

the Cornel West theory is a Washington, D.C. based hip-hop band.

With the blessing of Dr. Cornel West, the Princeton University professor and renowned author, the band takes its name from his prolific writings and philosophies that have shaped contemporary thought throughout the world.

Inspired by D.C.'s rich musical history and the struggles of the poor worldwide, the band formed in 2004 in response to social oppression everywhere. They are here to deliver hip-hop that holds a mirror up to the world, with a core focus on political, cultural and spiritual commentary.

They combine the essence of hip-hop with its original purpose: to speak the truth to the masses, while communicating to young and old alike.

They create soulful live music that entertains, informs, educates and provokes awareness and activism. Their sound, filled with drums, bass, piano, conga and electronic sounds, contains elements of all great music – from home grown go-go to jazz to rock to hip-hop.

Their music is rooted in hip-hop, but that single genre does not define the range and variety of the musicians in the group. There are four core members: Tim Hicks (lead vocalist), Rashad Dobbins (vocalist), John Moon (vocalist/electronic sound) and Sam Lavine (drums).

Winners of the 2008 Washington Area Music Association's Wammie™ for Best Hip-Hop Duo or Group, the Cornel West theory releases its debut album "Second Rome" this fall.

Tim Hicks provides the groove for the Cornel West theory as lead vocalist and chief composer of the music. He founded the band in 2004. A native Washingtonian, Hicks has performed as a hip-hop artist since 1998. His musical influences, among many others, start with Bob Marley and Fela Kuti and continue to Pete Rock, D.J. Premier and J Dilla.

Rashad Dobbins coined the phrase Type 1 to describe the Cornel West theory's musical genre. The band's music is fused with accents of hip-hop, rock and jazz, and therefore needed a classification of its own. A graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts, he has gripped microphones as a poet and emcee since the mid-90s. His musical influences – from Wu Tang Clan to Bad Brains to Backyard to John Coltrane – shape his politically probing, mind-bending verses.

Katrina Lorraine Starr is the Cornel West theory's griot. She is a performance artist and storyteller whose expression provides a literary foundation for the music. A native of Washington, D.C., she attended the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and has been active in the performance arts community since 2000. As a storyteller and author, her work has been inspired by Octavia Butler, Esmeralda Santiago, Storm Constantine, Sobonfu Some', Nina Simone, Odetta, and Abbey Lincoln.

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Yvonne Gilmore provides a spiritual base for the band as a poet and ordained minister. She is a student of the prophetic tradition and is currently pastor of New Song Community Church in Columbus, Ohio. A native of Washington, D.C., she is artistically motivated by the tradition of justice, scholarship, improvisation and resistance of sacred prophets, writers, jazz men and women, and blues men and women that came before us. Her words remind us of the power of poetry. She is always reminded of Luke 17:21 “... For the Kingdom of God is already among you.”

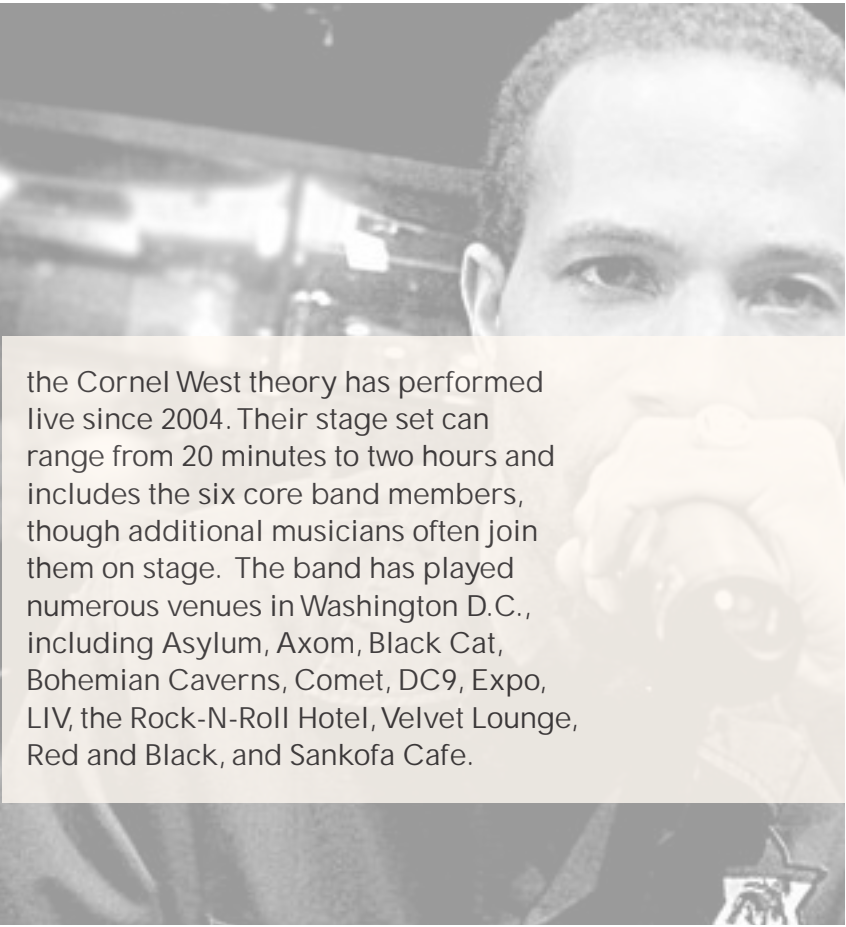
Samuel Lavine keeps the Cornel West theory in time with his go-go inspired pocket drumming. His father gave him his first drum kit in 1995 and it's been fire ever since. A native Washingtonian, he draws his hard-thumping style from go-go bands such as Backyard, and has been creatively inspired by percussionist such as Nirvana's Dave Grohl and Fugazi's Brendan Canty.

John Wesley Moon keeps the Cornel West theory sonically in line with electronic sound manipulation and lending his voice as an emcee. A native of Washington, D.C., he's performed as a vocalist since 1998 and electronic musician since 2003. Artists such as Jean Michel Basqiat, Stevie Wonder and Jimi Hendrix have influenced his avant-garde sensibilities and musical ear.




the Cornel West theory's debut album
Second Rome is scheduled for release
on Sockets Records in September 2009.
Dr. Cornel West is featured throughout.






the Cornel West theory has performed live since 2004. Their stage set can range from 20 minutes to two hours and includes the six core band members, though additional musicians often join them on stage. The band has played numerous venues in Washington D.C., including Asylum, Axom, Black Cat, Bohemian Caverns, Comet, DC9, Expo, LIV, the Rock-N-Roll Hotel, Velvet Lounge, Red and Black, and Sankofa Cafe.



Second Rome
Radio Free D.C.
Knights of the East & West
Prophetic Suicide
COINTELPRONomics
Rifles
Miscegenation
The Wake Up Song
Gentrifried
Oil as Slick
Memory Loss

Patriotic Me
An Angel for You
Iron Emptiness
G.R.E.E.D.
Jungle Hymn
Duritots Revenge
Omega Cross
Would You Kill?
Paper Tigers
Captives
Rock Creek



light up

the
Cornell
West
theory