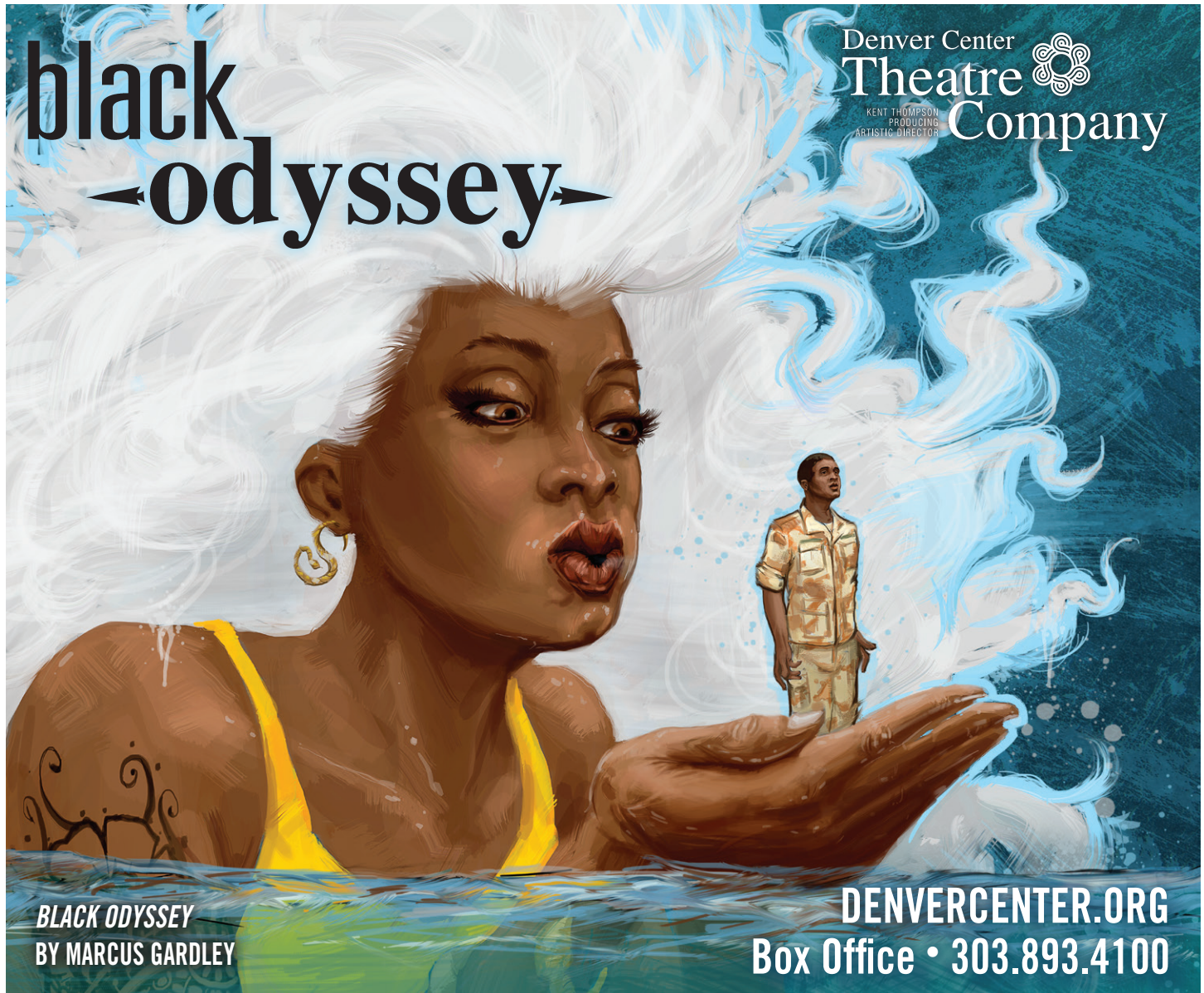


InsideOUT

PRODUCED BY THE DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



black odyssey

Denver Center
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KENT THOMPSON
PRODUCING
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

BLACK ODYSSEY
BY MARCUS GARDLEY

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InsideOUT

Douglas Langworthy Editor
Joelle Parrott Contributing Writer
David Saphier Education Contributor
Tina Risch Community Services Manager

Administration 303.893.4000
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*This play is a recipient of
a grant from the National
Endowment for the Arts.*

SYNOPSIS

Great Grand Daddy Deus and his brother Great Grand Paw Sidin play chess in Heaven (that is, Harlem) and argue about their extended family. Aunt Tina arrives, begging for her father Deus's help rescuing her nephew Ulysses, who cannot come home from the War in Afghanistan until Paw Sidin lifts his curse. Aunt Tina goes to Ulysses' wife Nella P. to encourage her to wait for Ulysses' return. In his wanderings, Ulysses comes across ten-year-old Benevolence Sabine and her parents; at her request, he tells his epic story. ■

THE PLAYWRIGHT: MARCUS GARDLEY

MARCUS GARDLEY is a poet-playwright who is the recent 2012 James Baldwin Fellow. He is also the 2011 PEN Laura Pels award winner for Mid-Career Playwright and a Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence Grantee with Victory Gardens in Chicago. *The New Yorker* describes Gardley as "the heir to Garcia Lorca, Pirandello and Tennessee Williams." His most recent production, *Every Tongue Confess* premiered at Arena Stage starring Phylicia Rashad. His musical, *On The Levee* premiered in 2011 at LCT3, Lincoln Center and was nominated for 11 Audelco Awards including outstanding writer. He holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale Drama School and is a member of The Dramatists Guild and the Lark Play Development Center. Gardley is a professor of Playwriting at Brown University. ■

HOMER'S ODYSSEY

Homer lived in the seventh or eighth century BCE, though no specific biographical information about him has survived. He is considered to be the greatest of the ancient Greek epic poets and the author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, though both works grew out of longstanding oral tradition, a collective inheritance from many singer-poets. *The Iliad* is the oldest extant work of Western literature. *The Odyssey*'s original Greek title, *Odusseia*, means simply "the story of Odysseus," but in English, the word "odyssey" has come to refer to any epic voyage or adventurous journey, especially one with many changes of fortune.

