

Winter 1-2003

## Direction of the Play/Musical: Once On This Island

Kathryn C. Baker

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Direction of the Play/Musical: Once On This Island

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A Project Report  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
Theatre Production

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by  
Kathryn C. Baker  
January, 2003



## ABSTRACT

### PROJECT REPORT

#### Once On This Island

Clayton County Performing Arts Center

Directed by

Kathryn C. Baker

January, 2003

This project entailed the selection, background research and documentation, musical analysis, casting, direction, vocal coaching, and post-production analysis of Clayton County Public Schools' Annual All County, All Star, Honor Musical production of Once On This Island. Documentation includes research and analysis of the play, its music, and an evaluation of the musical as a production vehicle for the department of Theatre Arts at Central Washington University. The analysis also includes a discussion as to the non-traditional directorial vision of this production.

## Acknowledgements

I believe that almost everyone important to this project has been mentioned somewhere in this document; however, the person who has been there from the start and to the finish, every step of the way, encouraging and patient, is my dear husband, Niles Baker. He is a source of strength to me every day of my existence, and it would be remiss of me not to mention him as a part of this degree program.

The summer of 1999 was my first visit to CWU. I had a stellar trip, and I am quite sure that all conversations we had during my absence were testimony to the grand time I was having. Upon arriving home, when Niles picked me up at the airport, he said to me, “So, how long will you be gone next summer?”

My sons, Robert and Jacob, are a source of pride. Robert has graduated from college while I have been enrolled in this graduate program, and Jacob is now a senior at the University of Georgia. He will finish his degree fall semester. With two grown sons fully focused and a loving and supportive spouse, how could I not be successful?

My mother, Kathryn Cave, who is now deceased, encouraged me to begin this program. She was an inspiration to me all of her life, and her memory continues to brighten my day and remind me of who I am and why I exist. She and my father, O’Neal Cave, are still very much a part of my existence. I am proud to be their daughter.

What finally prompted me to begin the program was my mother who wrote me a check and said, “Go out there and get your master’s degree!”

As I am completing the program I would like to acknowledge each of the professors in the theatre department at Central Washington and especially my committee, George Bellah, Michael Smith, and Wes Van Tassel. These professors have shared their wisdom and experience. They

have my respect, admiration, and love. They have truly inspired me to grow and succeed during this program.

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(Submit in Quadruplicate)

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Student

Note: This form is to be completed as soon as the student has formed a committee and selected an option from the list below. The form should be submitted in quadruplicate to the Office of Graduate Studies in Barge 305.

Name: Kathryn C. Baker Birth Date Address: Date: 7/10/02

Check option: Indicate credits to be received for the thesis or option: Written Exam\* TH 700 Master's Thesis 6 NonThesis Project Course No. Title Credits Creative Project Studio Project Portfolio Review Thesis

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\*Students taking written exam option may omit items 1-5 below.

- 1. Proposed Title: Direction of the Musical Production Once On This Island
2. Purpose of Study: The direction of the musical Once On This Island serves as the culminating experience in theatre graduate studies.
3. Scope of Study: Documentation based upon the preparation of pre-production research, post-production evaluation, the direction of the production (including the casting and rehearsal of actors, the preparation of the Director's Production Book, and oral examination) shall benefit both the student and Theatre Arts Department.
4. Procedure to be used: Three phases of study shall be included: 1. Pre-production research and thesis documentation: MLA style, 2. Rehearsal and direction of the production, 3. Post-production evaluation and documentation.

- 5. Does the procedure involve collection of data obtained from Human Subjects (including use of surveys)? Yes\*\* No X Use of Animals? Yes\*\* No X

\*\* If yes, your procedures must be approved in writing by the Human Subjects Committee or the Animal Care and Use Committee before you initiate your research.

Professor George Bellah Committee Chair (typed or printed)

Committee Chair (signature) Date

7/10/02

Professor Michael Smith Committee Member (typed or printed)

Committee Member (signature) Date

7/10/02

Dr. Wesley Van Tassel Committee Member (typed or printed)

Committee Member (signature) Date

7/10/02

Approved by: Dept Chair/Designee (signature) Date

Approved by: Associate VP of Graduate Studies Date

7/10/02

Students will be required to submit two copies of all motion picture film, film strips, sound film strips, slides, tapes, cassettes, pictures, etc. produced as part of the thesis. These are to be submitted at the time the thesis (three copies) is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research.

## Parameters

The production Once On This Island will be Clayton County's seventh annual honor musical. This is an opportunity for students throughout the county to become educated through the actual production of performance art. The annual event is fully funded through ticket sales, local sponsorship, and the county fine arts department. The budget is maintained through the office of the fine arts coordinator. The artistic staff is free to create excellence in performance without the normal concern for finances. In addition the production has a considerably larger budget than any single school has. Education through the arts truly becomes a reality as our school system holds the belief that the arts nourish and sustain the academic achievement of students in all curricular areas.

The original script provided for eleven actors of color; however, the authors provide text alterations and flexibility that allow for a large multiracial cast. This provides extensive opportunity in casting which is desirable for the scope of the annual event. It is hoped that a fair representation from the 50 schools in the system will occur. Of course the technical crew and musical pit group provide additional opportunities for student involvement. The performance dates are January 16, 17, 18, 19, 2003.

Select fine arts teachers from the schools in the county will serve on the production staff. This provides for a talented instructor staff to mentor the cast and crew of students who will be selected. The main stage of the Clayton County Performing Arts Center will house the production. It is a state-of-the-art facility completed in 1990 with a fly system containing 39 battens, light system including 300 circuits with computerized board, and a recently updated sound system. This system had been the area of greatest concern when performing in the space; however, this has greatly improved the situation.

Auditions on September 25, 26, and 28, will be open to students in grades two through twelve. A schedule containing the assigned times for specific grades and schools will be given to all fine arts teachers during preplanning in August. An application and interview for student production staff positions will also be made available. Every effort will be made to gather the help of these teachers to encourage their most talented students to audition for this year's county musical.



MUSTANGS

Morrow High School

2299 Old Rex Morrow Road  
Morrow, Georgia 30260  
Phone: (404) 362-3865  
Fax: (404) 362-2044

DR. MORRIS BLASINGAME, Principal  
GLENICE GRAVES, Assistant Principal  
DOUGLAS HENDRIX, Assistant Principal

JANIS W. STRIGGLES, Assistant Principal  
SPENCER WILLIS, Assistant Principal  
SHERYL DUKES, Instructional Lead Teacher  
TOM VAN TONE, Athletic Director

June 18, 2002

Mr. George Bellah  
Graduate Coordinator  
Theatre Arts Department  
Central Washington University  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Dear Mr. Bellah:

It is with great pleasure that I grant permission to Kathy Baker to direct our All County Honor Musical as partial fulfillment of her graduate studies with Central Washington. The show selected, *Once On This Island*, should be extremely popular with both our students and community. I look forward to January 16, 17, 18, 19, 2003, the scheduled production dates.

Sincerely,

Morris Blasingame



Brief Evaluation of the Play as a Production Vehicle

Once On This Island deals with the universal themes of childhood fears and dreams, the differences of class and race, the capacity of love, the forces of nature, as well as death and resurrection. These themes presented in a simple storytelling fashion with the rhythmic musical patterns of the Caribbean should have great appeal to Clayton County's multiracial community, while providing an appropriate challenge for the cast and production staff. The contemporary music and presentational style should also appeal to both the community and theatre company. Past productions have been American musical theatre classics like The Wizard of Oz and Oklahoma! This production should be a refreshing theatre experience for all.

### Concept Statement

This musical is based on a novel by Rosa Guy called My Love, My Love. It takes place on an imaginary island in the Caribbean where the differences between the lighter skinned ruling class and the darker skinned peasant class help create the primary ideas of the show. The plot of the musical follows the plot line of the novel with slight variations. One of these variations is the symbolic use of the butterfly. At the end of the novel the character Ti Moune becomes a butterfly; however, the authors of the musical did not choose to interpret her resurrection in this way. They choose a tree as the symbolic resurrection of Ti Moune. The tree becomes the metaphorical representation of the main idea of the musical that life is reciprocal evidenced by the unconditional love felt by its heroine.

The musical Once On This Island is presented in a storytelling fashion. This requires the make-believe quality of storytelling to be sustained throughout the performance. A unit set of fragmentary scenery with a stylized interpretation and imaginative use of textured surfaces and exposed structural parts is desired. The collaboration of set and costume design should allow for a set with foliage greens and earth tones while the costumes should become the representation of vivid flowers and insects. Darker costumes are planned for storytellers and lighter costumes for the principals. Lighting will heighten all these elements and intensify specific dramatic moments.

