

TROUBLE IN MIND

ENRICHMENT GUIDE



BY ALICE CHILDRESS
DIRECTED BY CHERISSA RICHARDS

A Co-Production with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre
Season Sponsor Capital Power

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THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Going to the theatre is an engaging and interactive experience. We want you to be an active participant when you see our shows; laugh when it's funny, cry when it's sad, gasp when it's shocking and enjoy the experience as much as possible. To ensure the most positive experience, please review the following information prior to arriving:

- Please turn OFF and put away all electronic devices such as cell phones, iPods, video game systems, etc. prior to entering the theatre. Ringing, beeping, vibrations and screen lights are extremely distracting to other audience members and performers. If you turn your device back on at intermission, please remember to power it down again before the second act begins.
- The taking of photographs, videos and audio recordings in the theatre is strictly prohibited by law and our professional labour agreements.
- The only food or beverages permitted in the theatre are bottled water, beverages in Citadel Sippies and unwrapped ice cream bars purchased in the lobby. Please enjoy all other snacks in the lobby. No outside food or drink is permitted in the theatre.
- Please respect the space by keeping your feet off the seats.
- Just as you can see and hear the performers, they can hear and see you. We kindly ask that audience members do not talk or move around during the performance, as it distracts the actors and your fellow audience members.
- There is no dress code at the Citadel Theatre, but we respectfully request that patrons refrain from wearing hats. For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from using perfumes or scented products before coming to the theatre.
- Please keep backpacks and other bags underneath your seat. Placing them in front of you may impair the ability of people exiting the row in an emergency. Please also keep the aisles clear, as they are sometimes used as entrances and exits for our actors.
- Inappropriate behaviour including the use of laser pointers, interfering with an actor or the performances (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.) is strictly prohibited. Audience members identified as engaging in this type of behaviour will be removed from the theatre.
- Most importantly, we want to ensure that all audience members have a positive time at the Citadel. If you have any accessibility needs, or if there is anything we can do to improve your overall comfort at the theatre, please speak to any Citadel representative at the show!

WHO'S INVOLVED?

Alana Bridgewater
Andrew Broderick
Oscar Derkx
Reena Jolly
Jodi Kristjanson
Glenn Nelson
Alex Poch Goldin
Geoffrey Pounsett
Alvin Sanders

Cherissa Richards
Cory Sincennes
Sarah Uwadiae
Kevin Humphrey
Ashley Au
Tré Cotten
Tom Soares
Melissa Langdon
Kate George
Lisa Russell
Molly Pearson
Charlotte Braid

Willetta Mayer
John Nevins
Eddie Fenton
Millie Davis
Judy Sears
Henry
Bill O'Wray
Al Manners
Sheldon Forrester

Director
Set Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Dialect Coach
Voice and Dialect Coach
Assistant Director
Apprentice Costume Designer
Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Apprentice Stage Manager

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Alana Bridgewater

Wiletta Mayer

Citadel debut. Other theatre credits: “Ma Rainey” in *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, “Wild Woman” in *Rose, Idomeneus* (Soulpepper); “Novelette” in *‘da kink in my hair* (Arts Club); *Freedom* (Stratford); *Spoon River* (Signature Centre NYC). Recent film/series credits include: *Mysticons*, *Total Dramarama*, *Hannibal*, *Wayne*. Radio/Recordings: “Narrator” in *The Journey to Jazz* and *Human Rights* (JazzFM Radio); “Mr. King Dice” in *Cuphead*. Much love to Tanisha. For mom.

Andrew Broderick

John Nevins

Andrew Broderick is a Toronto-based theatre artist. Previous Credits Include: *The Color Purple* (Neptune/Citadel/MTC); *Hadestown* (Citadel); *Choir Boy* (Canadian Stage); *Sweeney Todd*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Everybody* (Shaw Festival); *You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, *The Pirates of Penzance* (Stratford); *Hairspray* (Charlottetown Festival/Drayton Ent/Rainbow Stage) *Dreamgirls* (Grand Theatre); and *South Pacific* (Drayton Ent). He would like to thank all the creatives on & off for telling this timely story, agents at The Talent House and all his loved ones.

Oscar Derkx

Eddie Fenton

Oscar Derkx is an actor and musician based here in Edmonton. Selected credits: *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Citadel Theatre/Arts Club); *As You Like It* (RMTC/Citadel Theatre); *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Once*, *A Christmas Carol* (Citadel Theatre); *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Winter’s Tale* (Freewill Shakespeare Festival); *Evelyn Strange*, *Lost Lemoine*, *The Hothouse Prince* (Teatro La Quindicina); *Suburban Motel Series* (Punctuate Theatre); *The Antyssey*, *Under Cover* (Concrete Theatre); *Ride* (Lunchbox Theatre); *Barvinok* (Pyretic Productions/Tarragon Theatre); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Kill Shakespeare* (Thou Art Here).

Reena Jolly

Millie Davis

Network (Citadel & RMTC); *Perfect Wedding* (Thousand Islands Playhouse); *Cabret*, *Venus*, *Assistance*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (National Theatre School) *Hamlet* (Shakespeare In The Ruins); *Torn Through Time* (Manitoba Theatre for Young People); *Home 2.0*, *New Beginnings*, *Shattered* (Sarasvati Productions); *Marat/Sade*, *Nothing Sacred*, *After Magritte*, *Titus Andronicus* (Black Hole Theatre Company). Film/ TV: *Made for Each Other*, *Love In Design*, *Journey Back To Christmas* (Hallmark); *Channel Zero* (Syfy). Love to my family & Friends!

Jodi Kristjanson

Judy Sears

Jodi Kristjanson is a Winnipeg-based multidisciplinary artist. She is an alumna of Drama Studio London & the Village Conservatory for Music Theatre, & a co-founder of Genesis School of Dance. Previous credits include: *Whatever Happens After?* (Naked Theatre); *Knock Knock Ginger* (One Trunk Theatre); *Seasons of Love* (ViC); *The Country Wife*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *Hedda Gabler* (Drama Studio London); Apprentice Director: *New* (RMTC); Musical Director: *The Selfish Giant* (DSL); *Little Women* (Genesis). Much love to my family & friends. ICXC

Glenn Nelson

Henry

Citadel: *Network* (co-production with Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre), *The Candidate*, *The Party*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Death of a Salesman*, *One Man, Two Guvvorns*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. Glenn is delighted to be part of *Trouble in Mind* with these remarkable people. At Shadow Theatre: *Outside Mullingar*, *Mistakes Were Made*, *The Odd Couple*, *Sexy Laundry* and *Flyfisher's Companion*.

