

Curricular Connections

A guide for teachers and students to a Company One Theatre's Production



Dear Educators and Students,

We are pleased to share with you our Curricular Connections Packet for Company One Theatre's production of AN OCTOROON, by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, running January 29 – February 27, 2016. We've developed these materials for you to explore the world of the production and we encourage you to adapt the packet to suit your needs for the classroom or the stage. Enclosed you will find:

- A Synopsis and List of Characters of AN OCTOROON
- A list of Cast Members and Production Staff for the Company One Production
- An Article on American Minstrel Performance
- A Production Interview with the Set Designers of AN OCTOROON
- Activities that connect thematically to the Article and Interview

The activities and discussion questions will provide creative opportunities for you to engage with the themes in the script and connect with the world of AN OCTOROON. More content and updates about the production can be found on Company One Theatre's production and education blogs:

Production Blog: octoroonc1.wordpress.com
Education Blog: c1stageone.wordpress.com

If you have any questions about this packet, or are interested in reserving group tickets for AN OCTOROON, please contact us at stageone@companyone.org or visit us online at www.compnyone.org.

See you at the theater!
C1 Education Staff

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Synopsis, Characters, Cast, & Production Staff	Page 3
ARTICLE – Roots Of Minstrelsy	Page 5
ACTIVITY – Cultural Appropriation	Page 10
PRODUCTION INTERVIEW – Set Design	Page 11
ACTIVITY – Set Design	Page 19

AN OCTOROON – Synopsis

There's trouble at the plantation: No one is falling in love with who they should be, someone has been murdered, and, unless the mail comes soon, all hope is lost! Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (author of NEIGHBORS and APPROPRIATE) radically revises a 19th Century melodrama — complete with blushing Southern belles, dastardly schemes, and budding forbidden romances — for today's "post-racial," spectacle-obsessed world. Winner of the 2014 Obie Award for Best New American Play, AN OCTOROON is an incendiary, subversively funny exploration of identity, jammed with sensation and surprises!

AN OCTOROON – Playwright



Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' plays include NEIGHBORS (The Public Theater), APPROPRIATE (Actors Theatre of Louisville, Victory Gardens Theater, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Signature Theatre in New York, Spring 2014), AN OCTOROON (Soho Rep, Spring 2014), and WAR. He is currently a Residency Five playwright at Signature Theatre and a Lila Acheson Wallace Fellow at The Juilliard School. Additionally, his work has been or will be seen at the Vineyard Theatre, The Matrix Theatre in Los Angeles, Company One Theatre in Boston, and the HighTide Festival in the United Kingdom. He has taught at New York University and Queens University of Charlotte, and his honors include a Paula Vogel Award, a Helen Merrill Award, and the inaugural Tennessee Williams Award. He holds an M.A. in Performance Studies.

AN OCTOROON – Production Staff

BRANDEN JACOBS-JENKINS – Playwright
SUMMER L. WILLIAMS – Director
RAMONA OSTROWSKI – Co-Dramaturg
HALEY FLUKE – Co-Dramaturg
CHRISTOPHER BRUSBERG – Lighting Designer
AMANDA MUJICA – Costume Design
CHRISTOPHER & JUSTIN SWADER – Scenic Design
DAVID WILSON – Sound Design
ANITA SHRIVER – Properties Design
KEVIN PARKER – Technical Director
KAREN KOPRYANSKI – Vocal & Dialect Coach
LYNN WILCOTT – Special Effects Designer
ANDREW KENNETH MOSS – Fight Choreographer
JULIE LANGEVIN – Stage Manager
LINDSEY ANDERSON – Assistant Stage Manager
EMILY BROWN – Assistant Stage Manager
TEHYA SAYLOR – Assistant Stage Management Intern

AN OCTOROON – Cast & Characters

KADAHJ BENNET

Br'er Rabbit - played by the actual playwright, or other artist involved in the production

Ratts – played by the same actor playing Br'er Rabbit

ELLE BORDERS

Minnie – played by an African-American actress, black actress, or actress of color

HARSH GAGOOMAL

Assistant – played by an Indigenous American actor/actress, a mix-race actor, a South Asian actor/actress, or one who can pass as Native American

