

Living Voices: “The Right to Dream”

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019 AT 10 AM & 12 PM • 60 MINUTES
HANNAFORD HALL, USM PORTLAND CAMPUS



Portland Ovation has brought a dynamic season of exceptional performing artists to Portland, Maine, including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway since 1931. Portland Ovation believes that cultural enrichment should be accessible to all and provides quality live performances and education experiences. Ovation collaborates with other arts organizations, nonprofits, education systems and the business sector to promote cultural enrichment and lifelong learning and celebrates the power and virtuosity of the performing arts.

In addition to live performances, we bring the exhilaration of the performing arts out into our community with season-long educational and outreach programs called Ovation Offstage. Ovation Offstage creates resonating moments when artists and audiences connect. Whether it's an unexpected "art happening," a workshop or masterclass with a visiting artist, a lively community discussion, or a pre-performance lecture, Portland Ovation invites you to join us as we explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ovation Offstage is made possible in part with support from Culture Club-Portland, Bank of America, TD Bank, Machias Savings Bank, Unum, Maine Arts Commission, Dead River Company, and the Sam L. Cohen Foundation, Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation, and Maine Community Foundation's Frances Hollis Brain Fund."



"The Right to Dream" STUDY GUIDE

This guide includes information about "Right to Dream" and its broader cultural and literary connections; suggested activities designed to engage and sustain your students' learning before, during, and after the show; as well as a number of local resources to help you extend your learning. Please note connections to Common Core State Standards.

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

- Reading Literature
- Reading Informational Texts
- Writing
- Speaking & Listening
- Language
- Maine Learning Results: Theatre
- Movement
- Character
- Improvisation

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THEATER ETIQUETTE

Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform and each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and will want an audience to applaud only when they have completed a portion of their performance. As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? Name a few as a class.
- What kind of responses might an audience give in each circumstance?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?

Also, remember that a theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers or paper rustling can be heard throughout the auditorium. You are part of a community of audience members and you all work together to create your theater experience.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS

African American History in Maine:

- Abyssinian Meeting House: www.abyme.org
- NAACP Portland Branch: www.naACP.me
- Portland Freedom Trail: www.mainehistory.org/PDF/walkingtourmap.pdf
- USM African American Collection: usm.maine.edu/library/specialcollections/aacm-history

A Letter From The Artistic Director of Living Voices

“The Right to Dream” is Raymond’s story, a young African American growing up in Mississippi on the brink of the American Civil Rights movement. Early on, Raymond feels the daily impact of racism and then is introduced to leaders like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., showing him that something different may be possible for blacks in America. Dedicated to joining these leaders, Raymond receives a scholarship to attend Tougaloo College. Raymond begins his involvement in the movement when he leads a sit-in at a local lunch counter. He then becomes a part of SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and is a participant in the voter registration drive, the March on Washington,

Freedom Summer and the March from Selma to Montgomery.

Raymond’s experiences reflect much of the world of the American south of that time: both the personal and collective struggle for a voice; the everyday adversity created by the Ku Klux Klan and white supremacists; the conflicts within the movement as well as those outside it; the achievements as well as the tragedies. Raymond offers a personal inside view of a tumultuous and challenging period of American history.

Living Voices strives to recreate historical periods with as much authentic detail as possible. We believe that by allowing audiences to experience history as participants, they will better understand the choices individuals made during that time. “The Right to Dream” presented us with a particular challenge: the use of racial epithets as was common in Mississippi during this era. Though the word “nigger” is kept to a minimum (we do not wish to desensitize audiences to this word), it is present within the program. Please contact us if you need any clarification or information about the content of “The Right to Dream.”

Thank you,
Rachael McClinton
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Synopsis

Raymond Hollis is a young African-American born in a small town in Mississippi just after World War II. His father fought in the war and was awarded for his valor on the battlefield. While in the Army, Mr. Hollis meets his wife, a nurse. But when Mr. Hollis returns to Mississippi, he is treated as a second-class citizen and shown no respect for his service to his country. Mrs. Hollis, unable to work as a nurse, takes a job as a maid.

Raymond excels in school even though the facilities granted to black students are poor in comparison to the white schools. Raymond must walk the long distance to school or ride an old broken-down bus that the black families bought, since the state wouldn't provide the money for a new bus for black students. Still, Raymond is able to become class president and succeed in his studies. He meets his first best friend, Jack, a white boy who lives next door to the house where Mrs. Hollis works. The two best friends spend all their time together. One day Mrs. Hollis takes the children to the movies. Raymond sees Jack in the theater and runs in. The theater owner quickly throws Raymond out. Mrs. Hollis explains to Raymond that he can only sit in the balcony because he is black. Mrs. Hollis is forced to find other work, and Raymond is not allowed to play with Jack again.

Raymond and Cousin Tony hear about the Bus Boycott in Montgomery. After seeing Martin Luther King, Jr. at a rally, Raymond decides he wants to be a political leader. Raymond and Tony are able to get into the best black colleges in the country: Tony goes to Morehouse and Raymond to Tougaloo.