Alex Poch-Goldin

Bill O'Wray

Originally from Montreal, Alex has performed across Canada and his plays have been produced internationally. **Theatre:** *Network*, *Scorched*, *Intimate Apparel* (Citadel); *Ma Rainey*, *Incident at Vichy* (Dora Award-Soulpepper); *Bang Bang* (Evie Award/RMTC/Belfry); *Oslo*, *Disgraced* (Mirvish); *Superior Donuts* (Coal Mine); *Harper Regan*, *Angels in America* (Canadian Stage); *My Name is Asher Lev* (Segal-META Award); *Remnants*, *Democracy* (Tarragon); *King Lear* (RMTC); *Amadeus*, *Possible Worlds* (TIFT/Munich). **Film/TV:** *Little Bird*, *The Porter*, *Made for Each Other*, *Skymed*, *Suits*, *Flashpoint*. **Playwriting:** *The Trial of William Shakespeare*. *Cringeworthy*, *This Hotel* (Dora Nominations), *Yahrzeit* (German tour). Alexpochgoldin.com

Geoffrey Pounsett

Al Manners

Geoffrey is a Saskatchewan-born/Toronto-based actor, educator and Dora-nominated director. He is honoured to be making his Citadel debut with this fantastic play. Previous credits include: *The Philadelphia Story*, *Fire* (Betty nom) (Theatre Calgary); *You Will Remember Me*, *How Do I Love Thee?* (ATP); *War Horse* (Mirvish); *Serving Elizabeth* (Western Canada Theatre); *Doubt* (Theatre Northwest); *Oslo* (Studio 180/Mirvish); *No Great Mischiefs*, *If We Were Birds* (Tarragon); *Moon For The Misbegotten* (Watermark); multiple seasons at the Stratford & Charlottetown Festivals. Selected film/TV: *It* (New Line); *Accused* (Fox); *Grand Army* (Netflix); *Macy Murdoch* (CBC).

Alvin Sanders

Sheldon Forrester

Alvin's numerous stage credits in the United States and Canada include work with The Citadel (*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* in 1989), Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Seattle Repertory Theater, Alberta Theatre Projects, Indiana Repertory Theater, Actor's Theater of Louisville, Vancouver Playhouse, and The Arts Club Theatre. He has over 150 IMDB credits including more than 20 Hallmark movies and currently the roles of Pop Tate on *Riverdale*, Lewis Thompson on *Resident Alien* and voices on the animated series *My Little Pony* and *Polly Pockets*. Alvin is a graduate of Carnegie-Mellon University.

Cherissa Richards

Director

For Royal MTC: Assistant Director: *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*. Actor: *The Mountaintop*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Di and Viv and Rose*, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (co-production with Citadel), *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. Other theatre credits include: Director: *Red Velvet-Globe & Mail Critic's Pick* (Crow's Theatre); *Backstage at Carnegie Hall* (Centaur); *Meet me at Dawn* (Theatre by the River); *VOICE* (PTE); *Subjection of Kezia*, *Poof* (Shaw); *The Power of Harriet T* (MTYP). Associate/Assistant Director: *Fall on Your Knees* (CanStage/Neptune/NAC/Grand); *Ladykillers*, *Getting Married* (Shaw); *Timon of Athens* (Bard on the Beach). Upcoming Directing: *Julius Caesar* (Bard on the Beach). cherissarichards.com

Cory Sincennes

Set Designer

Cory is an award-winning designer whose set, costume, lighting, and video designs have received both national and international recognition. Cory earned a degree in Architectural Studies from Carleton University before studying design at Ryerson Theatre School. He also holds an MFA in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta. Previous designs for the Citadel include *Almost a Full Moon*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Ring of Fire*, *Matilda*, *Once*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Crazy for You*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Venus in Fur*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Spamalot*, *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Evangeline*, *Mary Poppins*, and *Next to Normal*.

Sarah Uwadiae

Costume Designer

Sarah is a Nigerian multi-disciplinary artist and designer based in Calgary. Select design credits: *Death and the King's Horseman* (Stratford Festival); *Steel Magnolias* (Theatre Calgary); *The Fiancée*, *The Mountaintop* (Persephone Theatre); *Scope* (Lunchbox Theatre) *Murder in the Studio* (Vertigo Theatre); *Gimme Chance Leh* (Chromatic Theatre); *Sound of Music*, *Where Words Once Were* (StoryBook Theatre). Sarah is the 2022 winner of the RBC Emerging Artist Award in Calgary. She is passionate about storytelling and creative exploration through the arts. She would like to thank her family & friends for their support.

Kevin Humphrey

Lighting Designer

Kevin just finished designing *Pride & Prejudice* across the lobby in the Maclab. He is looking forward to having designs on both mainstages. Past designs include *Avenue Q*, *Romeo & Juliet* (Citadel Theatre); *Jason Kenney's Hot Boy Summer* (Grindstone Theatre); *Billy Twinkle: Requiem for a Golden Boy* and *Penny Plain* (Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes); *Sister Act* (Mayfield Dinner Theatre). He is a member of the Associated Designers of Canada ADC659 & IATSE Local 210. He is Chair of the Alberta Section of CITT and Principal Lighting Operator at the Jubilee Auditorium. www.lxdesign.ca

Ashley Au

Sound Designer

Ashley Au (she/they) is a Winnipeg-based bassist, composer, sound artist, arranger, and queer creative. A multifaceted musician, Ashley specializes in the upright and electric basses—performing, touring and recording extensively. As a composer and sound artist, Ashley's work can be found behind various theatre and dance productions in the city. Current and past projects include work with Weakerthans frontman John K. Samson; folk roots songstress Carly Dow; internationally-acclaimed Americana tastemaker Scott Nolan; composer/trumpeter Chuck Copanace; Winnipeg's Contemporary Dancers; and Polaris Prize-nominated hip-hop outfit Super Duty Tough Work. Ashley is the Artistic Director of Cluster: New Music + Integrated Arts Festival. She recently scored her first opera *Inertia* (libretto by Christene Brown), commissioned by Loose Tea Music Theatre (TO).

Tom Soares

Voice and Dialect Coach

Tom is a Winnipeg-based actor, voice, dialect, and text coach. This is his first time working for the Citadel Theatre! Previous coaching credits include: *The Rez Sisters*, *Jane Eyre* (RMTC); *The Winter's Tale*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III* (Shakespeare in the Ruins); *Iceland*, *Mary's Wedding* (Theatre Projects Manitoba); *Little Thing*, *Big Thing* (Prairie Theatre Exchange); *Shrek* (Rainbow Stage). Tom has an MFA in Acting with a Voice Specialization from York University. Thank you Aedan and Erin for your love and support.

