

PAMELA SNEED

**Featuring a musical tribute to
Big Mama Thornton, performed by
Pamela Sneed, Mara Rosenbloom,
Michael Vatcher and Jasper Stadhouders**

June 8, 2024—Doors at 8pm

Torpedo Theater, Amsterdam

ACT IX

X

XI

XII



PROGRAMME
8pm
Introduction to Pamela Sneed

8.10pm—Set
The hits of Big Mama Thornton
Performed by Pamela Sneed
(vocals), Mara Rosenbloom (keys),
Michael Vatcher (drums) and
Jasper Stadhouders (guitar)

9:30pm—Drinks

New York-based poet, performer and visual artist Pamela Sneed's genre-defying work is rooted in her commitment to activism and intersectional modes of thinking, from the 1990s AIDS crisis to the Black lesbian working class experience. An example of this is her most recent and widely celebrated book, *Funeral Diva* (2020)—a poetic memoir about coming-of-age in the AIDS era, and its effects on life and art.

Often working from an autobiographical impulse, Sneed's contribution to ACT IX is no different. For the occasion, she brings her recently developed performance project A Tribute to Big Mama Thornton to Amsterdam for the first time. Premiering in New York at the beginning of 2023 and brought to life in the style

of a juke joint—a term within African American vernacular to refer to an establishment featuring music, dancing and drinking—*A Tribute to Big Mama Thornton* honours singer and songwriter Big Mama Thornton. Until her recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2024, Big Mama Thornton was an unsung pioneer of rock and roll known for her gender-expansive style. Through bringing her hits to life on stage, Sneed locates the legacy of Big Mama Thornton within the queer canon through an examination of her presence as a Black and transgender performer.

In a prose poem-cum-newsletter for the Poetry Project in 2020, Sneed writes: 'Like Big Mama Thornton, I too was raised in the church. My grandfather was a baptist preacher. My

grandmother sang spirituals. I credit the Black church for my love and introduction to poetry, the music and art I was surrounded by, and through the lyricism of preachers and women's testimonies I learned poetry. Through this upbringing I identified with Big Mama Thornton and how she came to music.'

Sneed will be joined on stage at Torpedo Theater by Mara Rosenbloom on keys, Michael Vatcher on drums and Jasper Stadhouders on guitar. For the evening, Torpedo Theater will open its doors under the name of Juke Joint, and its stage will be dedicated to the coalescence of voices raring to be heard—ones joyously singing their refusal to adhere to what could be understood as normative femininity.

COLOPHON Torpedo Theater is a long-running, thirty-seat theatre in the heart of Amsterdam's city centre. Originally founded by *Het Parool*, a Dutch national newspaper, the theatre has been committed to the spoken, written and performed word from the beginning. *playbill* is an event-based project invested in the presentation of experimental language and text-based artistic works on the (small) stage. It is curated by Martha Jager and Isabelle Sully, and designed by Maud Vervenne. *playbill: ACT IX* has been made possible thanks to the Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsdeel Centrum and Mondriaan Fonds. This playbill has been printed by Terry Bleu, Amsterdam.