Raymond and other Tougaloo students stage their first sit-in. They are brutally attacked by the police and other patrons. One of Raymond's friends is blinded in the fighting. Raymond is not sure he can continue to lead in this kind of danger—but after encouragement from Mr. Hollis, Raymond dedicates himself to SNCC and the civil rights movement. Later, on a visit home, Mrs. Hollis warns Raymond that certain white leaders in town know what he's doing. After a threat from the Sheriff that is directed at Mrs. Hollis, Raymond decides to return to school and distance himself from the family.

Raymond helps lead the voter registration drive in Mississippi. The effort experiences a temporary setback when parents of the teenage volunteers keep them away for fear of their safety, but Raymond is re-energized by the March on Washington. SNCC is told to refrain from unapproved protesting by the planners of the march. However, after Dr. King's speech, the entire SNCC delegation sings “We Shall Overcome”—even though they were denied permission to sing the song.

Raymond and the workers are shocked when four little girls are killed in a church bombing in Alabama. Raymond dedicates himself to Bob Moses' plan of a freedom election. 80,000 African-Americans vote for the first time in a mock election designed to show that black people could and should vote. SNCC then plans Freedom Summer. Faced with great danger, Raymond and the other workers spend the summer helping blacks in Mississippi register to vote. Three workers, Schwerner, Cheney and Goodman, disappear and are later found dead.

After graduating from Tougaloo, Raymond joins Tony in Alabama to help with the voter drive in that state. Police in Selma kill a man named Jimmy Lee Jackson when he tries to protect his mother from being beaten, and Raymond and Tony join the march from Selma to Montgomery in protest of this violence. State troopers meet the marchers at a bridge outside of Selma and attack. Tony is seriously wounded, and both he and Raymond are nearly killed by an angry sheriff. Days later, protesters are given permission to cross the bridge, and Mr. Hollis surprises Raymond by joining the march. Together they walk from Selma to Montgomery and hear Dr. King speak on the steps of the capitol. When Mr. Hollis returns home, he is met by the Klan and killed.

Not long after the march, President Johnson ends voter discrimination by signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Now able to be a candidate for the town council, Raymond dedicates his life to leadership in working towards equal rights for all.



Discussion Questions

1. What are human rights?

Human rights are rights that belong to individuals simply for being human. They are:

- Inherent and automatic: they do not have to be bought, earned or given.
- Universal: all human beings are entitled to equality, regardless of race, gender, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin.
- Indivisible: all human beings are entitled to freedom, security and decent standards of living at the same time.
- Inalienable: no one has the right to take away or deprive another person of their human rights for any reason.

People still have human rights even when governments or others violate or do not acknowledge them. Included in human rights is the expectation that each individual has responsibilities to respect the human rights of others.

Suggested reading:

- The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
“Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages.”
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

2. What are civil rights?

Civil rights are the personal and property rights recognized by governments and guaranteed by constitutions and laws. Civil and political rights are freedom-oriented and include:

- The rights to life, liberty, privacy and security of the individual
- The right to own property
- Freedom from torture and slavery
- Freedom of speech, press and religion
- Freedom of association and assembly

These rights ensure that all citizens receive equal protection under the law and equal opportunity to enjoy the privileges of citizenship regardless of race, gender, religion, or any other arbitrary characteristics

Suggested reading:

- The Bill of Rights
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights>
- Amendments 11-27 of the Constitution
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/amendments-11-27>
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom
This is an online version of an exhibition that ran at the Library of Congress from September 10, 2014 to January 2, 2016, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It includes a detailed timeline with historic primary documents.
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/civil-rights-act-of-1964.html>

Discussion Questions

3. What does “Jim Crow” mean?

Today, we typically use the term “Jim Crow” to refer to the decades of black oppression between the end of Reconstruction and the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, Jim Crow was actually born out of a minstrel show that toured New York City in the 1830s. A white man named Thomas Dartmouth Rice performed in blackface as Jim Crow, and, as the show gained popularity among white audiences across the north, the name quickly became a derogatory term for African Americans.

“Come listen all you gals and boys,
I’m going to sing a little song,
My name is Jim Crow.
Weel about and turn about and do jis so,
Eb’ry time I weel about I jump Jim Crow.”

By the time the Civil War ended and the Emancipation Proclamation formally abolished slavery, the epithet “Jim Crow” was an engrained part of the national white vernacular. Soon, southern states began passing laws to restrict the rights of freed slaves and to enforce racial segregation. These laws, which relegated African Americans to a subordinate class of citizens, became known as the Jim Crow laws. Under these laws, black Americans suffered not only unjust treatment but also extreme violence – thousands were lynched by white mobs.

In 2010, legal scholar Michelle Alexander published the book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, which details how persistent racism in the American criminal justice system has turned Jim Crow’s legal segregation into other forms of racial suppression.

