THE LONG VIEW
The 10-year-old Long Center was 80 years in the making

By Michael Barnes
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“The past makes the present,” Late Austin Mayor Tom Miller liked to say, “and the present makes the future.”

The heavyset, Shakespeare-spouting mayor, first elected in 1953, is perhaps the person most responsible for the presence of an Austin auditorium that doubles as a spectacular community commons on the south banks of the Colorado River.

As very few Austinites remember, the seeds for Miller’s civic project were planted in the 1930s. After many false starts and dead ends, it finally opened in 1959.

Yet the theater’s convoluted story did not end there. And a good portion of that story has not been told before.

After a long, stop-and-start campaign and a radical renovation as the Long Center for the Performing Arts 10 years ago — the theater on a high spot above Vic Mathias Shores looks and performs in a starkly different manner than it did in the 1950s. Its leadership, programming and audiences have grown far more diversified — and are growing more so. In contrast to the club of Anglo businessmen who pushed the original auditorium, a trio of leaders — Chairwoman Monica Peraza, President and CEO Cory Baker and Vice President Raquel Garcia — are the main public faces of the Long Center today.

Just as in the 1950s, however, the place remains a magnet for civic activity, indoors and out. The center’s H-E-B Terrace, a structural remnant of the domed Municipal Auditorium, later called Palmer Auditorium, has become a public haven, attracting yoga classes, concerts, movie showings, food festivals, kid-friendly events and, of course, crowds during every inside performance intermission who wander out to gawk at the ever-changing skyline across Lady Bird Lake.

“Our greatest asset is this place,” Peraza says. “Austin’s DNA is See LONG, D4

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THE LONG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AT NIGHT IN FEBRUARY 2008, THE YEAR IT OPENED. (AMERICAN-STATESMAN)

Austin author explores feminist symbolism in Beyoncé’s ‘Lemonade’

By Deborah Sengupta Stith
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When pop star Beyoncé Knowles and rap titan Jay-Z Carter married in April 2008, the ceremony at Carter’s penthouse was small but lavish. “One hundred thousand white orchids were flown in from Thailand, forty guests were driven to the penthouse by private chauffeurs and a large rooftop tent (was) decked in royal-themed decorations for the occasion,” author Omise’eke Tinsley tells us in the introduction to her new book, “Beyoncé in Formation, Remixing Black Feminism.”

Tinsley contrasts the Queen B’s wedding with her own, a courthouse affair that took place on an icy Minnesota morning three years later. For the chart-dominating musicians, flying under the radar of the paparazzi was a wedding-day priority. A less glamorous but more consequential concern hung over Tinsley’s wedding. Her husband, Matt Richardson, had legally transitioned a year before the wedding, and

To read “Beyoncé in Formation: Remixing Black Feminism” ($17.95, University of Texas Press) will be released on Nov. 6.

AUSTIN author explores feminist symbolism in Beyoncé’s ‘Lemonade’

THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM OPENED IN 1959 AND WAS CONSIDERED THE HEIGHT OF MODERNITY. IT WAS COMPLETELY REINVENTED AS THE LONG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN 2008. [CONTRIBUTED BY AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER]

See ‘LEMONADE’, D8

See LONG, D4
Beyoncé performs at a get-out-the-vote event for the Hillary Clinton campaign in Cleveland in November 2016. Beyoncé's nine nods for "Lemonade," her album and film exploring race and identity, led the field in nominations for the 58th Grammy Awards were announced on Dec. 8, 2015.

"Beyoncé in Formation: Remaking Black Feminism" by Austin author Omise’eke Tinsley

Beyoncé's 2016 audiovisual masterpiece "Lemonade" resonates with black feminism and the experiences of black women. It is an audacious and self-assertive statement that centers on women, their experiences, and their ability to make their own voices heard. The album is a testament to the power of art to influence and inspire change. Tinsley's analysis of the album's themes and symbolism is a valuable contribution to the conversation about black feminism and its role in contemporary culture. Through her writing, Tinsley illuminates the intersection of art and activism, showing how Beyoncé's work can be a powerful tool for social justice and empowerment.

Tinsley notes that Beyoncé's symbolism is often tied to the black female goddess of fertility, Okhuwa. This goddess is associated withirth, fertility, and motherhood, symbolizing the importance of these themes in "Lemonade." The album celebrates black maternity and the struggles of black women to maintain their autonomy and agency. Beyoncé's portrayal of herself as a powerful and regal figure resonates with the divine role that black women can play in the struggle for freedom.

Further, Tinsley cites Angela Davis' work on black feminism and the civil rights bus boycotts. Davis was a key figure in the movement for black women to be able to express their own voices and experience their own power. Beyoncé's symbolism aligns with this legacy, as she uses her platform to highlight the struggles of black women and inspire others to take action.

Tinsley's analysis is grounded in her expertise in black feminism and her personal experience as a woman. As a professor at the University of Texas, she has spent years teaching the popular black women's studies course "Remixing Black Feminism," which is out Nov. 6. Through her teaching and research, Tinsley has helped destigmatize discussions about miscarriage and maternal health, which are often taboo subjects. Beyoncé's openness about these issues in "Lemonade" has helped bring attention to the struggles of black women and inspired others to take action.

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