

August Wilson's Gem of the Ocean

Directed by Jude Sandy



Education

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Performance photos by Mark Turek from Trinity Rep's 2022 production of *Gem of the Ocean*

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Theater Audience Etiquette & Discussion

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND GO OVER WITH YOUR CLASSES BEFORE THE SHOW

TEACHERS

Speaking to your students about theatre etiquette is **ESSENTIAL**. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette in an effort to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

ETIQUETTE

What is the role of the audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why shouldn't you talk during the play? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema? Reiterate that students may not talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones and alarms are turned off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave and the class may not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the building during intermission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two dimensional vs. three dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works vs. posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a play? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a Shakespeare play?

Observation #1

When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show.

Observation #2

Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the "behind the scenes" elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students' eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Pay attention to when you're excited about something on stage. What excited you? Pay attention to when you're bored. Why were you bored? What would you have done differently to make the play more interesting? Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play. Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors.

Send these letters to: Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or email to: education@trinityrep.com.

USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

A Letter from Associate Education Director Matt Tibbs

Welcome

to Trinity Rep and the 54th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- **COMMUNITY BUILDING IN YOUR CLASSROOM**
- **INSPIRATION AND BACKGROUND ON THE ARTIST**
- **ENTERING AND COMPREHENDING TEXT**
- **CREATING TEXT FOR PERFORMANCE**
- **PERFORMING IN YOUR CLASS**
- **REFLECTING ON YOUR PERFORMANCE**

Trinity Rep's

Project Discovery student matinées help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>):

- Initiate and participate effectively in a ranges of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS.RL.9-10.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS.RL.9-10.4)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.I.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works (TH: Re8.1.I.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.I.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.I.)

Enjoy the show!

Matt Tibbs, Associate Education Director



Unit 1: Background

A Conversation with the Director: Jude Sandy

TG: Having directed the last play of August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, *Radio Golf*, what has it been like returning to direct the first play in the Cycle, *Gem of the Ocean*?

Jude Sandy: It feels like coming full circle. What's interesting about these two plays is that they were the last two plays that he wrote and they speak to each other very directly even though they sit at opposite ends of the century. It feels like he needed to write *Gem of the Ocean* to then be able to write *Radio Golf*. In *Gem of the Ocean*, we keep hearing *Radio Golf* show up in the play. The grandparents and great-grandparents we hear of in *Radio Golf* make their appearance in real full expression in this play. It's exciting to get to meet them and I think it's really exciting for our community, having seen *Radio Golf*, to meet them in the flesh. To finally meet Aunt Ester, to finally meet Black Mary, and to meet Caesar Wilks. We are meeting the ancestors in a play that August Wilson crafted about us needing to reckon with, acknowledge and come into a deeper relationship with our ancestry.

TG: Thus far, what excites you most about this production of *Gem of the Ocean*?

JS: *Radio Golf* was so much about the death of history in the face of capitalistic progress and the absence of ritual. It feels like a real gift now to live in one of his plays in which ritual and spirit are so deeply alive in the everyday lives of the people we get to meet. We as an audience get to think about what is the spirit of our lineage. How do we move to a closer relationship with that spirit? Can we foster a relationship to spirit within our own ancestry?

TG: Out of the seven characters, who would you say you identify most with? If there is more than one, what are some characteristics that you identify with of the six characters?

JS: I think the answer is different today than it would have been ten years ago. The two characters I think I feel the most empathy and connection with now are Eli and Black Mary. They exist in the play in such service to everyone else in this little community and it's really easy to think of them as secondary characters. This world cannot operate without their service, without their generosity or humility. I admire them so much.



Jude Sandy, Director

TG: What are some things you would like a student audience to take away from this production of August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*?

JS: I want them to take away that African-American culture is a profoundly rich and centuries-old tradition that is alive in every aspect of black existence, even in ways that we don't recognize. I hope they experience the richness of this culture and while appreciating that culture they can turn a lens to their own cultural heritage. That they become more curious about what is their lineage, what is in their heritage, what is in their bloodline, and how that speaks to who they are. And how the specificity of our ancestry can make it possible for us to connect to people across differences.



Liz Morgan as Black Mary and Joe Wilson, Jr. as Caesar



Dereks Thomas as Eli, Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow, and Ricardo Pitts-Wiley as Solly Two-Kings

Biography of the Playwright: August Wilson



Playwright August Wilson was born Frederick August Kittel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on April 27, 1945. He was the fourth of six children. His mother, Daisy Wilson, was of African-American heritage. His father was a German immigrant named Frederick Kittel. As a child, August attended St. Richard's Parochial School. When his parents divorced, he, his mother, and his

siblings moved from the poor Bedford Avenue area of Pittsburgh to the mostly white neighborhood of Oakland. After facing the relentless bigotry of his classmates at Central Catholic High School, he transferred to Connelly Vocational High School, and later to Gladstone High School. When he was 15 years old, Wilson pursued an independent education at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, where he would earn his high school diploma.

Following his father's death in 1965, 20-year-old Kittel, adopted the pen name "August Wilson," paying homage to his mother, declaring himself a poet. In 1968, Wilson and a friend, Rob Penny, co-founded the Black Horizon Theater. The following year, Wilson married Brenda Burton. The couple welcomed a daughter, Sakina, in 1970; they divorced two years later. Wilson remained primarily focused on succeeding as a poet until moving to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1978.

August Wilson wrote his first notable play in 1979, *Jitney*, earning a fellowship at the Minneapolis Playwright Center. In 1981 Wilson married his second wife Judy Oliver. The following year, his new play, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, was accepted at the Eugene O'Neill Playwright's Conference. The year 1982 was particularly fruitful for Wilson, as it marked his introduction to Lloyd Richards, who went on to direct Wilson's first six Broadway plays.

Wilson's play *Fences* premiered on Broadway in 1987, earning the playwright his first Pulitzer Prize as well as a Tony Award. Set in the 1950s, *Fences* explored the themes of the ever-evolving black experience and race relations in

America. *Fences* was the sixth of the playwright's 10-part series called The American Century Cycle also known as The Pittsburgh Cycle, which defined each "part" by decade. *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, the second part in the cycle, opened on Broadway in 1988. Wilson divorced Judy Oliver in 1990. He took home another Pulitzer Prize that same year, this time for *The Piano Lesson*, following its Broadway premiere. A collection of Wilson's work, titled *Three Plays* by August Wilson, was published in book form in 1991. The following year brought the Broadway premiere of *Two Trains Running*.

In 1994, Wilson married for the third time to a costume designer named Constanza Romero. *Seven Guitars* made its way to the Broadway stage two years later, followed by the birth of Wilson's and Romero's daughter, Azula, in 1997. *King Hedley II* made its Broadway debut in 2001, and *Gem of the Ocean* premiered in Chicago roughly a year later. In 2003, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* was revived on Broadway. *Gem of the Ocean* premiered on Broadway in 2004, where it had a run of 72 performances. August Wilson died of liver cancer on October 2, 2005, in Seattle, Washington. His new play, *Radio Golf*, had opened in Los Angeles, California, just a few months earlier.

Other Readings: American Century Cycle by August Wilson

- 1900: *Gem of the Ocean* (2002)
- 1910: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986)
- 1920: *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984)
- 1930: *The Piano Lesson* (1989)
- 1940: *Seven Guitars* (1995)
- 1950: *Fences* (1985)
- 1960: *Two Trains Running* (1990)
- 1970: *Jitney* (1982)
- 1980: *King Hedley II* (2001)
- 1997: *Radio Golf* (2005)

Meet the Creative Team and Cast

AUGUST WILSON

Playwright

August Wilson (April 27, 1945 – October 2, 2005) authored *Gem of the Ocean*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *King Hedley II*, and *Radio Golf*. These works explore the heritage and experience of African-Americans, decade-by-decade, over the course of the twentieth century. His plays have been produced at regional theaters across the country and all over the world, as well as on Broadway. In 2003, Mr. Wilson made his professional stage debut in his one-man show, *How I Learned What I Learned*. Mr. Wilson's works garnered many awards including Pulitzer Prizes for *Fences* (1987); and for *The Piano Lesson* (1990); a Tony Award for *Fences*; Great Britain's Olivier Award for *Jitney*; as well as eight New York Drama Critics Circle Awards for *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Two Trains Running*, *Seven Guitars*, *Jitney*, and *Radio Golf*. Additionally, the cast recording of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* received a 1985 Grammy Award, and Mr. Wilson received a 1995 Emmy Award nomination for his screenplay adaptation of *The Piano Lesson*. Mr. Wilson's early works included the one-act plays *The Janitor*, *Recycle*, *The Coldest Day of the Year*, *Malcolm X*, *The Homecoming*, and the musical satire *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*.

Mr. Wilson received many fellowships and awards, including Rockefeller and Guggenheim Fellowships in Playwriting, the Whiting Writers Award, 2003 Heinz Award, was awarded a 1999 National Humanities Medal by the President of the United States, and received numerous honorary degrees from colleges and universities, as well as the only high school diploma ever issued by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was an alumnus of New Dramatists, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 1995 inductee into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and on October 16, 2005, Broadway renamed the theater located at 245 West 52nd Street - The August Wilson Theatre. Additionally, Mr. Wilson was posthumously inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame in 2007.

Mr. Wilson was born and raised in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and lived in Seattle, Washington at the time of his death. He is immediately survived by his two daughters, Sakina Ansari and Azula Carmen Wilson, and his wife, costume designer Constanza Romero.

JUDE SANDY*‡, he/him

Director

Jude has been a resident company member since 2016. **Trinity Rep:** Direction for productions of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* and, with Joe Wilson, Jr., of Marcus Gardley's *black odyssey*. Choreography for six productions. *Scrooge and Christmas Present*, *A Christmas Carol*; *Seymour*, *Little Shop of Horrors*; *Deus*, *black odyssey*; *Othello*, *Othello*; *Reggie*, *Skeleton Crew*; *Demetrius*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Will Parker*, *Oklahoma!*; *Jem*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*; *Meridian/Papa D*, *Blues for Mister Charlie*; *Asagai*, *A Raisin in the Sun*; *Ensemble*, *Paris by Night*. **Broadway:** *War Horse*, Lincoln Center Theater. **Off-Broadway:** *The Little Prince*; *Hit The Wall*; *At the Table*. **Regional:** Shakespeare Theatre Company; Guthrie Theater; Cleveland Play House; The Williams Project; Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble. **Other:** MFA, Brown/Trinity Rep; Guthrie Experience for Actors in Training; American Dance Festival; American Dance Legacy Initiative/Dancing Legacy; Yin Mei Dance. Jude is a visiting assistant professor of Theater and Dance at Amherst College, a faculty artist with Middlebury College's Beyond The Page program, and co-founder/co-creator for Denizen Arts, an African diaspora and queer informed dance-theater collaboration with his life partner yaTande Whitney V. Hunter.

