

Suzan-Lori Parks

Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3

Fourth-Year Drama Production
2017–18 Season

The Readiness Is All

50

Celebrating 50 Years
Juilliard Drama



Welcome to the Juilliard Drama Division's 50th anniversary season.

In the theater, we make things together we could never make by ourselves. All through this 50th anniversary year we will all come together—actors, writers, directors, teachers, staff, alumni, patrons, families, friends—in celebration, in remembrance, and in gratitude. We will look back and look ahead as we rededicate ourselves and begin to chart a course for the next 50 years.

Our art is about the enactment of change. It is easier to enact change than live it. That is true for individuals and for institutions. The Drama Division is changing. It should. It must. But as we change we have to have the discernment to see and the tenacity to hold fast to the best principles that have made us who we are. We in the Drama Division hold fast to our dedication to craft and our dedication to telling the story of what it's like to be a human being. We believe you can't do the latter without the former.

Fifty years is not very long if we measure in years. But measured in accumulated experience—the journeys, the discoveries, the revelations, the heartbreak, the faith, the joy—these 50 years are almost infinite in the amount of lived life. Yet, so much lies ahead. There are stories not yet told, voices not yet heard on our stages. That is the work of the next 50 years and that work starts now.

Some of us will be here for the 100th anniversary. Some of us will not. But we will all be making something together we could not make by ourselves. By teaching, learning, and performing, we are all part of this great legacy of craft and humanity.

Welcome to our 50th year. Let us celebrate together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Richard Feldman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Feldman
Acting Director of the Juilliard Drama Division

The Juilliard School
presents

Fourth-Year (Group 47) Performance Project

Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3

By Suzan-Lori Parks
Directed by LA Williams

October 11–15, 2017
Stephanie P. McClelland Drama Theater

Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 7:30pm
Saturday, 2pm and 8pm
Sunday, 7pm

Scenic Design: Adam Rigg
Costume Design: Asa Benally
Lighting Design: Xavier Pierce
Sound Design: Pornchanok Kanchanabanca

Production Stage Manager: Cristina Sison

Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3 is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3 was developed by The Public Theater; Oskar Eustis, artistic director/Patrick Willingham, executive director; and had its world premiere there on October 27, 2014. The premiere was presented in association with American Repertory Theater at Harvard University; Diane Paulus, artistic director/Diane Borger, artistic producer.

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The Drama Division's 2017–18 season is supported in part by a generous grant from The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.

Please make certain that all electronic devices are turned off during the performance. The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not permitted in this auditorium.



Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3

Part 1: A Measure of a Man

Early spring, 1862. A slave cabin in the middle of nowhere. Far West Texas.
One hour before dawn.

The Musician	Allen Tedder
<i>The Chorus of Less Than Desirable Slaves:</i>	
Leader	Daniel Davila Jr.
Second	Brittany Bradford
Third	Jayme Lawson+
Fourth	Darryl Gene Daughtry Jr.+
The Oldest Old Man	Sheldon Woodley^
Hero	Calvin Leon Smith
Penny	Alicia Crowder
Homer	Toney Goins

Part 2 : A Battle in the Wilderness

Late summer, 1862. Around 12 noon. A wooded area in the South.

The Musician	Allen Tedder
A Colonel, in the Rebel Army	Philip Stoddard
Smith, a captive Union Soldier	Allen Tedder
Hero, the Colonel's Slave	Calvin Leon Smith

Part 3 : The Union of My Confederate Parts

Fall, 1863. Far West Texas. A slave cabin in the middle of nowhere. Late in the afternoon, about an hour before sunset.

The Musician	Allen Tedder
First Runaway	Brittany Bradford
Second Runaway	Jayme Lawson+
Third Runaway	Darryl Gene Daughtry Jr.+
Homer	Toney Goins
Penny	Alicia Crowder
Odyssey Dog	Daniel Davila Jr.
Ulysses	Calvin Leon Smith

Performed with two 10-minute intermissions

+ Members of Group 48 in their third year of training

^ Mr. Woodley is an alumnus of the Drama Division, Group 38

Staff for *Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2 & 3*

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Director, Professional

Apprentice Program

Helen Taynton

* Member, Professional Apprentices Program

These fully mounted productions provide the actors with a bridge to their life in the profession and an opportunity to collaborate with professional directors and designers. They are asked to put into practice all they have learned, testing their mettle by working in various styles in a variety of plays, coming up against the best authors in the theatrical canon, classical, and contemporary.

On August 26, 2005, just before Suzan-Lori Parks was scheduled to interview the playwright August Wilson, he told the press he was dying of cancer. Later that afternoon, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast. In an essay called “The New Black Math,” Parks wrote that it felt like Judgment Day. In an instant, the African-American community was hit by dual crises: the coming death of a revered elder and the governmental neglect that left thousands stranded in Louisiana’s Superdome or drowned in the streets. Parks says that a “black play” is born at such a moment. It is “fierce...doesn’t forget the numerous hard times of the past and those going on right now... and knows about the black hole of history and isn’t afraid of going there.”

Parks’ *Father Comes Home From the Wars* meets this definition. It looks unsparingly at the calamity of African-American slavery at the height of the U.S. Civil War. Hero, one of the play’s slaves, is given an impossible choice: he is promised his freedom if he fights with his master on the Confederate side—the side dedicated to his continued enslavement. In Hero’s dilemma, Parks outlines slavery’s psychic violence (beyond its physical and sexual torture), and the grave cost of being forced to wage war on your own humanity. The text describes the pain of misplacing oneself; being broken inside; and amputations of body and soul.

Parks also widens her lens, depicting Hero’s journey and homecoming in epic dimensions. The play is loosely based on the Greek classic *The Odyssey*, which you can hear in the characters’ names: Homer (*The Odyssey*’s author); Odyssey Dog; Ulysses (Odysseus’s Roman name); and Penny (his long-suffering wife, Penelope). Grafting the particulars of African-American slavery onto this mythic tale, Parks explores the nature of freedom itself. Who do I belong to? How is my worth to be measured? The *Less Than Desirable Slaves* and *The Runaway Slaves* function like a Greek Chorus, narrating the play. And echoing *The Odyssey*’s multi-part structure, *Father Comes Home From the Wars* will ultimately include nine more parts that track these characters’ descendants to the present.

Parks recently told an interviewer at Signature Theatre that she was born down the road from Abraham Lincoln’s Kentucky birthplace. She did so with a smile, clearly relishing their shared origins. Indeed, Lincoln figures heavily in her work: he appears in, among other plays, *The America Play*; *Topdog/Underdog*; and *Father Comes Home From the Wars*, where the fate of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation is in question. But when we listen closely, we hear that Parks is as interested in the antebellum period as the long shadow it still casts today. Slavery’s fist continues to grip us. America’s struggle to break free from it is an epic one.

Shana Komitee is a Drama Division faculty member and provides dramaturgy for its productions.

The John Houseman Prize



20th Century Fox Film

Established by Joan Houseman in the spring of 1994 to honor the memory of the Juilliard Drama Division's founding director, The John Houseman Prize, in the form of a living-expense stipend, is awarded annually to acting students at the end of the third year of training who have demonstrated exceptional ability in classical theater. Selected by the Drama Division faculty, the prizewinners for the 2017–18 academic year are **Brittany Bradford** and **Nicholas Podany**.

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