The *Odyssey* begins ten years after the Trojan War, and Odysseus (the Roman name is Ulysses) still has not returned home from the war. His son, Telemachus, is now 20 years old and lives with his mother, Penelope, on the island of Ithaca, where 108 young suitors are pursuing her hand in marriage and wish to kill Telemachus. On Mount Olympus, the gods debate Odysseus' fate; the goddess Athena visits Telemachus and encourages him to go search for his father. He travels to Sparta, where he learns from Menelaus that Odysseus was on the island Ogygia for seven years as a captive of the nymph Calypso, who sought his love. Sent by Zeus at Athena's request, the messenger god Hermes (Odysseus's great-grandfather) convinces Calypso to free him. Hearing of his escape, Poseidon is upset and wrecks Odysseus's raft. He swims ashore on Scherie, the island of the Phaeacians, where he meets the girl Nausicaa, sent by Athena. He is welcomed by her parents, Arete and Alcinous, who do not ask his name. After hearing the blind singer Demodocus tell Trojan War stories, including the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, and the tale of the Trojan Horse, Odysseus reveals his identity and begins to tell his own story.

Odysseus and his twelve ships were driven off course by storms. They were captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus, but escaped by blinding him with a wooden stake. At first Odysseus told the Cyclops that his name was "Nobody" so that he would say, "Nobody blinded me." However, once their ships were underway, Odysseus taunted Polyphemus by boastfully revealing his name. The Cyclops told his father Poseidon, god of the sea, who cursed Odysseus to wander the sea for ten years. The men sailed toward home, but when Ithaca was in sight, the sailors opened a bag containing the winds, which then blew them back the way they had come.

Odysseus next lost all ships but his own to cannibalistic giants, the Laestrygonians. He sailed on and encountered the witch-goddess Circe. Hermes warned Odysseus against Circe and gave him a drug that made him resistant to her powers. She tried to bargain for his love, but failed. After a year with Circe, they sailed to the western edge of the world, where Odysseus sacrificed to the dead. He summoned the spirit of the old prophet Tiresias for advice on how to appease the gods upon his return home. The spirit of his mother, who had died of grief waiting for his return, told him the news of his homeland and the threat of his wife's suitors. Many other spirits also appeared to Odysseus, including Agamemnon and Achilles.

Warned by Circe that the Sirens use enticing song to lure sailors to their doom, all of Odysseus's men plugged their ears with beeswax in order to pass by them safely. Odysseus himself wanted to hear their song, and so he had himself tied to the mast of the ship while his men sailed past the Sirens. Later, six men were lost to the six-headed sea monster Scylla, but the remainder landed safely on the island of Thrinacia. While Odysseus was away praying, his

men hunted the sacred cattle of the sun god Helios, who demanded Zeus punish them. They were thus shipwrecked, and all but Odysseus were drowned in the whirlpool Charybdis. He washed ashore on Calypso's island. Thus ends Odysseus's story to the Phaeacians.

Skilled mariners, the Phaeacians agree to take Odysseus home. They deliver him to a hidden harbor on Ithaca, and Athena disguises him as a wandering beggar. Telemachus has just sailed home from Sparta and meets Odysseus, who reveals his identity to his son; the two decide the suitors must be killed. Still in disguise, Odysseus returns to his home, where he is mocked by the suitors but recognized by the housekeeper, whom he swears to

secrecy. At Athena's prompting, Penelope announces the suitors must compete for her hand: whoever can string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through a dozen axe heads will win. The suitors fail at this task, but the disguised Odysseus succeeds and then kills all the suitors. He reveals himself to Penelope, who accepts his identity when he mentions that their bed is made from an olive tree still rooted to the ground.

Odysseus also reunites with his old father, Laërtes. Citizens of Ithaca follow Odysseus, whom they blame not only for the deaths of the suitors but also for the deaths of all his sailors. However, Athena intervenes, and peace is restored to Ithaca. ■

GREEK GODS

After defeating their father, the Titan Cronus, the three brothers Zeus, Poseidon and Hades (Roman names Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto) drew straws to see who would be supreme ruler of the gods. Zeus won and became god of the sky, Poseidon god of the sea and Hades god of the underworld. Zeus's wife Hera (Juno) was the goddess of marriage, though his many infidelities drove her to jealousy and vengeance.

Zeus's daughter Aphrodite (Venus) was the goddess of love; married to Hephaestus (Vulcan), she also took many lovers. The goddess Leto (Latona) bore Zeus twins: Artemis (Diana), goddess of the hunt, and Apollo, god of the arts. Zeus's son Hermes (Mercury) was the messenger of the gods. Demeter (Ceres), goddess of the harvest, bore Zeus's daughter Persephone (Proserpina), who was abducted by Hades and

forced to spend half of each year with him in the underworld; she was allowed to spend the rest of the year with her mother and the other gods. Zeus and Hera's son Ares (Mars) was the god of war. Zeus's daughter Pallas Athena (Minerva) sprang from his forehead fully formed and clad in armor; she was the goddess of wisdom, practical arts and prudent warfare.

Poseidon also had many lovers and many children. The mortal woman Tyro bore him twin sons, Pelias and Neleus, who killed Tyro's stepmother, Sidero, for having mistreated her. Poseidon and Demeter had a daughter, Despoena, goddess of mysteries. The sea nymph Thoosa bore Poseidon's son Polyphemus, a Cyclops, or giant with one eye. ■

CHARACTER CONNECTIONS

The following *black odyssey* characters are named after characters in Homer's *Odyssey*:

- 
- Great Grand Daddy Deus (ZEUS)
 - Grand Grand Paw Sidin (POSEIDON)
 - Great Aunt Tina (ATHENA)
 - Ulysses Malcolm Lincoln (ODYSSEUS)
 - Nella Pee Jerome Lincoln (PENELOPE)
 - Benevolence Nausicca Cleopatra Sabine (NAUSICAA)
 - Artez and Alsendra Sabine (ARETE AND ALCINOUS)
 - Circe Tubman Nzinga (CIRCE)
 - Malachi Malcolm Little Lincoln (TELEMACHUS)
 - Tire'seas (TIRESIAS)
 - Charybdis (THE WHIRLPOOL)
 - Scylla (THE SEA MONSTER)
 - Soul Siren (THE SIRENS)
 - Queen Mother Calypso Lincoln (CALYPSO) ■

HARLEM

Harlem is a large neighborhood in northern Manhattan, originally settled by the Dutch in 1658 and named for Haarlem, the capital of North Holland.