TAAVON GAMBLE*‡, he/him

Associate Director

Previously at Trinity Rep, Taavon has served as choreographer for the 2019 and 2021 productions of *A Christmas Carol*. **New York:** *The Color Purple* (NY Regional Premiere), *Hair* at WPPAC, *Blood Wedding* with Second Skin Productions. **Direction/Choreography:** *Joy* (virtual), City Theatre; *Pippin*, Jean's Playhouse; *West Side Story*, *Spamalot*, *Chicago*, *Guys and Dolls*, Bigfork Playhouse; *Seussical*, Pittsburgh

Playhouse; *A Chorus Line*, *All Shook Up*, Arundel Barn Playhouse; *Airness*, University California Santa Barbara; *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Brown University. **Other:** Taavon is a teaching artist for Trinity Rep's Young Actor's Summer Institute and teaches dance in the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program. www.taavongamble.com

YATANDE WHITNEY V. HUNTER, he/him

Movement & Ritual Direction

Trinity Rep: *Little Shop of Horrors* (2019), *black odyssey* (2019), *A Christmas Carol* (2017, 2018).

Theater: *We Are Proud to Present...*, Guthrie Theatre; *Lives of Great Poisoners*, Brown University; *The Persian Quarter*, Merrimack Repertory Theatre; *Finian's Rainbow*, Berkshire Theatre Festival; *a cautionary tail*, NYU Graduate Acting.

Choreography: Festival Ballet Providence, RISD Museum, New York SummerStage, Kumble Theater, Movement Research (Judson Church). **Education:** BFA, Howard University; MFA, Long Island University; Ph.D, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts.

MICHAEL ÉVORA, he/him

Music Director

Previously at Trinity Rep, Michael was the musical director for *black odyssey*. He is the founder and director of the Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir, now in its 30th year of music ministry throughout Rhode Island, Connecticut and Southeastern Massachusetts. He is committed to exploring the ability of music not simply to entertain, but to engage, educate, edify and enlighten. Michael is a civil rights attorney and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights. He lives in Providence with his husband Sean and two canine dependents, Gage and Tobey.

MICHAEL MCGARTY, he/him

Set Designer

2023 is the beginning of Mr. McGarty's 40th season of association with Trinity. In that time, he has designed upwards of fifty productions. He has designed extensively at regional theatre throughout the United States. Including The Public Theatre, Seattle Rep, The Old Globe, and The Dallas Theatre Center, among others. He has designed on Broadway and the West End of

London as well as opera in Europe and America. McGarty is an adjunct professor of design at Rhode Island School of Design.

LEVONNE LINDSAY, she/her
Costume Designer

LeVonne Lindsay is the Costume Shop Manager and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She has a BS in fashion design from Philadelphia University and an MFA in costume design from the University of Maryland, College Park. Academic positions held at Stevenson University, James Madison University, and Valdosta State University. Recipient of the Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship at Arena Stage 2001-2003 and Resident Designer for the African Continuum Theatre in Washington, DC 2002-2004. Recent design credits: *Kill, Move, Paradise*, Wilma Theater; *The Garbologists, Sweat*, Philadelphia Theatre Company; *Ragtime, Gem of the Ocean, The Bluest Eye*, Arden Theater Company; *A Hard Time*, Pig Iron Theater; *White*, Theater Horizon; *Time Is On Our Side*, Simpatico Theater; *Native Gardens, The Hampton Years*, Virginia Stage Company.

ALEJANDRO FAJARDO, he/him
Lighting Designer

Alejandro Fajardo is a Colombian lighting designer based in Lenapehoking (Brooklyn). Alejandro strongly believes that art and imagination can help guide our communities through the current crises we face and build a new future that centers community care and growth. His recent theatrical credits include *NYC Free*: a month-long performance festival at Little Island Park, *Murmur* (Kafka Collective), *The Bengson's Broken Ear Setlist: Songs from OHIO* (St. Ann's Warehouse), */wē/* and *fôr* (Michiyaya Dance), *Cherie Dre* (Danspace Projects), and more. Alejandro has designed two escape rooms at Big Sky Resort in Montana, as well as a series of theatrical immersive games at the Warren Miller Performing Arts Center (Big Sky, MT). Alejandro has designed the site lighting for music festivals (Electric Forest, Okeechobee Music and Arts Festival, Life is Beautiful) and many New York Fashion Week shows with Rob Ross Design; he is one of the associate Lighting Directors for Fall for Dance Festival at New York City Center. See more of his work at www.fajardodesigns.com

BROKEN CHORD
Original Music & Sound Designers

Trinity Rep: *Steel Magnolias, A Lie of the Mind, Crime and Punishment, The Glass Menagerie, The Melancholy Play, King Lear, Pride and Prejudice.*
Broadway: *The Parisian Woman, Eclipsed.*
Off-Broadway: *The Lying Lesson*, Atlantic Theater; *OZET, IAP; Bull in a China Shop, LCT3;*

When We Were Young and Unafraid, MTC; *Informed Consent*, Primary Stages; *The Good Negro, Party People*, Public Theater; *Dance and the Railroad*, Signature. Regional: *Ruined*, Berkeley Rep; *Fairfield*, Cleveland Play House; *The Great Society*, Dallas Theater Center; *Enemy of the People, As You Like It*, Guthrie Theater; *Make Believe*, Hartford Stage; *Top Girls*, Huntington Theatre; *UniSon*, OSF; *Hamlet, Macbeth*, Shakespeare Theatre; *These Paper Bullets!*, Yale Rep. **Film:** *Fall to Rise*. **brokenchord.us**

ALEC E. FERRELL*, he/him
Production Stage Manager

Alec E. Ferrell is a Philadelphia-based Stage Manager. **Regional Credits:** *My General Tubman* (World Premiere), *Indecent, Gem of the Ocean, Once, Fun Home, Gypsy, Parade, The Secret Garden, My Name is Asher Lev* (World Premiere) at Arden Theatre Company. **Other Regional Credits:** Adirondack Theatre Festival 2021, Phoenix Theatre Company, Theatre Horizon; PlayPenn New Play Development; Eugene O'Neill Theater Center; PTC@Play. **Internal:** [untitled project] #213 (Edinburgh Festival Fringe). Proud Member of AEA, SMA. Love and thanks to the family.

AMANDA KOSACK*, she/her
Assistant Stage Manager

Amanda is excited to make her Trinity Rep debut! **National Tours:** *School of Rock the Musical, Irving Berlin's White Christmas, Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story, Fela!* **Off-Broadway:** *Medea* (Brooklyn Academy of Music); *The Swimmer, Tom Morello at the Minetta Lane, Margaret Trudeau: Certain Woman of An Age* (Audible Theater); *Long Lost, Cost of Living* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *Wakey Wakey, Old Hats, Medieval Play, The Lady From Dubuque* (Signature Theatre); *All The Ways To Say I Love You* (MCC); *Cloud Nine* (Atlantic Theater Company); *The Way We Get By* (Second Stage). **Regional:** Long Wharf Theatre, SurfFlight Theatre, Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma. Oklahoma City University graduate. Love and thanks to Mom, Dad & Jared.

THE CAST

MAURO HANTMAN* ‡, he/him
Rutherford Selig



Trinity Rep: Mauro has been a member of Trinity Rep's resident acting company since 1999. Highlights include: *Macbeth, Macbeth*; Jack Burden, *All the King's Men*; *Cyrano, Cyrano de Bergerac*; *Hotspur, Henry IV*; Peter Pan, *Peter Pan*; *Dill, To Kill a Mockingbird*; Oberon, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Scoop, The Heidi Chronicles*; John Dodge, *Middletown*; Steve, *Clyborne Park*; Mr. Marx, *Intimate Apparel*; Hal,

Proof; Rooster Hannigan, *Annie*; George Bailey, *It's a Wonderful Life*; Wally, *The Cider House Rules*; Frank, *Appropriate*; Phil, *Faithful Cheaters*; Roderigo, *Othello*. **Other Theaters:** Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Wallis Annenberg Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Gamm Theatre, The Rhode Island Shakespeare Theater. Other: Mauro has an MFA from the Trinity Rep Conservatory. He was also a 2018 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow.

CHRISTOPHER LINDSAY, he/him
Citizen Barlow



Trinity Rep: Marley/Topper (u/s), *A Christmas Carol*. **Brown/Trinity Rep:** Prospero, *The Tempest*, Nick, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* **Regional:** Ferdinand, *The Tempest*, Stokely Carmichael, *The Parchman Hour*, Fred, *A Christmas Carol*, Virginia Stage Company, Asagai, *A Raisin in the Sun*, Cloverdale Playhouse. **Other:** Christopher is a fourth-year actor in the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA program. He holds a BA from Norfolk State University in English/Theater where he is also a charter member of the Alpha Theta Kappa Chapter of Alpha Psi Omega National Theatre Honor Society. Additionally, he is a recipient of the 2021 KCACTF Rosa Parks Playwriting Award, the 2021 KCACTF Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, & the 2016 KCACTF Most Distinguished Actor in a Play Award.

LIZ MORGAN*, she/her
Black Mary



Trinity Rep: Gabriella, *Boeing-Boeing*; Eva (u/s), *Absurd Person Singular* **Brown/Trinity Rep:** Venus, *Venus*; Countess, *All's Well that Ends Well*; Queen Margaret, *Richard III*; Vee Talboot, *Orpheus Descending*; First Witch, *Macbeth*; Romance, *Mo'Reece and the Girls*. **Other Theaters:** Camae, *The Mountaintop*, Capital Rep; Camae, *The Mountaintop*, Perseverance Theatre; Vicky, *Bright Half Life*, Company of Fools; Ensemble, *Othello*, Harlem Shakespeare Festival; Mouse, *whatdoesfreemean?*, Nora's Playhouse; *The Hunchback of Seville, Principal Principle, Chicken Grease is Nasty Business!*, Playwrights Rep; *He is Here He Says I Say, Na Luta, Inkblots*, Rites & Reason Theatre. **Film:** *Ted 2* **Other:** A proud graduate of Brown/Trinity Rep; Director of Training & Pedagogy at Theatre of the

Oppressed NYC; Co-Founder of The Fled Collective; 2021 TCG's Rising Leaders of Color.
www.LizMorganOnline.com

RICARDO PITTS-WILEY*, he/him
Solly Two Kings



Ricardo is an actor, playwright, composer, and director. **Trinity Rep:** He began his professional career at Trinity Rep in 1974 and appeared in *Brother to Dragons*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Tom Jones*, *Jumpers*, *The Little Foxes*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Good Times Are Killing Me*, *Boesman and Lena*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Jonestown Express*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Fences*, *The Piano Lesson*, *"Master Harold"... and the boys*, *The Cider House Rules*, and August Wilson's *Radio Golf*. **Other:** He co-founded Mixed Magic Theatre with his wife Bernadette V. Pitts-Wiley in 2000 and was a 2017 Pell Award recipient. He is the author and lyricist for the musicals *Celebrations: An African Odyssey*; *Waiting for Bessie Smith*; *Trains and Dreams*; *A Kwanzaa Song*; *Sara's Jukebox*; *Night's People*; *Man, Woman, Chaos*; and *The Well of Woman*. As a playwright he has written the dramas *Fate Comes Knocking*, *The Trial of Frederick Douglas*, *The Baghdad*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *35 Miles from Detroit*, and *Reflections: Growing Up a Black Man in America*, as well as page-to-stage adaptations of *Moby Dick*, *Frankenstein*, *Don Quixote*, *The Red Tent*, and *Sweat and The Gilded Six-Bits* by Zora Neale Hurston. Some of the universities where he has taught theater include MIT, URI, and RIC.

