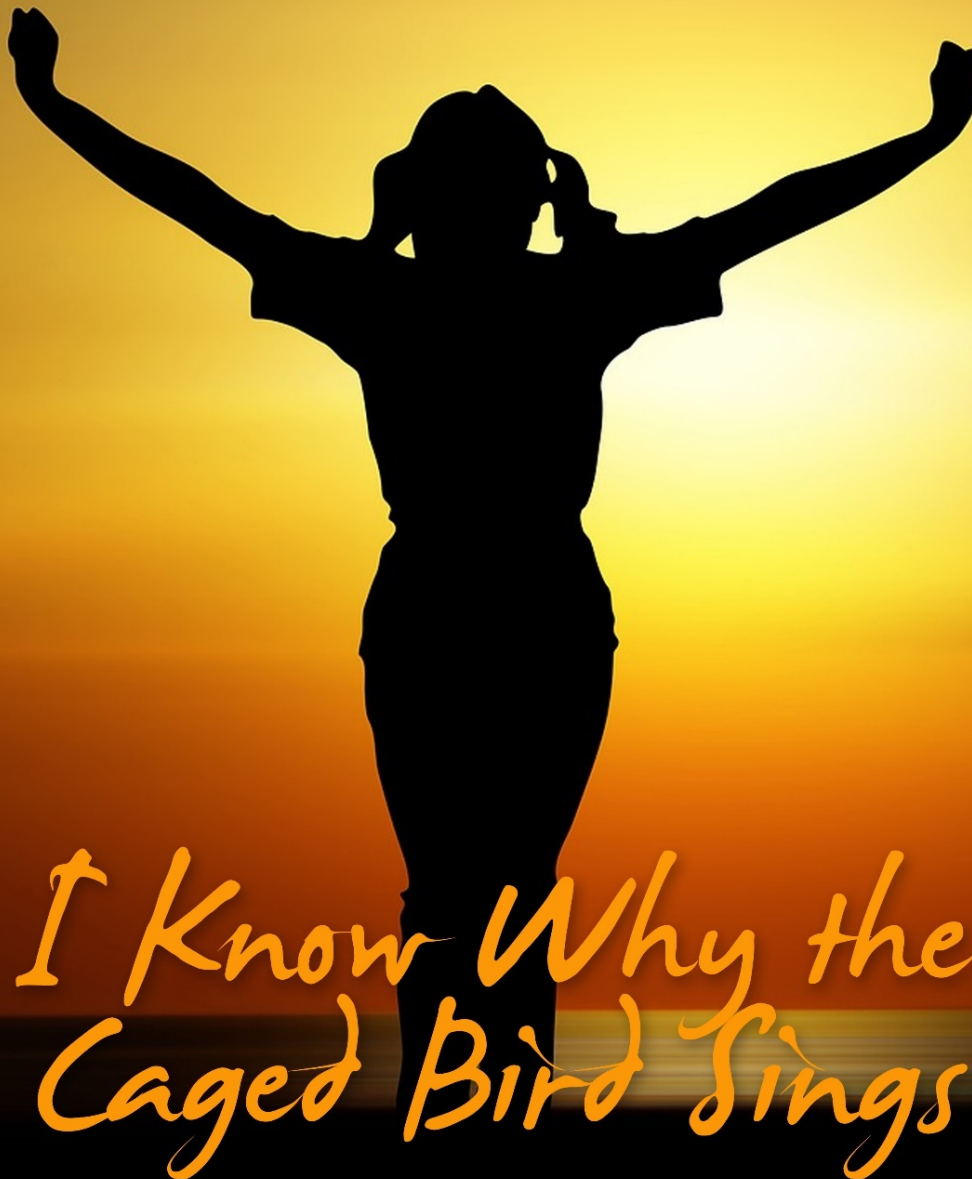


Prime Stage Theatre

RESOURCE GUIDE



I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

**BASED ON THE BOOK BY MAYA ANGELOU
ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY MYRA PLATT AND MALIKA OYETIMEIN
FOR BOOK-IT REPERTORY THEATRE**

DIRECTED BY MONTEZE FREELAND

**MARCH 9-18, 2018
PRIME STAGE THEATRE
WWW.PRIMESTAGE.COM**

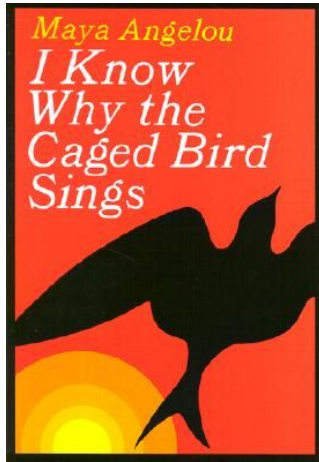


Prime Stage Theatre performances are located at
The New Hazlett Theater Center for Performing Arts

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2017-2018, Season *Humanity In The Face Of Adversity*

Bringing Literature to Life!

Dear Educator,



We are pleased to bring you the Pittsburgh Premiere play of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* adapted for the stage by Myra Platt & Malika Oyetimein from the book by Maya Angelou, our second exciting production of the season.

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary Reading Lists and themes are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with literature and theatre. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities, as well as the Theatre Etiquette suggested activities to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

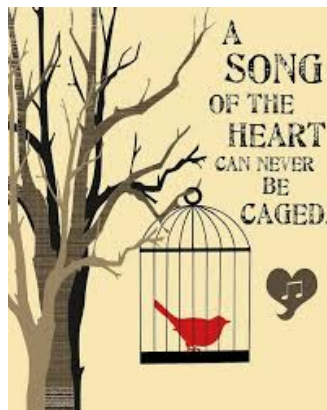
If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you, *and* I welcome your suggestions and comments!

Linda Haston, Education Director & Teaching Artist

Prime Stage Theatre

lhaston@primestage.com

The activities in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you watch the literature.



Our Education Programming is funded in part by the following:

Literacy In ACTion Program

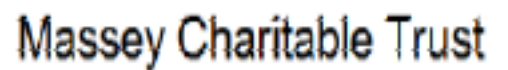
Student Matinee Field Trips

Theatre Mentor/Interns

Professional Development

Education Director

Teen Dating Awareness



Featured National Standards:

English/Language Arts Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
5. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
6. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre

NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements.

NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.



NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.

NA 9-12.3 Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions

Students analyze a variety of dramatic texts from cultural and historical perspectives to determine production requirements.

