



PLAYBILL

FATHER COMES HOME FROM
THE WARS (PARTS I, II, III)



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SUZAN-LORI PARKS



APPROXIMATE RUNNING TIME: 2 HOURS & 45 MINUTES
THERE WILL BE ONE 20 MINUTE INTERMISSION

ARTIST NOTE: WEYNI MENGESHA

I am writing this on July 7, two weeks into our rehearsal process. While our play grapples with the meaning of true freedom in America in 1862, this morning we found ourselves in the heart of the same discussion. Many of us came into the room filled with grief at the news of another death from an unwarranted police shooting. This time with a little girl sitting in the backseat of the victim's car. I could not stop thinking about that young girl. How this incident will affect her understanding of the world. We finished our talk with a moment of silence, then continued our work. I feel so fortunate that I was able to be with such an incredible group of artists this morning. So lucky to be born in a time when Suzan-Lori Parks is alive to express an experience so acutely, and give a voice to so many.

The Chorus asks Hero to "Weigh it all careful. Weigh it in your heart."

The ancient Egyptians believed that before one could be granted a place in the afterlife their hearts had to be weighed against Truth and Justice, represented by a feather. If their heart proved heavier than the feather they would be devoured by a beast. I am glad we have the ritual of theatre to bring us together, in the dark, to weigh ours.

Thank you for joining us,

WEYNI MENGESHA,

Director of

*Father Comes Home From
the Wars (Parts I, II, III)*

CREATIVE TEAM FATHER COMES HOME FROM THE WARS (PARTS I, II, III)

CAST

Akosua Amo-Adem
Leader, Third Runaway

Lisa Berry
Penny

Walter Borden
Oldest Old Man

Divine Brown
The Musician

Oliver Dennis
Colonel in the Rebel Army

Peter Fernandes
Odyssey Dog, Fourth

Daren A. Herbert
Homer

Dion Johnstone
Hero

Roy Lewis
Second, First Runaway

Gregory Prest
Smith

Marcel Stewart
Third, Second Runaway

PRODUCTION

Weyni Mengesha
Director

Lorenzo Savoini
Set Designer

Dana Osborne
Costume Designer

Kevin Lamotte
Lighting Designer

Thomas Ryder Payne
Sound Designer

Alejandra Nunez
Music Director

Simon Fon
Fight Director

Casey Hudecki
*Metcalf Foundation
Fight Director Intern*

Kelly McEvenue
Alexander Coach

Diane Pitblado
Dialect Coach

Robert Harding
Production Stage Manager

Arwen MacDonell
Stage Manager

Michael Sinclair
Assistant Stage Manager

Tanya Rintoul
Assistant Director

Ada Aguilar
Apprentice Stage Manager

SOULPEPPER PRODUCTION

Jacqueline Robertson Cull
Head of Hair & Makeup

Kathleen Johnston
Natalie Swiercz
Coordinators

Geoff Hughes
Cutter

Gilana Harendorf
Sewer

Barbara Nowakowski
First Hand

Emma Zulkoskey
Dresser

Bill Stahl
Carpenter

Mattea Kennedy
Jes Macduff
Scenic Painters

Greg Chambers
Props Builder

Tracy Taylor
Props Buyer

Special Thanks: John Millard

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When the late, great American writer James Baldwin taught Suzan-Lori Parks in her university days, he called her “an astonishing and beautiful creature who may become one of the most valuable artists of our time.” His words have proved prophetic. *Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts I, II, III)* is the first of a projected 9-play cycle that will examine life in America from the Civil War to the present day. This first play explores the physical, emotional and spiritual toll of slavery, whose deadly legacy of fear, oppression and violence continue to haunt the United States to this day.

Part 1, A Measure of a Man, opens in 1862 in Texas on a plantation with a Chorus of Undesirable Slaves. Our hero, also called Hero, strikes a deal with his master: if he fights with the Confederates in the Civil War, he will win his freedom. Even this small description carries a whiff of Parks’ audacity, her verve. She’s a master storyteller, mixing seriousness and humour, melodrama and realism, references to Greek poetry and old folk tales in completely original, exciting theatrical ways.

Part 2, A Battle in the Wilderness, moves into the heart of Hero’s journey. Multiple plots, themes and characters emerge and converge in an urgent contemplation of liberty, loyalty and identity. Every time we think we know what’s happening, this epic tale surprises us, moves us, and perhaps most importantly, shifts our perceptions. Through the individual journey of Hero, Parks illuminates a very different origin story than the one mainstream America likes to tell.

Part 3 is called *The Union of My Confederate Parts* and its blithe wordplay points toward one of the play’s greatest joys: its musical, poetic, earthy language. Parks moves from the blunt vernacular to free verse, from period decorum to contemporary slang with buoyant swagger, deadly accuracy, and unflinching purpose. Settle in for a raucous, reimagined, reinvigorated Odyssey, told by a rare and valuable artist who wears the mantle of Homer as if it were a favourite sweater.

WRITER BIOGRAPHY

Suzan-Lori Parks was born into a military family in Kentucky in the 1960s. She began writing at Mount Holyoke College and has been a professional playwright since the middle ‘80s. She became the first African-American to receive a Pulitzer Prize in 2002 for her play *Topdog/Underdog*. In 2007, she gave herself the task of writing a play a day for a whole year. The resulting work, *365 Days/365 Plays* was produced in over 700 theatres worldwide, one of the greatest grassroots collaborations in American theatre history. She’s written for radio, television and film and is the recipient of a MacArthur Genius Grant. She performs regularly at the Public Theater in New York in a project called *Watch Me Work*.

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FOR ATTENDING!



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