Tré Cotten

Dialect Coach

Citadel debut. Tré is a published and award-winning creator and educator. Based on the Kwakwaka'wakw Territory of North Vancouver Island, BC., Tré has been featured in *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* for his work as Dialect Coach on Regina King's *One Night in Miami...*, a Juilliard Teaching Fellowship Finalist (2021) and the keynote speaker for the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) Conference in 2021. Dialect Coach on the CBC & BET's Emmy-nominated period drama *The Porter*, and on Amazon's newly released *The Peripheral*. He is currently in production as Acting & Dialect Coach on the new franchise film *The Exorcist*. Raised in North Carolina, he is of proud Black and Indigenous descent.

Melissa Langdon

Assistant Director

Melissa is a Winnipeg-based actor and the Apprentice Artistic Director of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre supported by the Manitoba Arts Council. Selected credits include *The Three Musketeers* (Royal MTC); *Orlando* (Assistant Director, Royal MTC); *Voice* (Prairie Theatre Exchange); *Spelling 2-5-5* (MTYP); *School Girls; Or The African Mean Girls Play* (Obsidian/Nightwood Theatre); *Hamlet* (Shakespeare in the Ruins); *Blink* (One Trunk/Walk & Talk); *Home 2.0*, *The Game*, *New Beginnings* (Sarasvati); *O(phelia)* (ShakespeareFest); *Animosity* (Winnipeg Fringe); *Time and the Conways*, *Concord Floral*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (U of W).

Kate George

Apprentice Costume Designer

Kate is a Winnipeg-based designer and theatre artist.

Previous design credits include *Orlando*, *The World Goes 'Round* (RMTC); *Alunsina's Love*, *Blink*, *365 Plays/365 Days*, *People, Places and Things* (UW); *Innocence Lost*, *Urinetown* (MTYP YoCo); *Bloodsuckers* (ADM). A huge thank you to my family, Royal MTC and the Citadel as well as everyone else who has supported me in my journey.

Lisa Russell

Stage Manager

Lisa is thrilled to be back at the Citadel. Selected credits include: *The Unnatural and Accidental Women* (National Arts Centre); *Six*, *Hadestown* (Citadel Theatre); *Flight*, *Fidelio* (Pacific Opera Victoria); *Romeo and Juliet*, *Drowning Girls* (Globe Theatre); *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, *Liberation Days*, *Les Misérables* (Western Canada Theatre); *The December Man*, *Steel Kiss* (Green Thumb Theatre); and *Doubt* (Theatre Calgary/MTC). Lisa was the project manager for World Stage Design 2022, the production stage manager for the Summer Arts Festival at the Banff Centre for four years and spent seven seasons at the Stratford Festival.

Molly Pearson**Assistant Stage Manager**

Citadel: *The Royale*, *The Garneau Block*, *Made in Italy* (Stage Manager); *Children of God*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *A Christmas Carol* (Assist Stage Manager); Freewill Shakespeare Festival: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Comedy of Errors*, and *The Merchant of Venice* (Stage Manager); other stage management credits include *Last Chance Leduc* (Snowflake Productions); *Shakespeare's R&J* (Kill Your Television); *Bello* (Concrete/l'UniThéâtre); *Bust* (Theatre Network); *The Passion of Narcisse Mondoux* (Northern Light Theatre/l'UniThéâtre); and assistant stage managing *Mamma Mia!* (Mayfield Dinner Theatre) and *Vigilante* (Catalyst).

Charlotte Braid**Apprentice Stage Manager**

Charlotte Braid (she/her) is an emerging Stage Manager in Alberta. She is a recent graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Stage Management program. She is excited to work for the Citadel for the first time as part of this wonderful team. Recent credits include: *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Storybook Theatre); *Home for the Holidays* (Lunchbox Theatre); *New Mythic Works* (Thousand Faces Festival); *Rochdale*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Love Labour's Lost* (U of A Studio Theatre). Charlotte would like to thank her family and friends for their continued support.

PLAYWRIGHT BIOGRAPHY

Alice Childress

Playwright

Alice Childress (1916–1994) was a playwright, novelist and actress. She is a founding member of the American Negro Theatre and wrote her first play, *Florence*, in 1949. The script was written in one night on a dare from a close friend and then the play was produced off-Broadway in 1950. In 1952, Alice became the first African American woman to see her play *Gold Through The Trees* professionally produced in New York. Alice is best known today for her 1973 novel *A Hero Ain't Nothin' But A Sandwich*, which was subsequently made into a movie in 1978. Other plays written by her include *Just A Little Simple* (1950), *Wedding Band: A Love/Hate Story In Black and White* (1966) and *Gullah* (1984). Throughout her career, she examined the true meaning of being black, and especially of being black and female. As Alice herself once said, "I concentrate on portraying have-nots in a have society."

CHARACTERS

Wiletta Mayer: An experienced Black actor who has performed as a singer and in film.

Millie Davis: A Black actor unsatisfied with her roles but not enough to rock the boat.

Sheldon Forrester: An elderly Black character actor and aspiring songwriter.

Henry: A 78-year-old Irish doorman at the theatre.

Al Manners: The white director of the play being rehearsed for Broadway.

John Nevins: A Black actor making his Broadway debut.

Bill O'Wray: A middle-aged white actor.

Judy Sears: A young white actor who recently graduated and is acting in her first job.

Eddie Fenton: The white stage manager.

SYNOPSIS

Set in 1957, *Trouble In Mind* is a fascinating comedy-drama that takes a look at racism in the New York theatre scene. When the cast gathers to begin rehearsals, racial biases and tensions rise. When Wiletta Mayer, a talented Black actress, finds that her arguments to tell the truth of the story are dismissed, she decides to take action.

Venue: Shocter Theatre

WARNING: 14+

Run Time: Approximately 2 hours & 10 minutes, with one intermission

TERMS AT A GLANCE

This section defines and offers context for some of the vocabulary, locations, and phrases used and mentioned throughout the script of Trouble in Mind.

Provided by by Ksenia Broda-Milian of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

Buttering up – praising or flattering someone excessively

Flop – A show that is a flop is one that has failed completely; generally it has bad reviews, low or no ticket sales, and the run of performances ends before it was scheduled to. Wiletta thinks that *Chaos in Belleville* is bad, but that that doesn't mean that it will be a flop.

Herculean Trial – Something very hard to perform, requiring great strength like Hercules (of Greek mythology).

Home Rule – self-government in local matters by a city, province, state, colony or the like. In British and Irish history, refers to the movement for Ireland to secure internal autonomy within the British Empire. Home Rule bills led to great political tension in Ireland 1870-World War I.