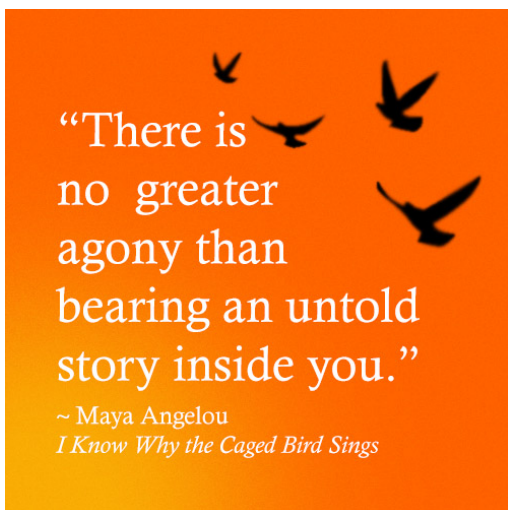
NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.



All Prime Stage productions and Resource Guides address the following:

**Pennsylvania Common Core Standards:
Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking**

CC.1.3.9-10.A: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.C: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CC.1.3.9-10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.E: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

CC.1.3.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.3.9-10.G: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

CC.1.3.9-10.H: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

CC.1.5.9-10.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CC.1.5.9-10.G: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

CC.1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

CC.1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

CC.1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.



Theatre Etiquette and House Rules

Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time.

Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance. The production team put in many long hours and hard work to mount this performance. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be terrific.

A few reminders for attending the theatre.

- When you arrive, stay with your group at all times, and wait for the ushers to help you find your seat.
- Gum, food, drinks, or candy, are **never** allowed in the theatre.
- Please go to the restroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- **TURN OFF ALL** cell phones, pagers, beepers, alarms, **anything** that can disturb the production, actors and the audience during the performance.
- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- **Do not talk during the performance.** The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well. Laughter is permissible at appropriate times.
- **No** taking of pictures or video recording is allowed.
- **Stay in your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end.** Show your appreciation by clapping. The actors love to hear applause. This shows how much you enjoyed the performance!





Family, Early Life and Education

Marguerite Annie Johnson Angelou (April 4, 1928 to May 28, 2014), known as Maya Angelou, was an American author, actress, screenwriter, dancer, poet and civil rights activist best known for her 1969 memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which made literary history as the first nonfiction best-seller by an African-American woman. Angelou

received several honors throughout her career, including two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, in 2005 and 2009.

Angelou had a difficult childhood. Her parents split up when she was very young, and she and her older brother, Bailey, were sent to live with their father's mother, Anne Henderson, in Stamps, Arkansas.

As an African American, Angelou experienced firsthand racial prejudices and discrimination in Arkansas. She also suffered at the hands of a family associate around the age of seven: During a visit with her mother, Angelou was raped by her mother's boyfriend. Then, as vengeance for the sexual assault, Angelou's uncles killed the boyfriend. So traumatized by the experience, Angelou stopped talking. She returned to Arkansas and spent years as a virtual mute.



During World War II, Angelou moved to San Francisco, California, where she won a scholarship to study dance and acting at the California Labor School. During this time, Angelou became the first black female cable car conductor — a job she held only briefly — in San Francisco. After giving birth to her son, she worked a number of jobs to support herself and her child.

Acting and Singing Career

In the mid-1950s, Angelou's career as a performer began to take off. She landed a role in a touring production of *Porgy and Bess*, later appearing in the off-Broadway production *Calypso Heat Wave* (1957) and releasing her first album, *Miss Calypso* (1957). A member of the Harlem Writers Guild and a civil rights activist, Angelou organized and starred in the musical revue *Cabaret for Freedom* as a benefit for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, also serving as the SCLC's northern coordinator.

In 1961, Angelou appeared in an off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* with [James Earl Jones](#), [Lou Gossett Jr.](#) and [Cicely Tyson](#).

Angelou went on to earn a Tony Award nomination for her role in the play *Look Away* (1973) and an Emmy Award nomination for her work on the television miniseries *Roots* (1977), among other honors.



Time in Africa

Angelou spent much of the 1960s abroad, living first in Egypt and then in Ghana, working as an editor and a freelance writer. Angelou also held a position at the University of Ghana for a time. In Ghana she also joined a community of "Revolutionist Returnees" exploring pan-Africanism and became close with human rights activist and black nationalist leader Malcolm X. In 1964, on returning to the U.S., she helped him set up the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which disbanded after Malcolm X's assassination the following year.

Screenplay Author and Director

After publishing *Caged Bird*, Angelou broke new ground artistically, educationally and socially with her drama *Georgia, Georgia* in 1972, which made her the first African-American woman to have her screenplay produced.

In 1998, seeking new creative challenges, Angelou made her directorial debut with *Down in the Delta*, starring [Alfre Woodard](#).

Other Awards

Angelou's career has seen numerous accolades, including the Chicago International Film Festival's 1998 Audience Choice Award and a nod from the Acapulco Black Film Festival in 1999 for *Down in the Delta*. She also won two NAACP Image Awards in the outstanding literary work (nonfiction) category, for her 2005 cookbook and 2008's *Letter to My Daughter*.

Personal Life

Martin Luther King Jr., a close friend of Angelou's, was assassinated on her birthday (April 4) in 1968. Angelou stopped celebrating her birthday for years afterward, and sent flowers to King's widow, [Coretta Scott King](#), for more than 30 years, until Coretta's death in 2006.

Angelou was also good friends with TV personality [Oprah Winfrey](#), who organized several birthday celebrations for the award-winning author, including a week-long cruise for her 70th birthday in 1998.

Maya Angelou's Poetry

'Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die' (1971)

Angelou published several collections of poetry, but her most famous was 1971's collection *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die*, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

'On the Pulse of Morning'

One of her most famous works, Angelou wrote this poem especially for and recited at [President Bill Clinton's](#) inaugural ceremony in January 1993. The occasion marked the first inaugural recitation since 1961, when [Robert Frost](#) delivered his poem "The Gift Outright" at [President John F. Kennedy's](#) inauguration. Angelou went on to win a Grammy Award (best spoken word album) for the audio version of the poem.



Maya Angelou's Books

'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' (1969)

Friend and fellow writer [James Baldwin](#) urged Angelou to write about her life experiences, resulting in the enormously successful 1969 memoir about her childhood and young adult years, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. The poignant story made literary history as the first nonfiction best-seller by an African-American woman. The book, which made Angelou an international star, continues to be regarded as her most popular autobiographical work. In 1995, Angelou was lauded for remaining on *The New York Times*' paperback nonfiction best-seller list for two years—the longest-running record in the chart's history.

'All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes' (1986)

A lyrical exploration about of what it means to be an African American in Africa, this autobiographical book covers the years Angelou spent living in Ghana.

'Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now' (1994)

This inspirational essay collection features Angelou's insights about spirituality and living well.