DEREKS THOMAS*, he/him
Eli



Trinity Rep: *Radio Golf*. **Off-Broadway:** *Ghost Stories: The Shawl & Prairie Du Chien*, Atlantic Theater Company. **Regional:** *Passing Strange*, Studio Theatre; *The Lily's Revenge*, *The Light Princess*, *The Donkey Show*, American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.). **International:** *The Imaginary Invalid*, Moscow Art Theatre (MXAT). **Television:** *Prodigal Son* (FOX). **Education:** MFA, A.R.T./MXAT Theater Institute at Harvard. BS, The Citadel: www.derekstomas.com

ROSE WEAVER*, she/her
Aunt Ester Tyler



This is Rose Weaver's 49th year as an actor, singer, and playwright. **Trinity Rep:** She began her career at Trinity Rep in 1973 as an Acting Fellow. Rose appeared as Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grille*, Dussie Mae in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Bernice in *The Piano Lesson*, The Witch in *Into the Woods*, *The Good Times Are Killing Me*, *The Waiting Room*, *Another Part of the Forest*, *Measure for Measure*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *Brother to Dragons*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Aimee*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Jonestown Express*, *Tintypes*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *School for Scandal*, and *From the Mississippi Delta*. **Other Theatres:** Los Angeles / The Mark Taper, The Walnut Street Theatre, Old Globe San Diego, Arkansas Rep, National Theatre Company. **Film/Television:** *In the Heat of the Night*, *Poetic Justice*, *LA Law*, *Tales From the Crypt*, *The Accused*, *Not In My Family*, *Lady in White*, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*. **Other:** Original Plays include *Menopause Mama*, *Skips in the Record*, *Black Women Taking Off the Masks*. **Teaching:** Wheaton College, RI College, Moses Brown School. **Awards:** The Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts 2000, R. I. Heritage Harbor Hall of Fame, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowships in Playwriting, Lucille Lortel Playwriting Award, GoLocal Providence's R.I. Woman of the Year, Rhode Island Foundation Fellowships and New Works Awards, Business Volunteers in the Arts/RI Achievement in the Arts, YWCA Woman of the Year Awards in Arts, and The RI Historical Society History Maker Award. Rose is the author and actress of the one woman play, *Menopause Mama* and the new play, *Black Women Taking Off the Masks*. Rose is published in *Monologues for Women by Women*, *Heinemann*, and *NuMuse: An Anthology of Plays from Brown University*. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wheaton College (Massachusetts), a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Brown University at the age of 50, and holds three Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts Degrees from Wheaton College, Marymount Manhattan College, and Providence College. Excited to be back on stage at Trinity with a fine cast and superb director, Jude Sandy!

JOE WILSON, JR.* ‡, he/him
Caesar Wilks



Trinity Rep: In 17 seasons as a company member, plays include: August Wilson's *Radio Golf*, *The Prince of Providence*, *Marisol*, *The Song of Summer*, *black odyssey* (co-director and the role of Ulysses), *The Mountaintop*, *Oklahoma!* (IRNE Award), *Julius Caesar*, *Intimate Apparel*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Clybourne Park*, *Camelot*, *Yellowman*, *Cabaret*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *A Christmas Carol* (director in 2021), *All The King's Men*, *The Fantasticks*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Topdog/Underdog* (IRNE Award), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (IRNE Award), *Hamlet*. **Broadway:** *Iceman Cometh* (2018 Tony-Nominated Best Revival) starring Denzel Washington, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (2000 Tony Nominated Best Revival). **Off-Broadway:** *Little Ham* and *Josephine's Song*. **Regional:** Huntington, Penumbra, North Shore Music Theatre, Alliance, McCarter, Syracuse Stage, Guthrie, Ordway Music Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, New Rep, and American Players. **Other:** MFA, Univ. of Minnesota/Guthrie; BA, Notre Dame. Joe and Trinity Rep participated in the Fox Foundation Resident Actor Fellowships, funded by the William & Eva Fox Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group. He is on the board of the Manton Avenue Project in Providence, RI. He was inducted into the MLK Hall of Fame at Providence City Hall, and was the Medgar Evers Award winner with the Providence NAACP.

* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

‡ Trinity Rep Resident Acting Company member

PLOT SYNOPSIS

by Rachael Warren

It is 1904 in the Hill District of Philadelphia & the house at 1839 Wylie Avenue is a sanctuary at the center of a storm. The house belongs to Aunt Esther, a former slave, who claims to be 285 years old. She serves as a cultural & spiritual leader of the African-American community & is known as a cleanser of souls. Also residing at 1836 is Black Mary Wilks, a sort of housekeeper to Aunt Esther who has also been chosen by Aunt Esther to learn & continue the art of soul cleansing & Eli, her longtime gatekeeper & protector. Others who pass in & out of the home during the play are Caesar Wilks, the local law keeper & also Black Mary's brother, Solly Two Kings, Eli's longtime friend & a former conductor on the Underground Railroad who loves Aunt Esther, Rutherford Selig, a traveling peddler, & Citizen Barlow, a young man who comes to Aunt Mary asking for his soul to be washed clean of a crime he will not name.

ACT ONE

Within the first scenes of the play, Citizen Barlow arrives at 1839 Wylie asking for Aunt Esther & is told that she isn't seeing anyone until Tuesday. He proceeds to wait outside the house. Eli is working on a stone wall that is meant to protect the home. The community is on edge due to an unfolding event at the local mill—a bucket of nails was stolen & the man who stood accused of the crime claimed his innocence, jumped into the river to avoid arrest, refused to come out & drowned. Solly arrives to have Black Mary read a letter he has received from his sister in the South that asks for advice on how to survive the terrible conditions she & the other former slaves are being subjected to. Solly decides immediately to travel south to Alabama to bring her to the relative safety of Pittsburg.

In the middle of the night, Citizen Barlow enters the house & is met by Aunt Esther who says he reminds her of one of her lost children, Junebug. After telling her about his troubles he falls asleep & Aunt Esther instructs Black Mary to set up a bedroom for him there so he can help Eli build the wall.

Soon, the mill workers began to riot in protest of the working conditions that they are subject to, refusing to return to work until their demands are met. Hundreds have been arrested. Caesar is tasked with ending the riot & returning order to the mill—he vows to give the people one more day to desist or else “there'll be hell to pay”.

Act One ends with Citizen confessing his crime to Aunt Esther who then sends him on a quest to find 2 pennies lying side by side & a piece of iron & return with them. Once that task is complete, she promises to take him to the City of Bones to cleanse his soul. In the very last moment, Eli runs in & announces that the mill is on fire.

ACT TWO

Act Two begins with Selig giving Aunt Esther & Black Mary the news that someone claims to know who set the fire at the mill. The fire is still burning & as far as Philadelphia Selig has heard white people expressing racist sentiments, using the fire & the ensuing riots as justification.

Citizen returns with the two pennies, although he failed to find the iron. Aunt Esther tells him to get ready for his journey to the City of Bones.

Solly returns to say goodbye before leaving to get his sister from Alabama. Aunt Esther asks him to stay & help her, Black Mary & Eli get Citizen to the City of Bones. He agrees. Solly also gives Citizen a piece of the chain that used to be around his ankle during slavery—which has been a good luck totem for him—so that Citizen can have some iron on his journey.

Citizen takes his journey to the City of Bones & returns transformed; his soul clean. Just as the journey ends, Caesar bursts in, accuses Solly of setting fire to the mill & tries to arrest him. Solly hits him & escapes.

Aunt Esther sends Citizen to find Selig to help Solly escape Pittsburg to safety. Just as Solly, Selig & Citizen are about to leave, Caesar arrives. They narrowly escape. Caesar arrests Aunt Esther for helping to hide Solly.

After Eli gets Aunt Esther released on bond, Citizen returns with the news that Caesar has shot Solly when they were trying to return to the jail & free the people who had been arrested during the protest at the mill. Citizen & Selig bring him into Aunt Esther's parlor & he dies. The group holds an impromptu memorial service for him. Just as it is ending, Caesar arrives to find & arrest Citizen for his part in Solly's attempted escape, celebrating the death of Solly. Black Mary denounces Caesar, saying he isn't her brother. Stunned, Caesar leaves without making the arrest.

Eli, Aunt Esther, Citizen & Black Mary finish the memorial service & Citizen puts on Solly's coat & hat, finding Solly's sister's letter as he does so. In the last moment of the play, Citizen leaves with the letter, intending to rescue the sister as Solly had intended.

Liz Morgan as Black Mary and Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow



Pittsburgh, PA and the Evolution of the Hill District

By Taavon Gamble

The major lure of inhabitants to Pittsburgh early on were the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio Rivers. Early in the mid-1700s, these were thriving lands for Native Americans who understand the advantages these specific lands held. Soon after, the French and the British coveted the land. Early settlers were mostly farmers and because the Allegheny Mountains was rather difficult, they became very self-sufficient, learning to make their own goods rather than waiting for them to be shipped over the mountains. Quickly, by the 1790s, over 300 inhabitants occupied the area. Among them were blacksmiths, shoemakers, tanners, brewers, cabinetmakers, tinsmiths, and more.

GATEWAY TO THE WEST

By the beginning of the 1800s, Pittsburgh had become known as the “Gateway to the West” because it was a debarkation point for those heading westward. 1811, the first steamboat was launched “the New Orleans”, having been built in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh’s major draw was that it was a town blessed with a wealth of natural resources such as coal, oil, limestone, and natural gas.

By 1816, Pittsburgh developed into a city and by 1854, the Pennsylvania Railroad opening, making travel to the area more convenient.

Pittsburgh became a manufacturing mecca. The Civil War and the growth of the railroads spurred industrialization. The area’s abundance of coal really helped. The area soon became known as the “Smoky City” for how much coal was burned to provide energy to all of the factories.

THE 20TH CENTURY

The rivers continued to be the major attraction for people and the region’s population continued to grow. People flocked to Pittsburgh to obtain employment in the mills and factories. The early 1900s was a period of time where African Americans migrated to Pittsburgh in large numbers. The Hill District became a jazz hot-stop, featuring legends like Duke Ellington. In 1900, black steelworkers in Homestead formed the Murdock Grays, a baseball team renamed the Homestead Grays in 1912.

