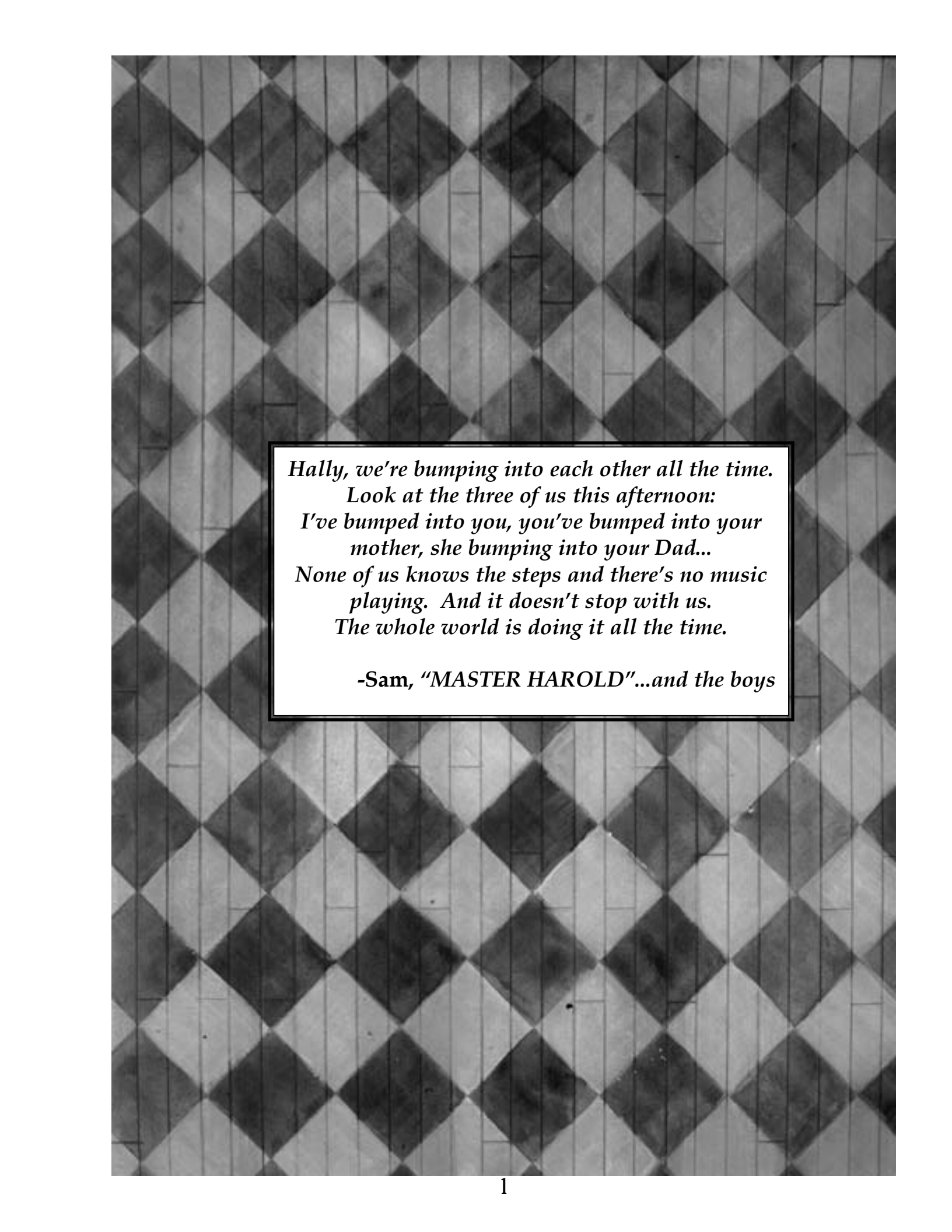


**“MASTER HAROLD”  
...and the boys**

by Athol Fugard

directed by ensemble member K. Todd Freeman



A black and white photograph of a quilt with a repeating diamond pattern. The quilt is made of various shades of gray and black fabric. In the center of the quilt, there is a white rectangular box with a black border containing text.

*Hally, we're bumping into each other all the time.  
Look at the three of us this afternoon:  
I've bumped into you, you've bumped into your  
mother, she bumping into your Dad...  
None of us knows the steps and there's no music  
playing. And it doesn't stop with us.  
The whole world is doing it all the time.*

*-Sam, "MASTER HAROLD"...and the boys*



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**Apartheid** was a system of laws put in place by the white-minority government in South Africa. It enforced discrimination and segregation of the black and “Coloured” (mixed race) majority, denying them their basic civil and legal rights.

### A Timeline of the Political Background of the Play 1939-1953

The flag of the National Party, adopted in 1939.

1939



1944

The Youth League of the African National Congress, a subset of the ANC, is formed in response to dissatisfaction among the ANC's younger members with its leadership. The Youth League seeks to foster a collective spirit of nationalism among members of the liberation movement as it combats discriminatory policies.

A local survey shows that Port Elizabeth has the poorest concentration of black South Africans among six major urban centers.

1946

# The World of "MASTER HAROLD" ... and the boys

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The **Group Areas Act** requires that black South Africans live in townships, like the one being planned in this map.

This is the year in which Athol Fugard set *'MASTER HAROLD' ... and the boys*.

1949

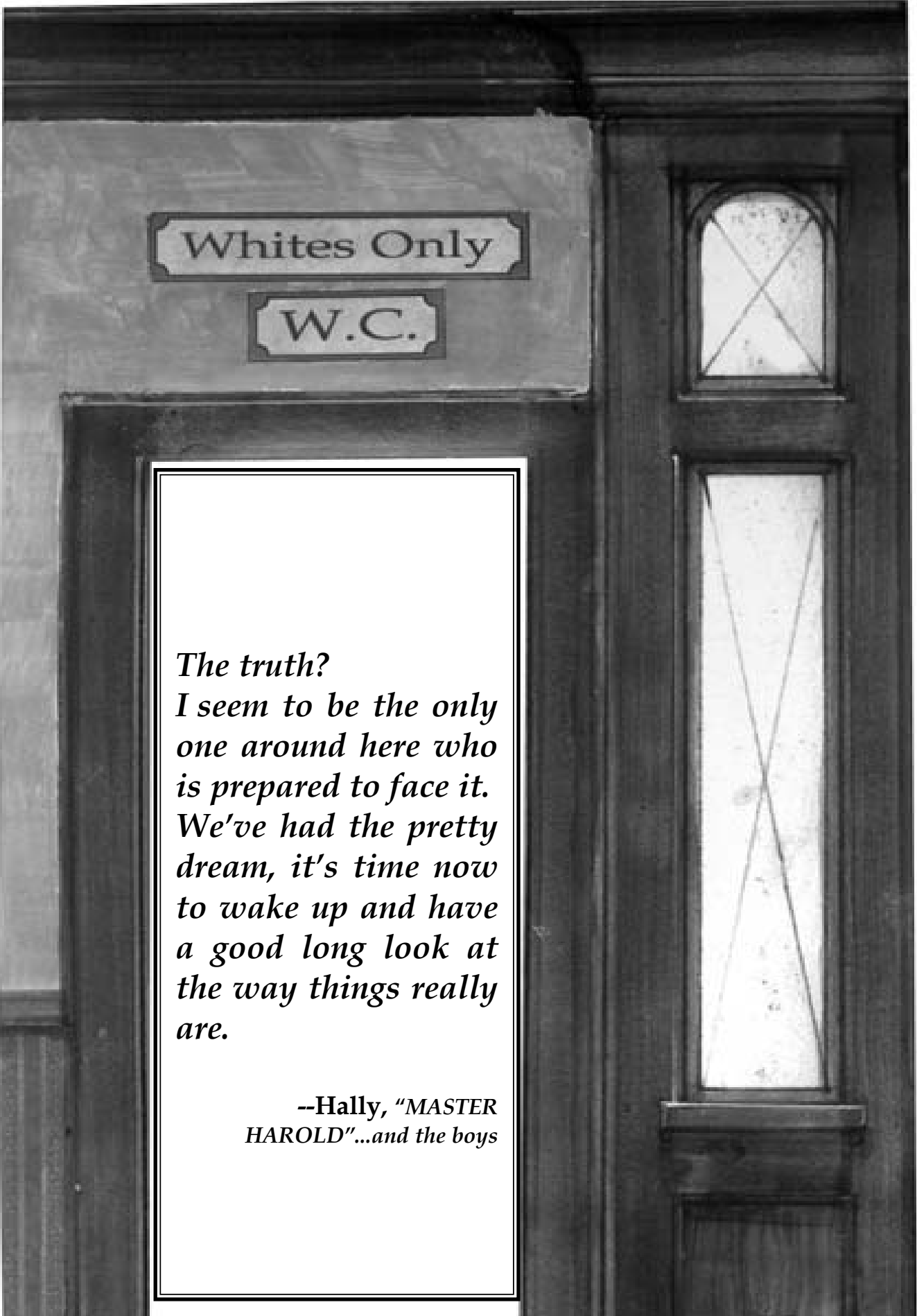
The **National Party** comes into power and begins to implement apartheid policy.

Black leaders in Port Elizabeth stage a bus boycott in response to poor service and high fares. The boycott lasts until August, when an agreement was brokered in which the municipality and private employers would subsidize some of the fare.

1950

The **Bantu Education Act** closes almost all mission schools that educated South Africa's black population. The Act deemed that education for black South Africans was not necessary. It was a held belief that black South Africans were expected to only be laborers and so therefore would not need to be educated.

1953



Whites Only

W.C.

*The truth?*

*I seem to be the only  
one around here who  
is prepared to face it.  
We've had the pretty  
dream, it's time now  
to wake up and have  
a good long look at  
the way things really  
are.*

*--Hally, "MASTER  
HAROLD"...and the boys*

# Plot Summary

"MASTER HAROLD"... *and the boys* opens in a tea shop in Port Elizabeth, South Africa in 1950. Willie and Sam, two black waiters who work there, are discussing Willie's dance steps for the ballroom competition he is entering in a couple of weeks. The two men argue and tease each other about Willie's dancing and his dancing partner.

In walks Harold, also known as "Hally," a seventeen-year old boy whose parents own the tea shop. Hally, Sam and Willie speak affectionately and familiarly to each other. They act more as friends, even though Sam and Willie work for Hally's family. Hally settles down to do his homework and have Sam serve him his lunch.

Sam says that Hally's mother is bringing his father home from the hospital that day. Hally denies that this is true, since he believes his father has not sufficiently recovered from his alcoholism to return home. This news makes him uneasy and he becomes agitated with both Sam and Willie. He returns to his homework to distract himself.

Sam is interested to learn what Hally is studying, prompting a discussion about the significance of historical and literary figures. Hally begins to reminisce about how he used to tutor Sam and Willie in the subjects he was learning in school as a younger boy. Hally would visit Sam and Willie every day and would spend more time with them than he would with his own parents or kids his own age.

As he remembers the day that Sam taught him how to fly a kite, Hally gets a call from his mother confirming that she is bringing his father home from the hospital. Hally argues with her about whether or not his father is ready to come home. He loses the argument and again turns his anger loose on Sam and Willie, ordering them to get back to work.