Harlem stretches from the East River (across from the Bronx) to the Hudson River, from Central Park north to 155th Street. The area saw a huge influx of African American migrants early in the Great

Migration and since the 1920s it has been a major residential, cultural and business center for the African American community.

Harlem was the center point of the Harlem Renaissance, an explosion of African American cultural expression in and around the 1920s. During that time, several wealthy African Americans took up residence in a part of

Harlem's Hamilton Heights that came to be known as Sugar Hill; residents of Sugar Hill included W. E. B. Du Bois, Duke Ellington, Thurgood Marshall and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Powell was the first African American from New York elected to Congress; the Harlem State Office Building and the Harlem section of Seventh Avenue are named after him. Similarly, the Harlem section of Eighth Avenue is called Frederick Douglass Boulevard, after the African American abolitionist leader, himself a former slave.

Other areas of Harlem are less affluent. For example, the characters in *black odyssey* live in the Robert F. Wagner Houses or Triborough Houses, a public housing development (government-subsidized housing for low-income families) with 22 buildings and more than 5,000 residents. Also in East Harlem, Cristo Rey New York High School is a college-preparatory Catholic school offering students from low-income families a quality education and real-life work experience via one-day-per-week internships.

Harlem's Apollo Theatre was built in 1913–1914 and originally called Hurtig & Seamon's New Burlesque Theatre. Initially presenting only white performers to all-white audiences, the building was lavishly renovated and reopened as the 125th Street Apollo Theatre in 1934 to cater to the African American community of Harlem. It quickly became the largest employer of African American theatrical workers in the country and the only theatre in New York City to hire African Americans in backstage positions. The Apollo has hosted such performers as James Brown, Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis, Jr., Ella

Fitzgerald, Aretha Franklin, Jimi Hendrix, Billie Holliday, Lena Horne, Michael Jackson and Bill “Bojangles” Robinson.

Nicknamed the Black Mecca, or Heaven, Harlem is home to more than 400 churches, including Riverside Church (interdenominational, but affiliated with both Baptist and United Church of Christ communities).

Riverside Church was opened in 1929, and in the course of its illustrious history has hosted such speakers as Kofi Annan, Fidel Castro, César Chávez, Bill Clinton, Jesse Jackson, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Yoko Ono, Arundhati Roy, Patti Smith and Desmond Tutu. Harlem also boasts several parks, including Marcus Garvey Park, which had been called Mount Morris Park until New York mayor John Lindsay renamed it in 1973 after Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican political leader and proponent of black nationalism. At the northern edge of Harlem lies Trinity Church Cemetery and Mausoleum. Among notable figures buried there is Ralph Waldo Ellison, African American novelist and author of *Invisible Man*.

Harlem is well known for its soul food, a term popularized in the 1960s, referring to the cuisine of the American South, specifically of the African American community, featuring a combination of West African and Native American traditional foods. A typical soul food meal might include fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, fried okra and cornbread. Sylvia's Soul Food on Lenox Avenue was founded in 1962; it features a live-gospel brunch on Sundays. Over on Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Melba's opened its doors in 2005, advertising American comfort food. Other popular eating places in Harlem include Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen and the hole-in-the-wall fish'n'chips shop Famous Fish Market, Inc. ■

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes on September 11, 2001, crashing them into the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center and into the Pentagon, just outside Washington, D.C. (In the fourth plane, passengers were able to fight back, causing the plane to crash in a Pennsylvania field instead of its intended target.) The following day, President George W. Bush declared, "The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war."

Domestically, the Department of Homeland Security was created in response to September 11 and charged with securing the United States from further such terrorist threats or attacks. A worldwide "war on terror" was launched; its first objectives were to dismantle the al-Qaeda terrorist organization behind the September 11 attacks and to remove Afghanistan's Taliban government, which harbored al-Qaeda terrorists and their leaders.

The war in Afghanistan began October 7, 2001, with aerial bombing campaigns by American and British military against Taliban and al-Qaeda camps; ground troops

quickly followed. In December, the United Nations established the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), charged with securing Kabul, and later all of Afghanistan, from the Taliban and al-Qaeda; more than 40 countries have contributed soldiers to ISAF. The Taliban was removed from Afghanistan's government, and the United States and the United Nations gradually built new bases across the country. However, many al-Qaeda and Taliban members escaped to neighboring Pakistan or retreated to rural or remote mountainous regions, from which they continue to fight. Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden was assassinated in Pakistan by American Navy SEALs on May 2, 2011.

More than 2,200 American service members have died as a part of the war in Afghanistan; around 20,000 have been physically wounded in action. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is one of the most common stress reactions that military personnel experience; PTSD is defined as the reaction to a severe stressor resulting in intense fear, horror and helplessness. Fully 20% of the American veterans of the war in Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD. ■

SECOND LINE PARADE

Second line is a tradition in brass band parades in New Orleans, Louisiana. The main line, or first line, is the main section of the parade, which consists of the members of the club with the parading permit as well as the brass band. Those who follow the band just to enjoy the music are called the second line; the second line's style of traditional dance is called second lining.

After the Civil War, African American traditions came to be merged with the military brass band parade traditions of Europeans and

white Americans. Insurance companies often refused to cover former slaves, so African Americans formed into Benevolent Societies; membership benefits usually included a brass band for funerals and at least one public parade a year. The oldest such organization still holding regular parades is the Young Men Olympian Junior Benevolent Association, founded in 1884.