Simplicity is the basis of storytelling, and with the state-of-the-art performance venue fully utilized the visual appearance of the performance should remain so. The unit set will have rotating parts that turn from the island village to the Hotel Beauxhomme with use of the fly system for additional settings. The actors as storytellers will actively take part in moving set pieces and props while the fly system will provide for quick changes.

The show was created to represent an imaginary island in the French Antilles. This production will base its dramaturgical research on the island of Haiti. A “show dialect” will be created with the help of real people from Haiti. Rehearsals for this purpose are being built into the schedule. The show will be set in the 1920’s with the ball at the Hotel Beauxhomme serving as a parody costumed in 18<sup>th</sup> century French costumes.

The ultimate success of the production rests on an ensemble energy of a multitalented group of actors who sing and dance and a production staff totally committed to their support. Building and sustaining this ensemble will be challenging. It is hoped that the entire theatre company will be committed to the creation of an imaginary island in the French Antilles with its poetic nature expressed and presented through storytelling.

Project Schedule

This schedule will be revised as needed.

April 30, 2002

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Initial production staff meeting, directorial concept shared, preliminary designs discussed.

May 29

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Preliminary designs shared and somewhat refocused, entire staff meets again in August.

June 18

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Director, Musical Director, Choreographer, work on rehearsal schedule.

August 21

4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Meeting to pull staff back together, additional refocusing of designs, discuss auditions.

September 25 and 26

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Elementary Student Auditions.

September 28

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Middle and High School Auditions.

October 10

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Entire Company Meeting with parents, introduction of Production Staff, contracts due.

October 15, 17

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Recital Hall for ELEM Music Rehearsal.

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Recital Hall for MS/HS Music Rehearsal.

October 18

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Kendrick Middle School.

Production staff meeting.

October 19

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Mt. Zion Dance Room.

October 22

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Recital Hall with MS/HS students for Blocking Rehearsal.

October 24

4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. ELEM Recital Hall.

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. MS/HS Recital Hall.

October 26

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m. Mt. Zion Dance Room for Dance Rehearsal.

October 29

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. ELEM in Recital Hall for Music Rehearsal.

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. MS/HS in Recital Hall for Music Rehearsal.

October 31

4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. MS/HS in Stroud Hall for Blocking Rehearsal.

November 2

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Mt. Zion Dance Room for Dance Rehearsal.

November 5

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Principals in Recital Hall for Music Rehearsal.

November 7

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. MS/HS Principals and select others Stroud Hall.

November 12

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. ALL use of Recital and Tarpley.

November 14

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Principals for Music Rehearsal.

November 19

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Principals including little Ti Moune from 6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

November 21

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Entire Company in Recital Hall.

November 25

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Entire Company in Recital Hall.

December 5

4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Entire Company

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Select Company TBA

December 10 and 12

4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Principals in Morrow High School Drama Room.

December 17

4:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m. Entire Company in Recital Hall.

December 21

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Mt. Zion H. S.

December 30

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. in Stroud Hall

January 3

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. in Stroud Hall

January 6

4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in Stroud Hall

Set and costumes completed, rehearsal with set.

January 7

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Costume parade, rehearsal with set.

January 9

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

January 11 (Rehearsal desired, but county conflict, will try to resolve, if unable then January 12.

January 12

2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Full technical rehearsal with cast.

January 13, 14, 15

Final dress rehearsals.

January 16, 17, 18

Call at 5:30 p.m. (5:00 p.m. for select cast)

7:30 p.m. Performances



January 19

Call at 12:30 p.m. (12:00 p.m. for select cast)

2:30 p.m. Performance

## Given Circumstances

## 1. Geographical Location-

Haiti is situated in the Caribbean and occupies the western third of Hispaniola which is an island it shares with the Dominican Republic. It occupies 10,714 square miles. Its original inhabitants named the country Haiti because it means land of high mountains. The border with the Dominican Republic runs through the Cordillera Central with its highest peak being Pic la Selle at 8,793 feet (Showker 176).

The capital of Haiti is Port-au-Prince. It is situated on the Gulf of Gonave on the west coast of the island. There are two mountainous peninsulas on either side of the city. Cuba measures fifty miles from the tip of the northwestern peninsula, and Jamaica is 100 miles from the southwestern peninsula's point (Showker 176).

At one time the island was covered with lush forests, but these forests have been cut down for fuel or farming. As a result much of the land appears desecrated, and it has become an ecological tragedy (Cameron 282). Fortunately the musical is set in an imaginary time which precludes the desecration of the land, and therefore luxuriant vegetation is the setting of the play.

The librettist-lyricist Lynn Ahrens comments that they were not specifying a particular place as they wrote the musical, but that they were drawing from the cultures of Trinidad and Haiti. They wanted the place to be a mythical one somewhere in the French Antilles (Bilowit 3). Selecting Haiti specifically allows for research of a specific place.

## 2. Climate-

Haiti maintains an even temperature between 78 and 82 degrees Fahrenheit most of the year. There are two rainy seasons in Haiti: April through May and September through October.

Abundant rainfall occurs in the SW peninsula and the eastern two thirds of the northern peninsula (Cameron 282).

### 3. Date and Season-

Just as Lynn Ahrens had commented on wanting a mythical place, she also mentioned that she and Flaherty wanted a mythical time (Bilowit 3). Selecting a specific time determines necessary choices for production. A date after the invention of the automobile is necessary to accommodate the important element of plot that deals with a car accident. Therefore it has been determined that the show is set in 1920 with the addition of the ball at the Hotel Beauhomme costumed in 18th century French costumes as a purposeful parody. This parody further communicates the disparity between the peasants and mulatto aristocrats of the island as a major theme of the musical.

The plot suggests the season to be a rainy one. Once On This Island opens with the sounds of a violent storm (1). The September through October rainy season is the selected season for the play's action.

### 4. Time of Day-

The musical opens in darkness. It is the middle of the night and a violent tropical storm is taking place. A small child cries out and a group of island peasants tries to comfort her by acting out a story (1). The telling of the story takes the entire night. By the end of the night, the storm has subsided, and the little girl has learned about the power of love as well as other themes that run through the story (54).

### 5. Economic Environment-

Deren comments in her book that the "material situation" for the Haitian peasants is a hopeless one. They are doomed to a desperate struggle to eke out a daily sustenance. If one of

these peasants should ever acquire some economic gain, he usually conceals it. The feeling is that the neighbors would think that his economic gain was actually some unlimited resource (165).

Between 1791 and 1803 the Haitian Revolution occurred. This revolution brought freedom to the black slaves as well as leaving the country with an economic devastation that continues to the present day. In fact, according to Knight and Palmer, few revolutions in the history of mankind have left such profound consequences on a country (21).

Zora Neale Hurston stated in her book Tell My Horse that:

For four hundred years the blacks of Haiti had yearned for peace. For three hundred years the island was spoken of as a paradise of riches and pleasures, but that was in reference to the whites to whom the spirit of the land gave welcome. Haiti has meant spilt blood and tears for blacks. So the Haitians got no answer to their prayers. Even when they had fought and driven out the white oppressors, oppression did not cease. They sought peace under kingdoms and other ruling names. They sought it in the high, cold, beautiful mountains of the island and in the sudden small alluvial plain, but it eluded them and vanished from their hands. (331)

#### 6. Political Environment-

As David Geggus states, no one disagrees that the French Revolution had a profound affect on the entire Caribbean and precipitated the destruction of Haiti. The ruling whites desired to continue their autonomy, the free coloreds wanted equality, and the slaves wanted freedom. Moreover, it was the “political earthquake in Paris” that provoked the eruption in the Caribbean (26).

A Colonial Assembly met and declared itself supreme over the colony of Haiti and severely

restricted French control. It openly discussed the idea of independence. This situation became an affair of factions and demagogues, and yet, the assembly agreed on two things: no one should tamper with slavery, and white supremacy should be maintained (Geggus 27).

All the while in Paris, the society of the Amis des Noirs, a French antislavery society, campaigned for the abolition of slave trade and for equal rights for all free blacks; however, it claimed to have no desire to interfere with slavery. The free blacks were careful to separate themselves from the masses of black slaves and support the intentions of the Amis des Noirs (27).

It was not long before both the whites and free blacks of Haiti found themselves to be victims of violence. This exposed the deep-rooted prejudice felt by the black slaves. The ruling whites then became determined to keep the free blacks out of politics. All the while the mulattoe class of Haiti began acquiring nonwhites to their struggle to gain power; however, neither the whites or mulattoes ever considered the desires of the black masses who wanted their freedom. It was in this political climate that the Haitian Revolution erupted (Geggus 28-29).

Toussaint Louverture, considered one of the slave elite, achieved prominence and led the fight against Napoleon's brother-in-law, General Leclerc, who landed in the colony in 1802 with 10,000 soldiers. When the French decided to reinstate slavery in all the colonies of the Caribbean a new sense of racial solidarity developed. The free blacks and the black slaves were united in a campaign to expel the French. This was accomplished by May of 1803 when Napoleon had to admit defeat (Geggus 45-46).