Sam and Willie dance as they work, and continue to discuss the ballroom competition. They talk about the beauty and perfection achieved in dancing that isn't achieved between people of different nations, beliefs and economic status. Hally thinks their talk might make an interesting topic for a paper he has to write for school and joins the discussion.

Hally receives another phone call from his mother asking him to come home to greet his father. Hally refuses but then is forced to speak to his father on the phone. Hally's tone changes immediately when he talks on the phone and he pretends to be happy about the homecoming. Once off the phone, Hally is angry and Sam discourages him from saying hurtful things about his father.

Hally lashes out against Sam as he never has before, reminding Sam of his status as a servant, not a friend or a father. In an effort to hurt and humiliate Sam, Hally sides with his father and makes a racist joke at Sam's expense. He insists that Sam refer to him as "Master Harold," and not as the familiar "Hally." Sam informs Hally that if he requires him to call him "Master," Sam will do as he wishes, but the consequence will be that their relationship is forever changed. They try to reconcile but realize that nothing can ever go back to the way it was.



# Character Analysis

## Sam

**Sam** is a black South African waiter working in St. George's Park Tea Room who befriends Hally. Recognizing the pain and embarrassment Hally's father has caused young Hally, Sam has spent a great deal of time with him in an attempt to strengthen the boy's faith in himself, and to separate Hally's father's faults from Hally's own sense of identity. Sam functions simultaneously as Hally's friend, father, servant, teacher and student. While Hally might be conflicted over his regard for Sam as a friend, father figure and servant, Sam is always aware of his actual status in society as a servant. He cares deeply for Hally but knows that he does not take the place of his actual family. This knowledge comes out of the racial discrimination of the time, but also out of Sam's respect for family in spite of Hally's parents' imperfections. However, when Hally disrespects his bond with Sam by adopting the racism of his father, Sam is not immune to feelings of betrayal. While they both try to reconcile at the end, it is ultimately Sam's age and experience with society's racism that exceeds Hally's understanding of why they can't return to the way things were.

## Willie

**Willie**, a black South African waiter at St. George's Park Tea Room, spends much of his time practicing for an upcoming ballroom dance competition. In "*MASTER HAROLD*"...and the boys, dancing serves as a metaphor for a perfect society unavailable to any of the three characters in the play--a world in which people cannot hurt or abuse one another. Ironically, Willie uses his girlfriend's inability to keep time while dancing as an excuse to beat her. The seriousness with which he approaches his study of dance and instruction to his girlfriend signifies several things. Willie's desire to win the competition reflects a need for ownership that he has been denied while in service of Hally's family. The way he abuses his girlfriend Hilda reflects a cycle of abuse that the social and political climate has helped perpetuate. Willie himself has been abused and he then takes out his own frustrations on Hilda.

Willie also serves as a witness to the way Hally treats Sam at the end of the play. Because their relationship shifts so dramatically, Willie's presence serves as a reminder to them both that they can never go back to the way they were.



## Hally

**Hally** is a seventeen-year old white South African boy growing up in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He spends his afternoons in his mother's cafe, the St. George's Park Tea Room, conversing with waiters Sam and Willie. He has spent a great part of his youth with these men. Hally, who has lacked a positive fatherly presence in his life, has looked to Sam to fill some of that role. At the same time, Hally has had more education than the two men and performs the role of teacher when spending time with them. Hally's attitude has likely been shaped by the South African society in which he lives, where black people are considered inferior to white people.

Because Hally relates to Sam and Willie in conflicting ways as both friend and employer, son and teacher, his behavior towards them is often erratic. Hally struggles with his parents' lack of involvement in his life and is also a poor student. Desperate to regain a sense of control over his feelings toward his own father, Hally often lashes out at Sam and Willie. His discussions of what he learns in school help him maintain a sense of confidence in himself when he can teach Sam and Willie something that they don't know.

### *Challenge Question!*

Hally references *Julius Caesar*, a famous play written by William Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* tells the story of a Roman dictator and the conspiracy surrounding his death. While Julius Caesar is the title character, the main character in the play is actually Brutus, his best friend, who was one of the many conspiring to kill Caesar. The play addresses his struggles between friendship and patriotism. It is the only Shakespeare play that Sam has ever read, and Hally claims he doesn't understand it. Why might a play that deals with themes of both friendship and patriotism be difficult for Hally to understand?

What about those themes might be appealing to Sam?

# Themes of the Play

## Boyhood and Manhood

In "MASTER HAROLD" *...and the boys*, Fugard turns the notion of traditional adult and child roles on its head. Hally is in fact only a child but because of his status as a white person in a racially divided society he is given the status of "Master", a title that holds a great deal of authority. Sam and Willie are referred to as "boys" in spite of the fact that they are both grown men and have had more life experiences than Hally. Just as Hally is elevated to the role of "Master" because of his race, Sam and Willie are not given the respect of being "men", but rather "boys" because of theirs.

## Teacher and Student

Fugard demonstrates how the fractious and disruptive effects of apartheid challenge all notions of traditional relationships. Hally views himself as Sam and Willie's teacher because he has been given more formal education than they have. He is interested in social theories and is coming into a greater awareness of the world. However, Hally is still in need of learning the ways of the world he lives in, and not just theoretical ones. When he recounts how Sam helped him build a kite in the park and then had to leave him, Sam is the one who informs him of the real reason why he couldn't stay. Hally's childhood memory is that Sam had to go to work, but because Hally was sitting on a "Whites Only" bench that day in the park, Sam would not have been permitted to sit there with him. While the social and political climate of South Africa has made it possible for Hally to view himself as more knowledgeable than Sam or Willie, it is Sam who teaches Hally about the harsh realities of the world.

## Personal and Political

The conversations Hally, Sam and Willie have with each other are about the daily events and problems in their lives. Willie is desperate to win his ballroom dance competition, Hally must complete his homework and deal with his father's return from the hospital and Sam is concerned that Hally show respect for his father in spite of his failures. Underneath the personal issues that affect all these characters, the political climate in which these characters live is apparent. Ballroom dancing serves as a metaphor for a world in which the disruptions that occur in daily life under apartheid don't exist. Hally uses his problem with his parents as an excuse to lash out against Sam and Willie, who are both his only friends and also the only two people Hally feels he has any control over. Hally's intensely personal family issues become a reflection of how he was raised and explain why he treats Sam in such a demeaning and discriminatory way. When Sam reacts to Hally's racist joke by dropping his pants, he is stepping outside the formality and level of reverence society insists he show to Hally, or any white person.

Fugard merges the political with the personal most poignantly when Hally and Sam recount their different experiences of the same event. Hally lacks the life experience to fully understand why Sam couldn't stay with him on the park bench that day, while Sam understands all too well. What Hally has gained in book knowledge he lacks in knowledge of the world around him. Another reason Hally perhaps cannot understand is because he experienced the day in the park from a privileged position he has been in all his life--a privilege his race has afforded him. Hally has never been barred from any public space; he has never not gotten what he wanted from Sam and Willie. Sam's experience of this happy memory for Hally is tainted by his exclusion from it since he was not allowed to stay with Hally. Fugard makes a powerful statement that every relationship, experience and memory is affected by the political climate in which it exists.

**The Native Land Act,  
No. 27 of 1913**

The Native Land Act made it illegal for blacks to purchase or lease land from whites except in reserves.

**The Native (Urban Areas) Act  
of 1923**

This act established a foundation for future institutionalized segregation in cities, restricting black occupancy to less than eight percent of South Africa's land.

**The Prohibition of  
Mixed Marriages Act,  
No. 55 of 1949**

This act made marriages between white people and people of other races illegal in South Africa.

**Reservation of Separate Amenities Act,  
No 49 of 1953**

This law required that black South Africans have separate amenities such as public restrooms, parks and beaches. They were not required to be of the same quality.

**The Bantu Education Act,  
Act No. 47 of 1953**

This act limited the education blacks received in publically-funded classrooms and was an attempt by the government to limit career possibilities for the black population, thereby preserving management jobs for South African whites.

***Apartheid Laws Enacted***

Apartheid effectively institutionalized racial discrimination in South Africa between the years 1948 and 1991, under the leadership of the National Party. The term itself means "separateness" in both Dutch and Afrikaans, the language spoken by Dutch descendants in South Africa, and refers to the forced segregation of non-whites from mainstream society. Like most formal systems of discrimination, the impulses that ultimately led to apartheid developed gradually, and its ramifications linger to this day.

Apartheid was comprised of a specific set of laws aimed at maintaining a life of privilege and economic advantage for the white South African population.

**Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, No. 67 of 1953**

South African **pass laws** originated in 1760, long before formal apartheid. The black population was required to carry passes signed by their white landowners when traveling between towns. Under apartheid, pass laws became a means by which the government regulated traffic of non-whites. Many industries supported pass laws in the 1800s, when the market for labor was greatest, as certain passes enabled blacks to legally work in white areas. Under the Natives Act, a single 96-page "reference book" replaced the 11 existing passes offered by the government. This book contained the fingerprint of its holder, along with his employment history and other personal information. Like the passes before it, this book had to be carried at all times under threat of punishment by law, and the authorities had the right to invade any home inhabited by blacks if so chose in order to search for documentation. Those caught with an expired pass were forced to pay a fine. If they could not pay this fine, as was often the case, the person would be imprisoned, often for months at a time.

### The Immorality Act, No. 21 of 1950 (amended in 1957)

The Immorality Act, passed in 1950, banned marriage between the races, and was followed up in 1950 with a ban on sexual relations between whites and blacks. On the grounds of the Immorality Act, the police tracked down mixed couples suspected of being in relationships, ransacked their homes, and arrested couples caught in bed. Most couples found guilty were sent to jail, and blacks were often given harsher sentences than their white partners. In 1985, the Immorality Act and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act were both repealed.

### *in the Time of the Play*

Since the seventeenth century, when the British and Dutch established colonies in the southern-most region of the African subcontinent, the land that later became South Africa has been the home of distinct and competing cultural groups including numerous native African tribes. Eventually, the English and Dutch descendants found common ground in their desire to limit the benefits of the industrial economy they established in South Africa to themselves, rather than share it with the native black or "Coloured" (mixed race) population. When the National Party, founded in 1914 by Afrikaner nationalists, defeated the Smuts Party in 1948, it immediately began passing laws to further suppress the freedoms of South Africa's blacks under their newly-named policy of apartheid.

### Suppression of Communism Act, No. 44 of 1950

The 1936 Representation of Natives Act placed laws on the statute that excluded blacks from political participation, and was reinforced by **The Suppression of Communism Act**, which outlawed communism and the Community Party in South Africa. Under the latter Act, Communism was defined so broadly that it applied to any radical call for change. Furthermore, in 1953, the Criminal Law Amendment Act made possible the prosecution of individuals advocating any of the "aims of communism."

### The Population Registration Act, No. 30 of 1950

This act prompted the creation of a national register in which a racial classification was formally assigned to every South African.