During New Orleans's second line season, which lasts most of the year with breaks for holidays and summer, there are second line parades most Sundays. Additional second lines, large

or small, may be held for any event which people think merits such a celebration, including weddings and the opening of new businesses. After Hurricane Katrina, residents of New Orleans embraced the second line tradition, and it became part of the cultural economy

of the city. Parade routes are now publicized online, inviting outsiders to participate. The overwhelming majority of second line events have been peaceful, with the notable exception of the 2013 Mother's Day Parade, where 19 were injured in a shooting. ■

EXCERPTS FROM AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Lynching is a murder carried out by a mob, often by hanging but also by other means, in order to punish an alleged transgressor or to intimidate a group of people. Lynchings were especially common in the American South in the decades following the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves; they became less frequent, though still not uncommon, after the 1920s. Between 1882 (the first year lynchings were recorded as such) and 1968, nearly 5,000 people were lynched in the United States; approximately 70% of the victims were African American. During those same years, almost 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in Congress, but no bill was approved by the Senate because of the powerful opposition of the Southern Democratic voting bloc. In the 1960s, widely publicized lynchings of civil rights workers, who had come to the South to register voters and support integration efforts, contributed to galvanizing public support for civil rights legislation.

The Great Migration was the movement of millions of African Americans from the rural South to urban centers in the Northeast, Midwest and West. Between 1910 and 1930, over 1.5 million migrants made the journey, mostly to the Northeast. After a lull during the Great Depression, which eliminated job opportunities, another five million people moved to cities throughout the country between 1940 and 1970.

The Scottsboro Boys. On March 25, 1931 nine African American teenagers were arrested in Scottsboro, Alabama, and accused of raping two white women,

who were also hoboing on a freight train between Chattanooga and Memphis, Tennessee. The case was rushed to trial only two weeks after the arrest, with an all-white, all-male jury and a standing-room-only, all-white audience. Eight of the young men were sentenced to death by electrocution. The U.S. Supreme Court ordered a retrial, and one of the original accusers admitted that the alleged rape had not even happened. Nonetheless, the second jury again found the defendants guilty, but the judge set aside this verdict, and the case returned to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The case was ultimately tried three times over the course of six years. The third jury—now with one black member—returned a third guilty verdict. Charges were finally dropped for four of the nine defendants. Sentences for the rest ranged from 75 years to death. All but two served prison sentences. One was shot in prison by a guard. Two escaped, charged with crimes, and sent back to prison. Clarence Norris, the oldest defendant and the only one sentenced to death, escaped parole and went into hiding in 1946. After he was found in 1976, he was pardoned by George Wallace and wrote a book about his experiences. The last surviving defendant died in 1989.

This case, recognized internationally as one of the most infamous in legal history, is now widely considered a miscarriage of justice that led to the end of all-white juries in the South. It has inspired, and been examined in literature, music, theatre, film and television.

From 1932 to 1972, the **Tuskegee Syphilis Study** was conducted on poor African American men in rural Macon County, Alabama, by the Public Health Service, the Tuskegee Institute and the Centers for Disease Control.

Originally advertised as free healthcare, the experiment monitored the health of 600 men, 399 with syphilis and 201 without. Told they were being treated for “bad blood,” but those with syphilis were never told of their diagnosis and were denied treatment for the disease. By 1947, penicillin had become standard treatment for syphilis, yet the scientists withheld it from their patients for another 25 years. Finally, in 1972, after venereal-disease investigator Peter Buxton took his concerns about the study’s ethics to the national press, the study was forced to end. During the 40-year study, 28 subjects had died of syphilis and 100 of related complications; 40 of their wives had been infected and 19 of their children had been born with congenital syphilis.

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study significantly damaged the trust of the African American community toward public health efforts in the United States.

Desegregation of the Armed Services followed a July 17, 1944 accidental explosion of 5,000 tons of munitions at the segregated Navy base at Port Chicago, California. It killed 320 sailors and civilians and injured 390 more. Most of the dead and injured were enlisted African American sailors, many serving as stevedores loading ships with munitions for the war in the Pacific. Three weeks later, the surviving members of the battalion were ordered to resume work, but 258 men (out of 328) refused to do so until unsafe and unfair conditions at the docks were addressed. Fifty men (the Port Chicago 50) were singled out by the Navy as ringleaders and were accused of mutiny—a crime punishable by death since the United States was at war. All 50 men were convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison and a dishonorable discharge. After the war ended, they were granted clemency and released from prison; they then finished the remaining months of their enlistment in the Pacific.

Following the explosion and mutiny trials, protests highlighted the racial inequality in the military; in 1948, Executive Order 9981 called for the desegregation of the Armed Services.

The murder of Emmett Till. On August 28, 1955, Emmett Till, age 14, was murdered for allegedly flirting with a white woman, 21-year-old Carolyn Bryant, in a grocery store. Till was from Chicago but was visiting his uncle, Mose Wright, in Money, Mississippi. Bryant’s husband, Roy, and his brother, J. W. Milam, kidnapped Till at gunpoint; they then beat him severely, gouged out an eye, shot him in the head and threw his body in the river. Back in Chicago, Till’s mother insisted on a public, open-casket funeral, which was widely publicized. Wright testified at the trial, identifying Milam as his nephew’s abductor; it was the first time that an African American man had implicated the guilt of a white man in a Mississippi court. However, Bryant and Milam were acquitted; protected against double jeopardy, they candidly admitted to the murder in an interview with *Look* magazine the following year.

Medgar Evers was assassinated in Jackson, Mississippi on June 2, 1963. He was a World War II veteran, civil rights activist and NAACP field officer. All-white juries twice deadlocked in trials of his assassin, Bryon De La Beckwith, a member of white supremacist organization White Citizens’ Council. After living as a free man for 30 years, he was finally convicted in 1994.

The 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. On September 16, 1963, four young African American girls – Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley, age 11-14 – were killed when the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, was bombed by the Ku Klux Klan. The church was targeted for its role as a meeting place for civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. No one was convicted for the bombing until 1977. The FBI reopened the investigation in the 1990s to search for other conspirators; two more men were convicted in 2001 and 2002.