The ball scene in the musical will be presented as a parody of the time just prior to the Haitian Revolution when the black slaves were being ignored by both the ruling whites and mulattoes. This atmosphere changed after the revolution, unfortunately the society was devastated although

the black peasantry was freed. Many of these peasants became indentured servants, having very little more than they once had (Geggus 42).

Haitian politics continued to be a struggle including both race and class distinctions. The uneducated black officer corps controlled the army. The lighter skinned mulattoes who were a mixed race of black people and French people made up the professional and business class. These two opposing groups were further divided along cultural and religious lines which affected their attitudes about the future development of the country (Geggus 49-50).

#### 7. Social Environment-

As previously stated the Haitian Revolution left the country with basically two classes, the mulattoes and the black peasants. Both groups are considered free classes of individuals; however, the mulattoes are economically and socially the more elite class. Although this distinction of class/race continues to exist, the revolution did open up the possibility of change in the country (Brereton 85).

It was not until the 1930s-40s that socioeconomic development finally accelerated. It was the depression of the 1930s and the impact of World War II, along with efforts of nationalist movements which led to important changes (Brereton 87).

This production of Once On This Island is being set prior to this acceleration of political, economic, and social change; thus, the class distinction between the mulattoes and the peasants is a conflict within the world of the play. There are some who will argue that these class distinctions are the basic framework of Caribbean society right up to the present day (Brereton 88). This makes the appeal of the play more of a reality.

#### 8. Religious Environment-

The mulatto class of Haiti has maintained a public appearance of belonging to the Catholic

faith. Catholicism is the official state religion; however, the masses of citizens believe in Voodoo (Deren 15). On the very first page of the musical it is established that the peasant storytellers share this belief in Voodoo in the world of the play.

Voodooism does not have a centralized church and no organizational authority, and yet it does have many similarities to other organized religions by having a structure. It is a religion that proposes that man has a material body and a soul that does not share the death of the body. The soul may acquire the status of a loa, which is a divinity, and become the representative of a natural or moral principal. This divinity has the power to displace a living person and become the force of his physical being. When the divinity displaces the living person, it is thought of as “possession” of the other soul. If a loa possesses a person, all thoughts and actions are believed to be that of the loa spirit and not the person (Deren 15-17).

In the first song of the musical, “The Music of the Gods,” each god is described. The descriptions are similar to the Voodoo gods described by Deren, Knight, and Hurston in their respective books. These gods will be discussed later in the Character Analysis section; however, it is important to note that these characters are based on the religious gods of Voodooism, and the peasant storytellers are in great awe of them. The storytellers sing about the power of the gods, and they describe them as being able to cause much happiness or great sorrow (Ahrens and Flaherty 2-3).

The song continues with a description of the other side of the island where the grands hommes live. They are described as very different people who drink champagne and entertain tourists in fine hotels as well as ordering their servants around. These two different worlds are never meant to meet, but the storytellers explain that once the gods chose a peasant girl for a magical fate. This is the story of Ti Moune who fell in love with Daniel, a handsome grand

homme (Ahrens and Flaherty 5).

Sometime later in the show Daniel is described as the pale mulatto boy from a different world when the song “The Sad Tale of the Beauxhommes” is performed. This establishes the racial, religious, and class differences between Ti Moune and Daniel. The darker skinned peasants believe in the Voodoo gods, and the elite mulattoes maintain a public disbelief in these gods (Ahrens and Flaherty 25-28).



## Previous Action

For the most part, almost the entire musical is presented in present action with the narration of being acted out as the “story.” This is according to Hodge’s definition of previous action being what an audience is told happened before the present action begins; moreover, recent plays are generally not dependent on previous action (20). The writers of this musical made it easy to make the narration interesting because it is structured as the “story.” The present action of *Once On This Island* begins in darkness. A violent tropical storm is taking place. A small child cries out and a group of island peasants tries to comfort her by acting out a story (Ahrens and Flaherty 1).

The acting out of the story is all present action, but it is preceded with an explanation of previous action. This is the story of Ti Moune, a peasant girl who rescues and falls in love with Daniel, a young man from a wealthy family. When Daniel is returned to his people, the gods who rule the island guide Ti Moune on a quest to test the strength of her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred, and death. The finale of the show is the song “Why We Tell the Story.” This song reviews the emotions of the “story” as an uplifting conclusion (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-52).

The story begins with the song, “We Dance.” This song explains that there was once an island where two different worlds of people existed. There lived the poorest of peasants and the wealthiest of grands hommes. The song describes the diversity of their life styles. The song also explains the peasants’ strong belief in the gods. Asaka, the mother of the earth, Agwe, the god of water, Erzulie, goddess of love, and Papa Ge, the demon of death, are all introduced (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-4).

Ti Moune has longed for a wealthy man dressed in white to come and carry her away. When the wealthy Daniel Beauxhomme crashes his car and Ti Moune rescues him, she believes the gods have answered her prayers (Ahrens and Flaherty 6-18).

Ti Moune's adoptive parents and other peasants do not want her to help the handsome Daniel because they believe this will anger the gods. Her father goes off to search for Daniel's family while Ti Moune pledges her love to Daniel. Then Papa Ge, the god of Death, appears to take Daniel's life. Ti Moune begs him to take hers instead. He agrees. Daniel's life is spared, and her fate is now in the hands of Papa Ge (Ahrens and Flaherty 19-24).

At this point in the musical, a pantomime is performed that tells the history of the island. A Frenchman named Armand fathers a son by a peasant girl. The beautiful son grows up, fights against the French, wins and inherits their wealth; however, before his father Armand leaves the island, he puts a curse on all future generations that their peasant blood will keep them on the island forever (Ahrens and Flaherty 25-28).

This was the story that Ti Moune's adoptive father, Tonton Julian, brings back with him when he returns to their village. He leads the way for Daniel's parents who come to take him home. Daniel's leaving saddens Ti Moune, and she decides to follow him (Ahrens and Flaherty 28-35).

When Ti Moune finds Daniel, the goddess of love, Erzulie, appears to preside over them. They seem happy together for some time, and then Ti Moune learns that Daniel has been promised since childhood to the beautiful Andrea. She is of the same class as Daniel. He explains this is how things are done (Ahrens and Flaherty 36-47).

Papa Ge appears again and gives Ti Moune the opportunity to save her life by killing Daniel. Papa Ge points out how Daniel has betrayed her, and he believes that this is surely motivation for Ti Moune to kill Daniel. Of course this will prove that death is stronger than love, but love

triumphs over death when Ti Moune hurls down the knife away from Daniel (Ahrens and Flaherty 47-49).

Ti Moune is then cast out of Daniel's home, and each time she tries to get back inside the gate, she is turned away. She waits for two weeks outside the gate, not eating, not even sleeping. The grounds of the beautiful home are being made more lovely each day for the upcoming wedding of Daniel and Andrea. They are finally married. The preceding is presented in narration only and would be the sole previous action of the play. The play returns to present action when Andrea and Daniel enter already married and proceed outside the gate where many peasants are gathered waiting for them to throw gold coins. Andrea exits as Daniel sees Ti Moune. He kneels and takes her hand. They look at each other before he gets up and then exits. Ti Moune opens her hand to find a gold coin. She is now close to death (Ahrens and Flaherty 49-50).

The mournful song, "A Part of Us," is now sung. At the conclusion of the song Ti Moune dies and is then resurrected from the earth as a tree that grows and continues to provide shelter for the peasants and wealthy alike. Even Ti Moune's resurrection is present action; whereby, the script dictates that the gods lift her up to become a tree. The spirit of Ti Moune set every one free to love one another despite their class differences (Ahrens and Flaherty 52).

As stated earlier, the finale of the musical is an uplifting present action with a retelling of the emotional journey the "story" has offered. We once again see the peasants around the fire. This time the frightened little girl tells the story with them as the storm comes to an end.

## Analysis of Dialogue

Specific language or jargon of the geographical location is not evident in the script. The text is lyrical and straightforward in structure, and a “show” dialect with certain inflections and vowel sounds makes the world of the play more truthful, but the dialogue that is more narrative and carried in the lyrics has a poetic quality of its own; whereby, it creates an emotional response that releases the imagination.

Lynn Ahrens explains that she believes in the old maxim that says that a character who is either in control or very sophisticated gets to rhyme more. When characters are out of control or more emotional, they rhyme less. She says that rhymes are associated more with intellect and control. In Once On This Island she chooses to use more internal rhyme because the people are not educated. She says that she really did not do this on purpose, but that it happened naturally. The characters in the show have musicality and a great deal of heart. The internal rhyme places emphasis on their less sophisticated nature (Haagensen 1).

