

**10** MOSS  
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CENTER  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON

**VT** VIRGINIA  
TECH.

***AN EVENING WITH  
LESLIE ODOM, JR.***

Saturday, May 4, 2024, 7:30 PM

Street and Davis Performance Hall, Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre

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# ***AN EVENING WITH LESLIE ODOM, JR.***

**Steven Walker, *music director and guitar***

**Christopher Cadenhead, *piano***

**Eric England, *bass***

**Gene Coye, *drums***

Program to be announced from the stage

**Co-sponsored by the Black Cultural Center**

This performance is supported in part by  
Libby Drapeau and Ms. Sherwood Payne Quillen.

Additional funding is provided by the  
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# BIOGRAPHIES

## LESLIE ODOM, JR.

Leslie Odom, Jr. is a multifaceted, award-winning vocalist, songwriter, author, and actor. With a career that spans all performance genres, Odom has received recognition with Tony and Grammy awards, as well as multiple Emmy and Academy award nominations for his excellence and achievements in Broadway, television, film, and music. Most recently, Odom made his long-awaited return to Broadway to star in and co-produce the new Broadway production of the classic American comedy *Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch* by the legendary Ossie Davis, which opened in September 2023 to widespread critical acclaim. Additionally, he starred in the highly anticipated sequel to the original iconic film *The Exorcist* for Blumhouse and Universal Pictures. Odom is a BMG recording artist and has released four full-length albums.

In 2020 Odom starred in and performed the songs of legendary singer Sam Cooke in the critically acclaimed Amazon film adaptation of *One Night in Miami...*, directed by Regina King. His portrayal of the soul icon was met with widespread praise and critical acclaim, earning him nominations for Academy, BAFTA, Critics' Choice, Golden Globe, and Screen Actors Guild awards, among others. King also enlisted Odom to write, compose, and perform the film's original song, *Speak Now*, which earned him a Critics' Choice Award for Best Song, as well as nominations for an Oscar and several other awards.

In October 2021 he starred in *The Many Saints of Newark*, a prequel to David Chase's award-winning HBO series, *The Sopranos*, which was released in theatres and on HBO Max. Recently, Odom starred in Rian Johnson's 2022 *Knives Out* sequel, *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery*, which broke records for Netflix and is currently streaming worldwide. In December 2022 the film debuted as Netflix's number one movie in its premiere week and has secured its position as the fifth most-popular movie of all time on the platform. He can also be heard voicing the character of Owen Tillerman in Season 3 of the Apple TV+ animated musical-comedy series *Central Park*, for which he received a 2020 Emmy nomination for Outstanding Character Voice-Over Performance. In September 2021 Odom hosted *The Tony Awards Present: Broadway's Back!* on CBS, earning his third Emmy nomination for Outstanding Variety Special (Live) in 2022. Throughout the live two-hour special event, he performed various musical numbers with David Byrne, John Legend, Audra McDonald, and many others. Additional film and television credits include the Disney+ musical performance of the original Broadway production of *Hamilton* (2021 Emmy nomination, Outstanding Lead Actor in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie), the limited series *Love in the Time of Corona*, which he executive produced and co-starred in opposite Nicolette Robinson; *Abbott Elementary*; *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder* on Disney+; *Harriet*; *Murder on the Orient Express*; *Only*; *Red Tails*; *Smash*; and many more.

# BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

Well known for his breakout role as the original Aaron Burr in the smash hit Broadway musical *Hamilton*, Odom won the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical and a Grammy Award for his performance as a principal soloist on the original cast recording. He made his Broadway debut in *Rent* at the age of 17. He also starred opposite Lin-Manuel Miranda and Karen Olivo in a 2014 City Center Encores! revival of Jonathan Larson's *Tick, Tick... Boom!* In December 2017 Odom returned to the New York City stage in a solo concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center. The cabaret-style performance was crafted around signature songs and music that shaped his journey, all performed with a world-class band in front of a live audience. The show was filmed for broadcast as an hour-long PBS special as part of the 17-time Emmy Award-winning series *Live from Lincoln Center* and premiered in April 2018.

