

VIENNA CARROLL BIOGRAPHY

Vienna Carroll is a singer, playwright, actor, historian and herbalist.

She learned music from the Black Ladies of her youth, including her fearsome great grandmother who played country & western guitar to Minnie Pearl on Saturday night radio and proper Pentecostal chords in church on Sunday. Ms Carroll received a BA in African American Studies and Political Science at Yale University.

She wrote and starred in *Singin Wid A Sword In Ma Han*, a musical docudrama about a family escaping slavery, which features rare spirituals and won the International NYC Fringe Festival's Audience Favorite Award. *Singin's* other venues include the PA Goodrich Underground Railroad Museum, Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Newark Museum, Medgar Evers College CUNY and the West Harlem Library Series. Ms. Carroll also produced a CD of spirituals and performed selections at the Schomburg's *Emancipation Proclamation* event. singinwidasword.com

Ms. Carroll conceived of and produced the *First Annual NYC Underground Railroad Festival Juneteenth Celebration*. With the assistance of the Brooklyn Borough President's office, she partnered with The Plymouth Church of the Pilgrim, a nationally certified Underground Railroad site; the Brooklyn Historical Society; the Weeksville Heritage Society; and the American Theatre of Harlem. The Festival, a sold-out event, was recorded and broadcast by WBGO-FM, the tri-state area's premier jazz station. undergroundrailroadfestival.org

Folk First: Black Roots Music is Ms Carroll's latest project which presents early African American work songs, prison songs, and spirituals – music that preceded jazz, blues and gospel – and their direct music relationships to contemporary artists like Biggie Smalls and Pharrell Williams. *Folk First* features Ms Carroll on vocals and a peerless old time band consisting of Newman Taylor Baker on washboard, Henrique Prince on fiddle, and Keith Johnston on guitar.

The Vienna Carroll Trio delivers an eclectic mix of folk, blues, jazz standards and jazzversions of country & western, pop and other favorites. Ms. Carroll has worked with Leon Thomas, and studied with Olu Dara, Barry Harris, Walter Bishop Jr, Nanette Natal and Opera Ebony's Wayne Sanders. At college she sang in a jazz band that included Nat Adderley Jr, Jay Hoggard and Pheeroan Aklaff.

Ms. Carroll has appeared in film, video ([Black Folk Don't](#)), television, commercials and theater including the critically acclaimed "[Deepest Man](#)."

As an herbalist, Ms. Carroll has led "Let's Make Dandelion Wine" and herbal walks, and taught aromatherapy and herbal classes throughout the tri-state area. Her company, Vienna's Herbal Compounds, produces a boutique line of organic and all natural body care products. viennasherbalcompounds.com

Ms Carroll is currently working on her second music cd. She is also curating songs for a new piece about the slave rebellions of the early 1800's which includes her ongoing research on urban slavery, Black sailors and 19th century herbal healing.