Ahrens shows the greater sophistication of the character Andrea who is of the elite mulatto class and to be wed to the grand homme Daniel when she chooses to use end rhyme. This example follows:

MY DEAR MAD'MOISELLE  
 I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY  
 SOMETHING I FEAR WAS LEFT UNSAID  
 MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOU'VE GIVEN DANIEL  
 BUT DO NOT BE MISLED  
 MY DEAR MAD'MOISELLE  
 YOU DANCE SO VERY WELL

I PRAY YOU'LL DANCE FOR DANIEL

AND FOR ME

WHEN WE ARE WED. (46)

Ahrens uses the technique of structuring the sentences with placing the important words to the end of the line. In the first four lines of the play, examples have been underlined to indicate the importance of the last part of the sentence:

There is an island where rivers run deep.

Where the sea sparkling in the sun earns it the name Jewel of the Antilles.

An island where the poorest of peasants labor.

And the wealthiest of grands hommes play.

Ahrens comments that this show is a more through-composed form. She explains that this means that it has fewer book scenes and more sung work. The narrative is carried in the lyrics. She mentions this produces a greater importance on the meaning. Ahrens says that the spoken words are incorporated into the songs and broken up in between songs as well purposefully because she believes that the ear needs a rest from the singing. This adds impact to the words when properly placed (Haagensen 2).

Personification is a figure of speech that transfers human qualities to lifeless objects or ideas (Bergman and Senn 367). It is used throughout the musical and begins with the first line: "There once was an island where rivers run deep." Another example can be found in the first song:

WE DANCE

TO THE MUSIC OF THE GODS

THE MUSIC OF THE BREEZES

THROUGH THE GREEN PLANTAIN

THE MURMER OF THE RIVER

AND THE ROAR OF RAIN. (2)

Repetition is used throughout for the purpose of emphasis. In most of the songs there is a repeated line. In the songs “We Dance,” “One Small Girl,” and “Pray,” the titles are repeated over and over throughout the songs. The use of this technique makes these songs that are relatively unknown become identifiable quickly and provide almost a “playback effect” after exposure to the show.

This analysis would not be complete without the mention of onomatopoeia. According to Bergman and Senn this is the use of words that reveal their meaning through their sound (368). This is evident in the song “Mama Will Provide” as the storytellers sing as if they were the birds, trees, frogs, and breezes of the earth:

COO COO, COO COO, COO COO COO

SHA SHA SHA – AAH

BOOM BAROOM

OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH OOH. (31)

The dialogue of the musical is almost always underscored. This technique adds to the lyrical nature of the text and creates a beautiful response to both the dialogue and music of the play. Combine the usage of figurative language, repetition, rhyme, and special structuring with the underscoring of the spoken words, and the result is a contemporary musical form.

\* units of action

Please note: The text of this musical has been redacted due to copyright concerns.

PROLOGUE

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## Character Analysis

## 1. Asaka-

Asaka is the goddess of earth. From the very first mention of her in *Once On This Island*, where Mama Euralie sings, "Asaka grow me a garden," we learn that she is the all powerful goddess who can create, and provide shelter through nature when she herself says, "Sheltered in a tree by Asaka" (1-5).

In the world of the play, Asaka is like the Voodoo Azacca who controls the fields and is very watchful of all details of the earth. Azacca is described by Deren as loving his food, and being less sophisticated than Ghede, the god of death. Azacca is a hard worker with a simple and honest nature. He also states that Azacca has a peasant shrewdness and is greatly appreciated by the farmers (108-111).

Asaka's polar attitudes do not change during the course of the play. She remains constantly protective in a strong and motherly way. When Ti Moune dies, Asaka holds her to her breast (Ahrens and Flaherty 51).

## 2. Agwe-

Agwe is the god of water. The respect the peasants hold for him is understood when they sing in the opening number, "Please Agwe, don't flood my garden" (Ahrens and Flaherty 1).

Agwe sings, "Let there be a girl walking by the sea and let there be rain" (Ahrens and Flaherty 16). He will obviously bring rain. He is commanding and fluid in his movements throughout the play.

The Voodoo Agwe is described as the sovereign of the sea. Deren explains that Agwe is like the sea both immediate and enduring, as well as being a strength and a great peace (125).

Deren also mentions that blue like the sea is the sacred color of Agwe (120).

In the world of the play, Agwe's polar attitudes do somewhat change. He remains strong and commanding throughout the play, until just before the end he is described as crying tears of compassion when Ti Moune dies. In the song "A Part of Us" Agwe is said to wrap Ti Moune in a wave, and lay her to her rest (Ahrens and Flaherty 51).

### 3. Erzulie-

She is the goddess of love. In the first song of the show, the storytellers sing, "Erzulie, who will my love be?" They call her beautiful goddess of love and look to her in all matters of the heart (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-2).

Deren describes Erzulie as the "epitome" of femininity. She says that Erzulie is concerned with love, beauty, flowers, jewelry, femininities, and she enjoys things like dancing and dressing up in fine clothes. She is also described as being extremely sensitive (62).

Erzulie remains tender and loving throughout the play; her polar attitudes are never changing. At the end when Ti Moune dies, it is Erzulie who leads her by the hand (Ahrens and Flaherty 51).

### 4. Papa Ge-

He is the god of death. The storytellers sing on page one, "Papa Ge, don't come around me." They describe him as being sly (Ahrens and Flaherty 2). As the story continues, we learn that he is determined to make Ti Moune choose between love and death. Papa Ge is confident that he can manipulate her into killing her love (Ahrens and Flaherty 15).

Deren says that the Voodoo Ghede's formal costume is a top-hat, long black tail-coat, smoked glasses, a cigarette or cigar, and a cane. He describes him as bowing to no man, and vowing to consume every man. He is a glutton who puts a cigarette or cigar to his mouth when his stomach can hold no more food. This gluttony is supposedly symbolic because his main purpose as the

god of death is with men's souls; therefore, his concern with food is an arrogant invasion of Asaka's province over the earth (107-108).

Papa Ge could also be described as the antagonist. He is the constant force that propels the protagonist in the play to become the tragic hero. Hodge reminds us that if a character does not finally accept what he dislikes, then he will probably die or be exiled and become the tragic hero. The action of the play must present conflict which will in turn coerce the situation (22). Papa Ge is the character force who pressures the protagonist.

Papa Ge's polar attitudes do change because of his gracious attitude toward the end of the play when he is described as gently guiding Ti Moune back to shore (Ahrens and Flaherty 51).

#### 5. Ti Moune-

Mama Euralie, Ti Moune's adoptive mama, tells her that her name means little orphan. She is further described by the storytellers in the song "One Small Girl" as being an orphan who is as sweet as eucalyptus. She is seen as a sweet and innocent child who remains the same kind soul as she grows into a beautiful young woman (Ahrens and Flaherty 5-11).

Ti Moune is truly the protagonist and tragic heroine of the play. She is chosen by the gods to journey on a quest to test her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred, and death. Her ultimate death and resurrection symbolize the power of love and provide the belief that her spirit lives on in future generations (Ahrens and Flaherty 52).

This character demonstrates internal strength with a childlike innocence and beauty. She maintains this spirit with an enthusiasm for life throughout the play until she is consumed with her love and dies tragically outside the gates of her one true love's home. Ti Moune has an enviable energy that maintains this spirit. This magnifies the tragic significance of her death.

## 5. Daniel-

Daniel is described as being “the pale mulatto boy” (Ahrens and Flaherty 25). Dramaturgical study provides the understanding that the mulattos of the island are of a higher class. Along with this higher social class comes a lifestyle that is more affluent and pretentious than the lifestyle of the peasants (Brereton 85).

Daniel’s heritage is described in “The Sad Tale of the Beauxhommes” as being a mixed background of peasantry and fine French manners. Four generations past his ancestor came to the island and built a great fortune and a great mansion. Even though this Frenchman married a woman who is described as being pale and blonde, he took his pleasure with the black peasant women who served him. This created the mulatto race of the island. The tale states that this mix of race or class caused a curse that keeps the mulattos on the island forever. For this reason the mulattos of the island despise the lower class peasants (Ahrens and Flaherty 25-28).

Daniel is handsome, aristocratic, and descended from the French. He is a grand homme from the wealthy mulatto ruling class of the island. He and the beautiful Ti Moune are from two different worlds (Ahrens and Flaherty 25). His polar attitudes do not change.

## 6. Armand-

He is father to Daniel, and Daniel’s character description as far as being handsome, aristocratic, and descended from the French, applies to his father as well. A subtle difference should be played by the character of Armand based on the age difference. The curse of the generations past is more greatly felt by him, and his character should be portrayed in this manner. He is a bitter man. Armand speaks to his son in a commanding voice when he advises him that he is not the only one to ever want a peasant girl, but that he cannot marry her (Ahrens and Flaherty 42).