Important Vocabulary:

- **minstrel shows:** acts where a white person would perform songs, dances, or skits in blackface to mock African Americans
- **blackface:** make-up used by a nonblack performer portraying a black character
- **emancipation:** the act of freeing a person or people
- **abolitionism:** the movement to end slavery
- **segregation:** the act of setting things apart; in terms of Jim Crow, the act of separating black people and white people, as well as their respective resources
- **lynching:** public execution, especially by hanging, for an alleged offense without legal process

Influential Works:

- *Southern Horrors* by Ida B. Wells
- *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington
- *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois

Suggested Reading:

- National Geographic: “Who Was Jim Crow?” <https://bit.ly/2vxeU7H>
- PBS: “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow” <https://bit.ly/2Kl1nyK>

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Discussion Questions

4. What is SNCC?

SNCC (pronounced “snick”) stands for Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In February OF 1960, a group of black students in Greensboro, North Carolina staged a sit-in at a “whites only” lunch counter. This simple and peaceful protest tactic garnered significant media attention, and soon other students in the south were organizing similar sit-ins. In April of 1960, Ella Baker of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference held a conference for black student leaders who were organizing on campuses, and thus SNCC was born. SNCC participated in many other peaceful protest initiatives, such as Freedom Rides, The Freedom Ballot, and Freedom Schools.

Major Figures

- Ella Baker
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Bob Moses
- Stokely Carmichael
- Congressman John Lewis
- NAACP Chairman Julian Bond
- Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry

Suggested Reading:

- For more information on SNCC visit www.ibiblio.org/sncc/



5. What happened at the March on Washington?

In August 1963, approximately 250,000 people gathered in support of the civil rights movement at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was also the setting for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character....I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

-Martin Luther King, Jr. at the March on Washington, 1963

Read the entire speech at www.archives.gov/files/press/exhibits/dream-speech.pdf

SNCC leader and activist John Lewis also delivered a fiery address, despite the Catholic Archbishop and several other leaders insisting that he tone down his criticism of the Kennedy administration’s civil rights bill:

Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to march in the streets of Birmingham? Where is the political party that will protect the citizens of Albany, Georgia? Do you know that in Albany, Georgia, nine of our leaders have been indicted, not by the Dixiecrats, but by the federal government for peaceful protest? But what did the federal government do when Albany’s deputy sheriff beat Attorney C.B. King and left him half-dead? What did the federal government do when local police officials kicked and assaulted the pregnant wife of Slater King, and she lost her baby?

-John Lewis at the March on Washington, 1963

Read the entire speech at <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/john-lewis-speech-at-the-march-on-washington-28-august-1963/>

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Activities

To prepare for the performance:

- Choose a specific event from the civil rights movement and write a newspaper article as if you were a reporter during that time.
- Choose a specific individual who was influential in the fight for civil rights, and write the interview you would have with that person.
- Compare and contrast the civil rights movement with another social movement, past or present (e.g., women’s suffrage, protests against Vietnam, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, etc.).

To process the performance:

- Rewrite a scene from the play using a different character’s point of view.
- Write a letter to Raymond about the future, thinking beyond the last scene in the play.
- On the whiteboard, draw the outline of Raymond’s body. Inside the figure, brainstorm as a class what Raymond is feeling on the inside or how he feels about himself. Outside the figure, write how others perceive him or how he appears to others. Repeat this exercise with other characters or real people, and use the activity to discuss prejudice, motivation, and character choices.
- Process the play as a class and discuss how the performance made you feel. In addition to its historical significance, the work’s emotional and political relevance to today is also important.



Student Response Form

Please guide your students through this form. Students may write and/or draw pictures to respond to the performance.

PERFORMANCE: "Right to Dream" • FEBRUARY 2019

SCHOOL NAME: _____

STUDENT NAME: _____ **GRADE:** _____

How did this performance help you learn more about the American civil rights movement?

Would you recommend this performance to your classmates? Why or why not?

What other historic events would you like to experience as a live performance?

Please print your name below to give Portland Ovarions permission to use your comments in future promotions.

Print Your Name Here

MAIL RESPONSES TO:
Ovarions Offstage
50 Monument Sq, 2nd Fl.
Portland, ME, 04101

Teacher Response Forms

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Include any comments from class discussion as well!

PERFORMANCE: "Right to Dream" • FEBRUARY 2019

SCHOOL NAME: _____

YOUR NAME: _____ **GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS:** _____

What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, why not, what can we do better?)

How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

If you used this guide, how did it help you prepare for and reflect upon the performance with your students? Why or why not? OR if you knew about the guide but opted not to use it, tell us why you chose not to use it. (We want to design the guides so that they are helpful tools for teachers—your feedback is key!)

Tell us about planning the trip:

How did you hear about this School-Time Performance? How was the process when arranging transportation?

Teacher Response Forms

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Include any comments from class discussion as well!

Tell us about the trip itself: How was the arrival and dismissal process? Were all of your specified seating needs met?

What types of performances would you like to see in the future? (topics/themes, genres, specific artists, etc.)?

A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for us to offer these School-Time Performances at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experience or its impact on your class?

Please sign below if Portland Ovarions has permission to use any of your comments in future promotions.

Sign here

RETURN TO:

Ovarions Offstage
50 Monument Sq, 2nd Fl.
Portland, ME, 04101