

cleveland PUBLIC theatre's
STUDENT THEATRE ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (STEP)



AUGUST 7 | 7:00PM (ET)

Cleveland Public Theatre’s celebrated **Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP)** is Cleveland’s longest-running arts and job training program for teens. This summer, the 2020 STEP ensemble presents a double-bill virtual performance: *RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE: Artist & Activist ACT OUT!* and *The Trail of Black Degradation* followed by a short post-show conversation. Continue reading below for more information about the works being shared.

PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLE

Angeles Cortes, Samone Cummings, Brian Currie, Da’Nita Goins, Ste-vee Lang, Azizah Muhammad, Shaniya Patterson, Angelo Sanford, Kierra Stover, Jayla Swanson, Moises “Antonio” Tuyas, Zhavaughn Twitty

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producer
Raymond Bobgan

Co-Director & Program Manager
India Nicole Burton,
NNPN Producer in Residence

Co-Director & Co-Lead Teaching Artist
Ed Blunt

Movement/Dance Instructor
Nehemiah “Neemo” Spencer

Stage Manager & Teaching Instructor
Jaytionna Wells

Administrators
Molly Andrews-Hinders,
Colleen McCaughey

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO COUNCILPERSONS

Kevin Bishop, Anthony Brancatelli, Phyllis Cleveland, Kevin Conwell, Blaine Griffin, Kerry McCormack, Jasmin Santana, Matt Zone

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCES

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE: ARTIST & ACTIVIST ACT OUT!

Written by the STEP Ensemble
Directed by Ed Blunt
Performance Ensemble: Angeles Cortes, Samone Cummings, Brian Currie, Kierra Stover, Jayla Swanson, Moises “Antonio” Tuyas

SCENE LIST

A Piece of You: Performed & Choreographed by Azizah Muhammad & Samone Cummings
Classroom: Written & Performed by Kierra Stover
Brown Skin Girl: Written & Performed by Jayla Swanson
Tantrum: Written & Performed by Brian Currie
Motivate: Written & Performed by Moises “Antonio” Tuyas
Run: Written & Performed by Angeles Cortes
Grandma: Written & Performed by Samone Cummings

THE TRAIL OF BLACK DEGRADATION

Written by the STEP Ensemble
Directed by India Nicole Burton, NNPN Producer in Residence
Assistant Directed by Ste-vee Lang
Conceived by Azizah Muhammad
Performance Ensemble: Da’Nita Goins, Ste-vee Lang, Azizah Muhammad, Shaniya Patterson, Angelo Sanford, Zhavaughn Twitty

SCENE LIST

News Report 1: Written by Azizah Muhammad & Performed by Ensemble
Male Manipulation: Written & Performed by Shaniya Patterson
News Report 2: Written by Azizah Muhammad & Performed by Ensemble
Reece Birling Interview: Written by Azizah Muhammad & Performed by Ensemble
Reece Birling Point of View: Written & Performed by Da’Nita Goins
Ready to Riot: Conceived by Ste-vee Lang & Performed by Ensemble
Turn My Black Up: Written & Performed by Azizah Muhammad
Anonymous Voices: Written & Performed by Ste-vee Lang
Jeff, Jeff: Written & Performed by Angelo Sanford
Twilight: Written & Sung by Angelo Sanford
Jennifer Ashton: Written & Performed by Da’Nita Goins
Legal Murder: Written & Performed by Zhavaughn Twitty
American Girl, American Dream: Written & Performed by Shaniya Patterson
Didn’t Deserve this: Written & Sung by Ste-vee Lang
Our Community: Written & Performed by Zhavaughn Twitty
Black Soul: Written by Azizah Muhammad & Performed by Ensemble

CO-DIRECTOR & PROGRAM MANAGER’S NOTE

Because of the unrest and current situation we find ourselves in right now in America, there is an urgent need for social reform and calls to action. It was obvious, as Ed Blunt and I began our sessions with the students, they were eager to speak out against the mistreatment of Brown/Black bodies and marginalized individuals. Most of the Ensemble came in with material they had already written or conceived. As the Ensemble worked to create, it was apparent the stakes were high for them. If this message wasn’t created thoughtfully and with care, they were afraid it’d be deemed as just another student production where kids from a certain culture talk about the issues they face every day without explaining how the audience could help or what they should do next. The pieces also had to be a call to action. “Here is what we are doing to make change. Now what are you going to do?” It is also important that the viewers understand that just because the students are presenting two separate pieces, I acknowledge that the students are also one big company – the ideas they created for both pieces were devised and developed together, inspiring each other. Through different exercises, homework assignments, and by viewing Anna Deveare Smith’s classic piece *Twilight*, the Ensemble derived monologues, movement pieces, and scenes. Once information was gathered, groups were created and split into two smaller Ensembles. Both pieces reflect all of their work done during that process. Being a part of this cohort of artists has given me so much hope. “Generation Z” is full of leaders and individuals who already know who they are at such young ages. These pieces are representations of a future where inclusivity, economic and social justice, and racial equality will be valued.

—India Nicole Burton, NNPN Producer in Residence



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Founded in 1994, CPT’s Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP) is a rigorous arts education and job training for teens. The majority of these teens come from families defined as low-income, live within the city limits, attend public schools, and are artists of color. STEP offers youth the opportunity to earn money while working and training in close collaboration with professional artists. For over 25 years, STEP participants have engaged in acting, writing, movement, percussion, voice, dance, technical production, and touring while developing valuable job skills such as timeliness, commitment, and teamwork. The program culminates in the creation of an original theatrical production that has toured to indoor and outdoor venues across the city. Through STEP, the youth see themselves as positive and inspirational forces, and watch as their work impacts the larger Cleveland community. Many youth return to the program year after year, eventually going on to assume leadership roles inside of the program.

SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS

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