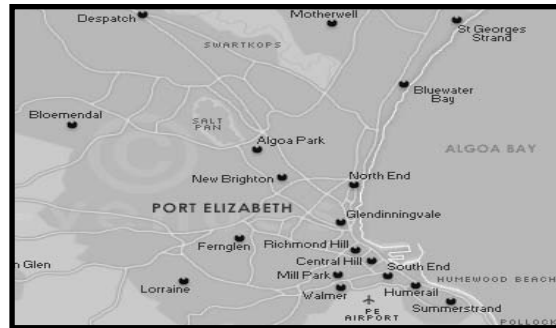
### Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950

The Group Areas Act dictated where different population groups could own property, reside and work. The government consolidated existing segregated areas, establishing townships for non-whites, designated either African, Indian, or "Coloured" (South Africans of mixed race). These townships were usually several miles from the cities themselves, and the government designed these areas to be connected to major business centers by only one of two avenues of transportation, which could be easily closed off. Thus, the Group Areas Act made political uprisings - already banned by law - particularly difficult to maintain. The Group Areas Act also made it illegal for Africans to be present in cities for more than 72 hours without official permission (see **pass laws**).

# Hally's Hometown: Port Elizabeth, South Africa

## The City of Port Elizabeth

Port Elizabeth is located on the eastern cape of South Africa. It is known for its beautiful beaches, but also has a rich political history during the reign of apartheid. Several boycotts, riots and arrests took place there.



In the 1950's world of "MASTER HAROLD" ...and the boys, Port Elizabeth was one of the last major urban areas of South Africa to remain relatively open to black South Africans. Conditions worsened in rural areas due to drought and increased land shortages as the years wore on. As a result, Port Elizabeth became overcrowded with poor black South Africans, many of whom lived deplorably. Finding housing was difficult which most likely explains why Sam and Willie had to live in the boarding house owned by Hally's parents. By the end of the 1940s, the area was home to South Africa's poorest black population, and had become a hotbed for diseases like tuberculosis. The City Council attempted to deal with the issue of overcrowding by demolishing the shanty residences of black South Africans. In 1949, black South Africans choosing to move to Port Elizabeth were forced to register their presence with the municipality. By 1950, these regulations had been implemented for much of Port Elizabeth's "local" (those who were from the neighboring Cape Town province) population as well.

### Challenge Question!

"There's no collisions out there Hally. Nobody trips or stumbles or bumps into anybody else. That's what that moment is all about. To be one of those finalists on the dance floor is like...like being in a dream about a world in which accidents don't happen."

What is Sam trying to explain to Hally, and how does ballroom dancing serve in his explanation? Bearing in mind the political climate in South Africa in 1950, as well as Sam's relationship to Hally, what might ballroom dancing represent? Might it mean something different to each character?

## Education

"MASTER HAROLD"...and the boys is set in 1950, five years before major apartheid-related reforms in education such as the Bantu Education Act were added. Prior to 1955, Africans were offered no means of mass public education. Sam and Willie demonstrate that they have no access to any education other than what Hallie teaches them. Some black South Africans were educated in schools run by Christian missionaries while other public schools existed in delapidated buildings and attendance was often sparse. The interest Sam and Willie display in Hally's studies and their willingness to learn from him second-hand illuminate the fundamental inequities of education between blacks and whites.

The school system under apartheid became the basic means by which the government ensured that its racial philosophy was reflected by and imparted to South African whites - that is, apartheid philosophy was both taught and practiced in schools. As a student enrolled in a Port Elizabeth school, Hally's daily lesson plans were infused with formal apartheid policies that colored his view of black South Africans such as Sam and Willie. Hally's studies focus on European culture and history, and not much more.

The National Party built a great deal of its initial support by capitalizing on existing fears of racial integration in the schools. Once the NP gained control, it mandated that all high school graduates be proficient in both Afrikaans and English. The National Party introduced Christian National Education as its guiding philosophy, which proposed to justify apartheid through religious doctrine.

*"There is no place for  
[the African] in the  
European community  
above the level of  
certain forms of labour.  
It is of no avail for him  
to receive a training  
which has as its aim,  
absorption in the  
European community".*

**Bantu Education Act,  
1953**

### Words From The Play

**Boet:** Friend or comrade

**Ja:** Yeah

**Struesgod:** "It's true as God"  
or "I swear to God"

**Wellfed:** Welfare

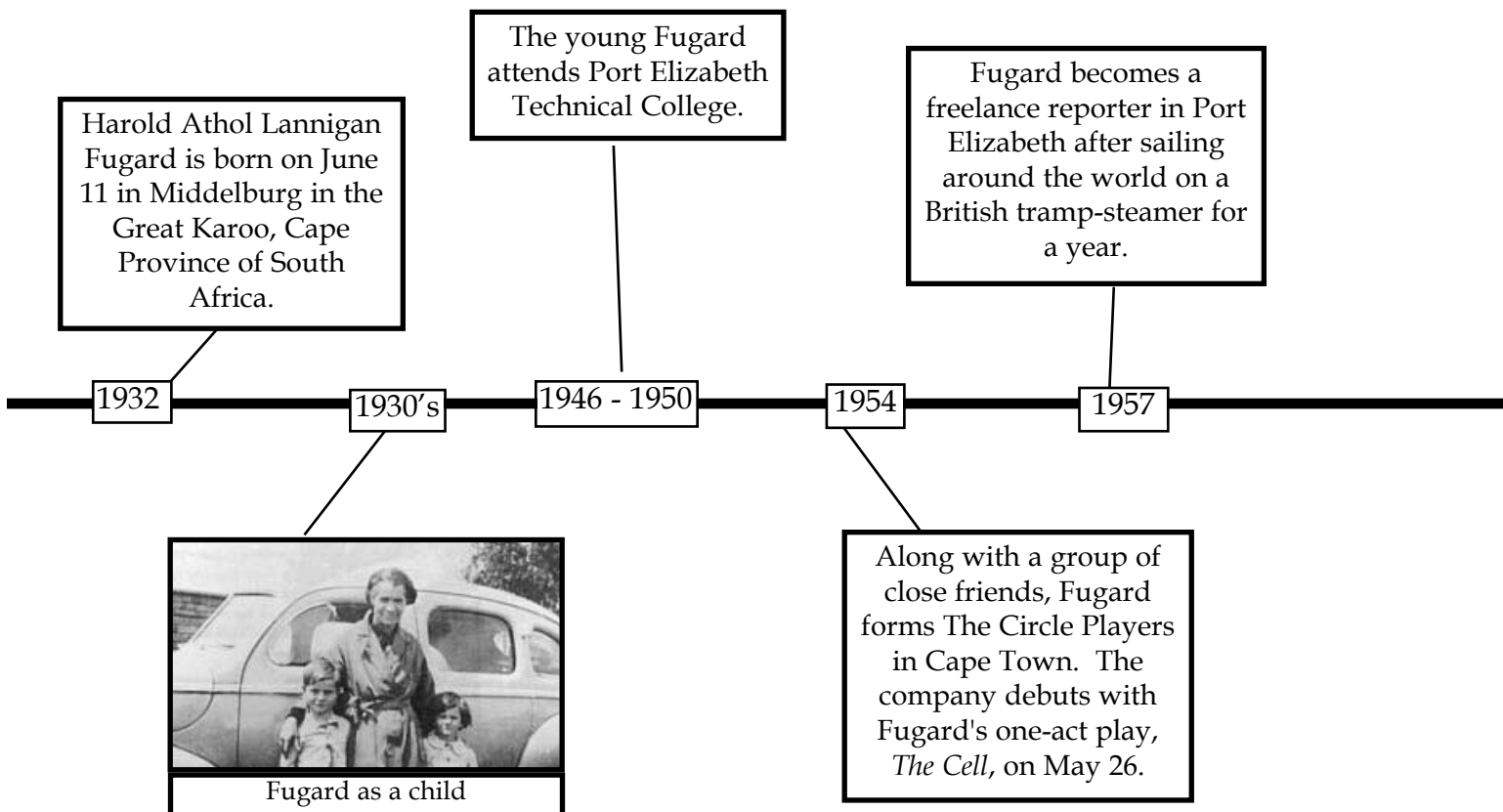
**Hiding:** A beating





Fugard stars with Zakes Mokae in the 1985 revival of *The Blood Knot*

## A Timeline of Athol Fugard



# Playwright Athol Fugard

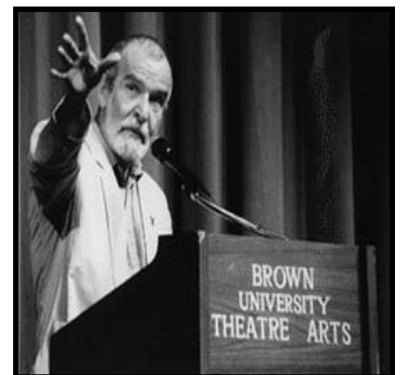
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The Serpent Players perform *The Cure*, adapted and directed by Fugard, beginning his long association with the South African theatre company.



"MASTER HAROLD"  
... and the boys  
premieres March 12 at  
the Yale Repertory  
Theatre in New  
Haven, Connecticut.

In the picture Fugard  
directs actor Lonny Price.



Fugard addresses students at  
Brown University

1963

1978

1982

1995

1998

On March 20, *A Lesson from Aloes* debuts at Johannesburg's Market Theatre - an integrated theatre that would go on to premiere 5 more of Fugard's plays.

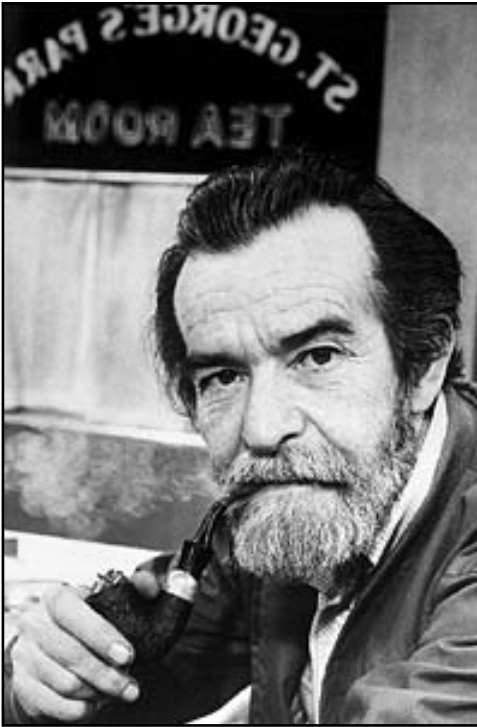
The South Africa Theatre Association honors Fugard with the Vita Award for lifetime achievement.



Johannesburg's Market Theatre

# Athol Harold Fugard

## Biography of a Playwright



Playwright Athol Fugard takes part in a long tradition of artists compelled to create socially conscious art. While his plays take place in South Africa and are concerned with both the political and social climate specific to that country, Fugard's work explores universal questions of brotherhood, community and the necessity of mankind to let go of and learn from the past. In using his art to respond to the injustice of apartheid, Fugard illuminates the dehumanizing effects of his native country's political system, champions the fight for reform, and examines how South Africa might heal in the wake of apartheid.

Athol Fugard was born on June 11, 1932 in Great Karoo, Cape Province, South Africa. His mother, an Afrikaner, ran the household and family business while his father, the son of immigrants from Manchester, England, was frequently ill and unable to work following a hip injury that left him handicapped. In 1935, the family moved to Port Elizabeth. Like Hally in the play, Fugard spent a great deal of time in St. George's Park Tea Room, a café owned and run by his mother in tandem with a boarding house and general store. The relationships he formed with the black employees at the Tea Room would ultimately fuel the story of "*MASTER HAROLD*" ...and the boys.