## 7. Andrea-

She is an elegant, refined young woman who is described in the song, "Some Girls," as being the kind of girl you marry (Ahrens and Flaherty 43-44). Andrea is also descended from the French aristocracy, and she maintains a royal sort of elegance throughout the play without her polar attitudes changing.

## 8. Mama Euralie and Tonton Julian-

These are the adoptive parents of Ti Moune. They are both described as being two old peasants (Ahrens and Flaherty 6). Deren describes the Haitian peasants as people who can barely eke out a daily sustenance (165). Understanding that these characters have very little in the way of material things, makes them appear extremely nurturing and kind hearted when they adopt the orphan Ti Moune. Their polar attitudes do not change. They remain constantly protective of their adoptive daughter throughout the play.

## 9. Peasants-

They are described in the song, "We Dance," as being burdened with pain and suffering, but having a strong work ethic, a strong belief in the gods, and the ability to sing and dance and make the most of their lives (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-4). They appear to be happy. These characters are clothed in simple bright colored island attire appropriate for the warm climate of Haiti. They remain constant throughout the play.

10. Grand Hommes-

They are described in the first song also. They have pale brown skin and French ways. They own the land and are described as the masters of their own fate, very unlike the poor peasants (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-4). Their clothing is off white in color and sophisticated in style, which distinguishes them from the brightly colored clothing of the peasants. They do not

move as freely as the poor peasants, but move in a somewhat restricted haughty manner. Their polar attitudes are unchanging.

### Ideas of the Play

The structure of the musical is based on the tradition of storytelling. According to Lynn Ahrens, the idea of framing the show in this manner really came from its first director, Graciela Daniele. The show was produced in a workshop type environment where Graciela got the idea to put the little child down front and let the other characters tell her the story. Ahrens says that this focused the whole meaning of the musical. It gave the idea of passing the story on from one generation to another (Jones par. 12).

The show moves immediately to the idea of class distinctions as the opening dialogue and first song reveal that there once was an island where two different worlds of people existed. The first song describes the diversity of their life styles, and it also introduces another idea of the play. Faith is introduced when the song explains the strong belief the peasants have in their gods (Ahrens and Flaherty 1-4).

The play deals with the idea of children growing up and leaving home when Ti Moune leaves her adoptive parents to follow Daniel (Ahrens and Flaherty 28-35). This is a theme that Ahrens and Flaherty like to use and pair with other ideas (Pender 2).

Prejudice is introduced when Ti Moune arrives at Daniel's home, the Hotel Beauxhommes. She is clearly not wanted here as the storytellers sing "Some Say" and explain how badly Ti Moune was treated with people laughing at her bare peasant feet (Ahrens and Flaherty 35).

Of course the idea of love is present throughout the play. Ti Moune falls in love with the handsome Daniel Beauxhomme, and he too appears to love her for a little while. He then explains that he must marry Andrea, which is a return to the class distinction idea of the play. Andrea is an elegant woman of his class, and their marriage is an arranged one. Ti Moune is heart sick and does not eat or drink, eventually dying for her love (Ahrens and Flaherty 36-50).

This brings us to the final idea of death and resurrection. Ti Moune dies but is resurrected as a tree. Her spirit provides everyone the freedom to love one another despite their class differences (Ahrens and Flaherty 50-52).

This idea reminds us of a fairy tale. The play is based on Rosa Guy's novel My Love, My Love, a novel based on Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale The Little Mermaid. Love is the driving force behind each of these heroines. Of course Once On This Island has Caribbean elements that add spice to an otherwise corny story.

The Dallas Morning News states that the message of the musical is that the life of the person who was willing to sacrifice all for love is worth celebrating and passing down from generation to generation ("Finny Girl" 2). The technique of storytelling then is what provides the vehicle for the prevalent theme of "love conquers all" and relates directly to the tree as the metaphorical symbol of the play. It additionally relates the theme to the simple title Once On This Island, a title that represents the idea of the island and all that occurs there as a universal concept.

## Past Productions

The Dallas Morning News discussed a “superb” production of Once On This Island at Theatre Three and how the story line is the same as Disney’s The Little Mermaid. The story is a legend, and legends have always been sources for playwrights because you do not have to pay to adapt a legend. The story is also one that audiences seem to like, and the storytelling format has appeal to writers and audiences (“Finny Girl” 1).

Other reviews offer similar discussions about the story line. Rather than discussing the actual technical aspects of productions, reporters seem to be enchanted with the mythological story. Lynn Ahrens says that there is a theatrical quality to the story, and that its being set in the Caribbean also has appeal (Bilowit 2).

The structure of the musical is based on the tradition of storytelling. This idea actually came from the show’s first director, Graciela Daniele. Lynn Ahrens says that this focused the whole meaning of the musical and it provided a framework for the show (Jones 2).

The team of Ahrens and Flaherty has been praised by musical greats like Harold Prince and Stephen Sondheim (Bilowit 4). Jerry Herman also spoke of them as the best of contemporary theatre composers. Their collaboration certainly seems to have been recognized in theatre circles and in 1996 their musical, Ragtime, won a Tony Award (Pender 1).

The Virginia Stage Company produced the show in 1995, and there are wonderful production pictures online. There is a picture of the scene where Ti Moune is nursing Daniel, also a picture of the backdrop lit for the storm sequence, and one for the very end of the show with stars (Island 1-2).

The reviews emphasize the importance of the theme of the musical, and the pictures from The Virginia Stage Company provide visual production suggestions.

## The Playwrights

Lynn Ahrens was born on October 1, 1948 in New York, but she spent most of her childhood in New Jersey. She acquired a degree in journalism from Syracuse University. She says that she originally did not really think about writing for musical theatre, instead she first worked in advertising. Ahrens eventually opened her own production company where she produced educational programs for children. It was on a whim that she decided to audition for the BMI Musical Theatre Workshop where she met Stephen Flaherty (“Lynn” 1).

Stephen was born on September 18, 1960 in Pittsburgh. He graduated from the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. However, whereas Lynn had never thought about writing for the theatre, Stephen says he knew from an early age that he wanted to write musicals. He composed his first score at the age of fourteen. Stephen’s mentor was Lehman Engel, the founder of the BMI Workshop, and so he attended the workshop and met Lynn Ahrens (“Lynn” 1).

Ahrens and Flaherty are quoted as choosing projects that transport them and move them enough to make them want to explore that world. They say that the project must also have an inherent musicality. In other words it has to make Stephen put his hands on the piano keys. Once they have chosen a project they usually like to write about three songs to see if they can really get into the piece. They say that if they can write an upbeat song, a ballad, and a character song, then the project will probably lead somewhere (“Ahrens 1”).

They both stated that it is important for musical theatre writers to think of themselves as dramatists who are telling a story in a musical language format. In Once On This Island they wrote the song “Rain” after realizing that what they originally wrote was not active enough. They came up with the idea of Agwe the god of water causing the rain which ends up creating the car Daniel is driving to crash (“Ahrens” 2-3).

Ahrens and Flaherty have been recognized by many notable people in the theatre industry. Rick Pender reports that the legendary Jerry Herman spoke of Ahrens and Flaherty as the best of contemporary theatre composers. The Ahrens and Flaherty Tony Award winning musical, Ragtime, was the show Herman mentioned as being the most outstanding contemporary show.

Other shows by Ahrens and Flaherty include Lucky Stiff, My Favorite Year, Seussical, A Man of No Importance, and the film Anastasia. The year 2003 will be their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of working together. Certain themes continue to emerge. The concept of storytelling and use of myth, and also the idea of parents and children keep showing up throughout their works (Pender 1-2).

Although Ahrens and Flaherty did not at first appear to be a likely match, they have certainly become one. Isenberg describes Ahrens as sophisticated and self-assured, although she appears reserved. Ahrens is Jewish and married, and Flaherty is Irish Catholic and single. Ahrens herself says that they are more alike than they look. She says that they both laugh and cry at the same things, that they both live to work, and enjoy working together (2).

The obvious popularity of Ahrens and Flaherty should assure them of a prominent place in musical history. They write contemporary pieces with universal appeal that should promise a continued collaboration of significant musical theatre.

## Student Learning Goals

The learner will:

1. demonstrate the ability to work as an individual in an ensemble with the understanding that acting is reciprocal.
2. demonstrate a working knowledge of theatre discipline and meet all contract requirements by learning lines, lyrics, music, blocking, and choreography, while always being on time and present for rehearsals with full attention to the task.
3. demonstrate the ability to create a truthful character.
4. demonstrate the ability to create character objectives to promote the dramatic action of the play.
5. demonstrate the ability to use proper projection and articulation in speaking and singing.
6. demonstrate the ability to use a “show dialect.”
7. demonstrate a working knowledge of acting through song and dance.
8. demonstrate the ability to sustain an individual vocal part with proper vocal technique.
9. demonstrate the ability to interpret the story through movement.
10. demonstrate a working knowledge of picturization to tell the story.
11. demonstrate an understanding of the importance of improvisation as a creative learning tool.
12. demonstrate an understanding that theatre is a collaborative art form.



