

Sally - a solo play

2/19/2026

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Reviews

It was an honor to attend the World Premiere of the first fully staged version of *SALLY: a Solo Play* written by Lansing playwright Sandra Seaton.

Stellar actress Sabrina Sloan (she toured in *Hamilton!*) embodied, not only Sally Hemings, herself, but an assortment of other characters, fleshing out her experience as mother to Thomas Jefferson's children. She capered over and under the fourth wall, alternately as our confidante and as a participant reenacting her life — and her efforts to convince a dying Jefferson to free their sons in his will.

This 90-minute tour de force humanizes and explains Sally's experience in the late 1700s, including accompanying Jefferson to France, which expands her perspective. Sloan is masterful, interacting with significant people in her life, including Patsy, a half-niece who was almost like a sibling. (A useful Hemings-Jefferson family tree is included with the program.)

Wharton Center Executive Director Eric Olmscheid pointed out in his introduction that this production is another example of Wharton's commitment to investing in new works. They have assembled a creative team from across the country who have worked with MSU faculty designers to develop this work of art, even tweaking the script with Sandra. The set is period furniture on a surreal backdrop that morphs with artistic and historic projections. (Set Design Kirk Domer; Projection Design Alison Dobbins) Sound Design (Troy Boyd) enriches the atmosphere.

Sandra Seaton has long been a student of Sally Hemmings. She wrote the libretto for the solo opera *From the Diary of Sally Hemings* (2001). She met Sally's descendants through that performance which deepened her understanding of the family. For more interesting info, see Ken Glickman's excellent article from the LSJ .

<https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/life/2026/02/15/sandra-seatons-sally-a-solo-play-about-sally-hemings-coming-to-wharton-center/88640921007/>

SALLY: a Solo Play nearly filled the Pasant Theatre, and received a well-deserved standing ovation — and it only has TWO SHOWS LEFT and they are marked “not many left” on the website, so make your reservations ASAP at

<https://www.whartoncenter.com>

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