'A Song Flung Up to Heaven' (2002)

Another autobiographical work, *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* explores Angelou's return from Africa to the U.S. and her ensuing struggle to cope with the devastating assassinations of two human rights leaders with whom she worked, [Malcolm X](#) and [Martin Luther King Jr.](#) The book ends when, at the encouragement of her friend James Baldwin, Angelou began work on *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

'Letter to My Daughter' (2008)

Dedicated to the daughter Angelou never had, this book of essays features Angelou's advice for young women about living a life of meaning.

Cookbooks

Interested in health, Angelou's published cookbooks include *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table: A Lifetime of Memories with Recipes* (2005) and *Great Food, All Day Long* (2010).

Death

After experiencing health issues for a number of years, Maya Angelou died on May 28, 2014, at her home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The news of her passing spread quickly with many people taking to social media to mourn and remember Angelou. Singer [Mary J. Blige](#) and politician [Cory Booker](#) were among those who tweeted their favorite quotes by her in tribute. [President Barack Obama](#) also issued a statement about Angelou, calling her "a brilliant writer, a fierce friend, and a truly phenomenal woman." Angelou "had the ability to remind us that we are all God's children; that we all have something to offer," he wrote.



Angelou's Son and Husbands

In 1944, a 16-year-old Angelou gave birth to a son, Guy (a short-lived high school relationship led to the pregnancy). A poet himself, Angelou's son now goes by the name Guy Johnson.

In 1952, the future literary icon wed Anastasios Angelopoulos, a Greek sailor from whom she took her professional name — a blend of her childhood nickname, "Maya," and a shortened version of his surname. The couple later divorced. Notoriously secretive about her marriages, Angelou was likely married at least three times, including in 1973 to a carpenter, Paul du Feu.

Citation Information

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February 22, 2018

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A&E Television Networks



Myra Platt, Co-adapter of the play

B.S., Northwestern University (Analysis and Performance of Literature), 1984

School Summer Acting Program, Circle in the Square Theater, 1986

Myra Platt is the Founding Co-Artistic Director of Book-It Repertory Theatre. Book-It is the recipient of Seattle's 2010 Mayor's Arts Award and Washington State's 2012 Governor's Arts Award. As director, adapter, actor, and composer, Myra has helped Book-It produce over 100 world-premiere stage adaptations. Most recently she directed the acclaimed 5-hour event *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael

Chabon. She adapted and directed Jess Walter's *The Financial Lives of the Poets* (Gregory Award Nominee for Best Production and Best Director).





Malika Oyetimein. Co-adapter MFA Directing

Malika Oyetimein is a recent transplant to Seattle by way of Philadelphia. She served as Artistic Director of the Philadelphia based Ademide Theatre Ensemble and was a member of the Directors Lab at [Lincoln Center Theater](#). In Seattle, she recently directed [Intiman Theatre](#) Festival's production of *Boytocandy* and was featured in City Art Magazine's 2016 Future List. Select directing credits: *Hoodoo Love* (Yancy

Girl Productions & Ademide Theatre Ensemble), *Young Voices* (InterAct Theatre Co. & Philadelphia Young Playwrights), and *Topdog/Underdog* (GoKash Productions). Select Assistant Director credits: *Three Penny Opera*, *Blue Door* (Arden Theatre Co.), and *A View from the Bridge* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). As a professional teaching artist, Malika has worked with: Seattle Repertory Theatre, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Arden Theatre Co., Mural Arts: Project Home, & Theatre Horizon's Autism Drama Program. Malika is in her third year of the MFA Directing program at the University of Washington School of Drama.

"Book-It Repertory Theatre opened its 28th season with a stage adaptation of Maya Angelou's masterpiece *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Founding Co-Artistic Director Myra Platt originally adapted and directed this piece for its 2003 world premiere at Book-It. Platt is thrilled to collaborate with Malika Oyetimein who directed and joined Platt as co-adapter on the new script for 2017.



"What are you looking at me for?" Angelou says, echoing the first line of her 1969 memoir. It's a question she puts to the ensemble as well as the audience as she delves into stories of her childhood. "She was a black woman who was molded by a country that tried their damndest to bury her," director Malika Oyetimein writes in the premiere program. "She was a woman who went through hell and back before she was eight years old." Oyetimein and Myra Platt's adaptation of *Bird* and the production's stellar acting deeply honor Angelou's narrative and resiliency. The adaptation is framed and chronicled by Angelou as she narrates her life from age 3 until her son is born,

reflecting on her childhood in Stamps, Arkansas; St. Louis; and San Francisco. Despite wrenching childhood trauma and racism, Angelou wills herself to rise above it as she discovers the beauty and power of language. She ultimately finds her voice and learns to use her powerful words and her identity as a source of strength and a platform for cultural change. Angelou's memoir made literary history as the first nonfiction best-seller by an African-American woman.



DIRECTOR NOTES

“What can we overcome? What makes us stumble, and fall, and somehow miraculously rise...and go on.” is how this stage adaptation of Dr. Maya Angelou’s early life begins and ends. These words conjure reflection, hope and perseverance and echoes universal themes that transcend time, race and gender. Admittedly, when I was asked to direct “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings” I had pause, shouldn’t an African American woman direct this play? Was I taking work from a more than capable director who can offer gems of insight? As I thought, I decided to read the book in tandem with the script and within that week Dr. Angelou began to pop up everywhere; her poignant quotes sprinkled about Facebook, memes floated onto my Instagram feed and the fleeting memory of her presence throughout my entire life returned. Her essence nearly always seemed to resonate with me due to my grandmother, Doris Freeland, bearing a striking resemblance. Near six feet tall, a deep purple voice, and such pearls of wisdom that if strung together would reach the brightest sections of Baltimore from her humble row home. I was surrounded by the essence of the women in Dr. Angelou’s life and the values they instilled in me prepared me to have the knowledge of knowing my boundaries with this project but also the confidence in knowing that I was raised appropriately to do so.

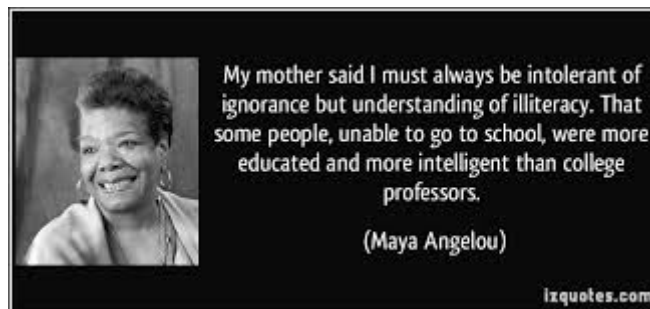


The sense of community, coupled with 30 plus characters, who pop in and out, linger, and stain put my brain to work on how this brilliant creative team could tell her story. Set designer Brittan Mauk was inspired by a piece of art owned by Dr. Angelou which depicts a quilt- another tangible example of community and legacy. I was inspired by the storytelling of the era in which she wrote the book and thought of the Negro Ensemble under the leadership of pioneers Douglas Turner Ward and Robert Hooks. We present to you a production that is steeped in African American storytelling, unapologetic cultural saturation and reverence for the great luminary that is Dr. Maya Angelou. At one point Dr. Angelou believed that her words had the power to kill but now we know that her words give us the encouragement to live. I hope that you are inspired to tell your truth through your preferred artistic medium and let your voice ring loud as the rolling sea. We are waiting to hear it.