Fugard's passion for the theatre developed relatively late in life. Following his study of auto mechanics at Port Elizabeth Technical School, Fugard briefly studied at the University of Cape Town. Deciding to abandon college, Fugard hitchhiked through Africa with a close friend, and then accepted a job as a sailor. Unable to bear the loneliness of a sailor's life, Fugard returned to South Africa and worked for a short time as a freelance writer for the *Evening Post* in 1954. Soon, he was promoted, then transferred to Cape Town in 1955 where he was re-aquainted with several of his old college friends. One such friend set him up with an actress named Sheila Meiring, whom Fugard had met in passing while at school. The two married in 1956.

### *Challenge Question!*

Athol Fugard relies heavily on his own life experiences when writing his plays.

In "*MASTER HAROLD*"...and the boys, Fugard drew upon an incident that took place in his mother's cafe when he was a boy.

What experience from your life would you like to write as a play?



A poster of Fugard's play *Boesman and Lena*

Under the influence of his wife's passion for the arts, Fugard grew to know and love the theatre. His career as a playwright began in 1954 with the play *Klaas and the Devil*. Around this time, he and his wife founded the Circle Players, a theatrical workshop which would produce some of Fugard's original works. While working as a clerk in the Native Commissioner's Court in Johannesburg, Fugard frequented the black township of Sophiatown. He developed friendships with black South African artists such as **Zakes Mokae** (see box below). His experiences during this time cemented Fugard's deep hatred for apartheid, and he relinquished his clerkship in protest. In 1959, Fugard moved to London to more firmly establish himself as an artist, but with the occurrence of the **Sharpeville Massacre** in 1960, he felt compelled to return home to South Africa.

Fugard's collaborative work tapered off in the 1970s, as the playwright felt the need to write increasingly personal work. In the 1980s, frustrated by the limitations placed upon his work under apartheid, Fugard forged a close relationship with Yale Repertory Theatre, which premiered "*MASTER HAROLD*"... *and the boys* in 1982.

In the decades that followed, Fugard continued to write prolifically for the theatre to considerable acclaim, both in South Africa and abroad. Over the course of his career, Fugard has won the Obie Award, Outer Critic's Circle Award, and a Tony Award nomination, among others. Today, he keeps a residence outside San Diego to be near his extended family, but returns frequently to his home in South Africa.

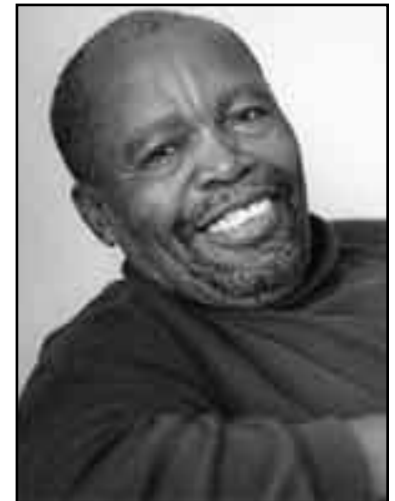


Zakes Mokae and Danny Glover star in the Yale Repertory Theater's production of "*MASTER HAROLD*"...*and the boys*

## Zakes Mokae

"You always hear me tell the story of how my parents don't know what it is I do because there is no word in my language for an actor. The closest word is "to play." So I tell them I play and they say 'A big man like you and all you do is play?'"

Zakes Mokae is one of Fugard's foremost collaborators, working alongside him as a member of The Serpent Players and originating roles in such plays as *No-Good Friday*, *Nongogo*, *Blood Knot*, and "*MASTER HAROLD*"... *and the Boys*. Mokae began his career as a saxophonist, but turned to acting when he met Fugard in the late 1950s. After studying acting at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, Mokae returned to his native South Africa. In 1969, he moved to San Francisco to secure acting opportunities he could not get under apartheid. There, he founded The Black Actor's Theatre with Danny Glover and went on to enjoy a successful career in film and television as well as onstage. In 1982, Mokae won the Tony Award for his portrayal of Sam in "*MASTER HAROLD*"... *and the Boys*, and was honored with the South African Lifetime Achievement Award in February 2005.



# Fugard Responds to Apartheid

*"If there is one thing I know about writing it's that being 'safe' is not a good idea, so I have tried to stay out there on the wire"*

*- Athol Fugard, September 1997*

Athol Fugard used theatre as a means of proactive response to the injustices of apartheid, creating political theatre in the truest sense of the word. While his plays contain themes politically relevant to the times they were written, they also carry with them far-reaching implications. Each of Fugard's plays is based on events he has witnessed, people in his life, and incidents in his own life experience.

Stagings of these early plays exemplified live political theatre, as Fugard and his actors took the plays directly to the communities depicted in his drama. These plays, which include *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* and *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act*, were created through extensive workshops with black South African actors, whom Fugard relied on heavily to shape the scope of his drama. The typical audience for Fugard's early plays was comprised of poor migrant workers and those residing in hostels within the townships. The response each play received contributed to its overall impact and effect, both as drama and a means of political expression. Frequently, Fugard would use these performances as workshops, changing parts of his play in response to audience reaction. The plays would travel through South African township communities, utilizing whatever performance venue the troupe could find.

Fugard's work, which featured racially integrated casts and anti-apartheid themes, was soon brought to the attention of the South African government. Prior to 1961, it was technically legal - though extremely unusual - to perform plays with racially integrated casts for racially integrated audiences. After 1961, the laws began to change, and Fugard sought out spaces, such as the Johannesburg Market theatre, that remained unaffected by discriminatory laws. Fugard publicly supported an international boycott against segregated theatre in 1962, urging fellow playwrights to refuse to grant performing rights to houses practicing racial discrimination.

In 1965, the **Group Areas Act** was extended to prohibit mixed casts and audiences in public theatres. Faced with what he perceived as a choice between "accepting[...]compromise or doing nothing at all," Fugard allowed his plays to be performed in segregated theatres on the condition that, whenever staged, both white and non-white communities be given the right to attend. Sometimes this meant taking productions into the townships in order to reach black audiences - a step that state-subsidized theatres had not done before Fugard's mandate.

Though Fugard's productions broke no laws, they nevertheless angered government officials, who, without reason, revoked his passport from 1967 to 1971. Fugard has speculated that perhaps the government hoped to prompt him to leave the country on an exit visa and not be allowed to return. Instead, Fugard remained in South Africa. The plays Fugard created over

this period were heavily workshopped and improvised. Because of strict South African censorship laws, they were only written down after they had been performed abroad.

In an effort to get his plays seen while avoiding persecution, Fugard took his play *The Blood Knot* to England in 1963. The South African government responded by revoking his passport for four years. Restrictions against Fugard's work were eased after 1971, and the playwright went on to considerable international fame.

**A close look at some of Fugard's earlier works may help to illuminate the close connection Fugard saw between politics and the arts:**

### *No Good Friday (1958)*

Fugard's first full-length play is firmly rooted in the politics and culture of Sophiatown, a black **township** then in existence outside of Johannesburg. The play exposes the manner in which blacks living in townships strive to replicate the very same economic system used in white South African cities - the system that seeks to demean and alienate non-whites. Ultimately, the play is a meditation on the plight of South Africa's poor blacks, and the inability of black South Africans to release themselves from the cycle of poverty at work in the townships.

*No-Good Friday* tells the story of Willie Seopelo, a resident of Sophiatown who commands respect from his peers, and who once, dreaming of a better life, enrolled in a college correspondence course. Haunted by the death of his friend, Willie decides to break the vow of silence customarily held by black township dwellers and reports the murderer to the authorities.

*"The world I live in is the way it is not in spite of me but because of me. You think we're just poor suffering came-to-Jesus-at-the-end-of-it-all black men and that the world's all wrong and against us so what the hell. Well I'm not so sure of that any more."*

*-Willie, No-Good Friday*

**Townships** were residential locations adjacent to white towns or cities where the South African government permitted blacks to live. Because the government planned to eventually return all blacks to the **homelands** (a small percentage of the country designated for the black population), even blacks living in the townships were denied any form of permanent occupation such as ownership of their homes or lands.

## *Boesman and Lena* (1969)

Fugard's 1969 play *Boesman and Lena* illuminates the alienation and hopelessness Fugard saw in South Africa, as apartheid laws such as the **Group Areas Act** systematically destroyed the individual and collective lives of South Africa's non-white population.

*Boesman and Lena* chronicles both the love story and hopeless journey of an old "coloured" man and woman who have been forcibly removed from their homes, as sanctioned by the Group Areas Act. After their house is bulldozed, Boesman and Lena flee with what little they can carry. They serve as representatives of South Africa's dispossessed - the forgotten and outright ignored victims of apartheid law. Boesman is filled with a sense of guilt and self-hatred that he covers by adopting a superior air, and Lena struggles to believe she exists at all, repeatedly asking Boesman questions about the past in an attempt to understand the present. In their wanderings, the pair encounters an old, dying black man who can only mumble. Lena forms a bond with the dying man, who can articulate only Lena's name. When the man dies in Lena's arms, Boesman fears he will be blamed for the death, and flees. Lena, whose communion with the dying man has reassured her of her existence, joins Boesman, and the two journey on together toward nowhere in particular.

*"I meet the memory of myself on the old roads. Sometimes young. Sometimes old. Is she coming or going? From where to where? All mixed up. The right time on the wrong road, the right road leading to the wrong place."*

**-Lena,  
*Boesman and Lena***

The **Group Areas Act** designated different residential areas for people of different races. One of the many consequences of this Act was that many South Africans were abruptly uprooted from their homes.

## *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1973)

This complex series of several plays-within-a-play begins with the story of Sizwe Bansi, who is in Port Elizabeth looking for work without the necessary permit. While in the city, Sizwe Bansi discovers the corpse of Robert Zwelinzima, who, in accordance with **pass laws**, had been carrying his passbook - which contains a valid work permit -- on his body. In order to secure a job, Sizwe adapts the dead man's identity. Sizwe's decision is matter of survival, though it pains him considerably to part with his name. *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* openly condemns the pass laws for their ability to separate people from not only their families, but from their own sense of identity.

### Did you know?

In township performances of *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* in the 1960s, when the drama would pose the question of whether or not Sizwe should metaphorically put an end to his own existence by adopting the passes - and thus, the life - of another man, the audience would cry out "Go on. Do it," because they believed, as much as Sizwe, that without a pass of some kind, a black man was essentially a non-entity in South Africa.

The **pass laws** required blacks to carry identification with them at all times in order to verify their eligibility to be in an urban area.

## *A Lesson from Aloes (1978)*

*A Lesson from Aloes*, speaks to both the potential for change in South Africa, while acknowledging the bone-chilling costs that any attempts to reform apartheid would surely involve. The play's plot, more complex than the majority of Fugard's plots, concerns a family waiting to put on a dinner party that never happens. In act one, Piet and Gladys Bezuidenhout, two white South Africans, await the arrival of their friend Steve Daniels and his family, who are about to depart for England on an exit visa. It is revealed that Steve has been heavily involved in anti-apartheid activities, and, after being placed under a banning order allowed under the **Suppression of Communism Act**, served a term in prison. Now out of prison, Steve, a coloured man, has decided to uproot his family and leave South Africa permanently, mostly because he can no longer earn a living. His visit ultimately unravels the delicate relationship between Piet, rumored to be the informant who put Steve in jail, Gladys, whose emotional health has been bad since her own implication in anti-apartheid activities became public, and Steve, who comes to feel a deep sense of betrayal and distrust that lingers even after he learns that Piet did not inform on him after all.

