

VOICES OF THE **SOUTH** PRESENTS



THE STARRY ROAD TO FREEDOM

by Darius Wallace

MISSION

VOICES OF THE SOUTH

a non-profit theater company

Voices of the South is a non-profit, ensemble-based company that creates, produces, and performs theatre from diverse southern perspectives.

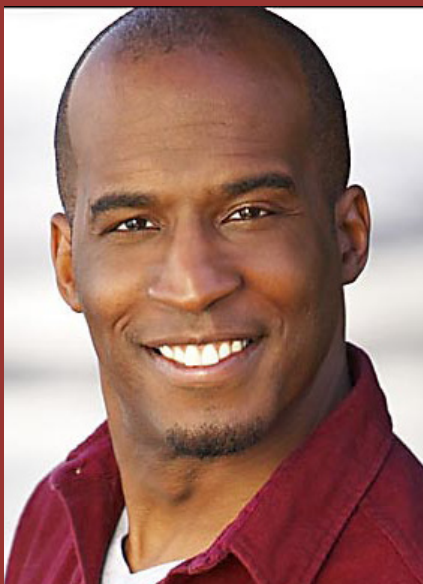
"Our organization of actors, directors, and visual artists work together to explore and stage the music inherent in short stories, novels, and poetry. This engaging form of theatre, now experiencing a renaissance both nationally and internationally, is widely referred to as narrative theatre. This unique theatrical style takes the tradition of storytelling to another level by utilizing movement, metaphor, and evocative visual imagery to illumine the heart and voice of the story. Our company is dedicated to maintaining the beauty, power, and integrity of the authors' original text, hence providing a theatrical experience that is entertaining, educational, and of exceptional quality."

-Voices of the South

Voices of the South was founded in 1995 by Jenny Odle Madden and Alice Berry, who were later joined by actors Todd Berry, Virginia Ralph Matthews, Steve Swift and director Jerre Dye. They were commissioned to create *The Ugly Duckling* in 2001 by the Memphis Arts Council and The Center for Arts Education for the Memphis Aesthetic Education Institute. They have adapted and performed the work of many Southern authors including William Faulkner (*A Light in August*), Joan Williams (*Twenty Will Not Come Again*), Bobbie Ann Mason (*Weeds*), Eleanor Glaze (*The Window*) and Eudora Welty (*Why I Live at the P.O.*). They have twice been featured at the International Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, receiving four-star reviews. For the past several years Voices of the South has partnered with The University of Memphis to create unique internships for actors and directors. The company also collaborates with local artists, performers, dancers, and writers to create new innovative works. To learn more about Voices of the South visit <http://www.voicesofthesouth.org>.

DARIUS WALLACE

ABOUT THE WRITER/PERFORMER



Phill Darius Wallace was born in Flint Michigan. He attended Interlochen Arts Academy where he studied theatrical arts. He then attended SUNY Purchase Theatre Arts School in New York, a school of professional theatre. His first professional role was Caliban in Shakespeare's "The Tempest," which was performed at Michigan's Shakespeare Festival. Later, he became a company member of Flint Youth Theatre where he performed various children shows. It was during this that he wrote and produced a one-man show on the life of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Frederick Douglass. Phil Darius Wallace began touring his one-man shows around the country through mobile productions, which has been seen in forty-eight states. The show *Malcolm X* received rave reviews by the *LA Times* and *LA Weekly*. He recently finished shooting the movie *Nothing But the Truth* with Kate Beckinsdale and Matt Dillon. He is currently in post production on his own movie *100 Lives*, which he wrote, directed and produced.

ABOUT FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass was born in a slave cabin, in February, 1818, near the town of Easton, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Separated from his mother when only a few weeks old he was raised by his grandparents. At about the age of six, his grandmother took him to the plantation of his master and left him there. Not being told by her that she was going to leave him, Douglass never recovered from the betrayal of the abandonment. When he was about eight he was sent to Baltimore to live as a houseboy with Hugh and Sophia Auld, relatives of his master. It was shortly after his arrival that his new mistress taught him the alphabet. When her husband forbade her to continue her instruction, because it was unlawful to teach slaves how to read, Frederick took it upon himself to learn. He made the neighborhood boys his teachers, by giving away his food in exchange for lessons in reading and writing. At about the age of twelve or thirteen Douglass purchased a copy of *The Columbian Orator*, a popular schoolbook of the time, which helped him to gain an understanding and appreciation of the power of the spoken and the written word, as two of the most effective means by which to bring about permanent, positive change.