Monteze Freeland

Director

Prime Stage production of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," March, 2018





The ARTISTIC VISION

by Monteze Freeland, Director of Prime Stage's production of

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

When reading the play, I was struck by how fast the scenes moved and how many locations the play visits while telling this story. I knew the best way to halt a show would be to have several blackouts and a ton of scenic changes. I began to hone in on the idea of community raising a child, for better or for worse, and settled on the idea of having a talented ensemble working together as a unit to aid the memory of adult Maya and inspire her to write this harrowing story. Below are a few conventions we use in the telling of the story.

Bright Set- The last thing I and my set designer Britton Mauk wanted was to suck the joy out of this story with a set that showed the reality instead of reflecting the technicolored world that children grow up in. The stage is full of color; colors used from a piece of art Dr. Angelou owned which was a picture of a quilt. The stage is a 3-D re-imagined idea of a quilt. Quilts were used throughout history as family trees for many African Americans. Scraps of important fabrics would illustrate the legacy of many families who didn't have the literary tools to communicate their stories.

White Gloves- When you see an actor wearing white gloves in the show it means they are portraying a white person. This convention was used in the original production of this show and I along with our costume designer Kim Brown agreed that this is a perfect and subtle way to not appropriate another culture but to assist in the storytelling for clarity.

Actors Watching the Action- You'll notice that the actors in the play never or very rarely leave the stage. They are always a part of the action, watching on and ready to jump into the story as needed. They are simply a band of actors whose job is to conjure old memories for Older Maya to write her story. They play so many different characters and they make subtle costume changes- adding a hat or jacket- to represent a new character. This once again supports the thought that the community is ever present and watching as we grow.

Pantomime- There are very little props in the play. I eliminated many of the ones called for in the script because this story calls upon us to use our imagination as young Maya often did. So the props you will see are books. Books were so important to Dr. Angelou so I thought why not have that be the constant, tangible prop used throughout the play. Otherwise, you'll see people mime driving a car, raking leaves, exchanging money, and even serving their boss tea and cookies. Allow your imagination to fill in the blanks.

Music- Music is such an important staple in many cultures and when you hear certain chords you can instantly visualize a group of people. For this story gospel and jazz are the chosen elements of music that help push this story forward. You'll also hear some classical tunes as well as Maya becomes a little more sophisticated through her newfound knowledge. Mr. Robert "Bob" Doswell plays live while our sound designer Angela Baughman fills in the blank with what we call "canned music" and sound effects. (Originally, I envisioned the actors making their own sound effects but the story moves so quickly it would have proven to be a pretty difficult feat.) I hope this guide will help you understand our choices a little better.





COSTUME DESIGN NOTES

My inspiration for the costume design of Prime Stage's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou (as adapted) comes from the rich narrative, which I label a "tapestry". A "tapestry" in the figurative, not literal sense, references an "intricate or complex combination of things or sequence of events" (Internet definition).

This production, which features an ensemble of nine portraying 33 characters onstage nearly all of the show's duration, covers the complexities of a young girl's life experiences in Jim Crow America.

The necessity of representing character in this drama is paramount as each performer will add clothing and accessories to their base look. This "patchwork" approach is rather like making a quilt – the layering and removing of bits of color and pattern that represent both a journey and a legacy.

Angelou's definitive narration of her own coming of age amid tragedy and triumph is indeed a tapestry. A further examination of Angelou's influences will lead one to Paul Laurence Dunbar, the poet author from whom she took the title for her book. The son of former slaves, Dunbar's life was its own tapestry of triumph and tragedy. Classmate friends Wilbur and Orville Wright published his "Tattler", the first African American weekly newspaper. It only lasted six weeks, but he continued to make his literary mark through publications of poetry and fiction, writing lyrics for the first African American musical on Broadway, writing a critically acclaimed eulogy for abolitionist Frederick Douglass to European patron backed speaking engagements. Sadly, his voice was silenced by tuberculosis at the age of 33.

Angelou's own voice, silenced for six years as a result of rape trauma, roared back as she reclaimed her life and made her tapestry come alive as the first streetcar conductress in San Francisco, a composer, singer, actor, civil rights activist, journalist, poet laureate and educator.

Who we are and how we change and grow, how we falter and rise, becomes the tapestry of our community and country. Our tapestry lays the foundation for generations and every living member of society contributes to it. Like Angelou, we weave and reweave our experiences into the universal narrative that is the human condition. In dramatic story telling, live performance of Angelou's factual, funny and heartbreaking stories challenges the creative teams and the audience to journey together, to risk the exposure of raw emotion and human frailty, to accept responsibility for collective injustice and to leave the theater world with a new perspective and hope in the ultimate triumph of a determined spirit.



Kim Brown

Costume Designer

Prime Stage production of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," March, 2018



SCENIC DESIGN



Set designer's model

The scenic design was created from being inspired directly from Maya Angelou's personal art pieces she had in her home. There was an African quilt in particular that caught mine and Monteze's interest. We became very attracted to the concept of Angelou's story blanketing us with vibrancy and truth of her story. The poetry in her words needed to be able to flow over the audience without being bogged down by realism. From there the scenery became an abstract sculpture of a specific quilt that allowed for movement to guide the audience through the story.

Britton Mauk

Scenic Designer

Prime Stage production of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," March, 2018



LIGHTING DESIGN



"Nothing can dim the light which shines from within." - Maya Angelou. At the core of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya is telling the story of how she came to find her own light. It's a journey. It's a path that she both creates and follows. In telling her story, Maya proves that she is never far from her history. The next step is never far away. This idea is reflected in how to lights for the show are designed. Sometimes obviously, sometimes subtly, the light for what happens next is present in what happens now. The lights are meant to move like a stream or the lyric quality of Maya Angelou's poetry. They are meant to be evocative without being literal.

J.R. Shaw

Lighting Designer

Prime Stage production of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," March, 2018





Actors in Rehearsal

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS PLOT SUMMARY

In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou describes her coming of age as a precocious but insecure black girl in the American South during the 1930s and subsequently in California during the 1940s. Maya's parents' divorce when she is only three years old and ship Maya and her older brother, Bailey, to live with their paternal grandmother, [Annie Henderson](#), in rural Stamps, Arkansas. Annie, whom they call Momma, runs the only store in the black section of Stamps and becomes the central moral figure in Maya's childhood.