THE GREAT MIGRATION

The Great Migration was a mass movement of about six million southern African Americans to the north and west from the early 1900s to 1960. Between 1780-1910, more than 90% of the African-American population lived in



the South. The economic motivations for migration were a combination of the desire to escape oppressive economic conditions in the south and the promise of greater prosperity in the north. Since the emancipation from slavery, southern rural black people had suffered in a plantation economy that offered no chance of advancement. WWI created a huge demand for workers in northern factories and created more opportunities. This demand was because of the loss of 5 million men who left to serve in the armed forces, as well as the restriction of foreign immigration. Many were paid travel expenses and given free railroad passes for how desperate workers were needed at many steel mills, factories, tanneries and especially the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Besides work advancement, other reasons for migration were lynching, an unfair legal system, inequality in education, and denial of suffrage in the South.

WORKING: FINDING A PLACE

Many employers preferred to hire native-born whites and immigrants for higher paying industrial jobs. Others believed that blacks were farmers by nature and were thus ill suited to industrial employment. Most trade unions excluded African Americans, effectively shutting them out of the labor movement. These economic and social barriers limited employment opportunities for black men to the most taxing, dangerous and menial positions

MIGRATION TENSION AND VIOLENCE

The migration did create immediate tension with mixing of white and black workers in the factories. The American Federation of Labor had advocated for the separation between White and African American workers in the workplace. Protests and walk-outs became frequent. One of the most known and bloodiest workplace riots, the East St Louis Illinois Riot, saw between 50-200 killed and 6000 African Americans displaced from their homes.

The time period from late winter through early autumn of 1919 had been referred to as the Red Summer. It was a period of time that white supremacist terrorism and racial riots took place in more than three dozen cities across the United States.

HOMESTEAD STEELWORKS STRIKE

Just before the turn of the century, Pittsburgh experienced one of its' major strikes during the summer of 1892. When industrialist Andrew Carnegie left Pittsburgh for vacation, he had left Henry Clay Frick in charge of operations at his steel

plants. At that time, the steel plants were in the middle of some labor strife. Frick had been ordered that if the workers didn't accept the new terms, then he should close the plant and wait the men out. Frick locked the workers out and announced that he would no longer negotiate with the union, but only with individual workers. The remaining workers who weren't locked out went on strike on July 1st. Frick countered by planning to reopen with a non-union workforce. Frick called in 300 armed Pinkerton guards to the Homestead plant. When the barges filled with guards sailed up the Monongahela River, the striking workers on shore warned the guards not to disembark. No one knows for certain who fired the first shot, but what is known is that for 14 hours union workers and armed guards engaged in a gun battle. When the fighting ceased, three guards and nine workers were dead. The workers took over the plant, but the governor sent in the militia to reclaim it for Carnegie.

THE HILL DISTRICT

The Hill District, as we know it now, is the area bordered by Downtown Pittsburgh, The Strip District, Polish Hill, Uptown, and Oakland. The following neighborhoods comprised The Hill District: Crawford Square, Bedford Dwellings, Uptown/Bluff, Terrace Village, Upper Hill, Middle Hill, and lower Hill. The Hill District, originally known as "farm number three", was owned by William Penn's grandson. This land changed hands numerous times before being subdivided and sold to developers in the late 1840s. Jewish, Italian, Syrian, Greek, and Polish settlers became some of the first to settle in the neighborhood. African Americans began arriving from the South between 1880 and 1890. By the early 1900s, the Hill District quickly became a vibrant, politically active community, rich in diversity and culture. It became the cultural center of black life in the city and a major center of jazz music. The Hill District was the place to stop between Harlem and Chicago during the 20s-50s.

Did you know?

FACTS ABOUT 1904

Since the early 1900s, America has experienced major changes in its' demographic makeup and in how people lived. Just think – in the early 1800s, roughly only 8,000 automobiles were on the road in the United States, and only about 10 miles of paved roads existed. Here are some fun facts about life during 1904, the year *Gem of the Ocean* takes place.

INFLATION 1904 vs. 2022

What would cost \$2 in 1904
would cost \$62.46 in 2022

What would cost \$100 in 1904
would cost \$3,132.61 in 2022

LIFESTYLE

Only 14% of homes in the U.S. had a
bathtub

Only 8% of the homes had a
telephone

The average life expectancy in the U.S.
was 47 years

95% of all births in the U.S. took place
at home

COSTS IN 1904

\$0.15 - One pound of coffee

\$0.04/pound – Sugar

\$0.14 – A dozen eggs

\$650 – One Oldsmobile

\$11.00 – A three-minute call from
Denver to New York City

WAGES

The average wage in the U.S. was \$0.22 an hour

The average U.S. worker made between
\$200 and \$400 per year

A veterinarian made between
\$1,500 and \$4,000 per year

A mechanical engineer made about
\$5,000 per year

Vocabulary

Acts/scenes: An act is a part of a play defined by elements such as rising action, climax and resolution. A scene is a part of an act defined with the changing of characters

Aiding and Abetting: helping and encouraging

Antagonist: a character, group of characters, institution, or concept that stands in or represents opposition to the protagonist

Arson: the willful or malicious burning of property

The Civil War: The American Civil War (1861-1865) was a civil war in the United States fought between the Union (North) and the Confederacy (South) with the central cause being the status of slavery

Dialogue: a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie

Emancipation: being freed from someone else's control or power

Loitering: to remain in an area for no obvious reason

Mill: a building or collection of buildings with machinery for manufacturing

Monologue: a long speech by one actor in a play or movie

Playwright: a person who writes plays

Protagonist: the leading character in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text

Redemption: the act of making something better; of saving people from sin or evil

Refuge: shelter or protection from danger or distress

Riot: a tumultuous disturbance of the public peace

Sanctuary: a person who writes plays

Stage Directions: the leading character in a drama, movie, novel, or other fictional text

Underground Railroad: a character, group of characters, institution, or concept that stands in or represents opposition to the protagonist

Vanity: An act is a part of a play defined by elements such as rising action, climax and resolution. A scene is a part of an act defined with the changing of characters.

Vengeance: a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie

Warrant: a long speech by one actor in a play or movie

Unit 2 Entering the Text

Major Themes

Guilt, Innocence, and Absolution

In August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*, Citizen Barlow arrives at 1839 Wylie Avenue in desperate need of Aunt Ester's help. Citizen's guilt over his role in a man's death quickly becomes more than he can bear, but he knows that the laws of men hold no chance for redemption. He hears in town that Aunt Ester is a washer of souls and he seeks her out, believing that she is his last chance of being absolved of his sin and his chance at a new life. Aunt Ester agrees to help him by taking him to the City of Bones, where he must face the truth of what he has done. This journey of restorative justice brings Citizen the moral salvation he seeks.

Family and Identity

The characters in *Gem of the Ocean* continuously strive to create their own identities, freeing themselves from the confines of perception and history. The idea of belonging to a strong community and finding your family is extremely important to these characters. It is unique that most of the characters at 1839 Wylie Avenue are not biologically related to one another. They are chosen family. Solly Two Kings redefines himself on his own terms, having rejected the name given to him and choosing one that he wants. For Solly, community seems more important than his own existence as he gives his life for his community by burning down the mill to help the exploited workers. The need to keep a sense of identity integrity in a world where labels have significant consequences is so strong that Garret Brown is willing to die if it means that he will not live out the rest of his life branded as a thief and a liar.

Memory and The Past

The past is a frequent presence throughout *Gem of the Ocean*. In 1904, the country was still recovering from the devastation of slavery, secession, and war which continues to loom over the characters in the play. Citizens, plagued with guilt from an event gone by, might rather forget the past. Others, like Aunt Ester, carry the weight of the past in the hope of seeing progress and change in the future. Aunt Ester holds on to her experiences and the experiences of others through her memory with hopes of passing on to Black Mary to keep alive and relevant. The past also holds a physical presence throughout the play. Both Solly and Aunt Ester hold on to items that serve as reminders of the past with the chain link and the Bill of Sale.



Joe Wilson, Jr. as Caesar



Mauro Hantman as Rutherford Selig and Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow

Exercise 1: Role Play and Improvisation

Part 1: Community Meeting

Hold a Community Meeting; Organize a 1904 Pittsburgh Hill District community meeting to discuss issues raised in the play:

Instructions:

- Caesar's eviction policies
- Poor housing conditions
- Racism
- Unemployment
- The strike at the mill
- violence
- Etc.

Have each of your students' role play a character from the play (if there are more students than characters, have some students create characters that might have lived in the Hill District in 1904). The teacher should be in role as the mediator to probe students for further thought and to guide discussion.

Part 2: Hold a Debate

1. *Choose two characters in August Wilson's Gem of The Ocean that have differing opinions about a central issue in the play*

2. *Ask for two volunteers and conduct a debate on this issue. Give the first pair a chance to argue their case for at least two minutes.*
3. *Next, ask the other members of the class if anyone would like to "tap in" and take over one or both of the characters by entering the scene silently and gently tapping the actor they wish to replace.*
4. *Give these two a chance to debate, and then allow others to "tap in" again. Continue this process as long as there are students who wish to participate in the debate. This allows students to hear different perspectives.*

Exercise 2: Open Response & Writing Assignments

Instructions for students: Please answer the following as thoroughly as possible. Remember to use topic sentences and examples from the text.

Open Response Assessments

1. Most plays have a protagonist and antagonistic force. Define these two terms. Who or what is the protagonist in this play? Who or what is the antagonist? Justify your choices.
2. Aunt Ester believes that things work out according to God's plan. Define fate. In what ways do the characters try to control fate?

Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester and Ricardo Pitts-Wiley as Solly Two-Kings

Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester and Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow



3. Eli is building a rock wall around Aunt Ester's house to keep Caesar out. How is building a wall of rock different than building a fence? What are some effects the wall might have on the relationship between Aunt Ester's house and the community?
4. Why did Citizen Barlow's mother name him "Citizen" after freedom came? What does it mean to be a citizen?

Writing Assignments

1. What perspective does Caesar have on Black Americans and freedom? Describe in your own words what happened in Caesar's that led him to feel this way. Contrast Caesar's social/political point of view with another character's point of view in the play.
2. Solly set fire to the mill and attempted to burn down the prison, why is that? What does the mill and prison symbolize in the lives of Black Americans? Was Solly's actions justified? Imagine you are Solly, write a letter to another character in the play explaining your reasons for committing this crime.
3. What does it mean to "do the right thing?" Who decides what the right thing is? Research an event in history when a person, or a group of people, defied the law (i.e., Harriet Tubman/ Underground Railroad, Rosa Parks/ Civil Rights Movement etc.) for social and/or political reasons. Write a report describing the circumstances of the event. Do you agree with the choice(s) that were made? Why or why not?

Exercise 3: August Wilson's Legacy

Note to Teachers: Use the following ideas to engage your class in thinking about August Wilson, introducing them to Gem of The Ocean and its major themes.