Lynch – Broadly, to put to death (as by hanging) by mob action without legal approval or permission. There is usually a public aspect to the killing, and while the definition deals with lawless mobs, police officers have participated under the pretext of justice. The NAACP says “Lynchings were violent public acts that white people used to terrorize and control Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the South. Lynchings typically evoke images of Black men and women hanging from trees, but they involved other extreme brutality, such as torture, mutilation, decapitation, and desecration... A typical lynching involved a criminal accusation, an arrest, and the assembly of a mob, followed by seizure, physical torment, and murder of the victim. Lynchings were often public spectacles attended by the white community in celebration of white supremacy. Photos of lynchings were often sold as souvenir postcards.”

Throughout the late 19th century, racial tension grew throughout the United States. More of this tension was noticeable in the South. After the Civil War, many white people felt that the formerly enslaved people were getting away with too much and needed to be controlled. Lynchings were becoming a popular way of expressing some of the anger in relation to free Blacks. Some say that more recent shootings of unarmed Black people should also be labelled as lynchings. [Read more in this NAACP article](#) and from [Cambridge University Press](#).

Montgomery, Alabama – The capital of Alabama is an important place in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1955, just before this play is set, Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old Black girl refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Later that year Black woman Rosa Parks refused to sit in the back 10 rows of the bus as per segregation laws and was arrested. This sparked a 385-day bus boycott by the Black community, led by community members including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr that became a very tense situation and led to King's arrest and jailing. The controversy ended with a ruling prohibiting racial segregation on all Montgomery public buses. [Read more about the bus boycott and civil rights movement from History.com](#)

Organdy – A fine, thin cotton fabric usually having a durable crisp finish, usually white, dyed, or printed.

Porgy and Bess – An opera written by George and Ira Gershwin in 1935, about a beggar and an unmarried mother who are plagued by her violent former boyfriend, and a cynical drug dealer. For its debut, Gershwin insisted on casting Black actors as opposed to the usual white actors in *Blackface*, which created opportunities for classically trained Black performers, but it is controversial as a show about the Black experience by white writers and the stereotypical nature of the characters and culture. More about this in the [Smithsonian Magazine article about Porgy & Bess](#).

Sardi's – A famous restaurant in New York in the theatre district; “the centre of Broadway’s upper class.”

Sharecropper – During the Reconstruction era (reorganizing of the American South following the Civil War), sharecropping was the dominant system of labour. In this system, wealthy whites - former enslavers - owned farmland, and Black farmers (and some poor whites) were permitted to lease some land by paying a portion of their profit from their crops. All supplies were given to them by the owner who also took that cost out of the farmers’ profits. Some landowners would determine every year that the farmers were a few dollars short of what they owed, and debt would accumulate until it was so great there was no hope of it ever being repaid, keeping sharecroppers tied to the land and forcing them to work it in a variation on slavery.

Smug – Overly self-satisfied; contentedly confident of one's ability, superiority, or correctness; complacent.

Stage Manager – A role on a theatrical production involving organizing the rehearsal process, facilitating communication, keeping records, integrating technical elements, prompting technical cues, and assuming responsibility for the stage during a performance.

Subpoena – A formal order issued by a court of justice that requires a person to appear before the court at a specified time. (Manners says that if he doesn’t answer his wife’s phone call, she’ll issue a subpoena.)

Uncle Tom – A character in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a book by Harriet Beecher Stowe published in 1852. Tom is a gentle, humble, Christian enslaved man killed when he refuses to give information about two women who have run away. Stowe intended to show how slavery was incongruous with Christianity. Depictions of Tom on stage and screen distorted the character to a docile, loyal, contented “model slave” who prioritized his captors. As such, “in many African American communities ‘Uncle Tom’ is a slur for a Black person who is humiliatingly subservient or deferential to white people.” There are two variations, a loyal servant who accommodates himself to a lowly status, or the ambitious Black person who “subordinates himself in order to achieve a more favorable status within the dominant society. In both instances, the person is

believed to overly identify with whites, in Version A because of fear, in Version B because of opportunism” (Ferris State University). When Wileta advises John to agree with the director and “laugh when it ain’t funny at all,” John counters that this “sounds kind of Tommish” and then backtracks when Wileta is insulted. Read more about the Tom caricature and depiction in various media in [an article by the Jim Crow Museum](#) at FSU and listen to or read a transcript of an [NPR interview about this character’s impact](#).

THEMES

TROUBLE IN MIND'S JOURNEY TO THE STAGE

Provided by by Ksenia Broda-Milian of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

"I continue to create because writing is a labour of love and also an act of defiance, a way to light a candle in a gale wind." – Alice Childress

Trouble in Mind was Childress' first full-length play. It premiered off-Broadway at the Greenwich Mews Theatre in New York City on November 3, 1955. It was directed by Childress with her friend Clarice Taylor, who also played Wiletta Mayor. The play had a good reception from audiences and critics, and Childress was the first Black woman to receive an Obie for Best Off-Broadway Play.

The Greenwich Mews Theatre, led by Stella Hold, produced the work of many Black writers and was one of the only theatres featuring integrated casts at the time. However, a white male producer threatened to cancel the run of the show if Childress didn't change the ending. She reluctantly did to keep the show going; the *New York Times* gave it a positive review except for the new ending which it said contained "impassioned sermonizing."



Clarice Taylor and Liam Lenihan in "Trouble in Mind"

Photo from 1955 *New York Times* review

Trouble in Mind was optioned for Broadway, but this came with more rewrite requests from producers who were concerned about how white audiences would react. Childress worked on these for two years until the script no longer felt like her own, and decided she needed to stop. The conversation about a transfer to Broadway ended. Childress went back to the original ending for publication, but promotion for the show had died down. Instead, the first Broadway play written by an African-American woman would not take place until 1959 with Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun*.

Trouble in Mind was produced by some universities, but rarely professionally until recently. It likely did not receive its Canadian premiere until 2021 (at the Shaw Festival). Also in 2021, the play finally premiered on Broadway, produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company.

Childress' plays were optioned for Broadway a total of 11 times, but none were ever produced there, because she remained unwilling to revise her work in ways that she thought would compromise her ideals and the integrity of her scripts.

Kathy A. Perkins, who was the lighting designer for the Broadway production as well as a professor, scholar, and friend of Childress, wrote in the introduction to a collection of her works: "I asked Childress if she had any regrets about missing out on Broadway productions of her plays because she refused to make the changes demanded by producers. She admitted that it would have been wonderful to have had her plays on Broadway. But, she told me, it was more important to go to bed each night with a clear conscience and peace of mind" (Perkins xxxiii).