As young children, Maya and Bailey struggle with the pain of having been rejected and abandoned by their parents. Maya also finds herself tormented by the belief that she is an ugly child who will never measure up to genteel, white girls. She does not feel equal to other black children. One Easter Sunday, Maya is unable to finish reciting a poem in church, and self-consciously feeling ridiculed and a failure, Maya races from the church crying, laughing, and wetting herself. Bailey sticks up for Maya when people actually make fun of her to her face, wielding his charisma to put others in their place.

Growing up in Stamps, Maya faces a deep-seated southern racism manifested in wearying daily indignities and terrifying lynch mobs. She spends time at Momma's store, observing the cotton-pickers as they journey to and from work in the fields. When Maya is eight, her father, of whom she has no memory, arrives in Stamps unexpectedly and takes her and Bailey to live with their mother, [Vivian](#), in St. Louis, Missouri. Beautiful and alluring, Vivian lives a wild life working in gambling parlors. One morning Vivian's live-in boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, sexually molests Maya, and he later rapes her. They go to court and afterward Mr. Freeman is violently murdered, probably by some of the underground criminal associates of Maya's family.



In the aftermath of these events, Maya endures the guilt and shame of having been sexually abused. She also believes that she bears responsibility for Mr. Freeman's death because she denied in court that he had molested her prior to the rape. Believing that she has become a mouthpiece for the devil, Maya stops speaking to everyone except Bailey. Her mother's family accepts her silence at first as temporary post-rape trauma, but they later become frustrated and angry at what they perceive to be disrespectful behavior.

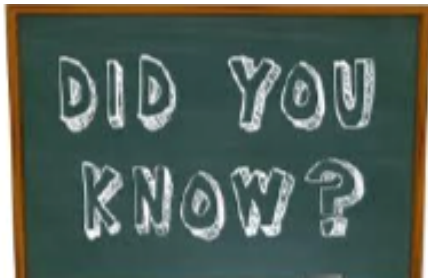
To Maya's relief, but Bailey's regret, Maya and Bailey return to Stamps to live with Momma. Momma manages to break through Maya's silence by introducing her to Mrs. Bertha Flowers, a kind, educated woman who tells Maya to read works of literature out loud, giving her books of poetry that help her to regain her voice.

During these years in Stamps, Maya becomes aware of both the fragility and the strength of her community. She attends a church revival during which a priest preaches implicitly against white hypocrisy through his sermon on charity. The spiritual strength gained during the sermon soon dissipates as the revival crowd walks home past the honky-tonk party. Maya also observes the entire community listening to the Joe Louis heavyweight championship boxing match, desperately longing for him to defend his title against his white opponent.

Maya endures several appalling incidents that teach her about the insidious nature of racism. At age ten, Maya takes a job for a white woman who calls Maya "Mary" for her own convenience. Maya becomes enraged and retaliates by breaking the woman's fine china. At Maya's eighth grade graduation, a white speaker devastates the proud community by explaining that black students are expected to become only athletes or servants. When Maya gets a rotten tooth, Momma takes her to the only dentist in Stamps, a white man who insults her, saying he'd rather place his hand in a dog's mouth than in hers. The last straw comes when Bailey encounters a dead, rotting black man and witnesses a white man's satisfaction at seeing the body. Momma begins to fear for the children's well-being and saves money to bring them to Vivian, who now lives in California.

When Maya is thirteen, the family moves to live with Vivian in Los Angeles and then in Oakland, California. When Vivian marries Daddy Clidell, a positive father figure, they move with him to San Francisco, the first city where Maya feels at home. She spends one summer with her father, [Big Bailey](#), in Los Angeles and has to put up with his cruel indifference and his hostile girlfriend, Dolores. After Dolores cuts her in a fight, Maya runs away and lives for a month with a group of homeless teenagers in a junkyard. She returns to San Francisco strong and self-assured. She defies racist hiring policies in wartime San Francisco to become the first black streetcar conductor at age fifteen. At sixteen, she hides her pregnancy from her mother and stepfather for eight months and graduates from high school. The account ends as Maya begins to feel confident as a mother to her newborn son. The birth of her son concludes *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Angelou states in *Current Biography* (1974) that this happy event is the best thing that ever happened to her.





Novel vs. Movie—a comparison

The novel speaks about the human condition—what we can endure, dream, fail and survive at. One problem Maya must overcome is the reality that her mother is a sassy and street-wise lady who makes Black beautiful and language into a form of the body as well as an art of the mind. Her mother has femininity, beauty, and sensuality and does not mind flaunting it. It is these same characteristics that Maya exhibits during her teen years that eventually results in her becoming an unwed teenage mother. In the novel, "Sula" by Toni Morrison a similar situation evolves. Sula's mother, Hannah was devoted to the practice and pleasures of sensuality. After being exposed to this type of behavior Sula set out to explore this self-indulgence that had merged in her.

Another point of intersection with "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and "Sula" is how the books reveal a girl's coming-of-age experience in a small town with a black community, the attitude of whites, and the social and political tensions during the 1900's. Although Sula is raised in the Ohio, she still encounters prejudice, hatred, racism, and the black lack of power. Both texts seem to display that society attempts to induce all blacks with a sense of impotence and nothingness.

The fictional aspects between the movie and the book "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" in comparison the movie uses more fiction. For example, the book talked about the children's parents and never mentioned that Maya and her brother thought their parents were deceased. However, the film portrayed the kids being overly whelmed with hatred when they received gifts from their parents. It was like they never knew their parents existed. Another example of the difference between the book and the movie is Mr. Freeman (mother's boyfriend) was presented as being very reserved with the children. In the movie he was seen as warm, talkative, and friendly towards Maya and her brother. The film also showed Mr. Freeman's manly behavior by confronting Vivian (Maya's mother) at her job. However, in the book Mr. Freeman never left the house, he always sat and waited at home for her.

Although reality involves a vast supply of details and you cannot select them all. Many writers, directors, and artists, emphasis with this information and diminish other information in order to make the novels, movies, plays and etc. more vivid to our imagination.



****ACTIVITIES****

After you finished reading the book and seeing the play, try some of these activities!

DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. The text presents us with many variations of Maya's name, culminating in a pivotal scene wherein Mrs. Viola Cullinan refers to Angelou as "Mary," instead of "Marguerite." What is the significance of this scene? How does Maya react? Are her actions justified? Explain.
2. Where does the title of the book come from and why is it significant? Where do we find this image of the caged bird applied in the story both literally and figuratively?
3. Following her rape, Marguerite becomes silent. Why does she refrain from speaking? What allows her to find her voice again?
4. What impact does literature have on Maya and her brother? Where in the story do we witness its effects?
5. Analyze the style of the book. Consider its structure as a whole, as well as the sentence structure and Angelou's use of metaphor and simile. How does the style of the book relate to Angelou's role as poet? Is the style characteristic of other autobiographical works? Why or why not? How does this affect our response to the story?
6. Why does Angelou devote an entire chapter to the Joe Louis fight? How do the characters in the book react to the fight? Why is it significant? What do we learn from this scene?
7. Is Maya's view always accurate? Is she a reliable narrator? Why or why not? Consider the perspective of the story. Is it told solely through the eyes of the young Marguerite? Or is an older, wiser Angelou also present in the book? How does the narration affect our reception of the text?
8. How does Angelou's own story reflect the social conventions and concerns of the day? Does it also reflect today's social conventions and concerns? Explain
9. Consider the role of truth in literature. Is it fair to say that the book is an autobiography, or is autobiographical fiction a more accurate categorization? What defines a work as autobiography and what distinguishes a work as fiction? Does Angelou's use of literary devices such as dialogue, characterization, and cohesive themes change the categorization of the book?
10. Analyze Maya's development through- out the story. How does the Maya at the conclusion of the story compare to the young Marguerite that we meet at the start? How has she changed? To what can these changes be attributed?
11. Why does Angelou include the opening church scene as an introduction to the book? Why would she choose to lead with this, and how does this scene tie in with the story as a whole?
12. Consider the structure of the book. Why do you think that Angelou chose to divide the book into so many chapters? Are the chapters lengthy or concise? How might the structure of the book tie in with common themes of the text such as memory?
13. Is Maya's portrayal of her parents accurate or should we be wary of it? Consider her descriptions of them and her reactions to both parents.
14. How does *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* address racial stereotypes? What is Maya's view of "white folk" and how do the so-called "white folk" perceive African Americans? What do we learn about racism and prejudice?
15. What are some of the themes of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*? How can we identify them as such? How do these themes unify the text and help to create a cohesive whole?



BEYOND THE BOOK (SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES)

1. Discuss an event that you consider to have been a critical part of your growth and development. How has your perception or understanding of this event changed (or remained the same) as you have grown older? How did this event help to define who you are?
2. In 2008, Angelou's family history was explored on the PBS series *African American Lives 2*. Explore your own family history. Create a work (a story, a video, a piece of art, etc.) which documents this history.
3. Throughout the story Angelou references many works of literature which have inspired her. Does *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* share anything in common with these works of literature? Are we able to see their direct influence in her own work? For instance, do the characters in Angelou's story and the stories she read as a youth share a similar fate or confront common obstacles? Does the subject matter of the work compare? Or the form and style? Choose one work and analyze its relation to *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.
4. Consider the book within the framework of the history of banned books. Why has this book been the subject of censorship? How does it compare to other banned texts? Consult the American Library Association website at www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.cfm for suggested projects associated with Banned Books Week. How does Angelou's book confront issues of voice, freedom, and censorship?
5. Read Angelou's original poem, "Those Who Burn Books," written for Random House's RHI magazine at www.randomhouse.com/highschool/rhi_magazine/pdf3/Angelou.pdf. What can be determined about the author's position on the banning of books? What does Angelou suggest censors are fearful of? Why would censors be fearful of allowing students to read about these issues? What other authors and works of literature does Angelou reference in the poem, and what do these works share in common?

TOPICS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Censorship • Freedom • Identity • Joe Louis • Ku Klux Klan • Pregnancy • Racism • Rape • Segregation



LESSON PLANS FOR *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS*

WORKSHOP I

Theatrical Warm-up and Get students engaged!

Objective: Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

Procedure:

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up

Start with head/neck roles

The Puppet –

1. Stand in a circle with some room around you to move.
2. Imagine a string is attached to each of your shoulders. Let the string pull your shoulders up to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your shoulders. Really try.
3. Now imagine the string is attached to your elbows. Let it lift your elbows to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your elbows.
4. Now imagine the string is attached to your wrists. Try and touch the ceiling with your wrists.
5. Now imagine the string is attached to your fingertips. Try and touch the ceiling with your fingertips. Stretch and reach to the ceiling.
6. Release your spine from the waist with a big “uhhh” sound. Hang bent over at the waist like a rag doll, relaxing everything in your body but those few muscles required to keep you on your feet.
7. Breathe a big sigh and let out any tension remaining.
8. Now roll up your spine, stacking one vertebra atop the other. Leave your head, shoulders and arms released until the very last minute when your head will float into place above the spine.
9. Breathe another big sigh and release the tension.
10. Repeat the entire exercise double time.

6-8 minutes -----



VOCABULARY – READING AND RESPONDING TO TEXT

Words mean more than what
is set down on paper. It takes
the human voice to infuse them
with the shades of deeper meaning.

~ MAYA ANGELOU

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading and writing. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus. It allows for **audibility**: projecting your voice so your audience can hear and understand you; **pronunciation**: recognizing words before you say them and pronounce all sounds correctly; **articulation**: using your tongue, mouth and

lips to pronounce all the sounds correctly; **vocal variety/expression**: using appropriate pitch, volume and flow.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

The following standards are addressed in this lesson plan:

1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion

Vocabulary

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading of *CAGED BIRD*. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

Divide class into teams. Use vocabulary cards and distribute copies to the students for example:

troubadour
calamitous
rakish
impudent
indignity
chifforobe
admonish
bombastic
apparition
roustabout
benign

Ask students to refer to the definitions they wrote on their vocabulary cards to answer each question below. The questions require them to apply the meaning of the words to their own experiences.

1. What is an experience that you find puts you in a **benign** position?
2. When have you seen a **chifforobe**?



3. Describe an **impudent** character from a movie.
4. Tell about a **calamitous** event from the news.
5. What would you describe with the word **indignity**?

20 minutes

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

- **Comprehension Focus**

Analyze Theme

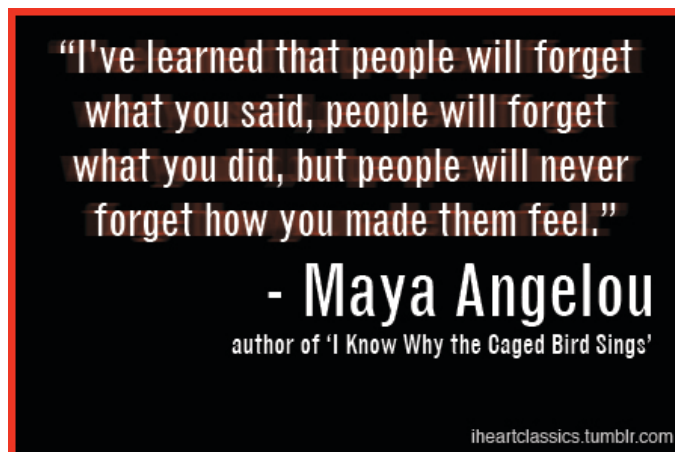
Community vs Individual

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou is an eye-opening autobiography that tracks Angelou's life as a young girl. The story covers themes surrounding racism, trauma, womanhood, and identity. The book boasts rich characterization that develops as the story moves from a three-year-old Angelou to a seventeen-year-old Angelou.

