or phone Alayna at (520) 884-0672 with your request.

**ONLINE MEDIA MATERIALS:**

Production photos will be available on February 1, 2018 at [www.invisibletheatre.com](http://www.invisibletheatre.com) (Press).

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