The Million Man March descended on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on October 16, 1995. Also called the Day of Atonement, the event sought to present a new public image of African American men committed to their families, active in their communities and taking responsibility for their actions. Immediately after the Million Man March, 1.5 million African American men registered to vote, and 13,000 applied to adopt African American children; some started companies, and others participated in community programs assisting youth. While the March had no specific political aim, its goal was to bring attention to the economic and environmental issues facing African American communities and to inspire the men to work to improve lives within the community.

Amadou Diallo, a 23-year old immigrant from Guinea, was killed by four New York City police officers on February 4, 1999. Believing he matched the description of a serial rapist, then mistaking the black wallet in his hand for a gun, the four officers fired a total of 41 shots, 19 of which struck Diallo. The officers were eventually acquitted of wrongdoing, although the incident sparked massive demonstrations against police brutality and racial profiling.

Sean Bell was killed on November 25, 2006 as he left his bachelor party at Club Kalua, a strip club in Queens, New York. Bell's friend Joseph Guzman had

had an argument with a man outside the bar before Bell, Guzman and another friend, Trent Benefield, got into Bell's car. Fearing a shooting was about to take place, a plainclothes policeman approached the car; instead of stopping, Bell accelerated the car, hitting the officer. Within seconds, five policemen had fired into the car about 50 times, 31 shots coming from one officer alone.

Bell was killed; Guzman and Benefield were seriously injured. There is no evidence the three men had a gun, but the policemen, tried for manslaughter and reckless endangerment, were found not guilty.

Oscar Grant III was fatally shot by policeman Johannes Mehserle after being detained at Fruitvale Station in Oakland, California, on his way home from New Year's Eve celebrations in 2009 on the San Francisco Wharf. Responding to reports of a fight on the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) train, police removed several people suspected of fighting from the train and detained them on the platform. Grant was being restrained facedown when Mehserle pulled his gun and shot Grant once in the back. Mehserle was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter but not guilty of second-degree murder and voluntary manslaughter. The 2013 film *Fruitvale Station* dramatized the final 24 hours of Grant's life. ■

PEOPLE

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in Maryland in 1820. In 1849, her master died, and his widow wished to separate and sell Tubman's family. Instead, Tubman escaped, heading north to Pennsylvania by way of the Underground Railroad, a well-organized and secretive network of abolitionists and safe houses that helped runaway slaves reach free states. Tubman later returned to slave states nearly 20

times in order to help her family members and other slaves escape; she was nicknamed Moses for leading her people to freedom. During the Civil War, she worked for the Union Army as a nurse, scout and spy. After the war she campaigned for women's suffrage. She died in New York in 1913, aged 93, and was buried with military honors.

Malcolm X (also known as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) was born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925. His father, Earl Little, was an outspoken Baptist minister, a passionate civil rights advocate and an avid supporter of Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey (who died in 1931 in what was officially ruled a streetcar accident, but may have been an orchestrated murder by the white supremacist group Black Legion).

A few years later, Malcolm X's mother, Louise, was committed to a mental asylum; her children were separated and raised in a series of foster homes. Malcolm X excelled in school, but he lost interest after a white teacher told him his dream of becoming a lawyer was unrealistic. Moving to Harlem and later Boston, Malcolm X developed a life of petty crime; in 1946, he was convicted of burglary. During his seven years in prison, he joined the religious organization the Nation of Islam (NOI), lead by Elijah Muhammad, who preached black supremacy and the need for a state separate from white people. When he left prison in 1952, he had changed his surname to X (considering Little a slave name, he chose the X to signify his lost tribal name).

Malcolm X became a national spokesman for the NOI, attracting thousands of new members; by the early 1960s, he and other NOI leaders were under FBI surveillance. In 1963, he became disillusioned with the NOI after discovering his mentor Muhammad was not living up to his own teachings but having multiple affairs. Malcolm X refused to help cover up Muhammad's deceit; in March 1964, he terminated his relationship with the NOI, intending to found his own religious organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc.

On a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, he met "blonde-haired, blue-eyed men I could call my brothers." He returned to the United States with a new outlook on integration and a new, hopeful message for all races. However, at a speaking engagement in Manhattan on February 21, 1965, three gunmen rushed Malcolm X onstage and shot him 15 times at close range. The assassins, all members of the NOI, were convicted of first-degree murder. Fifteen hundred people attended Malcolm X's funeral in Harlem.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968) was a civil rights leader known for promoting nonviolent civil disobedience, for which he received the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. He is the only non-president honored with a national holiday or with a monument on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. In 1955, he was spokesman for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which protested the arrest of Rosa Parks and successfully pressured the Supreme Court to rule segregation in transportation unconstitutional. In 1963, he organized nonviolent protests in Birmingham, Alabama, which attracted national attention following television news coverage of the brutal police response. King also helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

King was assassinated on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. The assassination led to a nationwide wave of race riots; this Holy Week Uprising broke out in Baltimore, Chicago, Kansas City, Louisville, Washington, D.C., and several other cities. Dozens of people were killed and thousands injured; hundreds of buildings (both homes and businesses) were damaged or destroyed. President Lyndon B. Johnson dispatched federal troops to cities with the worst rioting; he also urged Congress to rapidly pass the Civil Rights Act of 1968, enacted only one week after King's death.

Dr. Ivan Van Sertima was born in 1935 in the South American country of Guyana, then a British colony. His 1976 publication *They Came Before Columbus* presents his assertion that the Olmec civilization in ancient Mexico (1500–400 BCE) was in contact with the African continent. He also describes sea expeditions launched from Africa to Mesoamerica in 1310 and 1311, long before Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic in 1492. His theories have been ignored or refuted by mainstream Mesoamerican scholarship. In 1979, Van Sertima founded *The Journal of African Civilizations*, which his widow has continued to publish since his death in 2009. ■

MUSICIANS

Lena Horne, born in Brooklyn in 1917, was a singer, actress, dancer and civil rights activist of mixed African American, Native American and European heritage. She was blacklisted during the 1950s for her political views and unable to get work in Hollywood, but she returned to her roots as a nightclub performer, winning her first Grammy Award in 1961. Long active in the civil rights movement, she was at the March on Washington in 1963 and worked with Eleanor Roosevelt to pass anti-lynching laws. She passed away in 2010.