## Production Journal

Sunday, September 29: Auditions completed. We auditioned 349 kids. This must be done a different way next year. Fine arts teachers need to pre-audition their students. Perhaps a set percentage from each school. Anyway, we lived through the audition process, and we certainly have some marvelous talent to choose from. As usual there's not as much competition with the boys, but lots of girls to choose from! Kelly, Daisy, Ronda, and Lindsey were wonderful to work with. John and Theresa organized and managed the lobby. John is a wonderful producer. He handled a problem that we didn't even know anything about until it was all done! Hooray John! Kelly and I will meet all day tomorrow to finalize cast decisions. Paul has arranged subs for both of us!

Monday, September 30: We got together this morning at 9:00 a.m. and began the process of completing the organization of the audition forms. With these compiled we were able to weed through and find the kids who scored highest and look at these first for our principals.

I called John Odom to ask about one of his girls, Anita Coachman. She really impressed us during auditions. Beautiful voice and she scored high with the choreographers too! John told me that she had a strong work ethic and was a great kid! She's one of his GHP nominees. We selected Anita for Ti Moune. Phillip McKibben was our choice for Daniel. He's one of John's kids also. He was just the one for the role; Kelly and I were both confident of him. Our other choices came pretty easily as well. I'm so proud of Lee! He's mine! And we cast him as Tonton! When we completed looking over the highest scores for our principals, we moved on to eliminate those who did not score well with the choreographers. We feel like the company really needs to "move" in this show. There's so much dance and movement! But we did have some kids who have beautiful voices but don't really move well. We decided to put the pit chorus on

stage and just have these kids do less dance and more gesturing. We'll put them up on the platforms! Before we finalize the entire company, we feel like we need to "sleep" on our choices so we'll get together again Wed. afternoon.

Wednesday, October 2: Kelly and I met and finalized our cast list. She is the best musical director I have ever worked with. We just gel! It's now my job to get all this casting on paper and Susan Herbert will get it emailed to all the fine arts teachers in the county. Susan is an angel, and I love working with her! She is so efficient, level-headed, and great sense of humor!

Thursday, October 3: I've just completed the company list! Hooray!! Susan will get it out tomorrow! Our first company meeting is next Thurs.

Thursday, October 10: The company meeting went well. I wanted to introduce our entire production staff, but we were missing Ronda and there's a problem with Kathy doing the costuming. Paul and I will talk tomorrow about this.

Friday, October 11: We are going to approach Mary R. about doing the costuming. Both her girls are in the show, and she's been helping make costumes for years now. I taught with her my first year at Morrow, and I remember her to be a "team" player. I think she would be great! Actually she will probably be easier to work! Hopefully she will do it!

Tuesday, October 15: Paul, John, and I, met with Mary R. She has agreed to design costumes and serve as head of costume committee. Hooray!!! I told her that we would throw out the old designs, and she could start over fresh with her own ideas. We will talk again on Thurs.

The music rehearsal went well. Kelly already has the kids singing harmony! We passed out musical part cassette tapes for the kids to rehearse at home.

Thursday, October 17: Mary came to rehearsal with designs. Some were sketchy, but my goodness she just started working on these yesterday! She had done some internet research too.

Great visuals from there! She is putting together a flyer on some things that cast members need to come with on their own. She will email me a copy of this tomorrow for my review, and then we can pass this out to the kids at Saturday's rehearsal. There's no doubt that Mary is and will do a great job on costuming! What a relief!

Saturday, October 19: Great rehearsal! Just a few kids missing. I worked with principals for several blocks of time while Ronda worked with others! We have such a large cast that we will not need to use the gods in every scene, so I will be able to work with them separately. Also they are the ones with the most conflicts to our rehearsal schedule. We can just leave them out of some of the larger company numbers. Ronda is, no joke, a drill sergeant! The kids were exhausted!

Tuesday, October 22: As lovely as the elementary kids are, it was nice to rehearse without them. Working with our older group, we just get more done, faster! Good rehearsal. I did Sad Tale with the group. I think we've set it! The kids are like puddy in my hands. I attribute this to Kelly's musical work with them. After learning the music, they just seem to intuitively understand what I want! Great joy! But not all joy! Some frustration with several principals absent from this rehearsal! These were also absent from one of the music rehearsals last week.

Thursday, October 24: Kelly's rehearsal. I stopped by at beginning to see if she needed anything. PTSA at my school!

Saturday, October 26: Ronda's rehearsal. Ronda's plan was to split the kids during part of the rehearsal with Lindsey who would work with part of the group, then put them all together.

Theresa handled sign in and stayed on hand just in case Ronda or Lindsey needed any assistance and to run interference with the parents. One of the delights in doing this show is having such wonderfully supportive parents, but at the same time they can get a little over jealous and

there sound! I told them so too! They smiled and acted like “little children!” I feel like a “mentor” to the world tonight! And Kelly, she’s the best!!!

Thursday, November 7: Kelly and I conferenced yesterday and decided it was time to speak with Rachel and Robert about absences. I ask them at the beginning of the rehearsal to stay for a few minutes at the end. Well, Rachel was so apologetic, while Robert was defensive! I admonished both of them and told them what we expect. After they left Kelly and I agreed that we could more easily replace Rachel, but we didn’t want to ever have to that. She is incredibly talented and even though she’s been absent she’s always prepared. On the other hand, Robert is not as talented, not as prepared, but we really don’t have a “pool” of male talent to choose from in order to replace him. We agreed that we would keep our fingers crossed that they would both be more responsible to the show and resolve their own conflicts.

Tuesday, November 12: Tonight was the first time we got them all together! Wow! What a sound! Great rehearsal! Kelly has done an extraordinary job with the music! Now I’m reminded about the sound system. Will it work for us?

Thursday, November 15: I met with Paul this morning to report our progress. He is so supportive! I don’t know what I will do when he retires. He just needs to go on forever!

Tuesday, November 19: Rehearsal with Principals and our Little Ti Mounes. Both little people are so precious. They are remarkable in their abilities. Kelly and I are both impressed with the little ones!

Thursday, November 21: We had the entire company again this evening, and we put some of the show together. It’s really coming together. I reminded them that we only have next Monday night and then we’re off for Thanksgiving. Everyone must return after the holiday with all lines and lyrics learned.

Monday, November 25: Mama Will Provide is definitely going to be the strongest number of the show. We Dance is looking good too! The soloists are sounding grand and their characters are beginning to show development. I'm anxious to work with them privately. We've got two rehearsals coming up in our Morrow Drama room for the principals only. I've got their character analysis sheets from my thesis to share with them as well as some other dramaturgy.

Thursday, December 5: Our Morrow Fine Arts Winter Gala was Tuesday night! It went nice, but I'm glad to mark it off my calendar so I can fully focus on Island. Tonight was a music rehearsal from 4:30-7:00 with the entire company. I was then able to work with select members of the company for the rest of the evening. I've assigned individual solo lines to some of the kids I'm feeling confident about. Nikeisha, Rukiya, Ali of course, Rhea-Ann, and Ronndell! These students really stand out. I feel like I can count on them, so they are getting more lines. I would like to count on Angel. She looks the part, but she's been acting flaky, a real adolescent!

Tuesday, December 10: I met with the gods and Ti Moune and Daniel tonight. First we did some serious table work on character. These kids are truly some of the most talented I've worked with. They really get it! I had scheduled Ti Moune and Daniel to stay after the others left, and we worked on their bedroom scene. They both had their lines, so it really went smoothly. I feel like we've set it! We'll see how it goes on Thurs.

Thursday, December 12: I suggested Ti Moune and Daniel show their scene to the others. Everyone was impressed. This gave us a great starting off point. All went well. No problems. There are several holiday concerts and other conflicts that we are working around. Final exams are next week also!

Thursday, December 17: Entire company met tonight in the recital hall. We moved through the show with music and lines. Not too bad. We meet again on Saturday. I'm anticipating the full

day rehearsal. Everyone will be fresh. No one will have school to worry about. We can be totally focused on the show.