THE PLAY WITHIN A PLAY

By Janine Bannier for Milwaukee Repertory Theatre

In *Trouble in Mind*, the playwright Alice Childress uses the theatrical device known as a “play within a play.” As you will see, the characters in *Trouble in Mind* are actors who are rehearsing a play about race relations in America. Though the outer play is a comedy, the inner play is a drama which focuses on the African-American right to vote. The characters in the outer play live in the year 1957, and are forced throughout rehearsals to deal with a parallel in their lives to the lives of the characters of the inner play. In this way, Childress uses a “play within a play” to show the parallel of race relations throughout generations of Americans.

The history of this theatrical device can be seen as far back as ancient India, where layered stories known as a “frame story” were popular. In these stories passed down through



The King of Shahryer and Scheherazade

generations of storytellers as an oral tradition, the outer story served only as a vehicle to the inner story. For instance, the popular tale of *Scheherazade* is still told to this day. The outer story of *Scheherazade* is that of a king and a storyteller who saves her own life by telling a new tale to the king each night. The inner stories contained lessons, morals and what can be considered the “guts” of the tale. The inner stories were known to change often throughout the generations but were able to provide similar morals. One of the most infamous Indian tales that uses a story within a story is *The Mahabharata*,

which was written in the ancient language of Sanskrit. This tale is that of two rival tribes, who fight a war through their family stories. Famous stories in this series include *Arabian Nights*, *Ramayana*, and the *Seven Wise Masters*.

“A story within a story” can be seen across cultural history. In France, the device is known as *Mise en abyme* which translates into “placing into infinity.”

The first play to use this device was *The Spanish Tragedy* written in 1587 by Thomas Kyd. In this production, a play is presented in front of two “audience members” who commentate on the action. In this show, a play within a play was used to clearly convey the author’s inner monologue about a social issue. Play within a play became very popular in western playwriting with William Shakespeare, who used the device in several of his works including *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Love’s Labours Lost*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, as well as tragedies, most notably *Hamlet*.

A play within a play has continued to be used in western playwriting throughout modern history. From realistic works such as Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* to the revolt of realism as seen in Bertolt Brecht’s *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and into more recent popular Broadway hits such as *Kiss Me Kate* and Mel Brooks’ *The Producers*, a play within a play can be used in many ways. In some cases, the inner play exists for no other reason than to entertain. However, it can also be used to convey morals, lessons, social commentary, or to show a parallel between two worlds as seen in Alice Childress’ *Trouble in Mind*.

RACISM AND RACIAL INEQUITY IN THEATRE

"I've always wanted to do somethin' real grand... in the theater... to stand forth at my best... to stand up here and do anything I want..."—Wiletta, *Trouble in Mind*

Alice Childress' *Trouble in Mind* tackles the racism of the theatre world of the 1950s. Each African-American character discusses his or her experience as a Black actor in a business dominated by white folks. In the beginning, Millie, Wiletta, and Sheldon try to guide John, the neophyte, about how to behave around their white counterparts. Sheldon and Millie advocate getting along and not getting too close. Wiletta does as well until the end of the play when she can no longer tolerate the condescending attitude of the white director, Manners. But in their collective advice, the actors also reveal their true feelings about the play they are rehearsing for, *Chaos on Belleville*. As with many of the productions they have appeared in, they feel their roles are stereotypical and the script cliché, yet they take these jobs because they need the work.

In 2020 amidst the worldwide wave of Black Lives Matter protests against racial injustice that followed George Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police on Memorial Day, the theatre industry has been among many institutions forced to reckon with systemic racism that continues almost seventy years after *Trouble in Mind* premiered. Viola Davis, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Sandra Oh and some 300 other racialized creators in the theatre world published an incendiary open letter in June of 2020 addressed to "White American Theater," calling out systemic racism and demanding change.

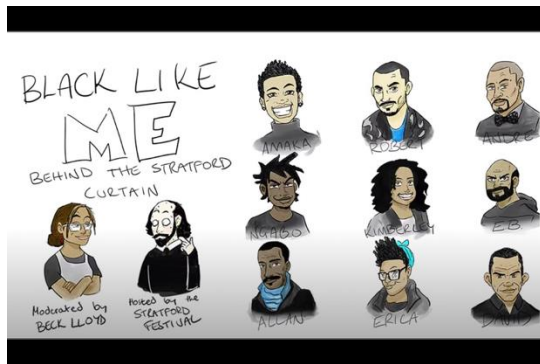
"We have watched you exploit us, shame us, diminish us, and exclude us. We see you. We have always seen you," the letter reads. "And now you will see us."

The letter states that racialized people in the theater world are suppressed through many structures within the industry, including board meetings, unions, criticism and fundraising campaigns. The result, the letter says, is a flood of plays "written, directed, cast, choreographed, designed, acted, dramaturged and produced by your rosters of white theater-makers for white audiences, while relegating a token, if any, slot for a BIPOC [black, indigenous, and people of color] play."

Similar racial reckonings have been taking place in the Canadian Theatre industry. On June 6, 2020, the Stratford Festival issued a statement that was unprecedented in admitting its "complicity in unjust systems" and upholding "white supremacy" as protests against anti-Black racism raged around the world. The festival acknowledged its own systemic racism "in solidarity with those demonstrating for justice" in the wake of George Floyd's murder.



The DEAR WHITE AMERICAN THEATRE open letter signed by over 300 racialized theatre creators



BLACK LIKE ME, BEHIND THE STRATFORD CURTAIN
Illustrations by @bobonabea

The festival then handed its social media channels for 72 hours to a group of Black artists and artisans, including a YouTube town hall-style discussion called [“Black Like Me, past present and future: Behind the Stratford Festival Curtain.”](#) Within three days, it had been viewed more than 17,800 times.

On Twitter, the hashtag #inthedressingroom became a meeting place for Black artists to reveal their experiences of racism throughout Canada’s theatre industry: in casting and rehearsals; with administration and in marketing meetings; in media interviews, with audience members and white cast mates; in theatre training, and in ill-equipped makeup and hair departments.

