



Jeannine Otis

At the age of 12, Jeannine Otis appeared as a soloist with the Detroit Philharmonic Orchestra. Four years later she was accepted to Wellesley College, as the first African-American to be a Presser Music Scholar. She went on to receive professional degrees in theater education and performance. On stage, and in theatre and church, she has partnered with performers across the musical spectrum from Kool and the Gang to Pete Seeger to the Helsinki Philharmonic to a variety of hip-hop artists to the Vienna Opera House. Her book “The Gathering” described her work with incarcerated teens. Through music she has engaged in ministry that has helped some of the least among us find their voice and expression and live into their creative fullness.

For over 25 years Jeannine has been the Music Director at Saint Mark’s Church in-the-Bowery, where she once performed with Allen Ginsberg, and more recently for Rural and Migrant Ministry as well, and where she has explored the fullest range of sacred music across all traditions and offered herself to the exercise of shared congregational worship. Among her offerings to that parish and the larger church have been her annual, heralded Good Friday Blues. She has been recognized and honored by the City Council of New York and the NAACP and was awarded a Reggie for her performance in The Cradle Will Rock.

In 2018, the Reparations Committee of the Diocese of New York inaugurated the first season of a three-year journey from shame to hope across the scope of American racism. This first chapter has been called The Year of Lamentation, and through intellectual inquiry, stage performance, music and dance, these twelve months invited us to enter together into the hard truth of human suffering that is the fruit of racism, and to abide for a while in the stories of slavery and racial violence. Jeannine has shepherded the musical expression of the Year of Lamentations and has brought the fullness of her own musical gifts to this exploration - of the keening, broken heart; of the soaring, hopeful soul - as we have heard her at this convention. It may be fairly said that she has been the soulful musical voice of Lamentation among us. Indeed, New York Magazine described Jeannine as having a voice that can lead us to the Promised Land.

Therefore, in recognition and gratitude for the sacred heart of her musical expression, and her commitment to the enlarging of the human spirit through music, offered to the glory of God, we, on this 9th day of November 2018, in the seventh year of our consecration, do award her

The Bishop’s Cross

The Right Reverend Andrew ML Dietsche
XVI Bishop of New York