Returning to the Eastern Shore, at approximately the age of fifteen, Douglass became a field hand, and experienced most of the horrifying conditions that plagued slaves during the 270 years of legalized slavery in America. But it was during this time that he had an encounter with the slavebreaker Edward Covey. Their fight ended in a draw, but the victory was Douglass', as his challenge to the slavebreaker restored his sense of self-worth. After an aborted escape attempt when he was about eighteen, he was sent back to Baltimore to live with the Auld family, and in early September, 1838, at the age of twenty, Douglass succeeded in escaping from slavery by impersonating a sailor.

He went first to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he and his new wife Anna Murray began to raise a family. Whenever he could he attended abolitionist meetings, and, in October, 1841, after attending an anti-slavery convention on Nantucket Island, Douglass became a lecturer for the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and a colleague of William Lloyd Garrison. This work led him into public speaking and writing. He published his own newspaper, *The North Star*, participated in the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, in 1848, and wrote three autobiographies. He was internationally recognized as an uncompromising abolitionist, indefatigable worker for justice and equal opportunity, and an unyielding defender of women's rights. He became a trusted advisor to Abraham Lincoln, United States Marshal for the District of Columbia, Recorder of Deeds for Washington, D.C., and Minister-General to the Republic of Haiti.

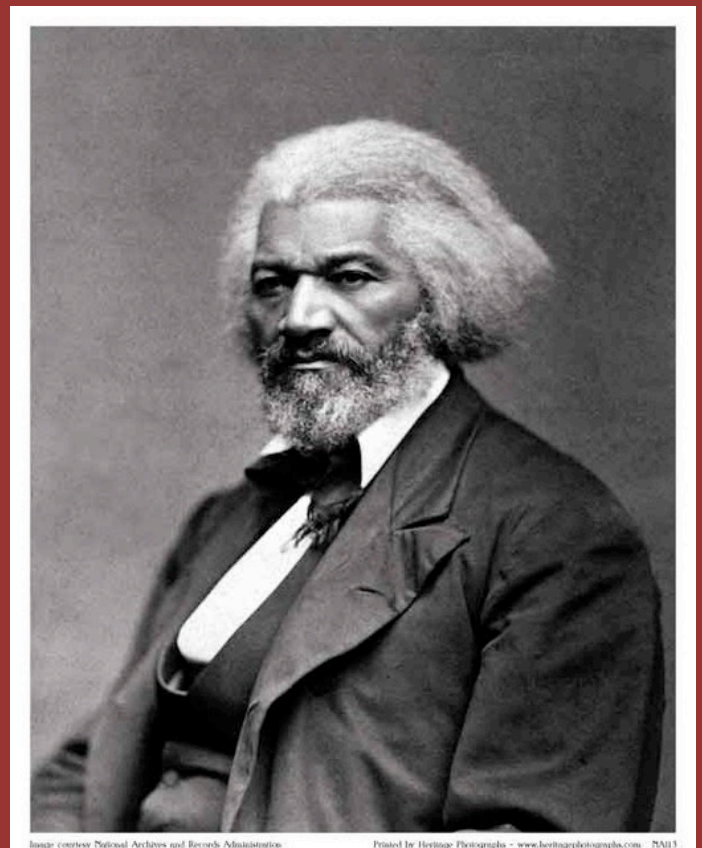


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HISTORY

In the *Starry Road to Freedom*, Frederick Douglass sings songs he has heard from his grandmother and other slaves. These songs were past down from generation to generation, this is a form of **oral tradition**.

- Have students define **oral tradition**.
- What are some examples of **oral tradition**?



ACTIVITY

Have students interview a family member or friend about tradition.