Pete – played by same actor playing ASSISTANT

Paul – played by same actor playing ASSISTANT



BRANDON GREEN

BJJ – played by an actual playwright, African-American actor, or black actor

George – played by same actor playing BJJ

M'Closkey – played by same actor playing BJJ

BRIDGETTE HAYES

Dora – played by a white actress, or actress who can pass as white

SHAWNA M JAMES

Zoe – played by an octoroon actress, a white actress, quadroon actress, biracial actress, multi-racial actress, or actress of color who can pass as an octoroon

OBEHI JANICE

Dido – played by an African-American actress, black actress, or actress of color

AMELIA LUMPKIN

Grace – played by an African-American actress, black actress, or actress of color

BROOKS REEVES

Playwright – played by a white actor, or actor who can pass as white

Wahnotee – played by same actor playing PLAYWRIGHT

LaFouche – played by same actor playing PLAYWRIGHT



ARTICLE – Roots Of Minstrelsy



Branden Green plays BJJ in Company One Theatre's production of AN OCTOROON. The character BJJ is a fictional representation of the playwright, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

The playwright of AN OCTOROON, **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**, adapted the 1859 play THE OCTOROON, by **Dion Boucicault**, to create the characters and story in his script. Boucicault, an innovator of the melodrama era, wrote more than 100 plays during his lifetime. Though his play THE OCTOROON was intended as an abolitionist piece of theatre, the Black characters in the script, who were written as slave caricatures to provide comic relief and “exotic” ambience, were played by White actors wearing various shades of

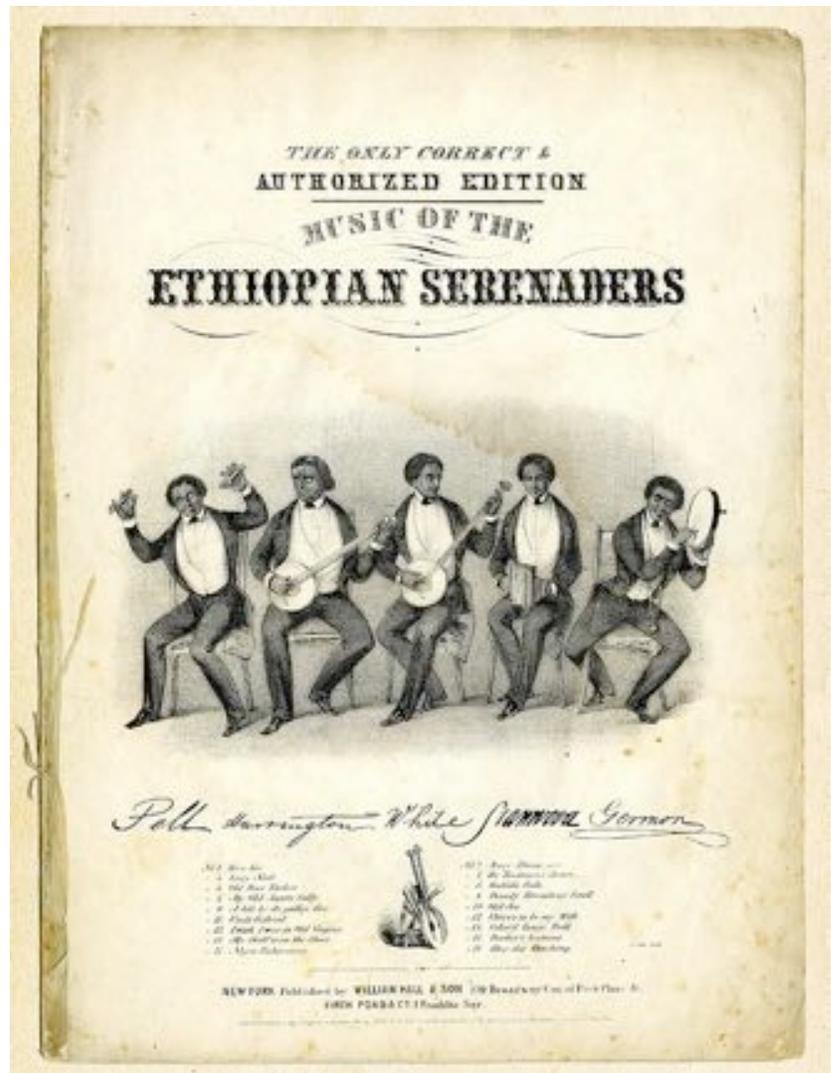
race face. Jacobs-Jenkins manipulates Boucicault's original text and utilizes the conventions of **minstrelsy** in AN OCTOROON to emphasize how this art form, which is steeped in racial stereotypes and **cultural appropriation**, has devastated and perpetuated negative portrayals of Black lives on stage, on screen, and in the media.