The Supremes were an African American all-female singing group and the most commercially successful group for Motown Records during the 1960s; at their peak they rivaled the Beatles in worldwide popularity. Originally called The Primettes, the group was founded in 1959 by four young African American women from the Brewster-Douglass public housing project in Detroit, Michigan, as the sister band to the Primes (whose

members went on to form The Temptations). One of The Supremes' biggest hits was the 1965 song "Stop in the Name of Love." Though the group disbanded in 1977, their story served as inspiration for the 1981 Tony® Award-winning musical *Dreamgirls*.

The Temptations are an African American all-male vocal group singing and dancing to rhythm and blues (R&B) and soul music since 1961; they are known for their distinct harmonies, intricate choreography and flashy wardrobe. Always comprising five men, the ensemble is still led by its founder Otis Williams. Their first huge hits came in 1964 with "The Way You Do the Things You Do" and "My Girl."

The Pointer Sisters are an African American family of singers who originally started performing in California in 1969 and achieved mainstream success in the 1970s and 80s. Their most famous song is "I'm So Excited," released in 1982. ■

SLANG

CHOKER AND PUKE: A truck stop or restaurant serving food of dubious quality.

CREEPIN' ON YOUR WIFE: Cheating; sleeping with other women.

DIME BAG: \$10 worth of marijuana.

GOING POSTAL: Becoming extremely and uncontrollably angry, to the point of violence, usually in a workplace environment; the expression derives from a series of incidents from 1986 onward in which United States Postal Service workers shot and killed fellow workers, police and members of the public.

GP: General principle.

HIP TO THE GROOVE: To be happening, awesome, cool.

HOME SKILLET: A term of endearment.

HOOPTY: An unattractive (rusted, dented), undependable old automobile.

ITIS: The general feeling of lethargy and well-being experienced after eating a satisfying meal.

JIVE TURKEY: Derogatory slang used in the 1970s for a person who was unreliable or full of empty promises or bluster.

SHAGADELIC: Sexy and psychedelic; a reference to the *Austin Powers* movies, in which the main character frequently used words incorporating "shag."

PAY ME A SOLID: Help out a friend.

PLAYIN' BONES: Playing dominoes.

POP A SQUAT: Take a seat, or relieve oneself.

WHAT IT DO?: How are you doing today?

WOOSAH: A relaxing mechanism; a mantra to stop you from losing your cool.

WORD IS BOND: My word is my bond.

YOU DIG IT?: Do you understand what I mean? ■

GLOSSARY

Aesop: An Ancient Greek story teller (circa 620–564 BCE) credited with a number of fables now collectively known as *Aesop's Fables*.

African Diaspora: The worldwide communities descended from the historic movement of peoples from Africa, particularly the descendants of the West and Central Africans who were enslaved and shipped to the Americas by way of the Atlantic slave trade.

Air Jordan: Brand of shoes and athletic clothing designed, owned and produced by Nike and basketball's Michael Jordan, first launched in 1985.

Ambrosia: The food or drink of the Greek gods, conferring ageless immortality on all who consume it.

Ashanti: A member of a people of south central Ghana.

Baton Rouge: The capital of Louisiana; 80 miles inland from New Orleans.

Bicoastal: Living or working on both the east and west coasts of the United States and travelling frequently between them.

Bipolar: Experiencing episodes of an elevated or agitated mood known as mania alternating with episodes of depression.

Brownstones: Townhouses clad in brown sandstone; a common architectural element of many neighborhoods in New York City.

Bunion: A painful swelling on the first joint of the big toe.

Bursitis: Inflammation of a bursa, which is a fluid-filled cavity countering friction at a joint.

Chanel No. 5: A perfume fragrance launched in 1921 by French fashion designer Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel.

Chitterlings: Pig intestines stewed for many hours, sometimes also battered and fried, served with vinegar and hot sauce (often pronounced “chitlins”).

The Color Purple: A 1982 novel by African American author Alice Walker, describing the lives of women of color in the rural American South in the 1930s; adapted into a 1985 film and a 2004 Broadway musical.

Coolie High: A 1975 film considered a classic of African American cinema, with a soundtrack of 1960s Motown hits; set in 1964 at Chicago's Coolie High School.

Crown Royal: A blended Canadian whiskey, 40% alcohol by volume; the top-selling Canadian whiskey in the United States.

Daffy's: A clothing store boasting “clothing bargains for millionaires”; in 2012, Daffy's closed its retail locations (including 11 in New York City) and continues as an online-only business.

Djibouti: A country located in the Horn of Africa, bordered by Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Emphysema: A condition in which the air sacs of the lungs are damaged and enlarged, causing breathlessness; the main cause is long-term smoking.

Fro: Short for “afro,” a hairstyle allowing naturally kinky hair to extend out from the head in the shape of a ball; particularly popular among African Americans in the 1960s as a rejection of previous styles requiring them to straighten their hair.

GED: Tests of general educational development; passing the GED test gives those who did not complete high school the opportunity to earn their high school equivalency.

Gold Coast: A region of West Africa that is now the nation of Ghana; to the east of the Ivory Coast and to the west of the Slave Coast.

Griot: A West African historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet and musician; a repository of oral tradition and traditionally an advisor to royalty.

Gumbo: A dish originating in Louisiana in the 18th century, consisting of a spicy stew of meat or seafood and vegetables such as bell pepper and okra; possibly based on traditional West African cuisine.

Igbo: A member of a people inhabiting southeast Nigeria.

Intel: Military intelligence.

Jakarta: The capital and largest city in Indonesia.

Kumquat: A fruit resembling an orange but only the size of a large olive, from a tree native to south Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Manna: The substance miraculously supplied as food to the Israelites in the wilderness, as described in the Bible (Exodus 16).

Marcy Houses, or Marcy Projects: A public housing complex with 27 buildings and over 4,200 residents in Brooklyn, New York; childhood home of rapper Jay Z.

Molasses: A thick, dark brown juice obtained from raw sugar during the refining process; moves very slowly, especially when cold.

Moses: A prophet who lived around 1391–1272 BCE; traditionally considered the author of the Hebrew Torah.

