

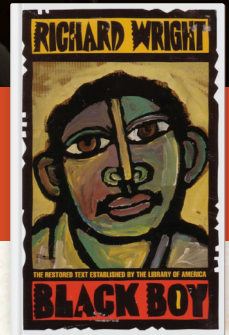
2021-2022 LIVE AT HERITAGE CENTER
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

A CenterStage Series Event



LITERATURE TO LIFE® PRESENTS

Black Boy



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021 | 3:00 P.M.
MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2021 | 7:30 P.M.
JOHN AND ALICE BUTLER HALL

Adapted and Directed by Wynn Handman
Performed by Tarantino Smith
Based on the memoir *Black Boy* by Richard Wright

Black Boy is the powerful account of one young man's journey from innocence to experience as a black youth living in the Jim Crow South. It is both the unashamed confession of a proud non-conformist and a profound indictment – a poignant and disturbing record of social injustice and human suffering. A tour de force, actor Tarantino Smith plays upwards of 20 characters from Richard Wright's past.

ARTISTICALLY

resilient

CAST BIOS



TARANTINO SMITH (*Actor*): Hailing from North Carolina, Tarantino moved to New York City on a full scholarship to study acting, singing, dancing, and vocal production and speech at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy – a private conservatory in the upper west side of Manhattan. He finished conservatory early by landing the lead of Sundiata in a national tour of *The Lion King of Mali*. While on tour, Tarantino’s passion for classical theatre continued to grow and, upon returning to NYC, he started training with The Pearl Theatre Company where he studied classics such as Chekov, Ibsen, Shaw, and Shakespeare. To further his experience he also worked with legendary acting teacher Wynn Handman on a historic drama piece based on letters orated by ex-slaves and on two one-man shows: Ralph Ellisons’ *Invisible Man* and Richard Wrights’ memoir *Black Boy* – all adapted verbatim from the novels. Though his passion for his craft was developed and continues to develop on the stage, he has also appeared in a few independent films such as *The Life* (2002), *Battle, New York Day 2* (2011), *Robot Revolution* (2015) and *Carbon Copy* (2017).



MELISSA "MEL" HOUSE (*Teaching Artist*): Mel is a graduate of the William Esper Studio and holds a master’s degree from the University of Exeter’s School of Drama in the United Kingdom. She is a classically trained award-winning actress, a prolific creator, producer, and filmmaker, and a passionate teaching artist. She co-founded The Drawing Board – a lab for playwrights, screenwriters, and actors; co-directed and filmed *Break Like You*, a short documentary about Hip Hop influencer and activist Emile Jansen in Cape Town, South Africa; and was a

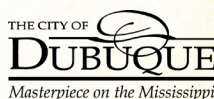
2019 finalist for Sundance’s New Voices Lab and the Orchard Project’s Episodic Lab with the digital series *Hot Angry Mom*. Mel has played roles from Shakespeare to Ibsen, has worked Off-Broadway, regionally, and internationally, and has originated roles for the web, film, and TV. She enjoys sharing her experience and passion with young New Yorkers as a teaching artist with multiple organizations such as Theatre for a New Audience, Lincoln Center Theater, and Literature to Life.



LITERATURE TO LIFE (LTL) is a performance-based literacy program that presents professionally staged verbatim adaptations of American literary classics. Founded as the educational program of the American Place Theatre more than three decades ago, LTL carries forward the legacy of founder Wynn Handman, who championed American writers of diverse backgrounds as “voices worth hearing” – a pioneering notion in the 1960s. Our mission is to perform great books that inspire young people to read and become authors of their own lives, and under the leadership of LTL’s co-founding Artistic Director Elise Thoron, this mighty collective of artists and educators brings the voices of diverse authors to thousands of students and audiences nationwide – giving them the tools to become the empowered “voices worth hearing” of our future. A LTL original that premiered at the Kennedy Center, *Black Boy* was one of the first titles on LTL’s roster to tour to communities nationally.

Free UD student admission made possible by UD Wendt Center for Character Education.

Black Boy is part of UD’s Captain Robert L. Martin Black Heritage Tribute program initiative made possible, in part, through the City of Dubuque’s Arts and Culture Special Projects grant funds.



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