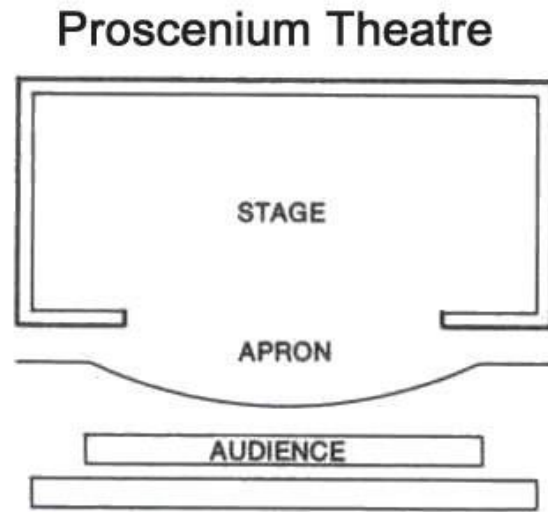
Michael J. Bobbit, the first Black artistic director in the 36-year history of New Repertory Theatre in Watertown who formerly ran a prominent children’s theatre in Maryland, is quoted as saying: “‘Not-racist’ is not a thing that exists. You can be ‘not-racist’ but still perpetuate and still benefit from the privileges of being white in this country. So your only choice is to be anti-racist. Right now I’m really working to fight these systems. Oftentimes culture is hard to change because you have to change people’s minds and hearts. But policy, you can change. So, to me, go for the policy, go for the systems. I’m looking at things like subscriptions, which I think are totally a racist structure: Who has the money to buy their seats a year and a half in advance? What seats are they buying? Are they leaving brown and Black and poor and young people sitting in the back and the sides? And general admission, so not having tiered ticketing, because tiered ticketing gives people that have a lot, more just for having a lot. I don’t think there’s anything more important right now than the anti-racism work and recovering from COVID-19. And I actually think the anti-racism work can help [theaters] recover from COVID-19. Because if you become a fiercely anti-racist organization, you’re going to have access to so many people that you never allowed or didn’t feel comfortable coming to your theater, coming.”

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

PROSCENIUM STAGE

A proscenium theatre is a specific style of theatre. Several features define a proscenium theatre, and this particular theatre layout is extremely common; if you have ever been to see a live performance, especially in a high school auditorium, chances are high that you have seen a proscenium theatre. In addition to proscenium style theatres, it is also possible to find black box theatres, theatres with thrust stages, theatres in the round, and numerous other configurations of stage and audience.

The classically defining feature of a proscenium theatre is the proscenium arch, which frames the stage for the audience. In addition, the audience faces the stage directly, with no audience on the sides of the stage, and the stage in a proscenium theatre is typically raised, allowing the audience to see more clearly. Modern proscenium theatres sometimes lack the proscenium arch, but they are still called “proscenium theatres” because they retain the other characteristics of this style of theatre.



Proscenium theatres originated in the 1600s, and became immensely popular by the 1700s. There are certain advantages of a proscenium theatre, such as the fact that the stage doesn't have to be as open, allowing people to conceal props, sets, and orchestras in the wings or near the stage without having these things visible to the audience. A proscenium theatre also creates a sense of staged grandeur, with the proscenium arch acting almost like a picture frame, giving the audience the sense that they are looking into a scene.

INTERVIEW WITH *TROUBLE IN MIND* DIRECTOR CHERISSA RICHARDS

1. When you received the script for *Trouble in Mind*, what were your first takeaways from the script that made it interesting for you as a director?

When I received the script for *Trouble in Mind* I was surprised at how the issues in this play (a play that was written in the 1950's) are still relevant issues in our world today. We are still dealing with some of the same social problems of appropriation, racism and gaslighting and sexism that Alice Childress wrote about. I also loved how this play so perfectly depicts what it's like to rehearse and create a play-it's very "meta", Art meets Life-meet Art! The relationships in the play are so beautifully written, and relationships are what draw us in as an audience-we want to care about these characters.



Cherissa Richards
Director of *Trouble in Mind*

2. As a director, what are your first steps for planning a rehearsal process?

As a director, I spend several months before getting to rehearsal reading the play several times to gain a better understanding of it, I research the play's time period and get familiar with what was going on in the world when the play was written, and I research the playwright to find out what her background is. All this research helps me to understand the play better and help inform my cast of the world of the play we are in.

3. What are the plays on your bucket list that you'd love to direct in the future?

The plays on my bucket list that I'd like to direct in the future are: any plays that speak to my lived experience as a Black woman, any plays that excite me as an artist and any plays that challenge me and scare me a bit - those are usually the plays that have the most interesting journeys!

HISTORY & CONTEXT

ALICE CHILDRESS: PLAYWRIGHT OF *TROUBLE IN MIND*

Provided by by Ksenia Broda-Milian of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre



Alice Childress was born in 1916 in Charleston, South Carolina. Her parents separated when she was 9, and she and her mother moved to Harlem. There they lived with Childress' grandmother who taught her to approach life as an education and encouraged her to tell stories. They would play a game where they would watch passers-by from the window and her grandmother would ask Childress questions that turned them into characters and then have her write these down as stories. Childress spent much time at the public library growing up but did not complete high school nor attend college. Passionate about learning and inspired by her grandmother, she was entirely self-educated. She became interested in theatre after seeing a Shakespeare play as a teenager. Venezuela Jones, who ran the Federal Theatre Project's Negro Youth Theatre and was a Black woman playwright, was her mentor. Childress was also inspired by W.E.B. Du Bois, a leading Black scholar and founder of the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and his wife Shirley Graham Du Bois who encouraged Childress' writing career.

She married actor Alvin Childress in 1935 and had their daughter Jean later that year. In 1939 the couple became founding members of the American Negro Theatre (ANT) and Childress acted as well as worked backstage, and offstage in many menial jobs. She was even nominated for a Tony Award for Best Supporting Actress in 1944. By 1949, she was frustrated by the limited roles available to her as a Black, light-skinned woman, and turned to playwriting. She wrote *Florence*, her first play, for ANT overnight as part of a bet that a "race play" could be interesting without the central focus being a life-and-death issue like lynching. She said that her work experience informed her writing about "ordinary people."

Childress defied the idea that the only important race drama was sensationalized and male-centric, and featured "ordinary" Black women in her scripts. She also wrote for interracial casts and included confrontation in her plays. Childress was also a political activist, working for a cultural support organization in Harlem and fighting for theatre artists' rights to create a union for Off-Broadway productions. She taught classes at the Jefferson School of Social Science, which was a Marxist institute, and founded a civil rights group with Shirley Graham Du Bois to fight against lynching, Jim Crow laws, apartheid, and sexism. Because of these associations and her connections, she was watched by the FBI for many years and protective of her information even when she was cleared as a member of the Communist Party.

Childress and Alvin divorced – her disapproval of him acting in the television show *Amos and Andy*, which perpetuated Black stereotypes, may have been a factor – and she remarried musician and composer Nathan Woodard in 1957. Through the 1960s and 70s, Childress wrote plays that focused less on interracial conflict and more on Black life, not requiring white actors. She also began to incorporate her intersectional identity as a woman into her writing. Childress began to write novels, which received more recognition than her plays at the time. They depicted teenagers "faced with finding security, acceptance and selfhood in social environments

hostile to their development” hoping to help isolated children feel optimistic. Her book *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* (1973), which explored the struggle of Black youth in the inner city, received multiple awards and was adapted into a successful film for which she also wrote the screenplay. In 1979, she received a Pulitzer Prize nomination for her book *A Short Walk*.

