

CELEBRATE

BLACK HISTORY

MONTH

We at Paper Mill want to fully recognize the significant impact and contributions made in the theater industry and beyond by those in the Black community. We actively pledge to honor this legacy and to do our part in the advancement of Black artists and their work within our space.



Juanita Hall
(*South Pacific*, 1948)
First African American to win a Tony Award.



Hello, Dolly!
(1967)
The all-Black Revival, starring Pearl Bailey, won her a Special Tony Award in 1968.

The Pittsburgh Cycle
(1982–2005) by August Wilson

A series of 10 plays that chronicle the African American experience spanning each decade of the 20th century.

These plays include *Fences*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, etc.



Suzan Lori Parks
becomes the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama with her work *Topdog/Underdog* (2001).



Audra McDonald
won the Tony Award for her performance in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* (2014) which won her a 6th Tony, as well as being the first person ever to win one in all 4 acting categories.

Bert Williams
(*Ziegfeld Follies*, 1910)
When invited by Florenz Ziegfeld to be a headliner in the *Follies*, Williams became the first Black performer to appear on stage with the all-white cast.

Harry Belafonte
(*John Murray Anderson's Almanac*, 1954)
First African American male to win a Tony Award.



The Wiz
(1975)
Winning multiple Tony Awards including Best Musical & Best Direction by Geoffrey Holder.



Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk
(1996)
The collaborative production by George C. Wolfe & Savion Glover using tap dance as a vehicle for social commentary and Black History.

Whoopi Goldberg
became the first African American woman to win the EGOT when she won the Tony for Best Musical as a producer of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (2002).



The 2016 Tony Awards
set a milestone with all 4 musical acting categories won by Black actors including Renée Elise Goldsberry, Leslie Odom Jr., Daveed Diggs & Cynthia Erivo.



In Dahomey
(1903)
The first all-Black musical to play on a Broadway stage.

Karamu House
(1915–Present)
Founded in Cleveland, OH it is the oldest, producing African American theater in the nation.



Appearances
(1925)
by Garland Anderson
The first play produced on Broadway written by a Black playwright.



Porgy & Bess
(1935)
An American opera by George Gershwin comprised of an all-Black cast of classically trained singers.

The Lafayette Players
(1915–1932)
Founded by Anita Bush, this Harlem based stock company of African American actors gained national acclaim for providing Black performers with challenging, dramatic roles in straight plays.



Shuffle Along
(1921)
The breakthrough, smash hit on Broadway featuring an all-Black cast, creative team, and a score of syncopated jazz music; this production would set the standard for future Broadway shows of its era.



Paul Robeson
(*Show Boat*, 1928)
The world famous renaissance man of his time, the New Jersey native was famous for his portrayal of Joe in the West End and future productions of *Show Boat*, famously known for the song “Ol’ Man River”. An actor, singer, athlete & social activist, he spent his career in theater and film, while also advocating for human rights around the world.

Federal Theatre Project
(1935–1939)
A nationwide government-funded program that provided employment and apprenticeships for hundreds of Black performers, playwrights, directors, & stage crew until it was discontinued in 1939.





American Negro Theater
(1940–1955)
Following the footsteps of the Federal Theatre Project, this Harlem theater company became a pillar in the industry for the advancement of Black theater and served as a training ground for artists such as Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte & Alice Childress.



Adrienne Kennedy
(*Funnyhouse of a Negro*, 1964)
A contemporary voice in the male-dominated Black Arts Movement, Kennedy made space for Black female playwrights to share their experiences on stage. With her unique use of surrealism and poetic storytelling, *Funnyhouse of a Negro* would share the Obie award with Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* for Distinguished Play.

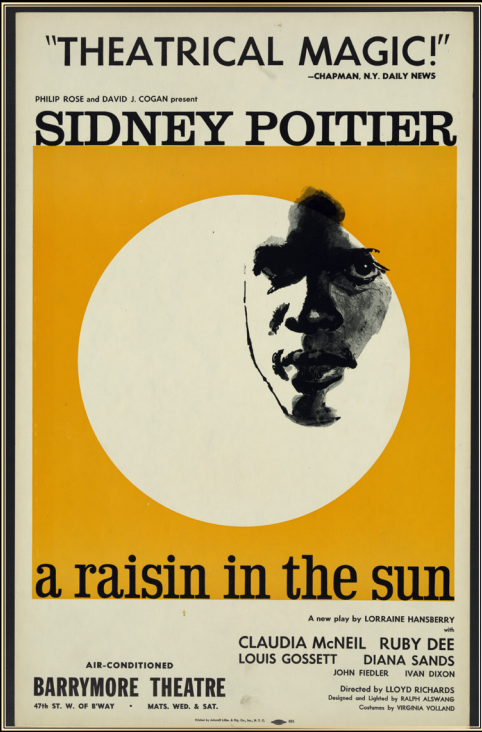


Dreamgirls
(1981)
Comprised of a mostly African American cast, the show became a smash hit, winning Tony Awards for Jennifer Holliday, Ben Harney, Cleavant Derricks, etc.

Negro Actors Guild of America
(1937–1970's)
An organization created with the objective of combatting Black stereotypes in the theater and film industries. Also served as one of the primary financial resources for Black performers, provided health care, transportation & housing accommodations, etc.

Guild officers included
Ethel Waters, Duke Ellington,
Louis Armstrong, Marian Anderson, etc.

Raisin in the Sun
(1959)
by Lorraine Hansberry
The first play on Broadway to be written by a Black woman.



The Negro Ensemble Company
(1967–Present)
An NYC based theater established by Douglas Turner Ward, producing original Black theatrical works and becoming the creative grounds for dozens of Black playwrights and actors.



For Colored Girls...
(1976)
the choreopoem by Ntozake Shange, premiered on Broadway.

Jelly's Last Jam
(1992)
by George C. Wolfe
became the first show by Wolfe to premiere on Broadway. Thereafter, he has become a renowned playwright and director in the industry, as well as being the most Tony Award nominated Black theater artist.