Divide students into teams

1. Using some of the characters in *CAGED BIRD* distribute “Character” cards to the teams.
2. Allow them to discuss amongst themselves (along with instructor) for 4 minutes how the characters contribute to the theme and movement of the play.

19-20 minutes End of Workshop I



WORKSHOP II

Objective: Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

Procedure:

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up from Workshop I

6-8 minutes

Theatre Game:

Observing Change

This exercise focuses entirely on your power of observation. It becomes more difficult for your partner as your attention to detail improves. This exercise will all also discipline the student to focus and observe the performance for comprehension and clarity.

1. Sit on the classroom floor across from a partner.
2. Spend two minutes observing everything about your partner in as much detail as possible.
3. Turn away. Your partner will then change three small things about his or her appearance.
4. Turn back when your partner is ready.
5. Try and guess the three changes.
6. Switch roles.

This exercise can be done with four students at a time so that the class can observe changes.

20 minutes

Objective: Training students on how to be an “audience” member.

Theatre Etiquette

1. Bring in a playbill – explain the importance of reading the contents of the Playbill.
2. Bring in picture of the set – explain the importance of observing the set and how important it is to the movement and tone of the play.

Explain how important it is to respect performers on stage by being quiet and listening to the performance. Students will learn the proper way to attend a theatrical performance by being observant and focused on the playbill, the set the language and will thus have an enjoyable experience and be able to ask intelligent questions at the Q&A after the performance.

20 minutes

END Workshop II



WORKSHOP III

AFTER THE PRODUCTION

Evaluation, Reflection and Comprehension

Objective: To evaluate the learning experience of the play and comprehension quality of the experience. Reflections on student experience.

Procedure: Initiate and participate with students in collaborative discussion on various aspects of the play. A Q&A period on paper and/or verbally for the entire session.

To properly evaluate the learning experience for the students, the Instructor can pose questions on paper from Workshops I and II and the theatre experience. **40 minutes**

I had given up some youth
for knowledge, but my gain
was more valuable than the
loss

Maya Angelou

I believe most plain
girls are virtuous
because of the scarcity
of opportunity to be
otherwise.

Maya Angelou



I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

AGREE/DISAGREE QUESTIONNAIRE

Before seeing the production, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, respond as to whether you agree or disagree with each statement by providing a check (✓) if you agree or an X if you disagree.

After seeing the play, examine your answers in the before column and respond again in the after column. Have any of your answers changed?

Before

After

	I now have more of an appreciation of non-fiction.	
	Does the novel/play change how you view racism?	
	If the same story had been written today but set in the current climate, would it be different?	
	Are women treated any different in the novel/play than today?	
	Does the novel/play effect you differently by being told from the Maya Angelou's perspective.	
	Do you feel we are still close to being in another world war today?	
	Did the novel/play change your view on whether there is still a divide between men and women today?	
	Life experience provides better education than reading books.	
	The United States is currently an equal opportunity nation.	
	I have a better respect for people of all races.	



If you enjoyed *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* we encourage you and your students to explore these and other topics by further by checking out the following suggested reading resources by Maya Angelou.

Autobiographies

- [*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* \(1969\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-375-50789-2](#)
- [*Gather Together in My Name* \(1974\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-394-48692-5](#)
- [*Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* \(1976\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-679-45777-0](#)
- [*The Heart of a Woman* \(1981\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-8129-8032-5](#)
- [*All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* \(1986\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-679-73404-8](#)
- [*A Song Flung Up to Heaven* \(2002\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-375-50747-2](#)
- [*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings: The Collected Autobiographies of Maya Angelou* \(2004\). New York: Modern Library. ISBN 978-0-679-64325-8^{\[14\]\[15\]}](#)
- [*Mom & Me & Mom* \(2013\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-1-4000-6611-7](#)

Angelou reciting "On the Pulse of Morning" at [Bill Clinton's](#) presidential inauguration in 1993



Poetry

- [*Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie* \(1971\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-394-47142-6^{\[16\]}](#)
- [*Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* \(1975\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-679-45707-0](#)
- [*And Still I Rise* \(1978\). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-394-50252-6^{\[9\]}](#)
- [*Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* \(1983\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-394-52144-7^{\[17\]\[18\]}](#)
- [*Poems* \(1986\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-553-25576-2](#)
- [*Now Sheba Sings the Song* \(1987\). New York: Plume Books. ISBN 0-452-27143-6](#)
- [*I Shall Not Be Moved* \(1990\). New York: Bantam Books. ISBN 0-553-35458-2](#)
- ["On the Pulse of Morning" \(1993\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-679-74838-5^{\[19\]}](#)
- [*The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* \(1994\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-679-42895-X](#)
- [*Phenomenal Woman: Four Poems Celebrating Women* \(1995\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-679-43924-2](#)
- [*A Brave and Startling Truth* \(1995\). New York: Random House. ISBN 0-679-44904-3^{\[20\]}](#)
- "From a Black Woman to a Black Man", 1995
- "Amazing Peace" (2005). New York: Random House. ISBN 1-4000-6558-5^[18]
- ["Mother: A Cradle to Hold Me" \(2006\). New York: Random House. ISBN 1-4000-6601-8](#)
- "Celebrations, Rituals of Peace and Prayer" (2006). New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-307-77792-8
- [*Poetry for Young People* \(2007\). Berkshire, U.K.: Sterling Books. ISBN 1-4027-2023-8](#)
- "We Had Him", 2009^[21]
- "His Day is Done", 2013^[22]



Personal essays

- [*Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*](#) (1993). New York: Random House. [ISBN 0-553-56907-4](#)
- [*Even the Stars Look Lonesome*](#) (1997). New York: Random House. [ISBN 0-375-50031-6](#)
- [*Letter to My Daughter*](#) (2008). New York: Random House. [ISBN 1-4000-6612-3](#)

Cookbooks

- [*Hallelujah! The Welcome Table: A Lifetime of Memories with Recipes*](#) (2004). New York: Random House. [ISBN 1-4000-6289-6](#)
- [*Great Food, All Day Long: Cook Splendidly, Eat Smart*](#) (2010). New York: Random House. [ISBN 1-4000-6844-4](#) ←