Nick the Greek: A professional gambler (1883–1966) born in Crete in 1883; a charter inductee of the Poker Hall of Fame.

Oral fixation: A psychological condition in which a person is unconsciously obsessed with the mouth and feels the need to always be sucking or chewing something.

Praline: A smooth, sweet substance made by boiling nuts in sugar and grinding the mixture, used especially as a filling for chocolates.

Sean John: Clothing and fragrance company Sean John Clothing Inc., owned by hip-hop artist Sean Combs, stage name Puff Daddy, first launched in 1998.

Sharecropper: A farmer, especially in the American South, who raises crops for the landowner and is paid a portion of the proceeds; many former slaves became sharecroppers after the Civil War.

Super Fly: a 1972 film starring Ron O'Neal as a cocaine dealer trying to quit the drug world; its own soundtrack, by soul singer Curtis Mayfield, outgrossed the film.

"Tennessee Toddy": A 1956 song by Marty Robbins; lyrics include "There I met a little chick called the Tennessee Toddy / The reason she was called the Tennessee Toddy / Was that she was all legs with a little bitty body."

Timberlands: Popular outdoor footwear manufactured by American company Timberlands.

White Plains: City in an affluent suburban county north of New York City.

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Quilting as fine art

*Debate continues as to the existence of the
African code quilt*

Merriella Crowell

Deep and rich history

Between 18th and 19th century, the Early company made what was known as the rose blanket and featured motifs embroidered in the four corners to show where the length could be cut smaller. These blankets were woven in one long length, often weighing a hundred pounds or more.

British textile historian Pamela Claburn (The National Trust Book of Furnishing Textiles), describes quilts as "blankets commercially woven in Oxfordshire, England which were embroidered with complex geometric patterns including stars and pinwheels."

Some earliest recorded examples of the American quilt were designed by Quakers, Puritans and others fleeing religious persecution in Europe. Many indentured

servants from England, Ireland, Wales and France sold themselves into servitude to pay passage to America through the sale of quilts.

The *slave quilt code* is legend that quilts were used to communicate routes to escape through images or patterns, embroidered or patched; code to identify safe houses for runaway slaves along the Underground Railroad.

Because literacy among slaves was illegal, quilts also functioned as historical records of events using patterns, colors and shapes to mark them.

Some doubt the existence of the African code quilting citing fabric availability, conflicting dates, geography and genealogy and many were reportedly lost, stolen or destroyed during the Civil War. The few that survived are treasured forms of history and fine art.

Did you know...

Denver is home to one of only a few African American research libraries in the nation?

One of 25 Denver Public Library locations, Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library (BCAARL) serves as an educational and cultural resource with particular focus on the history, literature, art, music, religion, and politics of African Americans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West.

BCAARL's Cousins Gallery is currently host to an exhibition of original slave quilts, Themed *The Civic Minded Woman*, sponsored by the African-American Quilters and Collectors Guild (AAQ&CG).

Mrs. Rose E. Shipp founded the Guild in 1988, and in 1989, the very first annual Table of Brotherhood, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday was held at Ford Warren Library.

Black Odyssey - The Story Of Us

Themes from DCTC Commission *black odyssey* by Marcus Gardley are highlighted throughout the Library as we roll into our MLK Holiday activities, some of the largest in the nation, through February 28.

VISIT 2401 Welton Street, Denver, 80205
*Easily accessible by bus and light rail.
Limited lot and metered parking available.*

CLICK <http://aarl.denverlibrary.org>

CALL 720.865.2401



FEED YOUR MIND

BRAINANTICS

BLACK ODYSSEY QUESTIONS

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTION

1. Why is Homer's *Odyssey* a favorite story to adapt for movies, novels and the stage?
2. Why do the stories and gods from Greek mythology stand the test of time?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. How does the sound design and music enhance the play? How do the other scenic elements (costume, set, props, lighting and projections) add to the production?
2. What similarities and differences to the original epic poem by Homer are there?
3. Who was your favorite adapted character and why?
4. How do the ancestors relate to the mortals? How do they show their approval and disapproval?
5. How do the names of the characters reflect who they are?
6. How would you describe the women characters in the play?
7. Why is Paw Sidin upset with Ulysses? How does he show his disapproval?
8. When Ulysses and Benevolence are stranded on the roof, who are the ghosts and spirits that are also there and what do they represent?
9. How do Aunt Tee and Nella differ in their views on how to raise Malachi?
10. Who is Circe and what does she represent?
11. What does Ulysses learn on his journey? How does it change him? How does it change the people who know him?

BLACK ODYSSEY ACTIVITIES

CONTEMPORIZING GREEK MYTHOLOGY

1. Create a list of characters from Greek mythology including both gods and mortals. Write a short description about a few of them including information about their archetype, relationships, and any other pertinent information. For example, Poseidon is the God of the Sea, brother of Zeus and controls sea creatures.
2. Find a contemporary connection that this god or character could be. What are their mannerisms? What is their occupation in the 21st century? Is this person based on a real person or a fictional character? As an example, Poseidon becomes the orca handler at Sea World.
3. Discuss what attributes make the characters similar? How believable is the new role for the character?
4. Extend the activity by casting and adapting a complete myth. Look and adapt the myths of Theseus and the Minotaur, Icarus, or Sisyphus.

Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

CONTEMPORIZING HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

Homer wrote *The Odyssey* centuries ago. The playwright, Marcus Gardley, transformed moments and characters from the epic poem to tell a similar but a more contemporary story using the traits of the gods.

1. Either individually or in a small group, pick a book from the original epic poem to contemporize.
2. By utilizing stage directions and dialogue, adapt a scene from the poem that sets the scene in the 21st Century.
 - a. Discuss what changes in the original poem would need to be made. How do the costumes change? Do the underlying themes change in your version? What are the changes to character and their attitudes change?
 - b. How does your scene differ from the original story?
3. After writing the scene, have different students read the parts in the scene.
 - a. How can you improve the scene to make it easier to understand?
 - b. How does the scene change by updating the scene?
 - c. Explain what the adapter(s) did to contemporize the play while keeping the integrity of the characters and story.