Research the life, work, and legacy of August Wilson. Have students choose one aspect of Wilson's life they find particularly relevant or inspiring and write essays describing why or how this is so for them. Topics to consider might include:

- Family History
- Youth in Pittsburgh's Hill District
- Education
- Development as a Playwright
- Influence on American Theatre
- Attitudes and Reflections on Playwriting
- Thirteen-year Collaboration with Lloyd Richards
- Collaboration with Marion McClinton and Kenny Leon
- Awards and Honors

Family History and Heritage

Wilson's work asserts that the only way for African-Americans to gain control of their existence is to dig deeper into the past; to remember and connect the stories of Africa, slavery, the U.S. civil war, emancipation, the Harlem Renaissance, and the civil rights movement, to the present. Ask students to investigate their own heritage by interviewing an older family or community member.

Ask students to investigate their own heritage by interviewing an older family or community member.

1. How were things different for them when they were growing up?
2. How does their past affect the way this person lives their life or views the world today?
3. What events or memories from their past are most powerful for them today?
4. Encourage students to think about pivotal events from their own lifetime and how these events have affected them. How do the experiences of the older generation relate to their own?

Exercise 4: Row Your Boat

In the show, this boat is what takes Citizen to the City of Bones to cleanse and free himself from his guilt. Aunt Ester shows Citizen a quilt map with the location of the City of Bones, which Aunt Ester says is the home of thousands of enslaved Africans who did not survive the voyage to America. She folds the bill of sale from when she was sold as a slave into a boat and tells Citizen that he will sail on it to the city so he can wash his soul. Citizen, unsurprisingly, doesn't understand how he would sail on a small piece of paper, but Aunt Ester insists that if Citizens believes the boat will take him there, it will.

Supplies

- Copy Paper/ Construction paper/ Cardstock
- Pen/Pencil

Directions:

1. Have students write on the piece of paper something they would like to get off their chest. Something that they have been harboring and would like to release.
2. Using the same paper start constructing the paper boats.

Note: For physical demonstration of the paper boats actually floating in water, try using cardstock to create the paper boats.

Exercise 5: 101 Ways to Read a Monologue

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it. Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do, and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it.

- In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.
- After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want -- this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions, and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are definitely not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, a drunk, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King...you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue.
- This can be done with all of the students working in partners or on their own at the same time. If this is a particularly brave group, you can challenge them to take your suggestions and perform individually in front of the class.
- After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, actually worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?



Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester and Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow

Monologues and Scenes

AUNT ESTER

I dreamed you had a ship full of men and you was coming across the water. Had that stick and you was standing up in this boat full of men. You come and asked me what I was doing standing there. I told you I wanted to go back across the ocean. I asked you to take me. You said you had some work to do but that you would come back. Told me you had a magic stick and when you come back you would part the water so I could walk across it. You said oyu were going to get another boat and some more men. Said you would come back and smote the water. Then you walked off with that stick. Said you was going to Alabama.

CITIZEN

Alabama. I only been up here for four weeks. When I left Alabama they had all the roads closed to colored people. I had to sneak out. Say they didn't want anybody to leave. Say we had to stay there and work. I told my mama I was going and she say okay. Told me 'there a big world out there.' I kissed her. She told me she loved me and I left. I almost got caught a couple of times. I had to go out the back way and find my own roads. Took me almost two weeks. There was some other people out on the road and we helped each other. Me and a fellow Roper Lee went over to the mill. They say they was paying two dolalrs a day but when we got there they say a dollar fifty. Then they say we got to pay two dollars room and board. They sent us over to a place the man say we got to put two dollars on top of that. Then he put two men to a room with one bed. The fellow I was with want to fight about it. I'm just starting out I don't want no trouble. I told him I would sleep on the floor. I wasn't planning on sleeping there long. I'm just starting out sleeping there. I asked on fellow what board meant. He say they supposed togive you something to eat. They ain't give us nothing. I say okay. I can't make them give me nothing. What am I gonna do? I got to eat. I bought a loaf of bread for a dime. I had sixty five cents to make it to

payday. I ate half the bread and say I would get a bowl of soup tomorrow. Come payday they give me three dollars say the rest go on my bill. I had to give the man what own the house two dollars. What I'm gonna do, Miss Tyler? I told the people at the mill I was gonna get another job. They said I couldn't do that cause I still owed them money and they was gonna get the police on me. I was gonna go to another city but then before I had a chance I killed a man. I don't know, Miss Tyler. I feel like I got a hole inside me. People say you can help me. I don't want to go to hell, Miss Tyler. My mama cry every time something bad happen to me.

AUNT ESTER

Take a look at this map, Mr. Citizen. See that right there... that's a city. It's only a half mile by half mile but that's a city. It's made of bones. Pearly white bones. All the buildings and everything is made of bones. I seen it. I been there, Mr. Citizen. My mother live there. I got an aunt and three uncles live donwn there in that city made of bones. You want to go there Mr. Citizen? I can take you there if you want to go. That's the center of the world. In time it will all come to light. The people made a kingdom out of nothing. They were the people that didn't make it across the water. They sat down right there. They say 'Let's make a kingdom. Let's make a city of bones.' The people got a bunnig tongue, Mr. Citizen. Their mouths are on fire with song. That water can't put it out. That song is powerful. It rise up and come acros the water. Ten thousand tongues and ten thousand chariots coming across the water. They on their way, Mr. Citizen. They coming across the water. Ten thousand hands and feet coming across the water. They are on their way. I came across that ocean, Mr. Citizen. I cried. I had lost everything. Everything I had ever known in this life I lost that. I cried a ocean of tears. Did you ever lose anything like that Mr. Citizen? Where you so lost the only thing that can guide you is the stars. That's all I had left. Everything I had ever known was gone to me. The only thing I had was the stars.

Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester and Christopher Lindsay as Citizen Barlow



Prologue – pdf pg 3, script pg 1

ELI :

This is a peaceful house.

CITIZEN: I come to see Aunt Ester. .

ELI: You got to come back Tuesday. She don't see nobody till Tuesday.

CITIZEN: What you mean come back? The people say go see aunt Ester. This 1839 Wylie ain't it?

ELI: Come back Tuesday. *(He starts to close the door. CITIZEN pushes his way in.)*

CITIZEN: I ain't going anywhere till I see Aunt Ester

ELI: You got to come back Tuesday.

(CITIZEN tries to go around ELI Who grabs him and shoves him toward the door. They knock over a lamp and CITIZEN'S hat falls off as ELI Tussles with him. AUNT

ESTER enters from her room. Her presence has an immediate calming affect on CITIZEN. She picks up his hat, brushes it off, and hands it to him.) inside.

AUNT ESTER : Didn't he say Tuesday, baby? Go on I'll see you on Tuesday.

(Citizen takes his hat and goes out the door. AUNT ESTER turns around and goes back into her room.)

(The Lights go down on the scene.)

Act One, Scene One: Aunt Ester, Solly, & Black Mary - pdf pg 14 –15, script 12-13

(BLACK MARY exits up the stairs.)

SOLLY: There's a Great Dane up on Arcena street. I been trying to get some of that but he don't never let him out. Great big old dog. Look like a small horse.

Liz Morgan as Black Mary



AUNT ESTER : They say that helps with tomatoes. But I'll be satisfied with this.

(She takes some coins out of a small purse and gives them to SOLLY.)

AUNT ESTER: I don't know what got into this child. Seem like she don't want to learn nothing.

SOLLY: Black Mary stubborn. Her and Caesar just alike. Only she ain't got his evilness. But she got everything else. They say the apple don't fall too far from the tree. But sometime it fall far enough. That's the difference between her and Caesar. The apple fell and then it rolled a little bit.

(BLACK MARY enters carrying her purse.) .

BLACK MARY : I'm going shopping

AUNT ESTER : I thought you was gonna do the laundry.

BLACK MARY : I got to go down on Logan Street.

AUNT ESTER : It ain't like it's gonna do itself. You got to plan better. I told you the key is to plan. You play right you can unlock any door. You got to run down on Logan street and do the laundry. You got to do both.

BLACK MARY : I ain't say I wasn't gonna do it. I said I'm going out now.

(BLACK MARY exits.)

Act One, Scene Three: Solly and Citizen – pdf pg 27, script pg 24

SOLLY: My name is Two Kings. Used to be Uncle Alfred. The government looking for me for being a runaway so I changed it.

CITIZEN : My mama named me Citizen after freedom came. She wouldn't like it if I changed my name.

SOLLY: Your mama's trying to tell you something. She put a heavy load on you. It's hard to be a citizen. You gonna have to fight to get that. And time you get it you be surprised how heavy it is. I used to be called Uncle Alfred back in slavery. I ran into one fellow called me Uncle Alfred. I told him say, 'Uncle Alfred dead.' He say,

'I'm looking at you.' I told him, "You looking at Two Kings. That's David and Solomon.' He must have had something in his ear cause all he heard is Solomon. He say, 'I'm gonna call you Solly.' The people been calling me Solly ever since. But my name is Two Kings. Some people call me Solomon and some people call me David. I answer to either one. I don't know which one God gonna call me. If he call me Uncle Alfred then we got a big fight.

Act One, Scene Three: Black Mary, Solly and Eli – pdf pg 29-30, script pg 26-27

BLACK MARY : You want a bowl of beans, Solly?

SOLLY : What kind is they? I had a couple of old gals try and poison me. With this one gal the doctor told me I was lucky. Say if I had eaten another bite I would have died. Good thing she couldn't cook. I was just eating to be polite.

BLACK MARY : They baby lima beans cooked up with some ham hocks.

SOLLY : I can't eat no lima beans. They belly busters. But I can eat baby lima beans. They agree with me a little better.

ELI : When I was a boy we used to say a little rhyme.

Beans beans the musical fruit.
The more you eat the more you toot.
The mor you too the better you feel
So have those beans at every meal.

SOLLY : Them big lima beans tell the truth about that. Hey Black Mary I got another pair of pants and a shirt that needs washing. I ain't got but a dime.

BLACK MARY : Where's all these dollars you be getting form selling that dog shit. Come in here the other day bragging about it.

SOLLY : I'll give you fifteen cents. I justs bought a new pair of shoes.

(BLACK MARY sits a bowl of lima beans and cornbread in front of CITIZEN.)

SOLLY: If I had the fifteen cents I'd give it to you. I try to do the right thing. I always wanna be on the right side. But sometimes I don't know what side that is. They say, 'God have planned but the devil have planned also.'

BLACK MARY : God ain't never wrong

SOLLY: God say different things. Say, 'I will smite my enemies.' Then he tell you to turn the other cheek. That don't get you nothing but two broke jaws.

BLACK MARY : You wanna be like God. Everything that's for Him ain't for you. That's why God threw Lucifer out of heaven.



Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester

SOLLY: That's what I'm saying. Lucifer was God's enemy. God ain't turned the other cheek. He picked Lucifer up and threw him down into hell.

BLACK MARY: The bible say, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,'

SOLLY: God ain't done that! He didn't want Lucifer to throw him out of heaven. He wanted lucifer to bow down and pledge obedience. That's what he would have Lucifer do unto him. He wasn't gonna bow down and pledge obedience to Lucifer.