Saturday, December 21: What a great day! All principals were present and only two little ones were missing. This rehearsal was held at Mt. Zion H. S. because the main house at the PAC is still being utilized by a rental group. This happens every year and concerns me since the facility should be ours first, but this is a rental and a community holiday program. Anyway, back to focusing on our rehearsal...we were able to really put it together today! We desperately need the platforms so the pit chorus people can know exactly how they will be seen. I don't think they realize just how important they are and how much they will be seen. Ronda worked with them a little more today on gestures. Bob has promised us platforms at our next rehearsal. I wished everyone a safe and happy holiday! Our next rehearsal is Monday, Dec 30 from 9-5. This is a change from my original proposed schedule. I was able to change this prior to presenting at our first company meeting. Dan (PAC director) certainly has been cooperative and worked this out for me. Gary will come over and open up for us and then come by at the end of the day and close up. Mary will still be out of town unfortunately which I'm afraid means that the lighting design will be delayed. Since this certainly isn't my area of expertise, I'm dependent upon her. We need more people trained on our light board. Arranging our rehearsal for the 30<sup>th</sup> will allow everyone to have a full week of much needed vacation! Hopefully this down time will not hurt the show but will invigorate all of us! This will also mean that we will have our entire production staff except Mary K. in attendance.

Monday, December 30: Great rehearsal! The tree and platforms that Bob had for us really put a punch in things. I guess most of us are visual and seeing some of the set makes it all seem more like a reality. Of course, some of the students were not impressed with the wire and sheets Bob

he's planning to major in music. What about that! Well, one of the greatest joys of working with this county show is the opportunity to work with so many wonderfully talented and intelligent kids. More later...

Friday, January 3: Wow! What a full day! We ran the entire show by sectioning it off in order to work with both elementary groups. We did all of the first act in the morning and the numbers the little people do in the second act. In the afternoon we ran the second and did the numbers from the first act that the little people are doing. We've divided the show into two acts even though it's not written with an act break. I talked with Stacy (our pit conductor) some time ago about playing some kind of overture and entr'acte even though none was originally written. He suggested some type of percussion show. He stopped by today and reported that the music is coming along nicely. I've been concerned because back in Dec. when we sent the soloists over to rehearse with the pit group they really didn't sound like they were ready for them. There are always additional problems with sound balance. They really need to be with us earlier. I will speak with Paul (executive producer) and John (producer) and ask them to do what they can to motivate Stacy.

Monday, January 6: Today was a work day for teachers. Students return to classes tomorrow. This evening was also our monthly school board meeting. Mary R. (costumer) and I met a dozen of our cast members at the central office complex. Paul wanted us to have them in costume and pass out a flyer advertising the show. Of course he had already sent them a formal invitation. He's just covering all bases. We enjoyed doing this! We anticipate more of the set being in place tomorrow night.

Tuesday, January 7: Well, I think everyone is totally aware that the show is next week! Our run went smoothly this evening. We had only the "A" group of elementary kids there. I don't know

what has happened to Daisy (props). She was suppose to bring baskets and a few other props to one of our rehearsals during the holidays. I've emailed her. Hopefully she will return my email. Meantime I've rounded up some things from my house. It is just absolutely necessary that the cast have these things to rehearse with now. For the ball scene we've got the special dancers playing servants at the beginning, passing out drinks, etc. I took trays, and plastic wine glasses for them to circulate to the guests. They handled this beautifully. They managed to put things down and begin dancing right on cue. I don't know if Ronda told them what to do or they just figured it out. Anyway, I commended them during notes. These girls that are part of Ronda's dance company have done the county show the last two years I've been directing, but this year they have really become more a part of the show. Of course this was Ronda's intention all along, but this year it happened. I now feel like I really know several from working with them repeatedly. Maybe this has made the difference. Ronda will be choreographing my spring musical, and some of her girls will come to auditions and help her. They plan to dance with us too. We're doing The Wiz, and somewhere in the back of my mind I know it's important to have the next project ready to go because it's going to be hard to close Island. My advanced theatre students will be performing student directed one acts in early March. And I'm confident that Island will be selected to perform at our state thespian conference in Feb., so surely by the time we officially close the show, I'll be ready to move on. Oh, we will be screened for the state conference next Friday, our opening night, and George will arrive that afternoon. His plans are to get in that day and see the show the next evening. His wife's brother and wife live hereby. I will pick him up that afternoon and drop him off at their house. With only four performances all will be attended by someone very special. I'm hoping our renovations here at the house will be



completed enough to have some folks over when George is in town; otherwise, we'll take everyone out somewhere. All this is next week, my focus returns to this week. We've still got a lot to do before opening. And that's just the production! I've got plans set to have my advanced students help me prepare the thank you candies and laminated notes for the entire company. I'll give the adults one of these, but I'm planning a special gift for each one of my production staff. I'll have time to get these together for our get together on January 29. Not to worry about this now!

Thursday, January 9: This evening went well! I think our kids will be ready for next week. At least the cast is prepared. I think the music truly sounds the best ever! Kelly is so grand! How tremendously talented all our production staff is! Mary K. has begun to play with the lights, and we are going to sit down tomorrow to talk again. The sound system has been sounding great, but that's without the pit playing. With only the keyboard as musical accompaniment, I know this is not a real reading of how it's going to sound. Oh, I did talk to Paul and John. It's still going to be Monday before Stacy and the pit are with us, but I'm sure that Paul has motivated Stacy to have his act together. Susan H. had me proof the program for her. It looks wonderful. She is a wonder!! She's always so calm and makes me feel as if all things are possible!

Friday, January 10: I met with Mary K. and we went back over the entire script. I really want those pin spots on Ti Moune and Daniel and then again later in the show on Ti Moune. Mary says she will make it happen. There have been problems with the intelligent lighting system, but she has assured me that she'll get it worked out. The rented backdrop has just arrived so a full understanding of what the set and lighting will look like is just becoming possible.

Unfortunately, we can not have a rehearsal in the main house tomorrow because of the annual honor chorus event. Sunday afternoon we have pictures scheduled, and we will run some rough

honor chorus event. Sunday afternoon we have pictures scheduled, and we will run some rough spots. Mary will be out of town, but she has promised to work on her light plot and have most of it in place for Monday night. I know all this is going to happen!

Sunday, January 12: The photographer was wonderful! We put the kids in the tree for individual pictures, and then used the whole first act set for the company picture. This process just takes such a long time. The first year I directed the county show I found out the hard way by scheduling a rehearsal on the same day. By allotting the appropriate picture time we were able to still run a few rough spots which included all the numbers with the little ones. We practiced the closing "bow" as well. I think we're ready for our technical rehearsal tomorrow night.

Hopefully the technical things will be in place.

Monday, January 13: Oh, the list is long...The lighting plot is not in place yet as promised! The light on the gods is missing. The three guys on the platform need light. I want my "pin" spots! Overall, lighting was not showcasing the appropriate groups on stage. I'm sure this is because Mary just hasn't seen enough of the show, and yesterday's rehearsal would not have helped much. I had hoped that sometime in the last several weeks she was paying closer attention to our rehearsals; however, it really wasn't until Bob had completed the entire set and the backdrop had arrived that she could do a final design. Hopefully by opening night we'll have appropriate lighting! Oh, the lights kept going on and off in places. Mary explained before I could ask her that she was setting some things. I have to trust that the lights will be there and worry about more of the things that I can control! My cast notes were extensive! We did stop in sufficient time to run notes, and I still have more to give them before we start tomorrow. What has happened to their articulation and projection? I'm afraid that the dialect is interfering with their ability to be understood. Some are talking too fast as well. Paul is coming early tomorrow night

push their voices so much. They're going flat! Mama does the same thing on her beautiful solo. I believe she's learned it wrong because it's the exact same spot in the song where it always happens, but all the rest of it sounds wonderful. Chevonne has developed such a nice character. Oh, Phillip is looking much more manly! I'm proud of him. Anita continues to look fluid in all her movements, and her voice is lovely! Rachel is superb! We have so much talent in this show. Ali and Nicole have those beautiful soprano voices that are featured throughout the show. Surely everyone will notice that we have an enormous amount of talent and not just the kids with the big solos. I don't think I've ever heard better! Robert can't stand wearing his head piece. I explained how it completes his costume, and it is a work of art! Patrice designed the gods' head pieces, and they look marvelous! More later, I've got to get some sleep! Oh, Susan had me do the final proof on the program today. It's going to the print shop today. I'm so impressed that our school system has such a shop that can produce a program like this one in such a short time. Of course Paul worked it out to be a priority over there I'm sure. We usually have to get things in very early. This late printing has allowed us to have accuracy that usually isn't possible.

Tuesday, January 14: The rehearsal video for my thesis was made tonight. I hope the quality will be okay. The technical things went somewhat better tonight, but the lighting is still not completely there and the sound is not sufficient with the pit playing. Lights still went on and off a few times. I was afraid when we added the pit this would happen. If I ever do this show again, I would like to use a small musical ensemble. Anyway, Stacy will have to hold the pit back or the audience will miss a lot of the show. Of course better articulation and projection on the part of the performers will help! We've all worked too hard! I communicated in this in my notes this evening. I did tell them that I was proud of much of the show, but that I know we can reach a

little higher. We've got thespian conference screening on Friday night and George will be here on Sat. doing my evaluation. I haven't said much to the cast about George's arrival, but they know how important this is to me. Of course the conference is something that many of our students have attended so they certainly want to be selected to perform for it. The conference is filled to capacity, all 1800 seats occupied by outrageously excited thespians!