Colorado Writing PG: Effectively use content-specific language, style, tone and text structure to compose or adapt writing for different audiences and purposes.

Colorado Writing PG: Write with clear focus, coherent organization, sufficient elaboration, and detail.

Colorado Drama and Theatre Arts PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.

1. Students start in a circle. One student steps out of the group and raises arms and says, “Oh Mighty Zeus, change us into the shape of _____” (insert the name of an object). In complete silence and without discussing with their peers, the students find their place and add to create one human sculpture that represents the image that was called.
2. When all the students have found their place in the image and all the students are still, another student steps out and calls, “Oh Mighty Zeus change us into the shape of _____.” Again the students find their place and add to the image. The prompt is repeated a third time.
3. After the third prompt and sculpture is created, the students should disassemble and recreate the human sculptures in reverse order and cycle through the images silently.
4. Discuss: How difficult or easy it was to work as an ensemble? What was the challenge in doing this activity in silence?
5. Raise the bar by adding thematic elements or characters from the play. For example, sailing, discovery, Zeus, or Cyclops.
6. Raise the bar by increasing the number of images from three to five or seven. Add some movement or sound effects to some of the images.

Colorado Drama and Theatre PG: Employ drama and theatre skills, and articulate the aesthetics of a variety of characters and roles.



FROM OUR STAGE TO YOUR LIFE

Designed to enhance your theatre experience, the CONNECT program offers a variety of opportunities, including moderated discussions with the cast and creatives, educational resources, tours, and other special events

PERSPECTIVES - Gain a unique behind-the-scenes perspective on each production when you participate in a professionally moderated discussion with the Denver Center Theatre Company's own creative team.

- **Jan 17, 6pm, Jones Theatre**
-

CELEBRATING THE BLACK ODYSSEY

Blair Caldwell African American Research Library

copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come. copy to come.

- **Jan 13 – Feb 28**
-

TALKBACKS - Engage in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and actors just off the stage to hear their insights and answers to audience questions. Talkbacks are moderated by trained professionals. Higher Education Advisory Council (HEAC) talkbacks are facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities. Theatre & Theology talkbacks are led by Pastor Dan Bollman of the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and explore connections between a play's themes and theology.

Held in the theatre, post-show

- **Jan 26, Talkback**
 - **Jan 28, Theatre & Theology Talkback**
 - **Feb 9, HEAC Talkback**
-

PAGE TO THE STAGE: DCTC@THE TC - Bring your lunch and join Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC) actors, playwrights and directors for in-depth discussions about the creation and development of their work.

Moderated by John Moore, former *Denver Post* theatre critic.

- **Jan 28, second floor of the Tattered Cover LoDo (1628 16th St.)**
-

Visit WWW.DENVERCENTER.ORG/CONNECT and learn about:

- **The Page to the Stage: Book Lovers Club**
- **Our educational resources**
- **Accessibility and more**

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

AT THE DENVER CENTER THEATRE COMPANY also offers the following programs:

DENVER CENTER THEATRE ACADEMY ON-SITE CLASSES: affordable, high-quality theatre classes for children, teens and adults taught by industry professionals. Classes are offered on-site four times a year. Classes are available for all interest and skill levels for ages 3-103. Scholarships are available. Call 303/446-4892 for information.

DRAMATIC LEARNING: Teaching Artists from the Academy bring the creative process into classrooms to support and enhance core curriculum. Workshops and residencies in any discipline are tailored for each classroom. Dramatic Learning benefits more than 90 schools and 5,000 students annually. Call 303/446-4897 for more information.

FAMILY FUN FORUM: This event is FREE. Families act, dance and sing in this two-hour performing arts skills hunt. Families will rotate from classroom to classroom, learning new skills and winning tokens for the entire family. Families spend their “earnings” on face painting and fun prizes. Call 303/446-4892 for more information.

SECOND ACT: LIFELONG LEARNING FOR OLDER ADULTS

Open To Students 55+

Recent studies in the *New York Times* and *Cognitive Daily* suggest that training skills used by actors may increase overall cognitive health. With this in mind, the Academy has put together a sampling of one-time workshops that introduce basic principles in a fun and social setting. Don't take our word for it, here are some recent articles:

<http://www.denvercenter.org/science-blog>

<http://www.denvercenter.org/new-york-times>

ACTivate the brain and have fun doing it at the Denver Center Theatre Academy.

For more information: 303/446.4892

For more information also check out our website at WWW.DENVERCENTER.ORG/EDUCATION

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

THE DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY RECOMMENDS:

- Read!** *The Unforgiving Minute: a soldier's education* by Craig M. Mullaney
West Point graduate, Rhodes Scholar, and Army Ranger U.S. Army Captain Craig Mullaney was trained and honed and trained some more, but when he and his platoon hit the ground and got caught in a firefight would all his preparation and experience be enough? And after returning home would he be able to help prepare new troops for the terrible inevitabilities of war? *The Unforgiving Minute* details a young soldier's growth into an experienced leader and the ways in which he became the man he needed to be.
- Watch!** *Carmen Jones* (20th Century Fox, 1954)
Otto Preminger's film adaptation of Oscar Hammerstein's musical based on Bizet's opera is still worth watching today for its lovely music and talented cast, including Dorothy Dandridge and Harry Belafonte. Reimagining Bizet's 19th century Spanish lovers as World War II-era African Americans, *Carmen Jones* relates the story of the doomed romance between a young soldier and a fiery parachute factory worker.
- Listen!** *The Odyssey* by Homer
You read it in school. You've seen the stage adaptation. Now, if you want a completely different way to experience the original *Odyssey*, consider listening to an audio edition. DPL carries several versions to choose from, on CD or in downloadable audio formats.
- Download!** *How to be Black* by Baratunde Thurston
This irreverent guide from *The Onion* digital editor and co-founder of the *Jack & Jill Politics* blog takes on racists and "race experts" alike. Thurston's chops as a stand-up comedian are on full display in such chapters as "How to be the Black Friend" and "How to Speak for All Black People," but beneath the surface you'll find a poignant memoir and a message that applies to everyone about how to be themselves. Available as a downloadable eBook from DPL.



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