(There is a knock on the door. ELI goes to answer it. CAESAR enters. About fifty-two years old, he is the local constable and BLACK MARY's brother.)

Act One, Scene Four: Aunt Ester, Black Mary, & Citizen
– pdf pg 41-42, script pg 38-39

AUNT ESTER: When you gonna comb out your hair? You got pretty hair. I don't know why you trying to hide it. Is you getting along with Mr. Citizen? He ain't no trouble is he?

BLACK MARY: He ain't no trouble. Eli trying to figure out how he got in the house.

AUNT ESTER: He knocked on the door and I let him in.

BLACK MARY: Eli say you ain't answered a door in twenty-five years. Say it look like somebody knocked some of the paint off coming through the hall window.

AUNT ESTER: If he knew what he ask for? I told you that's the problem now. People waste their time asking all the wrong questions. The question ain't how he got in. The question is who left the window open? That's the question. I told you don't waste the water. Put them in a pot and wash them off in the pot.

(AUNT ESTER slaps BLACK MARY'S hands.)

Don't leave all the them stems on there. You got that fire too high. Damp that fire down. Wake me up if Solly come back.

(BLACK MARY is chopping vegetables at the sink. CITIZEN enters with a bucket.)

CITIZEN: Eli sent me for some water.

BLACK MARY: There it is over there.

(CITIZEN starts to draw the water.)

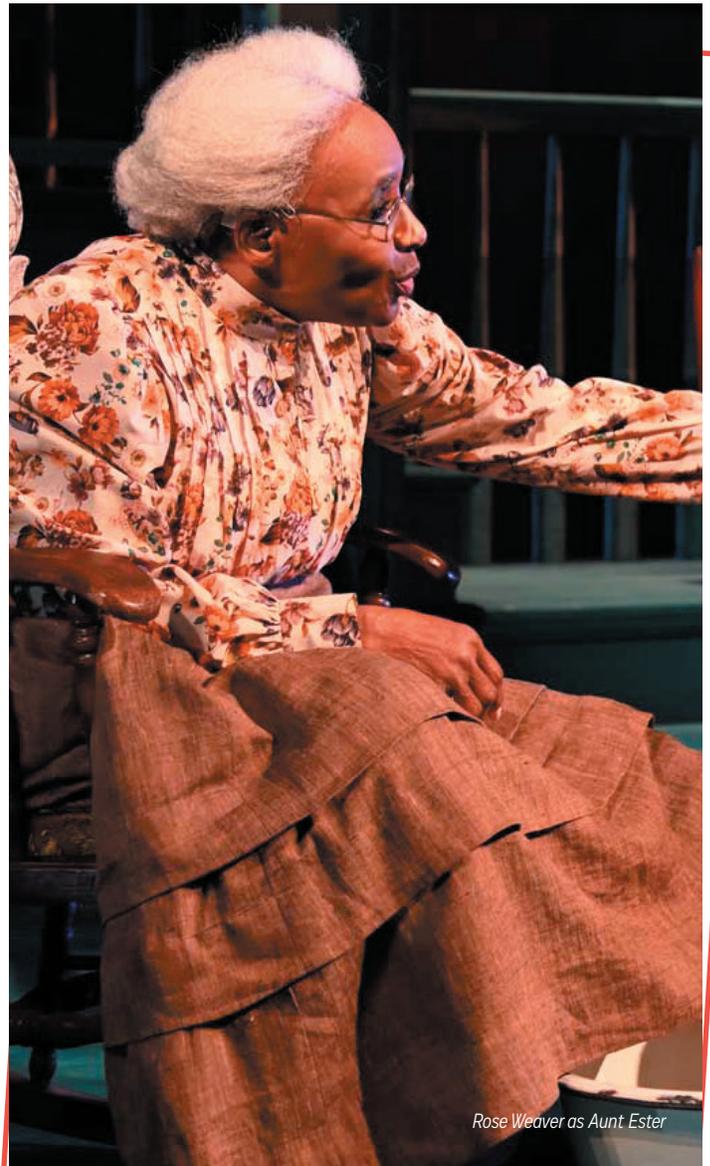
BLACK MARY: You knocked some of the paint off the sill coming through the window.

(CITIZEN is taken aback.)

CITIZEN: I couldn't wait till Tuesday. I got to get my soul washed real bad. You ever had your soul washed?

BLACK MARY: God's the only one can wash your soul.

CITIZEN: The people sent me to see Aunt Ester. One



Rose Weaver as Aunt Ester

man say he came to see Aunt Ester and all his problems went away. Says she can help anybody.

BLACK MARY : You got to help yourself. Aunt Ester can help you if you willing to help yourself. She ain't got no magic power.

CITIZEN : The people say 'Go see Aunt Ester and get your soul washed.'

BLACK MARY : The people say a lot of things.

CITIZEN : I like your hands. You got pretty hands.

BLACK MARY : I do too much laundry to have pretty hands. They're a woman's hands. That's all you see.

**Act Two, Scene Four: Aunt Ester, Caesar, & Black Mary
– pdf pg 86-87 - script pg 82-83**

AUNT ESTER : Sit on down there Mr. Caesar. I'm getting so I can't hardly move no more. I don't know what it is. My joints don't move right. If this keep up I'm gonna have to send for the doctor.

CAESAR: Aunt Ester I got a warrant here...

AUNT ESTER : I see you got a piece of paer. I got a piece of paper too. Black Mary get my piece of paper over there. Sit on down there Mr. Caesar I want to show you something.

(BLACK MARY takes the boat out of the drawer and hands it to AUNT ESTER who unfolds it. She hands it back to BLACK MARY.)

Give that to Caesar let him take a look at it.

(BLACK MARY hands CAEASR the paper.)

Tell me how much that piece of paper's worth, Mr. Caesar.

CAESAR: *Know all men by these present that I, William J. Ogburn of the county of Guilford...State of North Carolina, have this day sold and delivered...to Issac Thatcher... a Negro slave girl named Ester, twelve years five months old... for the sum of \$607. The right and title to said girl...I warrant and defend now and forever to be sound and healthy.*

This is a bill of sale.



Liz Morgan as Black Mary

AUNT ESTER : It say on there Ester. That's a bill of sale for Ester Tyler. That's me. Now you tell me how much it's worth, Mr. Caesar.

CAESAR : I wouldn't give you ten cents for it.

AUNT ESTER : Then how much you think your paper's worth. You see, Mr. Caesar, you can put the law on the paper but that don't make it right. That piece of paper say I was property. Say anybody could buy or sell me. The law say I needed a piece of paper to say I was a free woman. But I don't need no piece of paper to tell me that. Do oyu need a piece of paper, Mr. Caesar?

CAESAR : These ain't slavery times no more, Miss Tyler. You living in the past. All that done changed. The law done changed and I'm a custodian of the law. Now you know Miss Tyler you got to have rule of law otherwise there'd be chaos. Nobody wants to live in chaos. Now I got a warrant...

BLACK MARY : This house is sanctuary! It's been sanctuary for a long time. You know that. Everybody know that. This is 1839 Wylie Avenue.

CAESAR : I don't know nothing about no sanctuary. Somebody break the law I got to arrest them. Don't care where they at. 1839 Wylie Avenue ain't no different than any other house.

BLACK MARY : 1839 Wylie Avenue is a House of Sanctuary. It ain't up to you to decide.

Act Two, Scene Five: Black Mary, Aunt Ester, Eli – pdf pg 94-29 – script pg 90-91

BLACK MARY : Caesar, I gave you everything. Even when I didn't have to give you. I made every way for you. I turned my eyes away. I figured if I didn't see it I couldn't hold fault. If I held fault I couldn't hold on to my love for you. But now you standing in the light and I can't turn away no more. I remember when you was on the other side of the law. That's my brother. The one selling hoe cakes off the back of a wagon. The one that helped Mrs. Robinson and the kids when nobody else would. That's my brother. The one who used to get out of bed to take me to school. The one who believed everybody had the same right to life... the same right to whatever there was in life they could find useful. That's my brother. I don't know who you are. But you are

not my brother. You hear me, Caesar? You not my brother.

(Caesar is stunned by this declaration. He crosses to the door, turns and looks back at BLACK MARY, then raises himself to his full height and exits.)

AUNT ESTER: Come on Come on, Let's go to burying ground.

Come on Come on

ELI and BLACK MARY (singing) : Let's go to burying ground , Come on Come on, Let's go to burying ground

Come on Come on

ELI : The hammer keeps a ringing

AUNT ESTER and BLACK MARY (singing): On somebody's coffin.

ELI : The hammer keeps a ringing

AUNT ESTER and BLACK MARY (singing): On somebody's coffin, Over on the new burying ground

(Citizen takes off his coat and puts on SOLLY's coat and hat, and takes SOLLY's stick. He discovers the letter in the hat. ELI pours a drink and raises it in a toast.

ELI : So live.

(Without a word CITIZEN turns and exits. The lights go down on the scene.)

BLACKOUT

Behind-the-scenes of *Gem of the Ocean*

WELCOME TO THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF CREATING A THEATRICAL SHOW! A production team includes lighting, costume, set/prop, and sound designers, builders (carpenters), painters (scenic artists), electricians, sound and wardrobe technicians. Every person on the production team plays a part in shaping and supporting the show's vision. On the following pages you'll see how scenic, costume, movement and lighting are built into *Gem of the Ocean*. Below is a short list of jobs and descriptions of what they do at our theater.