So what exactly is minstrelsy? Why is it such a controversial genre of performance, and why has it stayed relevant in our world today? Many conclude that the use of **blackface**, or the act of painting one's face to represent black skin, is the reason it has endured. However, the origin of blackface tells us the story behind this mask. To understand

the theatrical convention Jacobs-Jenkins' uses in AN OCTOROON, we must first explore the era in which Boucicault wrote; we must understand the danger of artistic cultural appropriation.

Minstrelsy is an American performing arts genre that was designed for the stage and live performance. Contrary to widely held belief, due to its racist implications, the art form originated in the early 1800's on fringe stages in New York City. It gained popularity throughout most of the 19th Century and continued into the early 20th Century, performed in music halls, grand theatres, and opera houses. As more minstrel troupes formed and took productions on tour, minstrelsy traveled extensively throughout the United States and Europe.

Many believe minstrelsy began when New York actor, **Thomas Darmouth Rice**, or "Daddy Rice," began wearing blackface and doing the '**Jump Jim Crow**' dance where he would embody a satirical representation of a Black person by painting his face black and leaping high in the air while



Above is a book cover of music performed by a minstrel troupe, the Ethiopian Serenaders.

kicking his legs out. With this performance, “Daddy Rice” became known as the “Father of Blackface.” This kind of degrading impersonation became intriguing to White audiences and soon began to appear on stages across the country.

The early forms of minstrel shows would include White actors portraying Black individuals by painting their faces with burned cork or shoe polish and embodying exaggerated and fictitious Black stereotypes. Later, these stereotypes became codified as performed archetypes, or **stock characters**. Minstrel performance companies, such as the **Virginia Minstrels** or **Christy Minstrels**, are examples of ensembles that formed as the genre evolved and became widely popular. A typical minstrel show would be performed in three acts, featuring music, song, and dance, and employ an acting style generalized as comedy and melodrama.

MINSTREL STOCK CHARACTERS

JIM CROW – *Character popularized by New York actor Thomas Dartmouth Rice, or “Daddy Rice.” Jim Crow would serve as the basis for other characters such as Sambo /Coon.*

SAMBO/COON – *“Coon” is an abbreviation of the word raccoon. This character is portrayed as lazy, buffoonish, and explicitly discontent with being enslaved.*

TAMBO & BONES – *Most often appearing as a pair, both musicians. Tambo played the tambourine and Bones played “two bones,” sticks, or spoons, together.*

JEZABEL – *A provocative woman and temptress.*

MULATTO – *A mixed race woman who has the ability to pass in White society, until her bloodline is unveiled.*

PICKANINNY – *A Black child with an unkempt appearance.*

MAMMY – *The surrogate mother to all, loyal to the White family she belongs to, but often not her own. She is overweight, middle aged, and wears a headscarf. Most famously recognized as inspiration for the Aunt Jemima syrup spokesperson.*

ZIP COON – *A well-dressed Black man, who aspired to be White, but misused language and etiquette. Usually, portrayed as a “free man.”*

The **cakewalk dance**, which became a wild dance craze among Blacks, Whites, and Europeans in the 1800's, was a staple of the minstrel show. The dance originally known as the "**prize walk**" began on Southern plantations where Black slaves would mimic White slave owners through exaggerated, graceful gestures and moves. The dances were judged by the slave owners, who would award an elegant cake to the best dancers. Some of the most well-known American folk songs, which still resonate in contemporary society, were written for minstrel shows, including "Dixie," "Oh, Susanna," "Camptown Races," and "Swanee River." These songs, and many more, were written by songwriter **Stephen Foster**.

