

The America Play And Other Works: A Journey Through African American Theatre

When it comes to American theatre, one cannot ignore the significant contributions made by African American playwrights and performers. From the early years of slavery to the present day, the African American community has produced some of the most powerful and thought-provoking plays in history. In this article, we will explore one of the seminal works in African American theatre - "The America Play" - and delve into other remarkable productions that have shaped the landscape of American drama.

The America Play: Rediscovering History

Written by renowned playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, "The America Play" is a play that challenges our perceptions of history, identity, and the American Dream. Set in a theme park called the Great Hole of History, the story follows a man named The Foundling, who spends his days portraying Abraham Lincoln for tourists seeking a quintessential American experience.

As The Foundling grapples with his own sense of self and frustration with the repetitive nature of his job, he decides to excavate the Great Hole of History in search of the real Lincoln. This quest becomes a metaphorical exploration of America's desire to bury its past and rewrite history in a way that aligns with its idealized image.

The America Play and Other Works

by Suzan-Lori Parks (Kindle Edition)

 4.5 out of 5

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Through Parks' masterful storytelling, "The America Play" forces us to confront uncomfortable truths about the myths and legends that surround American history. The play explores themes of race, memory, and the unfulfilled promises of the American Dream, leaving audiences with a deep sense of introspection and a renewed perspective on the nation's past.

Other Remarkable Works in African American Theatre

1. "A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry

Considered a masterpiece of American drama, "A Raisin in the Sun" made history when it debuted on Broadway in 1959. Written by Lorraine Hansberry, the play tells the story of the Younger family, an African American family living in Chicago's South Side, as they navigate the challenges of racism, poverty, and the pursuit of their dreams.

Hansberry's play provides a rare glimpse into the African American experience in the mid-20th century, capturing the resilience and determination of a family seeking a better life. Through its exploration of racial and social issues, "A Raisin in the Sun" continues to resonate with audiences, reminding us of the enduring power of dreams and the importance of fighting for equality.

2. "Fences" by August Wilson

August Wilson is a towering figure in African American theatre, and his play "Fences" is a testament to his talent as a storyteller. Set in 1950s Pittsburgh, the play revolves around Troy Maxson, a former baseball player struggling to provide for his family while facing the demons of his past.

"Fences" delves deep into the complexities of race, family, and personal responsibility, showcasing Wilson's ability to create multidimensional characters that resonate with audiences. Through rich dialogue and powerful monologues, the play explores the ways in which racism and societal constraints shape the lives of African Americans, while also celebrating the strength and resilience of the human spirit.

3. "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf" by Ntozake Shange

Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf" is a groundbreaking work that combines poetry, music, and dance to portray the experiences of African American women. The play is a series of interconnected monologues and vignettes that offer a raw and honest exploration of love, identity, and the struggles faced by women of color.

Shange's revolutionary use of language and form, coupled with the emotional depth of the stories she tells, catapulted "For Colored Girls" into the spotlight and solidified its place as a transformative work in African American theatre.

The America Play and other remarkable works in African American theatre have not only entertained audiences but also pushed the boundaries of conventional storytelling. These plays bring to light the unique experiences and perspectives of

African Americans, challenging societal norms and sparking conversations about race, history, and identity.

Through the innovative storytelling techniques employed by playwrights such as Suzan-Lori Parks, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, and Ntozake Shange, the world of American theatre has been enriched and expanded. These works serve as a reminder of the importance of diverse voices and narratives in shaping our understanding of the human experience.

So, the next time you find yourself in a theatre, consider exploring the works that have emerged from the African American community. Allow yourself to be transported on a journey of self-discovery, empathy, and enlightenment as you witness the remarkable brilliance of *The America Play* and other works that have defined African American theatre.



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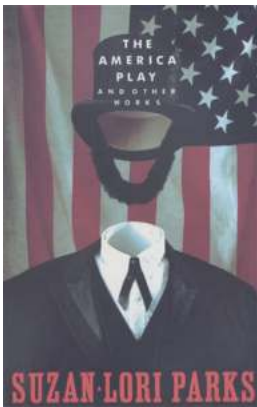
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"Parks has burst through every known convention to invent a new theatrical language, like a jive Samuel Beckett, while exploding American cultural myths

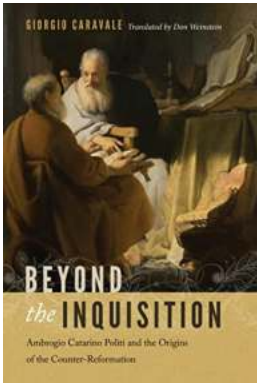
and stereotypes along the way.... She's passionate and jokey and some kind of genius."--Vogue

A collection of plays and essays by one of America's premier playwrights. Includes the essays "Possession," "from Elements of Style," and "An Equation for Black People Onstage," and the plays Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom, Betting on Dust Commander, Pickling, The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World, Devotees in the Garden of Love, and The America Play.



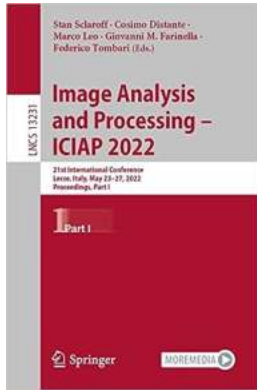
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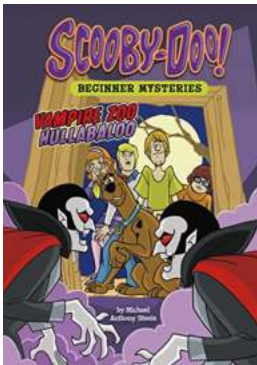
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