PRODUCTION JOBS AND CAREERS:

Artistic Director: Chooses the play, director and (sometimes) designers for a production

Production Director: Hires and oversees the production team and staff

Scenic Designer: Designs the set based on the show's vision, theme and script details

Carpenter: Constructs and builds the set based on blueprints and scale models

Lighting Designer: Creates lighting concepts for each moment/scene in the show

Costume Designer: Designs costumes and communicates needs to the wardrobe team

Sound Designer: Creates, or curates, music, noises and sounds digitally or manually

Movement Director: Teaches dances or choreography to an ensemble

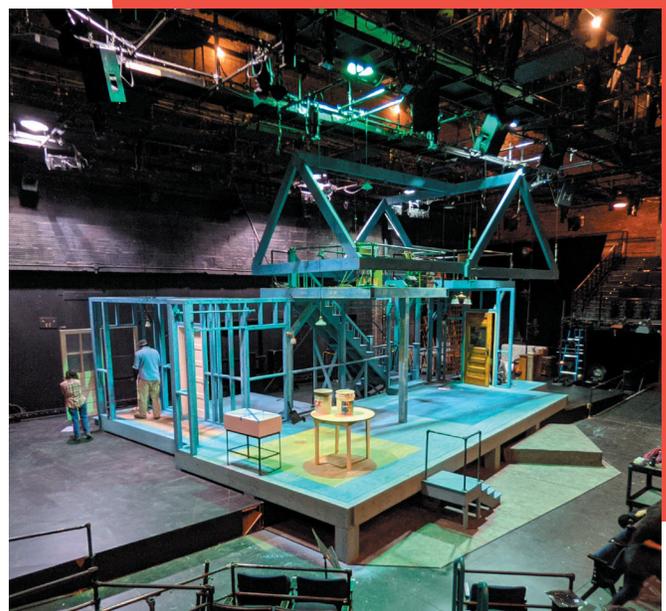
Stage Manager: Supports/organizes the day-to-day running of rehearsals and production

Production Assistant: Responsible for placing and moving props and set pieces

Electrician: Places lighting equipment in the location based on designs

Sound Board Operator: Tests and adjusts microphone volumes and plays sound cues

Costume Technician: Sews costumes and tends to backstage wardrobe needs



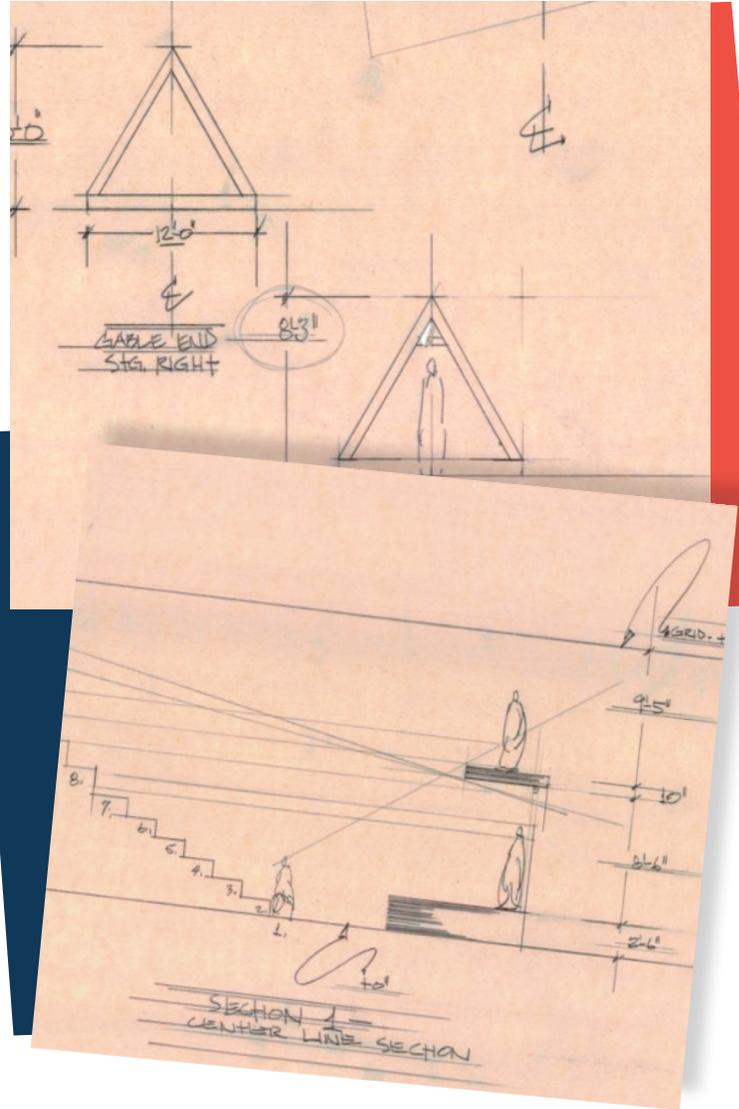
SCENIC DESIGN

SCENIC DESIGNER: MICHAEL MCGARTY

Michael McGarty says that set design allows him to be in Victorian England one day and 1800s Jamestown, Virginia the next. He explains that when it comes to scenic design, nothing is precious. Set design is fleeting, serves its purpose, and comes and goes. At the end of the day, all sets end up recycled and in the dumpster.

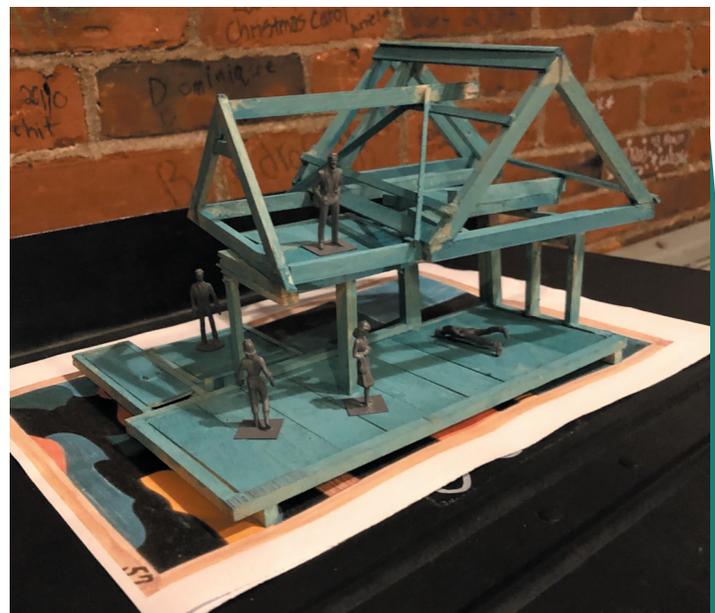
McGarty says that at its core, *Gem of the Ocean* is an actualist show. That means he tried to achieve, and find the spectacular within the ordinary, mundane. Therefore, the house is elevated to a level higher than our typical abodes. The set also embraces the scenery and spiritual journey of Citizen Barlow, and all characters, as they participate in the journey that is transferred by Aunt Ester.

When audiences come into the theater, they'll recognize an all-blue house. But then they'll see that there are no walls and that the second floor is twisted at a different angle than the bottom. The colors on the floor will pop and be seen more clearly from the two photograph inspirations (below) for the set. All metaphors and symbols are intended.



SET INSPIRATION #1

Each morning when McGarty walks his dogs, he passes a broken bird house that hangs off the railing on his neighbor's porch.



SET INSPIRATION #2

The production team looked a lot at the work of Jacob Lawrence for a sense of the everyday working and social lives that surround the house at 1839 Wiley Avenue where the play lives.



MOVEMENT AND RITUAL

MOVEMENT AND RITUAL DIRECTOR: YATANDE WHITNEY V. HUNTER

BUILDING THE CITY OF BONES:

yaTande shares that in addition to acquiring skills in choreography and teaching, it is beneficial to stay organized and communicative while creating practical movement out of conceptualized ideas. In preparing for *Gem of the Ocean*, yaTande researched certain areas of dance and movement using bibliographical resources he found at his local library and online.

The bulk of the yaTande Whitney V. Hunter's work included building the City of Bones where Citizen Barlow needs to go to get his soul washed. As August Wilson did not write stage directions on how to create this journey, it was yaTande and the team's responsibility to think about, and create, what the City of Bones meant for us. Therefore, audiences will see the use of circles function as transportation to allow us to set up the world of the ritual.

The Ring Shout, and its practice, is about connecting to our ancestors and having the ability to make ancestral connections. The circle becomes a metaphor for time-travel and the counter-clockwise pattern matches the movement of sunrise to sunset, where the midnight area is believed to be a time for the ancestors and deceased to exist and live. yaTande was very inspired by the imagery of the sun going up in the Ancestral Realm and the moon coming through in the realm of the living.

The show has a lot of symbolism that applies to African American cultures. While there is some audio support, the actors clap and stomp specific rhythms that come from the spiritual culture of Africa and African Americans. The shout circle gets the characters in tune with each other and helps them prepare for the ritual that is performed.

The rhythm that we call the Gullah-Geechee Shout lived primarily in the low country and islands of North and South Carolina. The people that were brought to these islands either stayed in their seclusion or moved to America's mainland. If you'd like to know more, watch the movie, "Daughters of Dust," as it narrates the experience of having to make the decision to go to the mainland or stay on the islands.



COSTUME DESIGN

COSTUME DESIGNER: YLEVONNE LINDSAY

LEVONNE'S BACKGROUND:

When LeVonne Lindsay decided to become a costume designer, she had to acquire a unique set of skills, knowledge and experience. She initially went to college to learn fashion design, where she built a strong foundation in design principles, color theory, art history, costume history and period styles. She also learned how to sew, tailor and make patterns. Once she took an interest in theater and performance, LeVonne went back to school to get her master's degree in costume design.

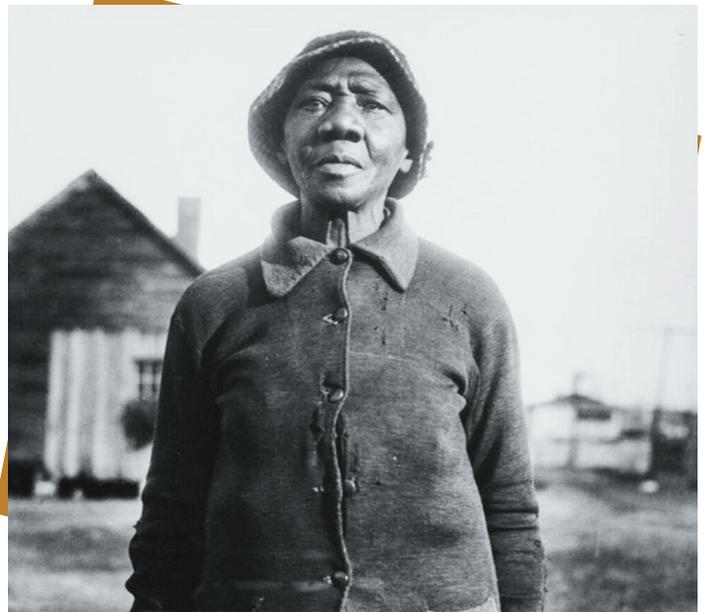
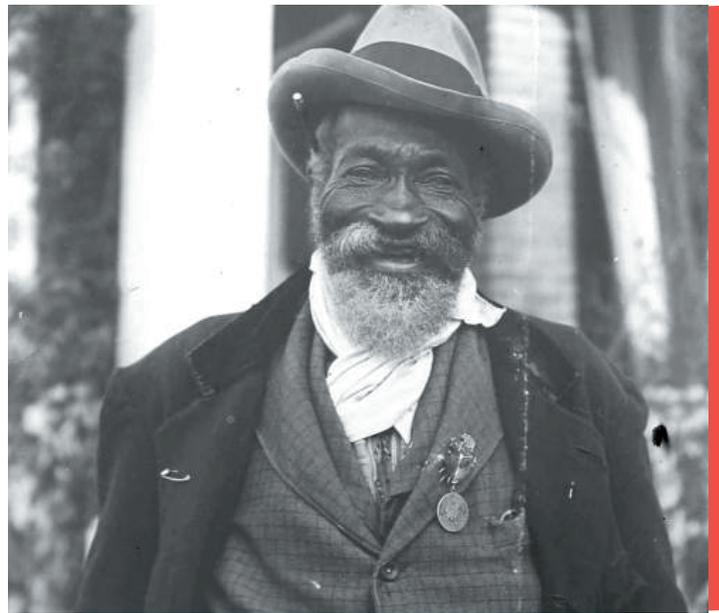
COSTUME RESEARCH FOR *GEM OF THE OCEAN*:

LeVonne began her design process by researching the play's historical context. *Gem of the Ocean* takes place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1904. By the late 1800s, Pittsburg had become a majorly industrialized city where many immigrants and African-Americans migrated to work at the mills and factories. Their wages were low, working conditions were harsh and frequently unsafe. The descendants of enslaved people often suffered from discrimination and bigotry. Many still held strong ties to their African roots and spiritual practices.