*"My first lesson from Steve, and the most important one. An evil system isn't a natural disaster. There's nothing you can do to stop a drought, but bad laws and social injustice are man-made and can be unmade by men. It's as simple as that. We can make this a better world to live in."*

*-Piet, A Lesson from Aloes*

The **Suppression of Communism Act** outlawed Communism, but defined Communism so broadly that it effectively prohibited all forms of political protest.

*"If the justice minister has good reason to assume that an individual intends to commit an act of terrorism or other associated act, or if he is convinced that an individual is involved in activities that could endanger the security of the state or endanger the maintenance of security and order, he is entitled to imprison such a person as a preventative measure."*

*-South Africa Yearbook 1989/90*



*"I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for your freedom. Too many have died since I went to prison. Too many have suffered for the love of freedom. I owe it to their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and to their fathers who have grieved and wept for them. Not only I have suffered during these long, lonely, wasted years. I am not less life-loving than you are. But I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free."*

**-Nelson Mandela, 1985**

### A Timeline of South African Responses to Apartheid

The Sharpeville Massacre results in the death and injury of many protestors when South African police open fire on citizens publicly opposing pass laws.



Policeman Bitten  
(1966)  
by Dumile Feni



Police open fire on a group of children protesting the Afrikaans Medium Decree, which further limited their exposure to English in public schools, in Soweto

1960



1968

South African artist Dumile Feni goes into exile in the USA to work on artwork expressing the suffering and oppression of apartheid.

1968

1976

# South African Responses to Apartheid

Activism and The Artist:  
Using Art to Speak Out against Apartheid page 26

South Africa After The Play:  
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Nelson Mandela: His Activism and Leadership page 32



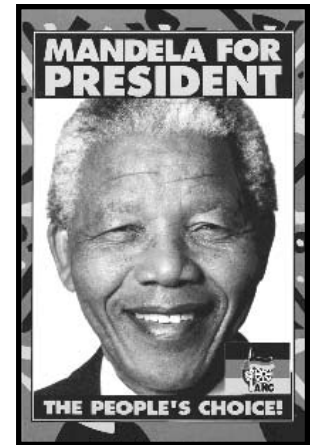
South African composer and performer Mbongheni Ngem, featured in the film *Amandla!*, brings his anti-apartheid opera, *Woza Albert*, to tour in the USA.

1984

1990

1994

Nelson Mandela is released after spending two decades in prison.



Nelson Mandela becomes the first democratically-elected president of South Africa.

# Activism and the Artist:

## Visual Art

**Polly Street Art Center** was founded in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1948, right at the start of the apartheid regime. It was started by artist Cecil Skotnes in the hopes of providing arts instruction to black youth who would otherwise not have that educational opportunity. White artists could study at the art institutions and universities, whereas black students could only receive art instruction at community centers, like Polly Street.

Polly Street students were encouraged to study not only Western art but also West and Central African art techniques--an uncommon area of study to propose studying since under the new regime, South African education was limited to only European history and traditions. Both white and black artists taught at Polly Street, despite pressures against whites and blacks working together. The center closed in 1960.

**Sydney Kumalo** (1935-1988) is one of South Africa's best-known artists. He studied and then taught sculpture at the **Polly Street Art Center**. Kumalo was interested in incorporating both Western influences and African traditions in his sculpture. His works often combined human, animal and geometric forms. His animal sculptures are often crouched forms that demonstrate a repressed power. The heavy bronze in which he cast his sculptures contributes to the heavy and weighted-down qualities and connotations of his sculptures.



*Reptile.* Sydney Kumalo, 1966.



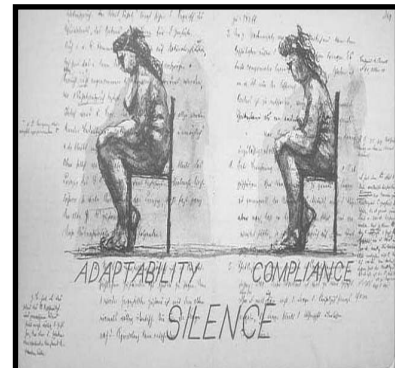
*Boy in Chair.*  
Dumile Feni

# Using Art to Speak Out Against Apartheid

*"I am interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain ending - an art (and a politics) in which optimism is kept in check, and nihilism at bay."*

**-William Kentridge**

**William Kentridge** was born in 1955 in Johannesburg where he still lives and works today. He is South Africa's most internationally renowned artist, in large part due to his varied talents as a painter, sculptor, filmmaker, set designer and puppeteer. Using all these art techniques, Kentridge tells a story of a divided South Africa. Often his works, his animated films in particular, use two recurring characters, Felix Teitlebaum and Soho Eckstein. Kentridge uses both of these characters to reflect the influence of Europe on South Africa, as well as telling their story to express his own anxiety over living in a racially divided country.



*Sleeping on Glass.*  
William Kentridge, 2003.

**Dumile Feni** (1942-1991) was one of South Africa's most famous artists, in spite of the fact that he created a large body of his work in exile from his country. His first exhibition at Gallery 101 in Johannesburg in 1966 established him as a painter and sculptor artist. However, apartheid law required that black South Africans have proof of employment (see information on **pass laws**) in order to stay in the country. Despite his efforts, Feni could not convince the white government that being an artist was a real profession and he was relocated to several cities in South Africa before he was forced into exile in 1968. Feni's works, mostly drawings in ink, in addition to sculpture and mural, depict figures under great stress. His figures, mostly human, are

contorted into expressions of pain. Feni showed his work in England, Nigeria and the United States, but he could not deny that his work was a reflection of what was directly happening to black South Africans under the rule of apartheid.

Feni's drawings are almost always drawn in ballpoint pen, a simple medium that symbolized the limited variety of art materials and instruction available to black artists. While Feni achieved international acclaim, he lived both in South Africa and exile in poverty. In 1991, as the rule of apartheid was ending, Feni died in New York never getting the chance to witness the change that his anguished figures reflected the need for.

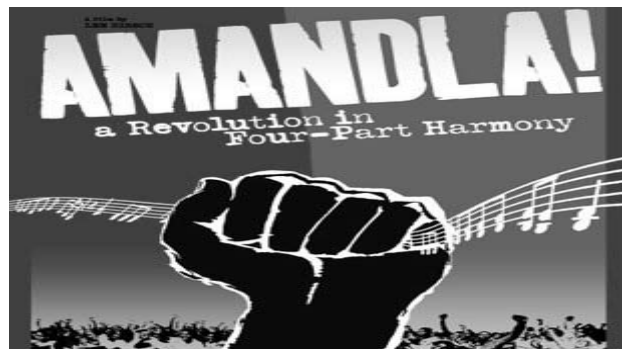
# Activism and the Artist:

## Music



**Ladysmith Black Mambazo** is one of South Africa's most treasured musical groups. Comprised of ten singers, Ladysmith Black Mambazo is revered in their country for retaining traditions from the past even in a new South Africa. Their music comes from the style called ISICATHAMIYA (Is-cot-a-me-ya), a style that came from black South African miners. The group has won several Grammy awards and recorded with various artists, most famously Paul Simon on his album *Graceland* in 1989. Simon was accused of violating the cultural boycott against South Africa's regime that the United States and other countries had established, even though the album celebrated the talents of South African artists without sounding any support for the government under which they were forced to live.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo started The Mambazo Foundation for South African Music and Culture in response to the demoralizing denial of culture that apartheid promoted. They are creating a school that will give South African children from various townships an education that celebrates their culture.

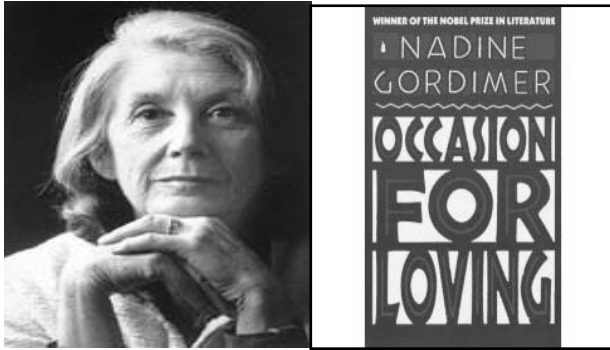


Protest music played a large role in mustering South Africans to voice their opposition to apartheid. Musicians such as Vuyisile Mini, a freedom fighter and composer, realized the rallying power of music could be a mode to protest black citizens' loss of their rights. During the most aggressive periods of apartheid, *Toyitoyi* was developed as a style of dance and music that was effective in fighting off police at demonstrations.

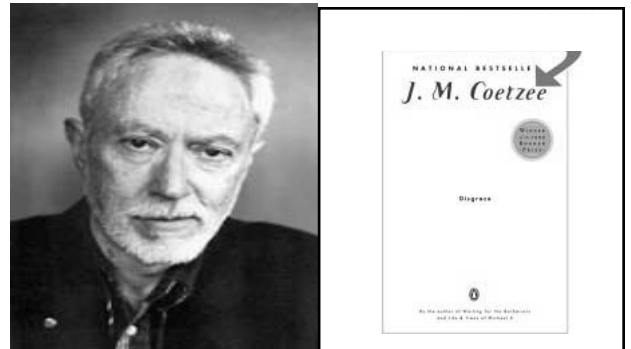
The documentary film **Amandla!** (a Xhosa word meaning "power") tells the story of how song and protest were used together in fighting against apartheid. The film shows how music helped mobilize black South Africans into protest against the oppression they were facing under apartheid. Interviews with both South African musicians and activists tell the horrors of apartheid rule firsthand, including the risks artists and freedom fighters took in order to even make their music and inspire black South Africans into action. The film also deals with how music is central to the post-apartheid South African culture.

# Using Art to Speak Out Against Apartheid

## Literature



**Nadine Gordimer**(1923- ) is the author of numerous novels and short stories and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991. Born and raised in a small mining town in South Africa, Gordimer's literature deals with the tensions one faces living in a racially divided country. Much like Athol Fugard, Gordimer's work borrows from her own experience of growing up in South Africa at the beginning of apartheid. One of her early novels, *The Lying Days* (1953) depicted a white girl Helen's growing dissatisfaction with the narrow-mindedness of small-town life. *Occasion for Loving* (1963) tells the story of Ann Davis, who, although married to a Jewish (Gordimer herself is Jewish) scholar with an interest in African music, begins an affair with Gideon Shibalo, a black painter. The affair between the two ends bitterly and serves as a direct commentary on such racist laws as the **Immorality Amendment Act**, which prohibited adultery between white and black people. Her work examines both the injustices of a racially divided society and also explores the possibilities for a new South Africa.