A Grammy Award-winning recording artist, Odom's self-titled debut album was funded in part by a successful Kickstarter campaign and released in 2014 by Borderlight Entertainment, Inc. His new label home, S-Curve, rereleased an expanded version with additional material in June 2016, and the album reached number one on the Billboard Jazz charts and charted in the Billboard Top 200. In winter 2017 Odom topped the charts once again with the rerelease of his second album and first holiday album, *Simply Christmas*, as a deluxe edition with new arrangements and new songs. *Simply Christmas* hit number one on iTunes and the Billboard Jazz charts, number 4 on the Billboard Holiday chart, and number 31 on the Billboard Top 200 chart. Odom released his third full-length album and first of original material, *Mr*, in November 2019 and, the following October, teamed up with nine-time Grammy-nominated and multi-platinum artist Sia to debut a new version of standout track *Cold*. His critically acclaimed second holiday album, *The Christmas Album*, was released in November 2020. Released in November 2023, Odom's fifth full-length album and his first of all-new original music since 2019, *When a Crooner Dies*,

features a collection of 10 newly penned original tracks that mark his most personal body of music to date. He has performed at the White House, Super Bowl, Oscars, Grammys, and on hallowed stages such as Lincoln Center, Rockefeller Center, and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

In March 2018 Odom added the title of author to his resume with the release of his book, *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher and Never Stop Learning*. Written in the style of a commencement speech, the book brings together what Odom has learned in life so far, tapping into universal themes of starting something new, following your passions, discovering your own potential, and surrounding yourself with the right people. *Failing Up* is about unlocking your true potential and making your dreams come true even when it seems impossible. The book was published by Feiwel & Friends, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers. Co-written with Nicolette Robinson, Odom's first children's book, *I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know*, was published by Feiwel & Friends on March 28, 2023. The book debuted on the *New York Times* bestseller list at number seven in its first week.

## STEVEN WALKER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND GUITAR

Steven Walker is a guitarist and music director who began his career in Washington, D.C., and is currently based in New York City. Walker has appeared in concert and on recordings with various artists, including Ledisi, BeBe Winans, En Vogue, Susan Boyle, Rashaan Patterson, Eric Roberson, Renée Elise Goldsberry, and Jonathan Nelson. In New York, he has performed in the orchestra for various Broadway shows, including *Kinky Boots*, *Mean Girls*, *Frozen*, and *SpongeBob SquarePants*. He has been working with Leslie Odom, Jr. since 2016, serving as music director since 2021. In those eight years, Walker is undefeated against Odom at chess.

# BIOGRAPHIES, cont.

## CHRISTOPHER CADENHEAD, PIANO

Starting at age five, Grammy-nominated pianist Chris Cadenhead's sound reflects his diverse upbringing in Miami and Alabama. Since touring the world at 17, Cadenhead has performed at iconic venues with the greatest artists of our time, like Leslie Odom, Jr. at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; KC and the Sunshine Band at The Sporting in Monte Carlo; and music royalty The Jacksons at the Java Jazz Festival in Jakarta. In the studio, he's collaborated with Terrace Martin, Ludacris, Diddy, and Gnarls Barkley, to name a few. As a multi-instrumentalist he continues to compose music for TV shows like *E! True Hollywood Story* and *Keeping up with the Kardashians*. Cadenhead's 2018 debut recording, *After Hours*, features Cadenhead on piano and vocals, fellow Miami native David Chiverton on drums, Eric England on bass, and William Artope, Jr. on trumpet.

## ERIC ENGLAND, BASS

Originally from New Jersey, Eric England grew up in a musical family and was exposed to many types of music from a young age. Playing both electric and upright bass are England's passions. It was during his high school years that he became more serious about jazz. He attended the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami and studied jazz and studio music. Before and after graduating he worked in Miami's music scene, covering a vast variety of music styles while gaining invaluable experience. England currently resides in Los Angeles, where he continues to gain experience as a top call musician. England has worked and recorded with such artists and groups as Jon Secada, Rihanna, Lil' Wayne, Dave Liebmann, Nicole Henry, and Troy Roberts' Nu-Jive, amongst many others.