Jude Sandy, the director of our production, stressed the importance of presenting the characters in Aunt Ester's house as humble, working-class people. We would see expressions of their spiritual ties to Africa when Aunt Ester takes Citizen Barlow to the City of Bones. In sharp contrast, Caesar should appear to live among the upper class where he wields his power against them as the town's Sheriff.

LeVonne is responsible for dressing each character as well as determining hair, makeup and accessories choices. That being said, research is instrumental in determining details and textiles.

Thankfully, many museums and private collectors have preserved clothing from the early 20th century. LeVonne likes to recreate pieces from images using similar fabrics. Usually, she'll create new interpretations of the past from a collection of different styles and ideas. It is also helpful for LeVonne to look at reenactments and modern clothing inspired by vintage designs when designing costumes for a period show.



If LeVonne or the costume shop can't build a costume, they will pull from costume storage from previous productions and rent or borrow something from another theater if they can't find retail clothing that looks like it is from the time period.

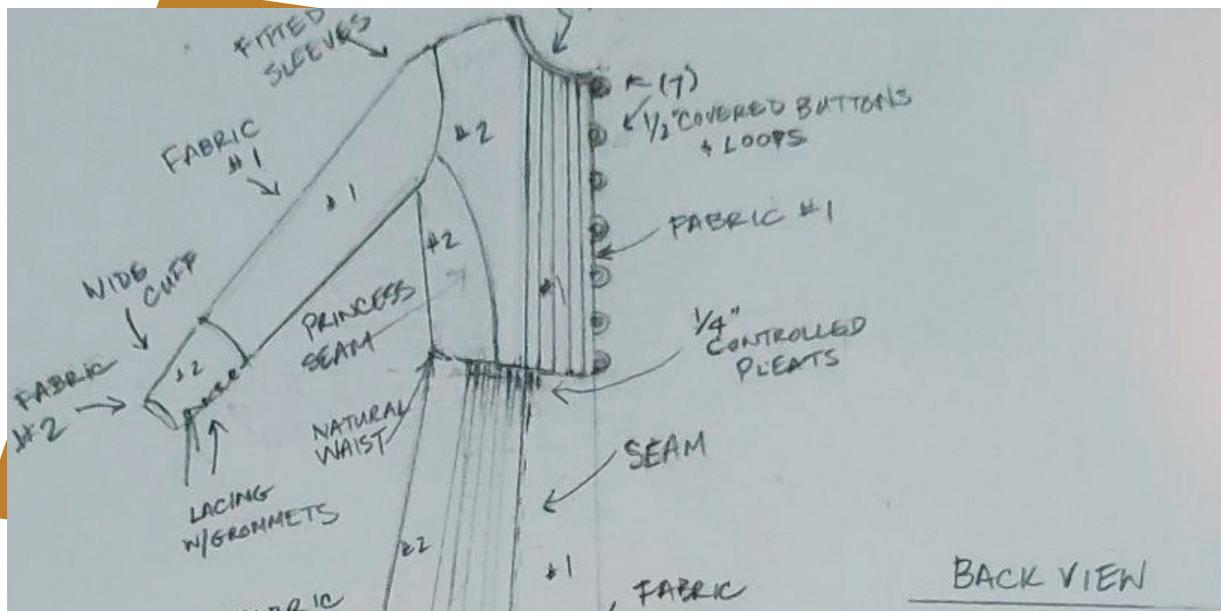
During the research process, LeVonne will have several meetings with the other production designers to unify all the visual elements in style and concept. She will also work from a color palette to help make the proper selections.

DESIGNING GEM OF THE OCEAN:

Once LeVonne has all her ideas solidified, she will draw sketches for each character in every scene. Full-color renderings are a costume designer's best communication tool. If she is short on time and needs to start finding costumes right away, she may have to skip this step and come back to it later. She will draw a quick technical sketch with notes for the pattern makers in the costume shop if they need clarifications.

Actors will try on all the clothing we purchased and made during fittings. LeVonne wants to make sure their costume looks appropriate, fits well, and is functional to their movement in the scenes. Sometimes we have to change pieces during rehearsals, even if we spend a lot of time and money on them. It's more important that we get it right.

The job of a costume designer is a lot of hard work! You have to be creative, flexible, and very good at problem-solving. It is a big responsibility to determine how all of the actors will appear on stage. It is also very rewarding to see your accomplishments on stage in front of an audience.



COSTUME DESIGN

COSTUME TECHNICIAN: LIZZY PELGER

Lizzy Pelger builds and alters costumes as a stitcher in the costume shop then works backstage to dress and help actors change their costumes during performances.

Lizzy worked on a larger team to help build Aunt Ester's skirt and blouse. To assemble a costume piece, the costume designer, LeVonne Lindsay, first researches and sketches garment idea and picks fabrics, trim, buttons and more. Then the cutter/drafter and Shop Supervisor, William Young, cuts the fabric for Lizzy and pattern-matches the blouse so that the flowers line up perfectly over the seams. Then, Lizzy works with mock-up fabric (called muslin) to see how the costume fits, functions and flares on the actor before the real fabric is cut. The patterns are cut out of real or fashion fabric. Once constructed, a second fitting is conducted before we finalize the finished product you see on stage.

After all costumes are built, altered and ready, Lizzy will go into tech rehearsal where all elements of the show come together. Lizzy will also spend time supervising and training other members of the wardrobe team during the show.

Wardrobe is responsible for setting and maintaining all costume pieces throughout the run which includes laundry, repairs and helping with any costume changes throughout the play. Being a costume technician is fun and rewarding because you're using your mind and hands to create wearable art.



LIGHTING DESIGN

LIGHTING DESIGNER: ALEJANDRO FAJARDO

ALEJANDRO'S BACKGROUND:

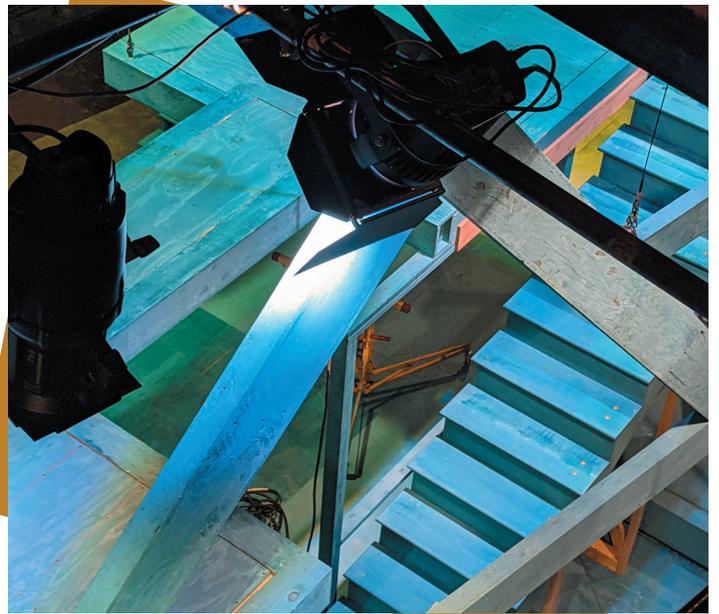
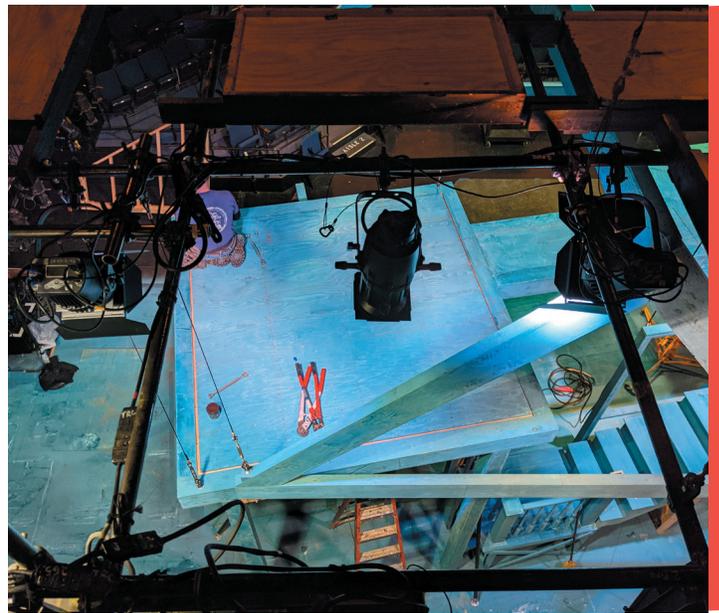
Alejandro Fajardo is a Colombian lighting designer based in Brooklyn, NY. He works in many different industries and his work can be seen on stage in live performances (theater, dance and more!), escape rooms and immersive games, commercial events (galas, fashion shows, product launches, etc.), and music festivals across the country.

LIGHTING *GEM OF THE OCEAN*:

Alejandro's primary focus is to reveal the show by focusing the audience's eye on where the action is happening. He tries to accomplish this by giving a subtle atmospheric undertone. In this particular show, we have to help the story flow through the various days that it takes place in. Therefore, Alejandro's job includes navigating the changing light in the house as the day goes by. There is also an atmospheric shift with the journey to the City of Bones, which is another invitation to shift the lighting aesthetic and take the audience into a powerful, expressionistic journey.

The bulk of lighting comes from what we call conventional fixtures. These are static lights that point to a specific area on stage, which is turned on and off to adapt the looks on stage. Additionally, there are a couple of moving lights and LEDs that have a greater tool kit of colors, textures and movement for certain moments.

While there are various skills needed to be a lighting designer, Alejandro relies greatly on his storytelling and world building abilities to help visualize what the story will look like. He asks: how does the light come in through the house and what is the aesthetic of the journey? Once answered, the imaginative vision gets translated into light plots, paperwork and cues (how lights are programmed to turn on/off during a scene). Once the electricians install and focus lights, the sets have actual lights and colors that are ready to be programmed by Alejandro and a light board programmer to record lighting sequences that can be easily repeated.



Alejandro believes that one of the most valuable skills in lighting design is communication. He needs to be able to communicate his vision to the director and the rest of the creative team so that they can start to find the specific world that they are building in production. Alejandro then has to communicate all the information to the lighting team so they can implement the creative vision. While it's challenging and rewarding, Alejandro is proud of his lighting design work and being a part of Gem's team.



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