

ASSEMBLY COORDINATOR: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE/POST/ANNOUNCE!

ASSEMBLY DATE: _____

ASSEMBLY TIME: _____

FOR: _____



**Young
Audiences
Arts for
Learning**
Maryland



DEBRA MIMS

PRESENTS

**“My Grandmother Told Me:
A Tribute to African-American Women”**

Debra Mims is an actress with over twenty-five years of experience on stage, film, radio, and television. She was an award-winning arts producer for PBS for thirteen years. Debra was trained as an actress and dancer, earning a BFA in Theatre Performance from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan. She has performed with Young Audiences of D.C. since 1996 and also with the Children’s Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin. Now working as a writer and performer, she has combined her love of history, literature, writing, and the arts to create original theatrical presentations that are highly interactive and vividly portray the African-American experience. Debra was awarded an Individual Artist Award for her solo performance from the Maryland State Arts Council in 2003.

- Prep Information For Assembly Coordinator -

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**PLEASE PASS ALONG THE ATTACHED TEACHER PROGRAM GUIDE TO
ALL PARTICIPATING CLASSROOMS.**

SET-UP REQUIREMENTS:

- A cleared performance space
- No interruptions during performance (bells, announcements, etc.)

ARTIST ARRIVAL TIME: 20 minutes prior to performance

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls, let's give a warm welcome to Debra Mims presenting... My Grandmother Told Me: A Tribute to African-American Women!”

YAMD CONTACT NUMBER: 410.837.7577

INCLEMENT WEATHER: DON'T WORRY! Artists will follow school closings/delays. They will work with you to reschedule the performance if necessary.

AFTER HOURS/EMERGENCY NUMBER: Call 410.837.7577 and follow the prompts to be connected with a staff member on call.

Teacher Program Guide



Young
Audiences
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“My Grandmother Told Me”

Artist: Debra Mims

GRADE
LEVEL:
3-5; 6-8;
9-12

Inside this guide:

Artist Bio

Performance
Description

SC Connectors

Vocabulary

List of Resources

Post-Performance
Activities

Contact Young
Audiences for more
information on this
and other programs.

410.837.7577
www.yamd.org

Artist Bio

Debra Mims is an actress with over twenty-five years of experience on stage, film, radio, and television. She was an award-winning arts producer for PBS for thirteen years. Debra was trained as an actress and dancer, earning a BFA in Theatre Performance from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan. She has performed with Young Audiences of D.C. since 1996 and also with the Children's Theatre in Madison, Wisconsin. Now working as a writer and performer, she has combined her love of history, literature, writing, and the arts to create original theatrical presentations that are highly interactive and vividly portray the African-American experience. Debra was awarded an Individual Artist Award for her solo performance from the Maryland State Arts Council in 2003.

Performance Description

Opening: The play begins as the audience “surprises” Grandmother Mims in her attic as she searches her trunk looking for her great-great grandmother’s freedom papers. After she recovers from the shock of seeing these strangers in her attic, she begins talking to them. Sensing that they don’t have the best understanding of freedom and history, she decides to tell them the stories her grandmother told her.

Body: Grandmother Mims starts looking in her trunk and each item she picks up evokes a memory of a story her grandmother told her. As she recalls the stories, she takes the audience on a journey into the past, becoming a specific woman of that time via poem, monologue, or song.

Finale: Grandmother Mims interacts with and engages the audience, teaching them a Negro Spiritual. Ultimately, she is successful in her search and the audience rejoices with her when she finds the freedom papers. Before she leaves, she asks the audience to take time and meditate on what they want their futures to be.

Maryland State Curriculum Connectors

Fine Arts Content Standards in THEATRE

2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the history, traditions, and conventions of theatre, dramatic texts, and other literature of the theatre.