**J.M. Coetzee** (1940- ) is the winner of the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature and the 1983 and 1991 Booker Prize. Like Fugard and Gordimer, Coetzee examines the conditions of humanity through the lens of apartheid. His characters often are often faced with moral decisions and are paralyzed at facing them, a condition that we recognize in Hally in "*MASTER HAROLD*"...and the boys. Coetzee's most famous book *Disgrace* takes place in post-apartheid South Africa. It tells the story of a professor, David Lurie, who is forced to leave his teaching post at a university and moves to a farm in rural South Africa. There, his daughter Lucy is raped and impregnated by three black strangers. Despite David's protests, she refuses to press charges against the men or tell anyone about the rape. The book deals with how a country can find hope in the middle of racial tension and social confusion. A critic wrote of Coetzee: "His prime concern has been with survival, spiritual and physical, the scraping of meaning and sustenance from the most hostile of environments."

# South Africa After The Play:

## A Timeline from 1960-1991

**1960:** Sharpeville Massacre. Police open fire on demonstrators surrounding a police station. 67 people opposed to the pass laws are killed and 186 are wounded; most are shot in the back. A state of emergency declared and people were jailed with out trial. Both ANC (African National Congress) and PAC (Pan Africanist Congress) are banned. In response, both develop underground military wings and start to use organized violence to sabotage the unjust systems in place.

**1961:** South Africa becomes a Republic. Cutting links with the British Monarchy the new country is not allowed to continue membership in the British Commonwealth due to opposition from African and Asian member states that oppose apartheid.

**1963:** Rivonia Trial where Nelson Mandela and other members of the ANC are tried for acts of sabotage designed to "ferment violent revolution." The defendants are held for ninety days without trial, unable to talk to their lawyers until two days before the indictment.

**1964:** Mandela and seven others are sentenced to life imprisonment and are jailed on Robben Island.

**1966:** Prime Miniser Verwoerd, the "architect of apartheid" is stabbed to death but his policies continue on.



**1976:** Soweto Students' Representative Council organizes protests against the use of the Afrikaans language being used in black schools. Police open fire on a student march starting a 12 month period of violent riots, protests and arrests.

**1977:** Steve Biko, a medical student and the driving force behind the South African Black Consciousness Movement, is beaten by police until he lapses into a coma and without medical treatment for three days he dies. His work was in favor of non-violent opposition to apartheid but his death spawned a generation of revolutionaries that fought under the catch-phrase "liberation before education."

**1980:** South Africa is the only country in Africa with a white government and a constitution discriminating against the majority of its citizens.

*"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."*

**- Nelson Mandela,  
1964, Rivonia Trial**



F.W. deKlerk

**1980's:** International sanctions cut off white South Africans from the rest of the world thereby enabling black leaders to develop sophisticated political skills. This arises out of formerly exiled citizens forging ties with regional and world leaders.

**1978-1988:** The South African Defense Force makes a number of major attacks in nearby regions. All white males were eligible for service and thousands fled to avoid the draft. Many more were scarred mentally and physically by the vicious struggles.

**1982:** First recorded death due to HIV. In the next 15 year over 10,000 cases would be recorded with estimates of actual HIV-positive cases to be close to one million. As the apartheid laws start to be dismantled the AIDS epidemic spreads rapidly through South Africa.

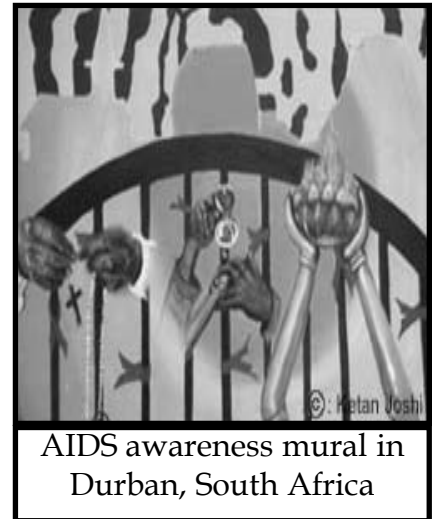
**1985:** South African government declares a state of emergency that lasts for five years.

**1986:** President Botha announces to parliament that South Africa has "outgrown" apartheid. The government starts to make minor reforms toward racial equality, but still holds an iron grip on the media and anti-apartheid groups.

**1988:** By this time in the state of emergency over 30,000 people have been detained without trial and thousands of people tortured. The media is censored.

**1990:** A new president, F.W. deKlerk is elected. In his opening address to parliament he announced that he will repeal discriminatory laws and lift the ban on the ANC, PAC and the Communist Party. Media restrictions are lifted and political prisoners not-guilty of common-law crimes are released.

**1990:** After 27 year of being incarcerated, Nelson Mandela walks out of the grounds of Victor Verster Prison a free man.



AIDS awareness mural in Durban, South Africa

*"Peace does not fare well where poverty and deprivation reign. It does not flourish where there is ignorance and a lack of education and information. Repression, injustice and exploitation are inimical with peace. Peace is gravely threatened by inter-group fear and envy and by the unleashing of unrealistic expectations. Racial, class and religious intolerance and prejudice are its mortal enemies."*

**-F.W. de Klerk, Nobel Peace Prize lecture 1993**



# Nelson Mandela: His Activism and Leadership



Nelson Mandela, one of the most influential figures in South African history and the country's first black President, has lived a life in stride with his nation's complex past. Given the name "Rolihlaha" at birth, Mandela took on the first name of "Nelson" when it was assigned to him by a teacher at a mission school. Though his new name stuck, so did the legacy of his former name. One interpretation of "Rolihlaha" is "troublemaker," and Mandela would grow up to provide the National Party's apartheid government with decades of "trouble," first as an outspoken activist, then as a stoic leader and a living symbol of hope for the nation's oppressed black population.

Mandela believed the best way to fight the injustices of his country's political system was to become a lawyer. In 1942 he joined up with the African National Congress (ANC), an organization dedicated to improving the rights of South Africa's black majority. Mandela founded the ANC's Youth League, a political action group for young people interested in the ANC, two years later. He also played a prominent role in establishing the ANC's Freedom Charter, which outlined the basic aims of the ANC during apartheid: namely, the advancement of a democratic nation in which all citizens, regardless of race, could enjoy basic human, social and political rights under a democratic system.

In 1961 Mandela became the leader of the Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC. This organization instigated bombings of military, industrial, and infrastructural sites to weaken and sabotage the apartheid regime. While Mandela initially opposed violent means of protest, the **Sharpeville Massacre** in 1960 had convinced him that armed violence was at times necessary to effectively enact change. During his time with the ANC, Mandela and his colleagues were charged with a variety of crimes under apartheid laws such as the Suppression of Communism Act, which banned organizations like the ANC. On June 12, 1964, Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage and several other crimes in the famous **Rivonia Trial**. During his time in prison, Mandela conducted himself with the utmost dignity and continued to correspond with the ANC, working always to enact reform. Taking advantage of the educational resources offered inmates, Mandela sought to learn the Afrikaans language to help in his political pursuits. Mandela himself became a symbol of apartheid oppression, as "Free Nelson Mandela!" became the rallying cry of anti-apartheid campaigners worldwide.

*"The first condition for victory is black unity. Every effort to divide the blacks, to woo and pit one black group against another, must be vigorously repulsed. Our people - African, Coloured, Indian and democratic whites - must be united into a single massive and solid wall of resistance, of united mass action."*

**-Nelson Mandela**

After spending two decades in prison for his activism, Mandela began negotiating for his own release in secret as well as a transitioning of the South African government away from apartheid. He rejected an offer of conditional surrender in 1985, but his efforts combined with those of others in the ANC and around the world, won his release from prison and the repeal of the ban on the ANC in 1990. In 1991, Mandela became President of the ANC, and 1993 won the Nobel Peace Prize, which he shared with South African State President F.W. de Klerk. When South Africa held its first democratic elections, Nelson Mandela was elected to the new office of President, becoming the first black South African in history to attain the highest political office in the country.

*“This year a new birth will occur. The physical being that will be its offspring will be like the new beginning which occurs when the spring rains wash away the dead leaves of winter and give life to the summer green which, as an expression of the rhythm of the seasons, blankets our earth.”*

**- Nelson Mandela,  
Inaugural Address**

As President, Mandela ushered South Africa into a new era. With apartheid officially dismantled, Mandela undertook the difficult task of transitioning the nation and fostering true reconciliation and social reform. His administration focused on social issues such as housing shortages, crime and unemployment, as well as the reintroduction of South Africa into the global economy following widespread international boycotts under apartheid. Mandela won a great deal of respect from many in South Africa and the international community for his efforts. Nevertheless, certain radical segments of the South African and international population have criticized Mandela for not doing enough during his term to achieve social reform, or to eradicate the emerging AIDS/HIV epidemic.

Since his presidency ended in 1999, Nelson Mandela has dedicated himself to being a human rights advocate. For his efforts, which have focused largely on combating AIDS/HIV, he has been awarded several honors including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from George W. Bush. He has also won back the support of many of his former critics. In 2004, Mandela officially retired from public life, but has continued his work combating AIDS and has lent his support to humanitarian organizations and education groups such as Make Poverty History and United World Colleges. In dedicating his life to altering his country's social and political landscape, South Africa's most famed "troublemaker" has certainly lived up to his name.

### *Challenge Question!*

Hally and Sam have a heated debate over who in history should be considered “great” or a “Man of Magnitude”--someone who has had a positive and significant impact on the world. Hally believes it is Charles Darwin, the scientist who gave us the theory of evolution which explains, among other things, the scientific reasons for our existence on Earth. Sam retorts that Abraham Lincoln is his “Man of Magnitude.”

Who would you pick as your person of “magnitude”?



England and other members of the UN encouraged boycotts of South African goods

**A Timeline of Global Responses to Apartheid**

The United Nations passes Resolution 1761 on November 2, condemning South African apartheid and urging member nations to sever all existing economic or military ties to South Africa.



1955

1962

1963

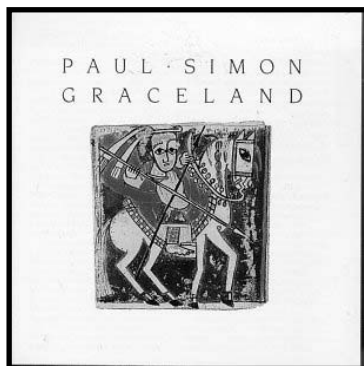


Rosa Parks is arrested after refusing to give up her seat for a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama USA on December 1.

Martin Luther King, Jr. gives his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

# *A Global Response to Apartheid*

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1986

American singer/songwriter Paul Simon releases *Graceland*, a commercial hit incorporating South African themes that comments both on rifts in South African society and Simon's personal life.

1990

Nelson Mandela is released from prison after a quarter century in jail for political crimes against the apartheid government. His speech in Cape Town rallies supporters.

1995

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No 34 of 1995 establishes South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

## Connections:

# The Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. 1950-69

As South Africans were coming to terms with and responding to apartheid, African Americans faced a similar struggle to gain equal rights in the United States. While not wholly analogous, **Jim Crow laws** and policies of segregation in the U.S. shared many of the same fundamental characteristics with apartheid law. Additionally, the anti-apartheid movement and the American civil rights movement sought to enact change in similar ways.