Around the mid-1860s, at the time that **Emancipation** was issued and the Civil War came to an end, Blacks began performing in minstrel shows and replaced White performers in popularity. However, derogatory elements, such as blackface and caricature, remained. Actors and companies would even market themselves to draw audiences using racist titles that White playwrights and troupes had established. Two well-known Black



Above is a book cover of music performed by a minstrel troupe, the Ethiopian Serenaders

minstrel actors, **Bert Williams** and **George Walker**, dubbed themselves “The Two Real Coons.” One of the first Black minstrel performers was **William Henry Lane**, who was named “**Master Juba**” by the critics. Lane was a skilled dancer, particularly in jigs and reels, and he is said to be the founder of tap dancing. At the height of Black minstrelsy, **Uncle Tom’s Cabin**, an anti-slavery book written by **Harriet Beecher Stowe** inspired the most famous play in America at the time.

By the early 1900’s, **Vaudeville** was on the rise. This was a genre of performing arts that incorporated a variety of brief skits, music, dance, and even burlesque and circus acts. Though minstrelsy faded as Vaudeville became popular, the damaging and detrimental effects of minstrelsy can still be felt in contemporary society. Branden Jacobs-Jenkins explores these effects in **AN OCTOROON** by both representing the genre of minstrelsy onstage and making commentary on it.

ARTICLE – Discussion Questions

1. What discoveries did you make about minstrelsy?
2. What words or phrases did you recognize about minstrelsy that are used in contemporary society?
3. How do you see minstrel caricatures or stock characters mirrored in today’s movies and television?
4. What are your thoughts on the use of race face or blackface after reading this article?
5. Is it important to represent cultures appropriately onstage? What is your rationale?

ARTICLE – Further Reading

- <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/who.htm>
- <http://black-face.com/>
- <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/12/23/256566647/the-extraordinary-story-of-why-a-cakewalk-wasnt-always-easy>
- <http://www.skennedyushistory.com/blackface-minstrel-shows>

ARTICLE ACTIVITY – Cultural Appropriation

In this activity you will work in groups to identify the influence of **cultural appropriation** on everyday life, and create short scenes that demonstrate its impact. Cultural appropriation is copying or imitating the beliefs or behaviors of a particular ethnic group or identity. The race face used by early White minstrel performers is an example of this kind of appropriation that became an acceptable part of mainstream culture in the 19th and 20th Centuries, as well as entertainment for White audiences during the time Boucicault wrote THE OCTOROON.

ARTICLE ACTIVITY – Instructions

1. **DISCUSSION:** As an ensemble, answer the discussion questions from the Article in this packet – Roots of Minstrelsy.
2. **IDENTIFY:** In groups of 3-4, facilitate a discussion and make a list of responses to the following questions. Prepare to share your list of responses with the rest of the class.
 - a. What cultural influences impact your everyday lives?
 - b. How are these influences contradictory?
 - c. How do you appropriate other cultures in the way you live your life?
3. **SCENE CREATION:** In your group, create a scene that demonstrates examples of at least three everyday occurrences of cultural appropriation from your discussion. The examples can be observed, or committed, by characters in the scene. One of these examples must be challenged by another character
4. After planning and rehearsing, present your scene to the rest of the class. Use the following questions to guide a group discussion after each scene is presented.

ARTICLE ACTIVITY – Discussion Questions

1. What happened in the scene?
2. What examples of cultural appropriation did you see?
3. How were those examples challenged, or not challenged, in the scene?
4. How are everyday examples of cultural appropriation in our control, or not in our control?

PRODUCTION INTERVIEW – Christopher & Justin Swader

When translating a play into a production, reading the first lines of the script's stage directions is the literary equivalent of walking into a theatre and seeing the set. It is the job of the **Set Designers** on an artistic team to bring what is written on the page to what the audience will physically see on stage. For some productions, this might look like an incredibly detailed-oriented dining room, equipped with large oak dining table, a Swarovski crystal chandelier, and an antique buffet table. For others, two black blocks pushed together and a couple of chairs can represent the same dining room. Set designers are vital members of the artistic team. Like every other artistic collaborator on a project, it is their job to interpret the work of the playwright and transfer that interpretation to the stage.