## GENE COYE, DRUMS

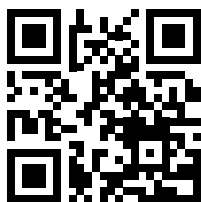
As a child, Gene Coye taught himself to play drums. By the time he was a teen, Coye was playing in numerous community choirs and jazz ensembles, spanning from Chicago to New York. He received a bachelor of fine arts in jazz at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), where he studied under famed jazz legend Joe LaBarbera. While in college Coye toured with Carlos Santana and his son, Salvador. Upon graduating, he quickly established himself as one of the most sought-after drummers in Los Angeles. Of late, Coye has won a Grammy with the John Daversa big band and has been recording, touring, and performing in Europe and the U.S. with Seal, Larry Carlton, Hiromi's Sonicwonder, Bob Reynolds, Richard Bona, Mike Landau, Robben Ford, Stanley Clarke, Terrence Blanchard, Pharoah Sanders, Tom Scott, Bennie Maupin, John Beasley's Monkestra, Thundercat, Flying Lotus, Cody Chestnut, DJ Khalil, Big Krit, Rick Ross, Mali Music, Nai Palm (Hiatus Kaiyote), and Leslie Odom, Jr. ... all in addition to recording and producing his own band and numerous other artists from Los Angeles to New York.

*This is Leslie Odom, Jr.'s first performance at the Moss Arts Center.*

*Special thanks to the Black Cultural Center and Kimberly Clark*



## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!



We'd love your feedback on this performance. If you complete the short survey, you can enter for a chance to win two tickets to *Celebrating 20 Years of the Crooked Road* on Friday, July 12, 2024. [bit.ly/odom-feedback](https://bit.ly/odom-feedback)

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or scan the QR code.

*If you have questions and would like more information, please contact Katie Gehrt at [kgehart@vt.edu](mailto:kgehart@vt.edu).*

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**Learn more at [bit.ly/moss-K12](https://bit.ly/moss-K12).**

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More than 100 student workers, including graduate assistants, help support the Moss Arts Center. While some students work on our programming, marketing, and administrative teams, most work for our patron services (ushers, gallery attendants, and box office attendants) and production departments.



artscenter.vt.edu

A black and white photograph of an orchestra performing on a stage. The conductor is in the center, facing the musicians. The stage is lit, and the audience seating is visible in the foreground.

# 10 YEARS

is just the opening act.

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Help us continue to bring unforgettable arts experiences to people of all ages. A gift of any size makes a big impact.

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Virginia Tech acknowledges that its Blacksburg campus sits partly on land that was previously the site of the Smithfield and Solitude Plantations, owned by members of the Preston family. Between the 1770s and the 1860s, the Prestons and other local White families that owned parcels of what became Virginia Tech also owned hundreds of enslaved people. Enslaved Black people generated resources that financed Virginia Tech's predecessor institution, the Preston and Olin Institute, and they also worked on the construction of its building.

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## YMCA at VIRGINIA TECH

### Sustainability at The Y!



Christine Tan who first brought the idea of sustainable bags to the Y when she started making them for our Meals On Main program. Christine was a YMCA Student Program Leader for the MOM program and then stayed on as an AmeriCorps Member with MOM.

Next time you shop in our Thrift Shop you may notice a difference when you check out. We're excited to announce that we are replacing the use of plastic bags with reusable bags made from donated items. Using t-shirts which didn't meet the quality we expect to sell in our store, groups of volunteers are making reusable bags for your purchases! Don't forget to bring back your t-shirt bag when you come back to shop! Reduce. Reuse. Repurpose.



The Virginia Tech AFROTC Squadron members made 145 t-shirt bags in 90 minutes for our Thrift Shop. Do you think you can beat that record???

Contact Emma at [volunteer@vtymca.org](mailto:volunteer@vtymca.org) to set up a bag making session for your volunteer group!



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