Americans protest racism  
in the 1960's

In both South Africa and the United States, blacks attempting to prompt social reform frequently found themselves victims of extreme violence. In both countries, many of the horrific murders that marked the apartheid era and civil rights movement era were carried out independently of the law. Political protest was a crime in South Africa and considered a fundamental right in the United States. In both countries individuals protesting against civil rights violations were often subject to arrests, beatings, and even murder. In the United States there was no official law to justify racial violence. Nevertheless, juries and law officials often turned a blind eye to crimes committed against African Americans, and perpetrators rarely received legal punishment.

### Did you know?

Jim Crow laws also came with rules for etiquette between black and white people. For instance, under Jim Crow laws, blacks were expected to refer to whites as "Sir" or "Ma'am," and it was also customary for whites to refer to blacks as "boy" or "girl."

The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution, passed in the 19th century, gave blacks basic rights of citizenship. Many states in the American South, however, found ways to deny blacks these and other rights by passing additional laws in a local sphere, called **Jim Crow laws** that severely restricted their ability to exercise their rights. One popular Jim Crow law required blacks, most of whom were poor and/or illiterate due to the lingering effects of slavery, to pay taxes or pass a literacy test to vote. Others bore a striking resemblance to apartheid policies, in particular laws that prohibited blacks from using the same facilities as whites, such as restrooms or park benches.



The picture on the left is a sign one might see in South Africa under apartheid rule. The picture on the left is an American sign you would have seen in the 1950's and '60s. Both signs reflect an attitude of racism that pervaded through all parts of society, including restaurants, stores, public restrooms and entire neighborhoods.



# Connections: The Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. 1950-69



In 1955, Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Supreme Court gradually began to overturn Jim Crow and other segregation laws, prompting segregationist state governments to pass ever stricter laws that in turn sparked a rise in the civil rights movement. The 1960's featured a surge of boycotts and public protests in the name of civil rights reforms. The verdict in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, was widely considered to be a watershed event in civil rights reform. It declared that the policy of “**separate but equal**” (separate schools for black and white children) was actually unconstitutional. Although *Brown vs. Board of Education* dealt exclusively with segregation in schools, the ramifications of the verdict soon spread to other areas of society. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, another major reform, this time dictated by Congress, outlawed discrimination in public accommodations such as stores and restaurants. Federal reforms were of tremendous significance, as all state

governments were legally required to abide by them.

Many civil rights advocates, under the guidance of **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, stressed a policy of non-violent protest reminiscent of early efforts by the ANC in South Africa to peaceably oppose apartheid policy. Citizens like **Rosa Parks**, who gained attention for refusing to give up her seat for a white man on a bus, attested to the power of nonviolence to sway opinion and enact change.

In contrast to the followers of King, certain civil rights reformers believed, as the ANC did in later years, that a blanket policy of non-violence was not the best way to go about securing equal rights for blacks in a time of forceful white opposition. Activists such as Malcolm X and others within groups such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) supported the “right to self-defense” in light of their belief that the deaths of black civil rights protestors were going largely unnoticed by the mainstream press and greater American population.

The work of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks and both black and non-black activists left a mark on the United States. While changes toward racial equality have been considerable, racism in this country has not yet been fully eradicated. In the most violent years of apartheid, the United States, all too aware of its own history with civil rights, voiced their opposition to the racism that ran rampant through South Africa, and became part of a global protest against South Africa's racist policies.



Martin Luther King Jr. speaks at the March on Washington.

# The End of Apartheid

## Apartheid Ends

On February 2, 1990, South African President F.W. de Klerk opened Parliament with a stunning announcement: His own party's policy of apartheid had failed. Accordingly, he said, the ban on oppositional political parties would be lifted, and Nelson Mandela would be released from prison sometime in the next decade. When the shock of the news wore off, a four-year period of domestic instability ensued during which the ANC regained much of its former strength, resorting again to tactics of violence. In March of 1994, the ANC and **Nelson Mandela**, newly released from prison, won the South African democratic national election. As the first-ever representative of the black majority in the highest South African office, Mandela oversaw the revision of South Africa's constitution to reflect the passing of apartheid, and established a **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** to investigate and report upon abuses that occurred under apartheid. In doing so, he officially ended the era of apartheid.

By coming forward and publicly admitting that the policy was not serving South Africa in any positive way, **F.W. de Klerk** opened up South African politics to the development of new policy. He recognized that apartheid was functioning in direct opposition to emerging social and economic forces that had been at work in South Africa for decades. The white minority had been growing steadily smaller in proportion to the black population year by year, and because black South Africans were not allowed to be educated properly, the majority of the population (namely blacks) could not adequately perform at their jobs to keep up with technical advancements. Combined with the added pressures of international sanctions, cultural boycott and the ongoing

escalation of violence and social unrest within South Africa, admitting failure and dismantling apartheid struck de Klerk and reformers like Nelson Mandela as the only responsible means of securing hope for the future of South Africa's culture.

## The World's Cultural and Political Boycott of South Africa

Due to the policies and methods employed by the South African government under apartheid, the nation found itself increasingly isolated from the international community. In spite of efforts made by the South African government to keep the level of unrest in the country a secret, the international community took responsive action.

On November 6, 1962, the United Nations passed Resolution 1761, condemning apartheid and calling upon members of the UN to break off any existing economic or military relationships with South Africa. Much later, the 1978 and 1983 World Conference Against Racism passed a variety of resolutions in protest of the South African government's apartheid policies. Gradually, investors began to look upon South Africa as a poor place to spend money, due largely to international pressures to boycott both South African businesses and those businesses that invested in South Africa. South Africa suffered socially and culturally on the international scene as well, as tourists traveled there less frequently. South African culture was viewed in an unfavorable light, and the nation's sporting teams were barred from international competitions, including the Olympic Games.

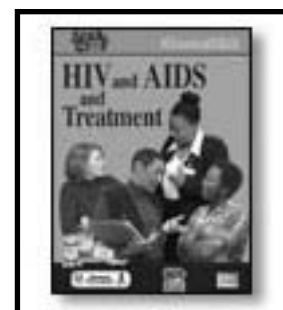
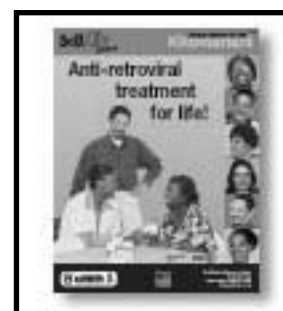
## The Rise of AIDS in South Africa

The HIV/AIDS crisis, one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa today, has been closely linked to the legacy of apartheid. The first cases of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa were diagnosed in 1982, against the violent political backdrop of the anti-apartheid movement. Today, it is estimated that twenty-eight percent of the population of South Africa is affected, a figure comprising 13% of the world's HIV-positive population.

HIV/AIDS education did not begin until after the crisis was relatively advanced. Educational efforts were complicated by the fact that South Africa is home to 11 official languages, and still today well over 80% of its population remains illiterate due to the aftermath of apartheid.

The disjointed nature of apartheid, which created an atmosphere of indifference, ignorance, and ineffective communication between the various populations and institutions, made it difficult to curb the spread of HIV in South Africa. In addition, testing positive for HIV has long carried a negative social stigma that has dissuaded many South Africans at risk for HIV from being tested. This attitude is particularly understandable in the case of South Africa, a nation with a long-standing history of institutionalized discrimination. In 1998, then-Deputy President Thabo Mbeki called for an end to discrimination against people with HIV. Despite such efforts, South Africans who are open about being HIV-positive often face discrimination in employment, housing, and social relationships.

In response to the epidemic, since the dismantling of apartheid, a wide variety of South African and international organizations have been established to fight HIV/AIDS and to prolong the lives of those it has affected by establishing plans for providing anti-retroviral drugs to those living with HIV/AIDS. In 1998, the Clinton Foundation announced that it had come to an agreement with 4 different drug companies willing to provide antiretroviral therapy to developing nations for less than \$140 per patient per year - a figure far below its previous cost. Efforts at making these drugs available to those who need it most are ongoing, but far from complete.



South African HIV/AIDS education and awareness booklets



# Truth and Reconciliation Commission

At apartheid's end, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established as a means through which South Africans could formally address the atrocities that had occurred. Anyone who felt he or she had been the victim of politically-motivated violence between 1960 and 1994, as well as those seeking amnesty for such acts, could come before the committee and plead their case. The public acknowledgement of abuses committed by both pro and anti-apartheid agents was vital to the establishment of a democratic South Africa at apartheid's end.

The TRC was composed of three Committees: The Human Rights Violation Committee (HRV), which investigated alleged abuses under apartheid, the Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee (R&R), which was charged with restoring the dignity of the abused, and the Amnesty Committee (AC), which considered applications by the accused for amnesty - or pardon - for their politically-motivated crimes. Many TRC hearings were nationally televised and made international news. The Commission placed no limits on who could be charged or seek amnesty. South African police and members of the ANC alike were accused of and found to be responsible for atrocities during apartheid.

The Commission presented its report on October 29, 1998, and the Commission itself was largely considered a success by South Africa and the international community. In addition to South Africa, other countries such as Chile and Sierra Leone have established Commissions in the hope of purging latent feelings from the past in an effort to build a secure future.

*"Corrective action does not refer only to forms of assistance, but it begins to look at all practices which became part of the machinery of dividing people, which people can begin to correct. It calls for people, the community, to begin to look at the languages used, even for people to be referred to as Coloureds, Africans, Whites. People [...] have got to begin to look at the language that divides them and to begin to claim their identity as a community."*

**-Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

## Testimonies from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

*"Most people who have made statements before the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are not bringing stories per se, although we call it story-telling. They are bringing to us the experiences of people with specific experiences like emotional damage. Quite a number of people who appeared before us have expressed incapacitating experiences of anger, of feelings of anger, about what happened to them or to their loved ones. Some of them appeared before us and presented feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, pain. Some have presented before us with chronic conditions, medical conditions resulting from specific practices of human rights violations."*

*--Oudtshoorn Post-Hearing Community Program*

**MR RANI**

*Well nothing happened really, I lost my house, it went to their side and my kids just went all over the place and my wife left me, I mean she couldn't live with an unemployed husband.*

**MS SOOKA**

*So - so one thing in fact being arrested, being detained, being tortured all of this has meant that you've had very little life with your family?*

**MR RANI**

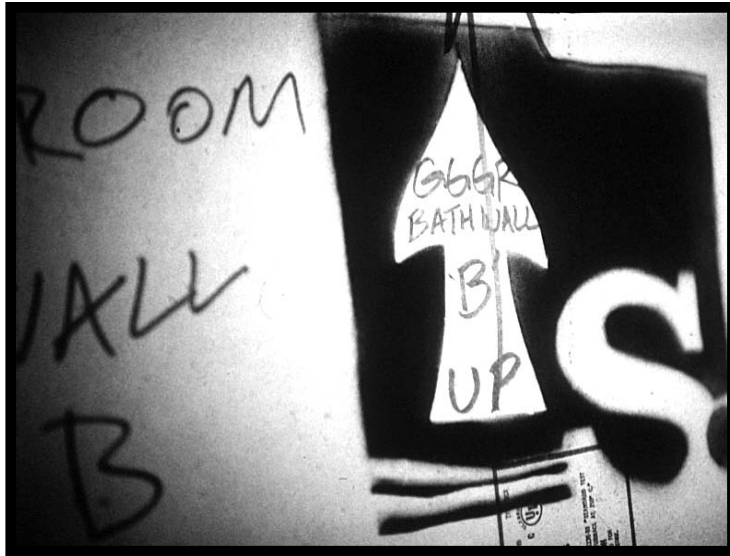
*The only chance I got to stay with my family was before I was arrested which was 1952. Now after that I was never outside prison, I would - I was with Mr Nngovela, I was always in prison, in and out - out to the last minute. It's only now that I have a rest.*

*"I went back again during 1982 to the prison [...] Again I was regarded as a bad person to these men who are now dead. I do not know if they are still alive. I was detained in 1980 because I used to write quite a lot about the people, especially the Port Elizabeth people. That was not liked by the security branch. I used to write about lost people, people who just disappeared. I used to talk about everything."*

*-Mono Badela*

*"They told me that we think we are clever, you say - you say have the land, where do you think you have the land from. I said to them we have the land, this land is ours - I am going to say that until I die. Until I get under the grave, I don't want [indistinct] in front of my face, because our blood is one, we are all created by God."*

*-Nomakula Evelyn Zweni*



Hallie Gordon, Director of Arts Exchange chooses its 2005-06 season, beginning with "MASTER HAROLD" ..and the boys.