Set Designers for Company One Theatre's production of AN OCTOROON, Chris and Justin Swader.

The set designers for Company One Theatre's (C1) production of AN OCTOROON—two brothers, **Christopher and Justin Swader**—have designed numerous productions, including projects in New York City where they are artistically based. Their last design project with C1 was on

THE DISPLACED HINDU GODS TRILOGY by Aditi Brenen Kapil in 2014. C1 consistently strives to work with artists like Chris and Justin who enjoy collaborating with other designers, are deeply engaged in each project, and, perhaps most importantly, take risks with bold design choices.

Christopher and Justin expanded on their creative process as designers on AN OCTOROON and on other projects in an interview with **Fran Da Silveira**, an Education Associate at C1. The images included in the interview were researched and collected by Chris and Justin during their research of set designs for AN OCTOROON.

What is your “concept-to-production” process?

*Justin and I don't have a specific formula for how we **take a script on the page and formulate that into a fully realized design**. I wish it were easier to dissect exactly how that discovery transpires, but the mystery and adventure that each process brings is often what is most exciting. **We always start with the text**, reading it several times until we are at a place where we can clearly start **responding to the kinds of imagery** that it draws up.*

We both usually have lots of questions, some of them very specific and others extremely open-ended. The subsequent reads of the script are where we really start to make some assumptions and let the wheels start turning. By that point, we have usually had some conversations with the director to discuss their vision for the play and any initial impulses they might have. It is always constructive when the initial discussions with the director are primarily focused on what excites them about the play, and then slowly start to let that excitement manifest into what the world might be. While it's not always the case, having the other designers in the room early on is a real treat. It is always a thrilling experience when everyone is actively discovering and problem-solving as a group—those inspired moments of cross-collaboration, where perhaps a sound designer solves an issue that is affecting the set designer or the lighting designer and costume designer work hand-in-hand to make a particular moment come to life. That's what makes creating art in theatre

so rewarding. Fortunately, the process with Company One Theatre has been especially collaborative in how they involve the entire group in discussions and meetings.



The Set Designers for AN OCTOROON researched the fundamentals of performance spaces to create their design for Company One Theatre's production.

*We are both very visual, so we usually **will create a model in 3D form during the process—even if it is first crudely mocked up with paper and tape—anything that helps communicate the design in miniature form before committing to it in full scale is important.** Sketches and renderings are also useful tools in putting an idea to the test. Once designs begin to take more shape, we will translate it into technical drawings on the computer and hand them off to the technical team to begin construction. After this point in the process, our involvement varies - sometimes we are extremely hands-on, painting and dressing the set ourselves, and other times we are merely there to consult with more skilled and talented artists that will help see the vision through. In either scenario, it is always extremely satisfying when the set is complete, and the actors can inhabit and explore the world that has been created.*

What resources are at the disposal of a set design team (artists, painters, research, production crew, space, etc.)?

*It is always most informative for us to visit the space in person in advance of starting the design process. We are always **inspired by the architecture of the room** and how we can embrace (or in some instances, hide) the quirks and challenges that it presents. **Research plays an integral role in shaping the world of the play**, whether it be a piece of art or photograph or a passage from a book or article. Sometimes we will start a search on Google Images and that will lead us towards something completely unexpected. Or we will visit the Picture Collection at the Mid-Manhattan New York Public Library, where you can tangibly browse through folders and folders of categorized images. Websites like Flickr and Pinterest are also great resources. **We tend to be inspired by the environment around us**, so it seems like we are always pulling from various details that we pass on the street or throughout daily life. And it seems like anytime we peruse the aisles at Home Depot, we can be struck by a material or item that could be used effectively in a unique way.*