Later in her life, Childress was awarded an Alumnae Graduate Society Medal for Distinguished Achievement in 1984 from Radcliffe College, where she was an Associate Scholar in the late 1960s. She received an Honorary Degree from the State University New York at Oneonta and an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the State University of New York in 1990, and in 1993, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for Theatre of Higher Education. Multiple articles, dissertations, and biographies were written about Childress. She died suddenly of cancer in 1994. At the time, she was working on a story about her great-grandmother, who had been enslaved.

THE 1950s IN AMERICA: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL?

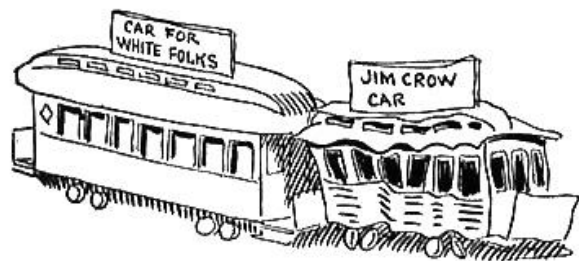
Provided by the Milwaukee Repertory Theater

America was coming out of a bleak era: the Depression in the 1920s and 1930s and World War II during the 1940s. As servicemen returned from overseas, the economy expanded. Americans started buying goods that were depleted during the previous decades which created corporate expansion and more jobs. America was starting to rebuild quickly and efficiently.

The 1950s was the perfect picture of American society. Imagine a man, working every day to provide for his family. Imagine a woman, cooking and cleaning all day and enjoying it. Imagine the children, frolicking happily during recess and enjoying school. Imagine the house, a small two-storey with lace curtains, a white picket fence and a dog in the front yard wagging its tail. Can you picture it: the epitome of the perfect American lifestyle? However, the 1950s wasn't this picture-perfect story. The 1950s was a time of resistance and struggle for many American citizens. While some may claim that there is only one America, the 1950's had two. There was “white America” and “Black America.” The phrase “separate but equal” rang throughout the nation. This doctrine, created in the late 19th century during the Supreme Court case *Plessey vs. Ferguson*, was the catchphrase of the time. This ruling originated with Homer Plessey, who was jailed for sitting in a “white car” because he was one-eighth Black. Judge Ferguson ruled that separate cars did not conflict with the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery. Thus the phrase “separate but equal” was born. During the 1950s this applied to everything from drinking fountains to schools to buses to hospitals and separate was not truly equal.



Above: segregated drinking fountains.
Below: political cartoon of rail cars by John T. McCutcheon. Public Domain.



This segregated nation became the norm. People accepted it because this was how it had been for so long. However, there were many who felt this was immoral and needed to change. The 1950s was the starting point of the civil rights movement: an initiation of abolishing “separate but equal.” The first ground breaking event was the Brown v. Board of Education case in Topeka, Kansas. This case focused on the idea of school segregation. It sought to challenge a law passed in 1879 that said racially-segregated schools were acceptable. However, most “Black schools” were much worse than “white schools.” They were smaller, falling apart, had a deficient curriculum, poor teacher training and oftentimes students had to take a school bus for over an hour just to get to school. When 13 parents attempted to enroll their children in a “white school,” they were denied. In February 1951, the Topeka National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a case on the parents’ behalf. It took three years for the ruling of “separate and unequal” in schools and various other public facilities. This ruling paved the road for much other educational and social reform throughout America.



Rosa Parks being arrested a second time in February 1956, indicted as one of the boycott leaders. Below: Parks and a reporter on a Montgomery bus immediately following their desegregation in 1956.

Another event that opened the eyes of Americans took place in 1955. December 1, 1955 marks the date that Rosa Parks refused to move from her seat on a bus. While the buses were considered desegregated (Blacks and whites could ride together), Blacks had to sit in the back of the bus. Rosa Parks boarded the bus and sat in the fifth row, the first row a Black person could occupy. A few stops later, the first four rows were filled with white people and one white man was left standing. The bus driver asked Parks to move; she refused and was arrested. This event started the Montgomery Bus Boycott, another initiative to desegregate more public facilities. During this year-long ordeal, Black folk refused to use public transportation and worked with each other to create a more fair system. White folk tried to end the boycott by using threats, stories to try to divide the Black community, and, eventually, violence. However, Black folk continued to stay off the buses until November 13, 1956 when the US Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was unconstitutional.



The civil rights movement of the 1950s paved the way for Black people and gave hope to a majority of Americans. The two Americas were becoming one through the works of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr, Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall and many more. The movement continued into the 1960s, and in 1964 the Civil Rights Act outlawed racial segregation in schools, public places and employment.

A HISTORY OF BLACK THEATRE IN AMERICA

By Laura Lynn MacDonald for Milwaukee Repertory Theater; updated by Ksenia Broda-Milian of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

Black Theater rose out of a rich history in Africa where stories were often dramatized using music and masks. As migration and slave trading moved Africans to other continents, vestiges of their storytelling traditions eventually made it onto the stage. Susan Croft in *Migrating Histories* notes that in Britain, “Black performers can be traced back to the time of Henry VIII, who employed a ‘Black trumpet.’” The first Black actor to achieve major recognition was Ira Aldridge (1804-1867), who was heralded for his portrayal of great Shakespearean roles, most notably Othello.



MISS ANGELINA GRIMKÉ

In the United States, around the time of the American Civil War, Minstrel Shows (disparaging comedies featuring white actors wearing greasepaint to caricature Black people) were all the rage. After The Civil War, Black people were finally allowed to participate in the Minstrel Shows themselves. Some embraced the opportunity to perform and expanded the shows to include dancing, singing and skits. However, this was still a show format born of a racist structure and did not necessarily allow Black performers to tell their authentic stories.

The first known play by an American Black playwright was James Brown's *King Shotaway* (1823). William Wells Brown's *The Escape*, also known as *A Leap for Freedom* (1858), was the first Black play published, but the first real success of a Black dramatist was Angelina W. Grimke with *Rachel* (1916). By the turn of the twentieth century, Black musicals were being produced.

Black theater flourished during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s. Experimental groups and Black theater companies emerged in Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C. The Ethiopian Art Theatre, which started in Chicago, launched the career of one of the most influential and charismatic actors of his day, Paul Robeson, known for his low voice.