Auditions are held and the play is cast.



May 2005

Summer 2005

August 2005

The Arts Exchange department writes and designs this study guide.

Before rehearsal starts the designers finish their part of the production so it can be built during rehearsal.

# Today in Chicago

**The Steppenwolf Production**

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**An Interview with the Director, K.Todd Freeman**

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**Design Elements**

**page 46**

Load in and Focus:  
The technical staff  
of the theatre puts  
in lighting  
instruments and  
the set.

Over 6,000 students  
from the  
Chicagoland area  
come to  
Steppenwolf  
Theatre to see our  
production.

September 2005

October 2005

On the 20th, rehearsal begins.  
The actors, director and stage  
manager work on the play from  
10am to 6pm six days a week for  
three weeks.



The rehearsals  
move from the  
rehearsal hall into  
the theatre for  
“tech.”

# The Steppenwolf Production

## The Cast

Hally  
Sam  
Willie

Nick Ferrin  
Cedric Young  
Kenn E. Head

## The Production Staff

Director  
Stage Manager  
Set Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Costume Designer

K. Todd Freeman  
Michelle Medvin  
Scott Neale  
Keith Parham  
Ana Kuzmanic

## Arts Exchange

Director  
Education Coordinator  
Community Programs Coordinator  
Summer Intern  
Apprentice

Hallie Gordon  
Elizabeth Levy  
Libby Ford  
Elizabeth Dudgeon  
Gaby Ortiz

# *An Interview with the Director, K. Todd Freeman*

Director of Arts Exchange Hallie Gordon talks with ensemble member K. Todd Freeman about directing, teaching, his fall Arts Exchange production of Athol Fugard's *"MASTER HAROLD"...* and the boys.

**Hallie Gordon:** Let's start by talking about what it is for you as an artist that makes you want to direct at this point in your career. Or why did you want to direct this play specifically?

**K. Todd Freeman:** Because Martha told me to. (laughter) Over the years, directing has grown on me. I never thought I could direct anything, just like I never thought I could act in anything. There are certain plays that speak to me like, wow, I would like to direct that one. This play in particular speaks to me, just because I'm very interested in South Africa and the whole political and social environment. I love plays that tell apartheid stories, especially because I feel like we've forgotten about apartheid in this part of the world. We think everything's all hunky dory now, which is a shame. I feel like people have forgotten about Athol Fugard. He used to be such a big thing in American theater, in the eighties, his work was produced everywhere in the regional theater. So I'm glad to help people rediscover Mr. Fugard.

**HG:** You're also teaching in The School at Steppenwolf this summer, and you've directed the final plays with the students in the past. How has teaching helped you as an artist?

**KF:** Teaching makes you get specific. They keep asking questions. (laughter)

**HG:** You kind of have to know the answers. (laughter)

**KF:** They look at you like you know everything. You've got to have an answer. They get very ticked off if you don't have an answer for them. So, it helps you get specific, it helps you find vocabulary for what you do if nothing else. It makes you think about what we do, in the ways that you haven't in forever, or since you were in school, which is refreshing.

**HG:** Do you think teaching will affect your work as a director?

**KF:** Sure it's always a good influence, but I'm confident of my work as a director. I've directed some off-Broadway shows, original plays friends have written over the years, so it doesn't scare me. The only thing that worries me is choreographing all the bloody dancing. (laughs)

**HG:** And we'll have to talk about the scene where they drop their pants.

**KF:** That has to happen...

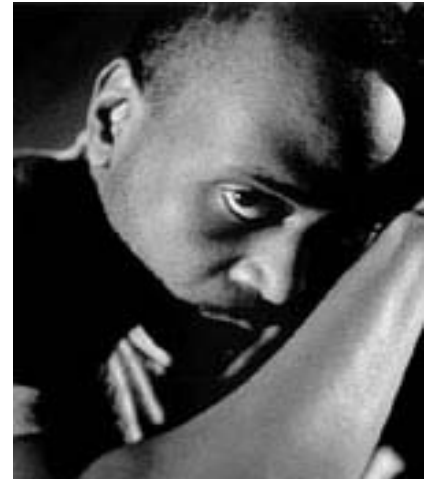
**HG:** Oh, I know it does. We're not cutting it, I'm not saying that at all....

**KF:** That's the moment everybody talks about in the play.

**HG:** We actually have a really great student audience, very mature. Yes, they can be very vocal, but they are all so incredibly engaged in the discussions that we have.

**KF:** Is this the first time you've done a more adult type of play for Arts Exchange?

**HG:** I would say that *The Bluest Eye* was very adult. The youngest girl,



Director and Steppenwolf ensemble member, K. Todd Freeman

who is 11 years old, gets raped by her father. There's also this other kind of rape with these two white guys have guns and make Cholly have sex with his girlfriend. It was pretty controversial. It's on the public school reading list, but the subject matter is still challenging. Still, it turned out wonderfully!

**KF:** That's definitely more challenging than what *MASTER HAROLD* presents. (laughter)

**HG:** Can you talk to me a little bit about your feelings about *"MASTER HAROLD"...* and the boys?

**KF:** This play is a landmark of world theatre; it hit audiences with such a powerful jolt when it came out. But it's more than just social, political theatre, because those things would feel dated. The play still holds up, still needs to be done because of the relationships it describes. It's not an overtly political play but there's are so many layers of politics built into the emotional landscape, built into the relationships in the play. I think that's what's really going to resonate with our student audiences.

# The Design of the Play

## Set Design

Arts Exchange talks with set designer Scott Neale about designing the set of “*MASTER HAROLD*”...and the boys. All Arts Exchange productions have performances during the run of our regular season. So the set you will see at the show is actually in front of a different set for another Steppenwolf show!

**Arts Exchange:** What challenges did you face designing a set that would go on top of another set?

**Scott Neale:** It was a huge challenge. The set of the other play takes place in the desert of Nevada. I had to find a way to put a tea room that is set in South Africa in there. The first thing I look into is if there is anything from the other set we can use on our set. In this case, there wasn't! So I had to make the set pretty contained. Luckily “*MASTER HAROLD*”...and the boys takes place in one room and there are only three actors onstage. If the play changed locations it would have been much more difficult to design.

**AE:** What kind of preparation do you do before you design a set?

**SN:** There are three types of research. Background research, which is research

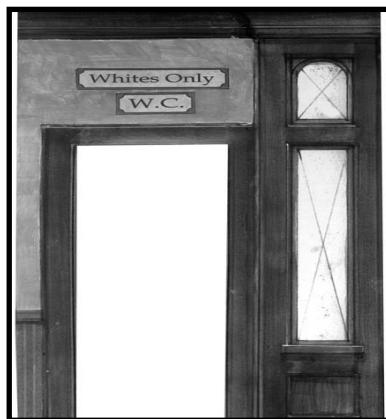
about the play itself; factual research, like what time period the play takes place in, and what that world looked like during that time; and then personal research, which just involves me looking at art books and seeing if there are images that I like and want to borrow from. Sometimes I'll see something and I will like it without knowing why and I might use it or borrow from it in a new way.

**AE:** What kind of research did you do for “*MASTER HAROLD*”...and the boys?

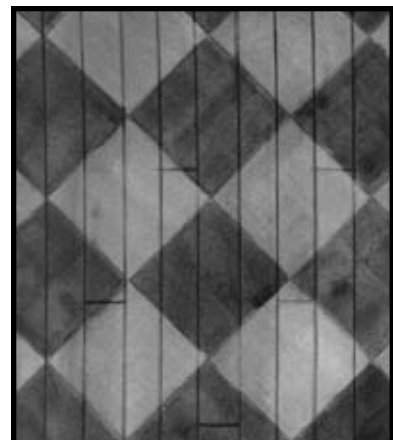
**SN:** I researched apartheid and South Africa at that time. The doorway that says “Whites Only” was something that would have been in any restaurant or public place in South Africa at that time. It was also important to me to know what the architecture would have been like. South Africa was greatly influenced by Britain, so I tried to make the tea room have a European feel.



A model of the set

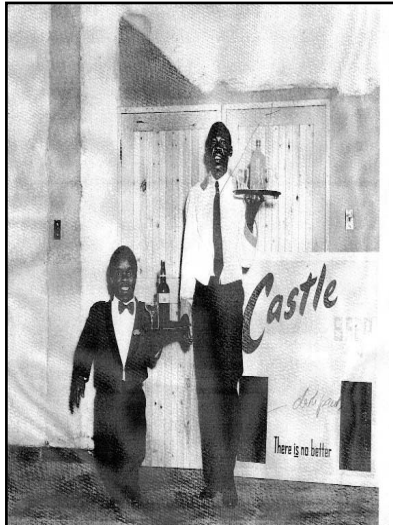


Sketch of a doorway of St. George's Park Tea Room



The pattern for the floor

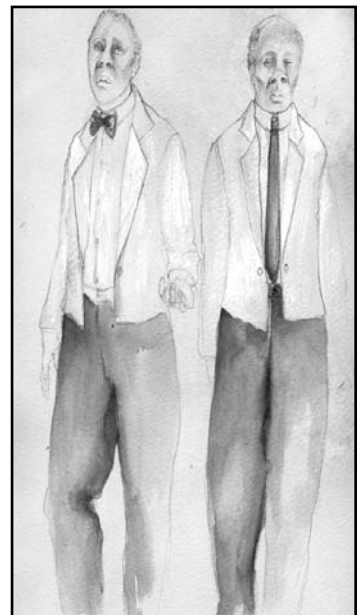
# Costume Design



Costume designer Ana Kuzmanic found different pictures as inspiration for her design. She experiments with different fabrics and styles for Hally's raincoat (see left picture), finds different looks for Sam and Willie's uniforms (see center picture) and borrows certain elements of outfits for Hally's school uniform (see right picture).



After all the research for style and fabric, Ana submits her sketches to the director. Here is what the actors playing Hally, Sam and Willie will wear.





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# Steppenwolf Theatre Company

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