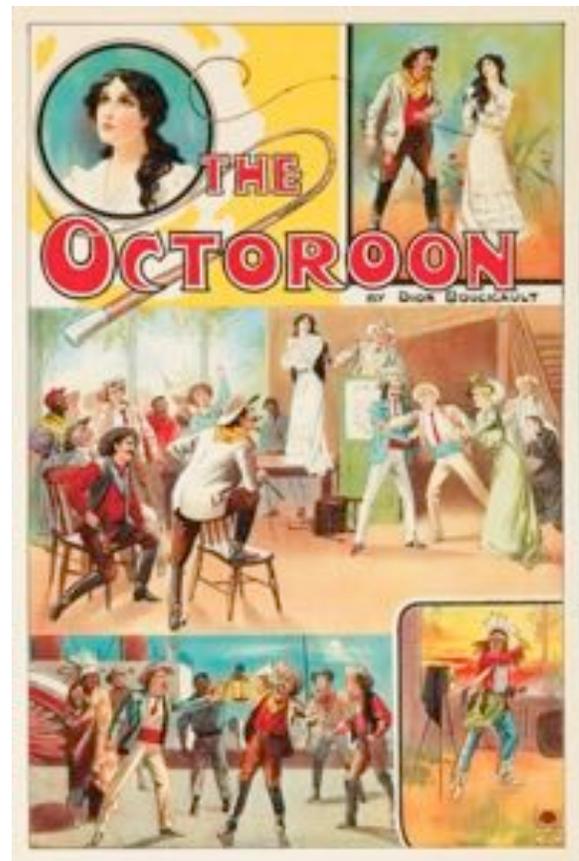
A classic image of a Southern plantation, where the action of AN OCTOROON takes place. The set designers used inspiration images like this to develop concepts for their final design.

What challenges does AN OCTOROON present that are different from other shows you've worked on?

*The play operates on so many different levels and asks some bold questions about race and identity, and the real challenge is making sure that we are creating the right environment for all of these big ideas to live in. Sometimes a play has a very specific set of parameters that you need to stay within, but **Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins** leaves lots of **room for interpretation within the text**. Much more than you'd expect. From a design perspective, he doesn't specify exactly how something should look, which gives the director and design team the kind of freedom to think outside the box. And especially since he has created a world where rules are broken and conventions are shattered, it's a fun, challenging puzzle to solve.*

What is unique about set design elements from 19th century melodrama era of theatre production? How are these incorporated into the set design for AN OCTOROON?

*For this design, we wanted to nod to the **techniques and characteristics of the 19th Century melodrama** but not feel like we had to fully commit to anything too historical. We were inspired by photos and illustrations of real melodramas and let that research color our understanding of the innovations of the time. During the 19th Century, there were great developments in spectacle and technological*



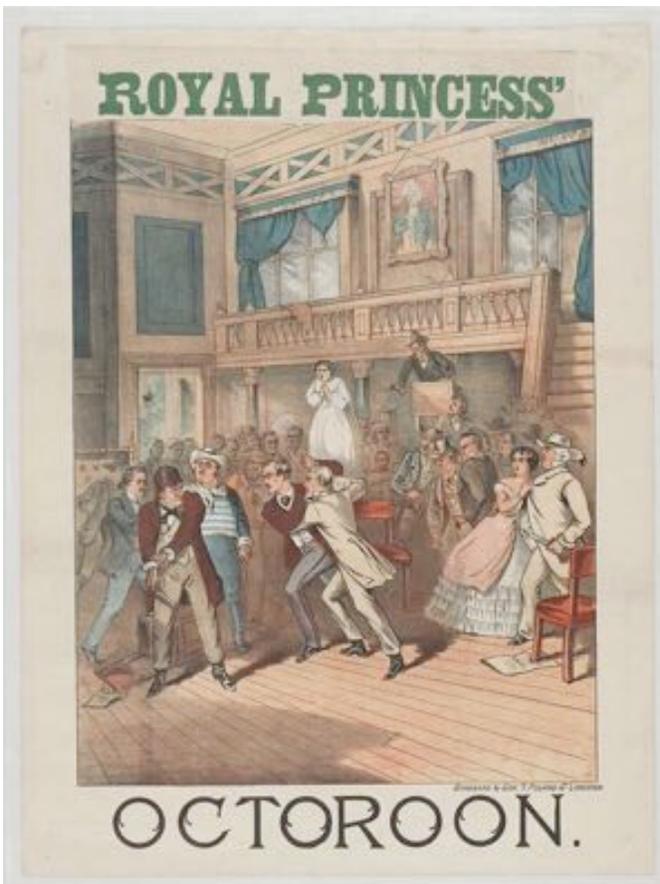
*A poster for the original stage play, *The Octoroon*, by Boucicault, which Branden Jacobs-Jenkins uses as the basis for his play, *AN OCTOROON*.*

innovations that helped pave the way for what could be realistically achieved onstage.