Children's books

- *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* (1998). New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang. [ISBN 1-55670-288-4](#)
- *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken and Me* (1994). New York: Knopf Books. [ISBN 0-517-59667-9](#)
- *Kofi and His Magic* (1996). New York: Knopf Books. [ISBN 0-517-59667-9](#)
- *Maya's World* series (2004). New York: Random House:
 - *Izak of Lapland*, [ISBN 0-375-92833-2](#)
 - *Angelina of Italy*, [ISBN 0-375-82832-X](#)
 - *Renée Marie of France* [ISBN 0-375-82834-6](#)
 - *Mikale of Hawaii* [ISBN 0-375-92835-9](#)

Plays

- *Cabaret for Freedom* ([musical revue](#)), with [Godfrey Cambridge](#), 1960
- *The Least of These*, 1966
- *The Best of These* (drama), 1966
- *Gettin' up Stayed on My Mind*, 1967
- *Sophocles, Ajax* (adaptation), 1974
- *And Still I Rise* (writer/director), 1976
- [*Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*](#) (director), 1978^[23]

Film and television

- *Blacks, Blues, Black!* (writer, producer and host – ten one-hour programs, National Education Television), 1968
- [*Georgia, Georgia*](#) (writer for script and musical score), Sweden, 1972
- *All Day Long* (writer/director), 1974
- [PBS](#) documentaries (1975):
 - *Who Cares About Kids & Kindred Spirits* (KERA-TV, Dallas, Texas)
 - *Maya Angelou: Rainbow in the Clouds* (WTVS-TV, Detroit, Michigan)
 - *To the Contrary* (Maryland Public Television)
 - *Tapestry and Circles*



- *Assignment America* (six one-half hour programs), 1975
- *Part One: The Legacy; Part Two: The Inheritors* (writer and host), 1976
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (writer for script and musical score), 1979
- *Sister, Sister* (writer), 20th Century Fox Television, 1982
- *Brewster Place* (writer), ABC, 1990
- *Down in the Delta* (director), Miramax Films, 1998
- *The Black Candle* (poetry, narration), Starz, 2012

Plays and films acted in (partial list)

- *Porgy and Bess*, 1954–1955
- *Calypso*, 1957
- *The Blacks*, 1960
- *Mother Courage*, 1964
- *Look Away*, 1973
- *Roots*, ABC, 1977
- *Runaway*, Hallmark Hall of Fame Productions, 1993
- *Poetic Justice*, 1993
- *Touched by an Angel* ("Reunion"), CBS, 1995
- *How to Make an American Quilt*, Universal Pictures, 1995
- *Madea's Family Reunion*, Tyler Perry Studios, 2006

Recordings

- *Miss Calypso*, Scamp Records, 1957
- *For the Love of Ivy*, ABC Records, 1968
- "And So It Goes" (co-written with [Roberta Flack](#) for Flack's album *Oasis*), 1988^[24]
- *Been Found* (collaborated on 7 tracks with [Ashford & Simpson](#)), 1996^[24]
- "Music, Deep Rivers in My Soul" (with [Wynton Marsalis](#)), 2007^[24]

Spoken-word albums

- The Poetry of Maya Angelou, GWP Records, 1969
- Women in Business, 1981
- On the Pulse of Morning, Random House Audio, 1993^[25]
- A Song Flung Up to Heaven, Random House Audio, 2002^[25]



Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

GRADE _____ NAME OF TEACHER _____

What part/parts of this story did you enjoy when you were seeing the play?

What part/parts of this play confused you while reading or watching the play?

What part/parts of the stage version helped you understand the book?

What did you learn from reading or seeing this play?

Which character would you like to play?



Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online!
Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Prime Stage constantly assesses the work provided by our education department. Your feedback is vital to our ongoing need for funding for this program. Please fill out the following forms and mail or email them to the address given below. Thank you.

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Which part(s) of the play and experience you find most helpful for you and your students?

Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?





MAYA ANGELOU in 1998, Chester Higgins, Jr., New York Times

ON THE PULSE OF THE MORNING
(Speech given at the 1993 Inauguration of Bill Clinton)

A Rock, A River, A Tree Hosts to species long since departed, Marked the mastodon,
The dinosaur, who left dried tokens Of their sojourn here On our planet floor, Any broad alarm
of their hastening doom Is lost in the gloom of dust and ages. But today, the Rock cries out to
us, clearly, forcefully, Come, you may stand upon my Back and face your distant destiny, But
seek no haven in my shadow. I will give you no hiding place down here. You, created only a
little lower than The angels, have crouched too long in The bruising darkness Have lain too
long Face down in ignorance. Your mouths spilling words Armed for slaughter. The Rock cries
out to us today, you may stand upon me, But do not hide your face. Across the wall of the
world, A River sings a beautiful song, Come, rest here by my side. Each of you, a bordered
country, Delicate and strangely made proud, Yet thrusting perpetually under siege. Your
armed struggles for profit Have left collars of waste upon My shore, currents of debris upon my
breast. Yet today I call you to my riverside, If you will study war no more. Come, Clad in peace,
and I will sing the songs The Creator gave to me when I and the Tree and the rock were one.
Before cynicism was a bloody sear across your Brow and when you yet knew you still Knew
nothing. The River sang and sings on. There is a true yearning to respond to The singing River



and the wise Rock. So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew The African, the Native American, the Sioux, The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh, The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher, The Privileged, the Homeless, the Teacher. They hear. They all hear The speaking of the Tree. Today, the first and last of every Tree Speaks to humankind. Come to me, here beside the River. Plant yourself beside me, here beside the River. Each of you, descendant of some passed On traveler, has been paid for. You, who gave me my first name, you, Pawnee, Apache, Seneca, you Cherokee Nation, who rested with me, then Forced on bloody feet, Left me to the employment of Other seekers -- desperate for gain, Starving for gold. You, the Turk, the Swede, the German, the Eskimo, the Scot, You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought, Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare Praying for a dream. Here, root yourselves beside me. I am that Tree planted by the River, Which will not be moved. I, the Rock, I, the River, I, the Tree I am yours -- your passages have been paid. Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need For this bright morning dawning for you. History, despite its wrenching pain, Cannot be un-lived, but if faced With courage, need not be lived again. Lift up your eyes upon The day breaking for you. Give birth again To the dream. Women, children, men, Take it into the palms of your hands, Mold it into the shape of your most Private need. Sculpt it into The image of your most public self. Lift up your hearts Each new hour holds new chances For new beginnings. Do not be wedded forever To fear, yoked eternally To brutishness. The horizon leans forward, Offering you space to place new steps of change. Here, on the pulse of this fine day You may have the courage To look up and out and upon me, the Rock, the River, the Tree, your country. No less to Midas than the mendicant. No less to you now than the mastodon then. Here, on the pulse of this new day You may have the grace to look up and out And into your sister's eyes, into Your brother's face, your country And say simply Very simply With hope Good morning.

THANK YOU, DR. ANGELOU!