In 1925, Garland Anderson's play, *Appearances*, was the first play authored by a Black playwright to make it to Broadway. When Langston Hughes' *Mulatto* opened in 1935, Black theater could celebrate a true hit on Broadway. In that same year, the Federal Theatre Project was founded, providing a training ground for Black actors. In the late 1930s, Black community theaters began to appear. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee began their careers in community theater. By 1940, two major Black theater companies had formed: Negro Playwrights' Company and The American Negro Theater (ANT) which would have members such as Sidney Portier and Harry Belafonte.



Early American Negro Theatre advertisement

After World War II, Black theater in the United States became more established. Black playwrights wrote plays that realistically told the stories of their lives. These stories asked hard questions about race, identity, and stereotypes.



Lorraine Hansberry in
1955

Out of that time came the ground breaking plays of two remarkable women - Alice Childress (*Trouble in Mind*, 1955) and Lorraine Hansberry (*A Raisin in the Sun*, 1959). Ms. Childress was the first Black female playwright to win an Obie Award for best original play. Hansberry's play that followed a few years later inspired a generation of Black writers and actors and "changed American Theatre forever" (*The New York Times*). *A Raisin in the Sun* was the first play written by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway. It premiered in 1959, with Lloyd Richards directing a cast that included Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee. The show ran for 530 performances and won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. In 2004, it received a Broadway revival featuring Phylicia Rashad and Grammy winning Sean (Puffy) Combs. Ms. Rashad won a Tony Award for her performance.

From the original cast of *Raisin*, three revolutionary minds came together to create a new company devoted to Black theater. Douglas Turner Ward, Robert Hooks and Gerald Krone opened the doors of The Negro Ensemble Company in New York City in 1965. Its mission was to provide a home for Black actors, writers and directors to freely explore their talents beyond the confines of racial barriers. The Negro Ensemble Company has produced more than 200 plays both on and off Broadway, winning numerous Tonys, Obies and Pulitzers. One of their first plays, *Day of Absence*, featured Black actors in whiteface in "reverse minstrel show" style. NEC has been the starting ground for many famous Black performers. Actors such as Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Phylicia Rashad, Laurence Fishburne and Angela Bassett all began their acting careers on the NEC stage.

The 1960s and 70s were a volatile period when creative expressions were directly influenced by the hope and energy of the Civil Rights Movement. The plays written by Black playwrights at that time often focused on the social turmoil of the day. As racial barriers were being challenged, more Black plays and Black theater companies, like The New Federal Theatre, emerged. NFT was founded by Woodie King Jr as an outgrowth of a theatre program called Mobilization for Youth.

In 1989, Larry Leon Hamlin founded the National Black Theatre Festival with the support of Dr. Maya Angelou. In its first year over 10,000 people attended to see thirty performances by seventeen of America's best



Negro Ensemble Company Members
pose with Hooks, Ward, and Krone
(front, L-R).

professional Black theater companies. According to The New York Times, “the 1989 National Black Theatre Festival was one of the most historic and culturally significant events of Black theatre and American Theatre in general.”

In recent history, many Black playwrights' works have been produced to great acclaim. For example, August Wilson has won a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award for his play *Fences* (1987). He won another Pulitzer in 1990 for his play *The Piano Lesson*. Wilson's cycle of 10 plays, *Pittsburgh Cycle*, sketch the Black experience in the 20th century and aim to “raise consciousness through theatre.” The first in this series was revived in 2017 and won a Tony for Best Revival of a Play.

Black works on Broadway in the 2021-22 season included: *Skeleton* by Dominique Morisseau, a revival of *Slave Play* by Jeremy O. Harris, *Clyde's* by Lynn Nottage, *Thoughts of a Colored Man* by Keenan Scott II, *Chicken & Biscuits* by Douglas Lyons, *Pass Over* by Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu, and of course, *Trouble in Mind*.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Participation as an audience member at the Citadel Theatre aligns with the Alberta Education Curriculum.

Drama (Junior High)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Strengthen their powers of concentration.
- Extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively.
- Extend the ability to explore, control and express emotions.
- Extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts.
- Develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism.

GOAL III- To develop an appreciation for drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Develop awareness of various conventions of theatre.
- Develop awareness of drama and theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art.
- Develop recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.

Drama (10-20-30)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Extend their ability to concentrate.
- Extend understanding of, acceptance of, and empathy for others.
- Demonstrate respect for others — their rights, ideas, abilities and differences.
- Demonstrate the ability to offer, accept, and reflect upon constructive criticism.

GOAL II- To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic disciplines.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Demonstrate understanding of integration of disciplines to enrich a theatrical presentation.

GOAL III- To develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Explore various conventions and traditions of theatre.
- Broaden knowledge of theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the process of art.
- Demonstrate recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.
- Develop an awareness of aesthetics in visual and performing arts.

REFERENCES

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Terms at a glance definitions come from Dictionary.com and the following:

[Sardi's](#)

[Home Rule](#)

[Porgy and Bess](#)

[Uncle Tom](#)

[Stage Manager](#)

[Lynch](#)

Contextual Background

[Montgomery bus boycott](#)

[African-American drinking fountains](#)

[American Negro Theatre](#)

[History of the Negro Ensemble Company](#)

[Black Work Broadway](#)

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

Provided by by Ksenia Broda-Milian of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

Read more about the impact of *Childress* and *Trouble in Mind*, including an examination of the genre of anti-lynching plays, in a [personal essay by Allan K. Washington](#).

Watch an insightful [30-minute video discussion](#) from the Alabama Shakespeare Festival about *Childress*' life and *Trouble in Mind* including its relevance to today (from 19 minutes on, it references events in the play, so may be best watched post-show).

Roundabout Theatre Company has a [detailed timeline of Black American Theatre from 1921-1979](#), which includes internal links to further reading about plays, people, and companies.

[Watch Douglas Turner Ward speak about the founding of the Negro Ensemble Company](#) in this video (28 minutes).

Explore [Black Work Broadway](#), a website keeping a record of all works presented in Broadway houses by Black creators.

[The Canadian Encyclopedia entry on Black Canadian Theatre](#) and Robin Breon's piece on the [growth and development of Black theatre](#) in Canada.

A [recent article from CBC](#) features interviews with Black artists; read introductions to [Black Canadian Female Playwrights](#).

You can read an article summarizing the 2020 events of [#InTheDressingRoom and Black Like Me](#) – incidents mentioned may be triggering to BIPOC, please take care.

The [Smashing Times Theatre Company](#) has developed a series of Drama for Change drama workshops. One of these is a three-hour workshop on addressing diversity through drama, with a series of games and activities that they suggest in sequence. Their full Anti-Racism workshop model is [available online here](#) and a few of the games are highlighted below as stand-alone activities.

GOVERNMENT AND FOUNDATION FUNDERS

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