Stock backdrops and flat, two-dimensional scenery were still used, but new pieces of technology were introduced. One such element was the **moving panorama**, which was a long piece of painted fabric that unrolled by turning spools to suggest a sense of movement and the illusion of shifting location.

How, if at all, do previous productions of the play influence your design?

In many cases, if it is a well-known work, we have usually seen how other productions have staged or solved a certain moment, and that can be both useful and informative. It is important for us, though, to make sure that we are focused on maintaining



*A poster for the original stage play, *The Octoroon*, by Boucicault, which Branden Jacobs-Jenkins uses as the basis for his play, *AN OCTOROON*.*

*the director's vision, as well as our own, throughout the process, so it can sometimes be distracting to have too much information at hand. In the case of *AN OCTOROON*, having seen the original production in New York, we wanted to approach the play with fresh eyes for this process. Of course, it's hard to not feel somewhat influenced by strong choices that were made for a previous production, but our alliance to the text and the trust of the director is what ultimately keeps us on track to create something unique.*



Set Designers present a scale model of their final design to the rest of the artistic team—director, costume and lighting designers, actors, and the production staff. The model in this image was presented by the Set Designers for AN OCTOROON weeks before the final dress rehearsal and opening night performance.

What attracted both of you to Company One’s production of AN OCTOROON? What excites you most?

When we saw the production of AN OCTOROON in New York last year, we were so impressed by the event of the piece and the kinds of big questions it asked. The play stuck with us for quite some time. Several months later, Company One Theatre asked us to collaborate on this production, and we were very excited to be a part of the team that could help share this story with Boston audiences. Since this production is one of the first incarnations outside of the original, there are no preconceived notions of what it can and cannot be—the possibilities are ultimately endless.

How do you envision audiences engaging with the set?

*The hope with our all of our designs is that they never pull focus away from the rest of the piece—that **they are working in tandem with the rest of the elements onstage.** If anything, we hope it helps illuminate the work of Summer L. Williams—Director of AN OCTOROON—and the rest of the team.*

More information about the Chris and Justin Swader and their work can be found on their website: www.cjswaderdesign.com

PRODUCTION INTERVIEW – Discussion Question

1. What are the steps that designers take in order to bring a play to life on the stage?
2. What are some research tools or locations that designers can seek out in order to get inspiration for their design?
3. How much creative freedom should designers have in creating a set?
4. Should they build exactly what is written in the script?
5. What role does interpretation have in set design?
6. What basic resources do set designers need?
7. How is collaboration between different members of the production team—director, set designers, costume designers, lighting designers, etc.—important to creating a successful production?
8. Should the set design be noticeable in a production?

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY – Set Design

In this activity you will use a poem of your choosing as inspiration for creating an original stage design. After choosing and sharing your poem, use key words and phrases to research images and build a three-dimensional design in which the world described by the poet can exist on stage. The poem, inspiration images, sketches, and model will all be shared in a final presentation.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY – Instructions

1. **POEM:** Find a poem to share with the rest of the class. The poem can be a piece you are familiar with, from your favorite poet, or find a new poem to use for this activity. Use the poetry samples included at the end of this activity for ideas and inspiration.
2. **SHARE:** Share your poem in pairs. Explain to your partner why you chose this poem, then read the selected poem out loud.
 - As you listen to your partner read, pick out the most dynamic words, phrases that stick with you, or imagery that gives you a sense of time and setting.
 - Share what you heard from the reading with your partner. Together, create a final list of these words and phrases for each of your poems.
3. **IMAGES:** Working on your own, use the list you generated with your partner to begin researching inspiration images. Search in art books, magazines, Google images, old photos, or newspapers to find images that connect to the words and phrases you and your partner pulled from the poetic text. Cut out, copy, or print these images to share with the class in your final presentation.
4. **SPACE:** Research performance spaces for your set design. You may choose your school's auditorium as the space you want to design for, a space in your community that you've visited, or a venue in another city that you'd like to work in. Find and create as



many images of this space as possible. Save these these images to share with the class in your final presentation.