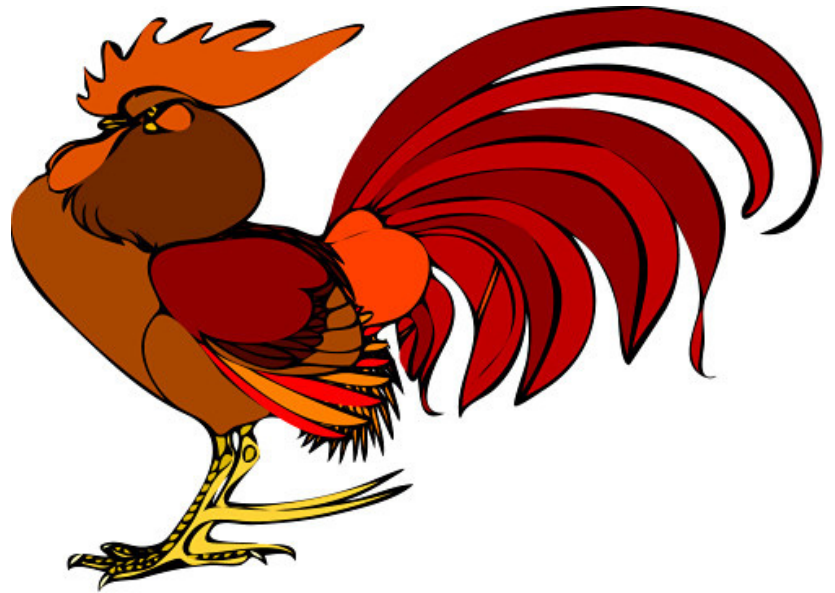
- What traditions have been passed down through their family?
- What traditions are unique to Memphis and the South?
- Have students share with the class.



SCIENCE

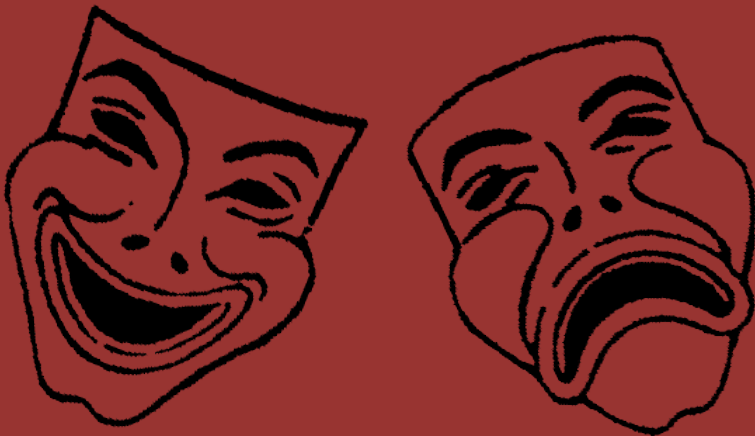
Young Frederick loved to play with the animals on the plantation. He said he learned how to run fast from the chickens.

- Have students compare human characteristics to the characteristics of a chicken, a horse, and a cow.
- How are they similar to each animal?
- How are they different?
- What can we learn from each of these animals?



ADD SOME DRAMA!

Have students act out each of these animals.



- How is their posture different?
- How is their voice different?
- What happens if a chicken and a cow go out to dinner?
- What would happen if they go to a baseball game, the library?

WRITING & RESEARCH

The actor, Darius Wallace, thought that Frederick Douglass was an important figure to write a play about.

- Why do you think he chose Frederick Douglass?
- Have students pick a historical figure they feel is important and study a few things about their life.
- Have students write what they feel is most important about them and read it to the class.
- Encourage students to find things that are fun, along with facts. (Like the songs Frederick Douglass sang)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As a slave, Frederick was not allowed to learn to read and write.

- What are things you must read everyday to get around? (street signs, clocks, menus, etc.)
- What do you think it would be like if you never learned to read or write?
- Why do you think slaves were not allowed to read or write?
- What happened in Frederick's life once he learned to read?
- What role did learning to read and write play in Frederick Douglass achieving freedom?

ACTIVITY

Once your students have discussed what it would be like to have never learned to read, have them complete the following activity.

1. Hide an object in your classroom. (book, piece of chalk, pencil etc.)
 2. Print the signs attached at the end of the study guides of “non-sense” words.
 3. Post these signs around the classroom as directions. (You can decide what they mean, turn left, turn right, etc.)
 4. Have students follow these signs to the hidden object.
 5. Assign other students to be “helpers.” The helpers can lead them in the correct direction, or the wrong direction. (It is good to have a mix of both so students can see they cannot always relay on others.)
- Were they able to find the object at all?
 - Would it have been easier to find if they knew what the signs said?
 - Why or Why not?
 - Did they ask for directions?
 - Were people willing to help them?



VOCABULARY



Freedom

Slavery

Privilege

Master

Plantation

Esteem

Journey

Knowledge

Ignorance

Desire

Discourage

Encourage

Disobey

Independence

Liberty

Underground Railroad

Struggle

Progress

Tgyf

Hutd

Yufr

Sdvw

Gyd

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