1. Express a broad range of human responses to a variety of stimuli
 - a. Identify ways in which theatre communicates feelings and ideas and reflects human experience by comparing dramatic texts from a variety of cultures
 - b. Identify how oral storytelling traditions reflect the beliefs and values of a given culture

Vocabulary

Abolitionist—a reformer who favors abolishing slavery

Bull Whip—a rawhide whip having a short handle and a long, plated lash

Confederacy—the southern states that seceded from the United States in 1861

Drinking Gourd—the Big Dipper constellation in the night sky

Freedom—personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery

Emancipation—freeing someone from the control of another

Excruciating—extremely painful, physically or emotionally

Independent—not influenced or controlled by others in matters of opinion, conduct, etc., thinking or acting for oneself

Manumission—to free from slavery or bondage

North Star—Polaris; the guiding star in the night sky

Proclamation—a formal public statement

Promised Land—a longed-for place where complete satisfaction and happiness will be achieved

Pot Liquor—the liquid in a pot in which meat and vegetables have been boiled

Quaker—a popular name for a member of the Religious Society of Friends

Rebs—a Confederate soldier

Swaddling—a long, narrow strip of cloth used for bandaging

Suffrage—the right to vote

Sojourner—a temporary resident

Topsy-turvy—crazy; unusual; unexpected; backwards

Union—the non-secessionist side of the United States during the Civil War—typically referred to as the Northern States or Yankees

Yankees—slang term referring to Union soldiers/residents



Debra Mims

List of Resources

For Teachers:

Books:

- *Black Books Galore! A Guide to Great African American Children's Books*, Donna Rand, T.T. Parker, S. Foster, 1998, Wiley and Sons, Pub.
- *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, Ira Berlin, 1998, Harvard University Press.
- *Remembering Slavery*, edited by Ira Berlin, 1998, Harvard University Press.

Films:

- "Amistad"
- "Glory"
- PBS - "Africans in America, Roots of Resistance"

Websites:

- <http://www.africanamericanculture.org/>
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African History and Culture
- <http://www.thewalters.org/>
The Walters Art Museum

Post-Performance Activities

1. Use the **Vocabulary Resource Sheet** to define and discuss key concepts from the program.
2. Use the **Make a Paper House Handout**: Students create a paper house representing the important things in their home or the home of their grandmother/father.
3. **Ideas/Questions for Discussion**
 - A. What was your favorite story?
 - B. What was the moral or main idea of that story?
 - C. How did Debra Mims use the acting tools of voice, body, and imagination to express different cultures and periods of history?

Vocabulary Resource Sheet

Debra Mims

“My Grandmother Told Me:
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Abolitionist _____

Bull Whip _____

Confederacy _____

Drinking Gourd _____

Freedom _____

Emancipation _____

Excruciating _____

Independent _____

Manumission _____

North Star _____

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Sojourner _____

Topsy-turvy _____

Union _____

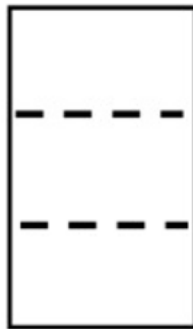
Yankees _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

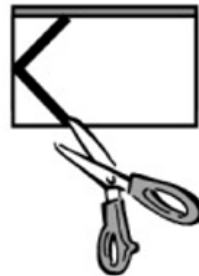
In “My Granmother Told Me” memories are prompted by things she pulls out of a trunk. Objects can also be useful in helping us describe who we are or what we want in life. Follow the directions to create a paper house. Then fill your house with images of things that are important to you.

How to Make A Paper House

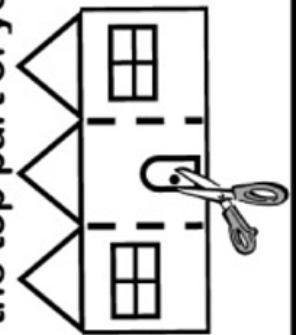
Step 1: Fold your paper on the dotted lines.



Step 3: Cut out your lines.



Step 5: Cut ONLY ONE side and the top part of your door.



Step 2: Keep the paper folded. Draw a line for the roof of your house.



Step 4: Unfold the paper. Draw different details for your house.



Step 6: Color your details.