5. **MODEL:** With newspaper, cardboard, and light adhesive materials, use the inspiration images you researched to create shapes, forms, structure—a three-dimensional environment—that represents the ideas, imagery, and emotional responses in your poem. You don't have to use all of the images you researched, but allow your artistic instinct to guide the process. This model is like a rough draft of your design—it does not have to be perfect, but should provide a visual suggestion of your set's scale, movement, textures, angle, and shape.



6. **PRESENT:** Compile the poem, inspiration images, performance space images, and the rough model for viewers to see each step of your artistic process. Take turns reading the poems as your audience views your inspiration sources and model, together.

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY – Discussion Questions

1. What descriptive words or phrases come to mind when viewing the designs of your peers?
2. How did the final images and designs connect to the poetry you heard?
3. What was difficult or challenging about the page-to-stage process, or, representing the written words as three-dimensional shapes and forms?
4. How is this process similar, or different, for a set designer reading a script and thinking of how to represent the playwright's work on stage?

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY – Inspiration Poetry

Those Winter Sundays

Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driveto ren out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

This Is Just To Say

William Carlos Williams, 1883 - 1963

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Huges

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

Langston Huges Theatre - Curricular Connections

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

[in Just-]

E.E. Cummings

in Just-
spring when the world is mud-
luscious the little
lame balloonman

whistles far and wee

and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and it's
spring

when the world is puddle-wonderful

the queer
old balloonman whistles
far and wee
and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

it's
spring
and

the

goat-footed

balloonMan whistles
far
and
wee

PRODUCTION ACTIVITY – Inspiration Poetry

Forgetfulness

Billy Collins

The name of the author is the first to go
followed obediently by the title, the plot,
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel
which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain,
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine muses goodbye
and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,

something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember,
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue
or even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river
whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall

well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted
out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

The Eagle

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Harlem

Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

A narrow fellow in the grass

Emily Dickinson

A narrow fellow in the grass
Occasionally rides;
You may have met him—did you not
His notice sudden is,
The grass divides as with a comb,
A spotted shaft is seen,
And then it closes at your feet,
And opens further on.

He likes a boggy acre,
A floor too cool for corn,
But when a boy and barefoot,
I more than once at noon
Have passed, I thought, a whip lash,
Unbraiding in the sun,
When stooping to secure it,
It wrinkled and was gone.

Several of nature's people
I know, and they know me;
I feel for them a transport
Of cordiality.
But never met this fellow,
Attended or alone,
Without a tighter breathing,
And zero at the bone.

EDUCATION AT COMPANY ONE THEATRE

The mission of Company One Theatre (C1) is to change the face of Boston theatre by uniting the city's diverse communities through innovative, socially provocative performance and developing civically engaged artists.

C1 uses theatre as a means toward liberated expression, self-confidence, and cultural awareness. As actors, producers, and educators, we are committed to teaching and exposing students to theatre as a means of inspiring creative thinkers, producing well-rounded individuals and a future generation of artists. Read more about each of our programs, below, or visit the Stage One Blog for regular updates about the students, artists, and educators in Stage One.



In-School

C1 brings theatre education residencies to the Boston Public Schools, designed to foster each young actor's personal growth and theatrical development. Focusing on both writing and performance skills, C1 instructors are committed to teaching theatre as a process, leading the student-artist to develop his or her skills at his or her own rate, while deciding which techniques may best suit the individual.



Apprenticeship

C1 offers both a summer and a school-year intensive program designed to create a pre-professional company of artists. Participants will gain valuable experience working in various jobs in the theatre, and have the opportunity to be mentored by C1's professional production and artistic staff, with a focus on community engagement and advocacy.



Professional Development for Actors

C1 provides theatrical training to adults. Athletes go to the gym to stay in shape; this class is designed to offer a challenging workout for actors perfecting their craft. Professional Development for Actors is 10 weeks of study with C1's high-caliber instructors. The class culminates in a showcase.

Discover **what's next** at Stage One by visiting our blog, c1stageone.wordpress.com, or C1's Education page at www.companyone.org/stage-one.