

Chances are that you've heard the amazing soprano voice of **Nova Y. Payton** in internationally staged musicals, on PBS in one of the specials with The American Pops Orchestra or *3 Mo' Divas* or in countless regional theatre productions across the country. Boasting a prolific catalog of artist collaborations, the former American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA) student has shared the stage with Stevie Wonder, Roberta Flack, Levi Kreis, Bobby McFerrin, John Michael Higgins, Yolanda Adams, Betsy Wolfe, Michael Uris, Anthony Hamilton, and Michelle Williams. She has also opened for heavyweights like Ashford and Simpson, Will Downing, Stephanie Mills, Melba Moore, The Chi-Lites and the Dramatics. Nova has performed in over 150 major cities in the US, as well as Canada, Japan, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and Europe.

Nova has been recognized with nominations and awards for her talents. Nova starred in a soul-stirring rendition of Effie White in *Dreamgirls*, which earned her the 2006 Barrymore nomination for Outstanding Leading Actress in a Musical. The DVD / CD for *3 Mo' Divas* received a 2010 NAACP nomination for Outstanding Duo, Group or Collaboration. In 2012, Nova was honored as the Helen Hayes Award Recipient as the Best Supporting Actress in a Resident Musical for her portrayal of MotorMouth Maybelle in *Hairspray*. For her performance as Effie White in *Dreamgirls* during the 2012-2013 season at Signature Theatre, Nova was nominated for the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Resident Musical. In 2015, Nova was nominated for Best Supporting Actress (Musical) for her role in *Elmer Gantry*. She was also nominated in 2018 for Lead Actress (Musical) in *Caroline, Or Change* and Supporting Actress (Musical) in *Ragtime*.

Other honors have come in the form of singing for President Biden and Vice President Harris and performing the National Anthem at the dedication of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial live as the world watched on C-SPAN. Nova has also appeared on the Jimmy Fallon late-night talk show accompanying artist Glen Hansard. Most recently in 2022 alone, Nova starred in *Grace The Musical*, *The Color Purple*, *Into The Woods*, and currently in *Fela!*

Nova serves as a cantor and an amazing lead vocalist directing her own choir, Favour, at her church, St. Martin's Catholic Church. An entrepreneur, Nova founded Yashim Studios, a musical theater troupe for youth, and has produced a number of productions with the next generation of budding stars.