Thursday, January 16: Last night's final dress rehearsal went well, but several technical things are still not right. Sound and lights continue to be a concern. The fog machine worked, but was late. Regardless of these problems, I know the cast is ready and will give a good performance this evening. I've never presented a better rehearsed show.

Saturday, January 18: George arrived yesterday afternoon. I picked him up at the airport and dropped him over at his brother-in-law's house. I'm picking him back up this afternoon and dropping him at his motel. He will stay there tonight. It's closer to the PAC. Last night the thespian conference screeners attended the show. They were complimentary and will let me know something by Monday. I'm sure we will be selected! Some of my CWU classmates will attend this evening and several others thinking about the CWU program. I'm planned a social for after the show so everyone can see George. I wanted to do this at the house, but our renovations will prevent this. The workmen are here now. I'm not a very patient person, so having all this work done on the house while being involved in this production, as insane as it seems, has probably been good for me.

Monday, January 20: Today is the MLK holiday and the day after our final public performance; however, we didn't strike the set last night because if we perform for conference we will need it. I'll find out something later today or tonight. Well, Sat. night's performance with George in attendance went well. There were minor problems, but overall I was pleased. I picked him up

early Sun. morning for breakfast before dropping him at the airport for his return flight. George had lots of wonderful ideas for improving the show before conference. He will type them and send me a copy, but I took notes so that I could utilize some of his suggestions if we perform for conference. I've already tentatively built in three rehearsals. George was complimentary for the most part. His criticisms were fair, and I am looking forward to having the opportunity to still improve a good show. I've never had the opportunity to take a show to a higher level. The conference performance will provide this. Yesterday's matinee was the best attended show. Wow! What a terrific audience.

Tuesday, January 21: We were selected to perform for the conference!!! Back to work! Susan will inform everyone for us and remind them of the rehearsal schedule. I will meet with production staff on Thursday for an update of our plans. This is all so exciting! More later...

Sunday, February 9: The conference performance was a tremendous success. We performed on Friday afternoon, which was not my first choice of time, but it did work well with including the elementary students. No one has ever performed at our state conference with little ones. Paul and Susan arranged for buses to pick up the students who needed transportation from their schools. Everyone worked hard to lift the show to a higher level. Having a week off helped get everyone rested. I would say that every aspect of the show was stronger than the performances in January. I am so proud of our entire company. We did it together. The story of "Ti Moune" will stay in my heart forever!!!

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
MASTER'S IN THEATRE PRODUCTION

THESIS PRODUCTION RESPONSE

**KATHY BAKER**

*Once On This Island*

by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003

On the evening of January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003 I attended Kathy's thesis production at the Clayton County Schools Performing Arts center in Clayton County, Georgia. It was a wonderfully enjoyable evening.

**The space** was a beautiful new performing arts center, complete with three theatre spaces. These three spaces are a small concert hall that seats about 350, a small studio theatre which also seats about 350, and a large proscenium theatre seating approximately 1000 or so. The largest theatre is where this project was produced. It is a state of the art theatre with ample fly and wing space, a deep apron, sizable orchestra pit and good lighting positions. Backstage there are dressing rooms, a green room, and even an attached scene shop. This is a crown jewel in the crown of Georgia's state education system! What a joy it must be for a secondary school theatre educator to produce a play in this theatre! I found myself wishing that all drama teachers in elementary and secondary education were so blessed by the vision and support of their administrators, parents, and taxpayers.

My first impression of the evening was looking through the extremely well produced program. It was very professionally produced, with beautiful full color art and professional typography. It was a pleasure to read.

The next thing that struck me was the diversity of the audience, and later, the company. I felt welcomed by all and I came away with a very strong feeling for the inclusiveness and unity of administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and children.

The production began with a good, if somewhat longish curtain speech by the producer.

**The set**, designed and constructed by Bob Putnam, was colorfully evocative of the Caribbean culture. My first view of the set was of a small hut on the apron DSL in front of a closed curtain. I wish that this hut had been used more by the director and perhaps balanced visually by another set element DSR. The full stage drop was colorful and appropriate, though it seemed not quite wide enough for the stage. I loved the cut drops depicting various types of foliage, which added dimension and depth to the nicely designed tree. The large 2-story rocky outcrop SR gave the director 2 levels and some depth to work with. I do wish she had been able to use the small cave or alcove more effectively. I liked the fact that this unit rotated to become the façade of the mansion. The bridge [?] USC didn't seem quite finished. I mourn the lack of floor treatment, but understand why it might not have been able to be done. Overall, a beautiful set.

**The lighting design** by Mary Kraack, was especially commendable for its' use of color. I particularly liked the storm sequence at the top of the play. The coverage overall was somewhat uneven and I found myself wishing that the designer had aided the director in establishing focus at key moments by bringing down the general illumination and popping the light up in the areas where key scenes were taking place. More consistent use of followspots,

combined with some softening of the hard edges on the pool of light, would have also aided in establishing focus for the audience. The use of intelligent lighting fixtures worked well in many scenes. Some areas seemed under-lit, for example the “bridge” USC and areas like the second levels of the rock and the mansion. I was pleased to see the use of gobos, providing another layer of visual texture to the production. I questioned some of the specific gobo choices, however. The angular pattern used on the trees at one point, for example, seemed distinctly non-organic and clashed with the set elements visually. I really loved the stars projected on the drop at the end, but wondered if the foreground could have been a little better lit. Overall, nicely done!

**Costume design**, by first time designer Mary Ramsaier, was eclectic and colorfully appropriate. The choice to clothe the *grands hommes* in all white with a splash of red was inspired and contrasted well with the rainbow of color worn by the rest of the cast. I particularly loved the headpieces [beautifully designed by art teacher Patrice Grier] worn by the gods. These were complimented nicely by the work of makeup designer Lindsey Clinton. The only thing I might have wished for was for the peasants’ costumes to be a little dirtier and more distressed to provide more of a contrast between them and the wealthy nobles.

**Sound**, supervised by Carolyn Marcus, was somewhat uneven. There were some problems with balance between the orchestra and singers, the former sometimes drowning out the latter. Also, in the second act, there were some problems with off-stage miking. Several times during key moments on-stage, I distinctly heard mics being tapped, distracting the audience during otherwise terrific moments.

**The stage management** and running of the show was pretty solid, with only a few mis-cues evident. I particularly wondered if the fog cues for the entrances of Papa Ge could have been tightened up.

**Musical direction**, by Kelly Roberts, and **orchestra conducting**, by Stacy Brown, seemed very tight. Vocally, the actors [especially several of the soloists] seemed well trained and rehearsed. Some of the soloists seemed timid and could not be heard. I also lost the frogs in *Mama Will Provide*. Articulation in general was spotty, but most of the leading singers had good, crisp diction. The orchestra was quite sharp, with only a few noticeable slips [most of which occurred in the overture]. At times, the orchestras’ sound overpowered the singers. I was particularly impressed with the percussion work, which started off the show. Very nice work overall!

**Dance choreographer** Ronda Price got the most out of the large and mostly inexperienced cast. The staging was simplistic, but achievable, appropriate, and pleasant to the eye, especially in the large group numbers. She obviously made the most of trained dancers in the featured solos. The best number was the second act opener *Mama Will Provide*. Very engaging and fun!

**The acting** in the production was very solid overall. Actor’s intentions seemed to be mostly clear and consistently present. Actor pacing was somewhat inconsistent with some moments rushed and others too slow [especially transitions between moments/beats]. Volume was fairly good, with consistent problems dropping vocal energy at the ends of words/lines. Articulation could have been more consistent also. Actors tend to get lazy when they know they are being miked and this cast was no exception. I estimate that I lost about one-third of the dialogue/story due to poor articulation. I lost almost all of the dialogue at the end of the play. Dialect work was uneven overall among the cast and inconsistent in the songs. Movement and blocking were generally executed well, but there were moments of wandering, not staying in



character while exiting, and so on. I was very impressed with the sense of unity among the cast. Nice ensemble work from a cast of very talented young people!

Although the ensemble work was terrific, there were several actors whose performances stood out during the evening. Anita Coachman, as Ti Moune, carried the show with a fine singing voice and crisp articulation. She gave a consistent, engaging performance. Tom Presley, as Papa Ge, gave an engaging, theatrical performance, clearly enjoying himself in his role as a “Demon of Death”. His vocal and physical work was consistent and strong. Rachel Holmes, as Asaka, stole the evening with her bravura performance of the second act opener, *Mama Will Provide*. Her vocal control and range is impressive.

**The direction** of the play was very solid overall, with good blocking and stage pictures. There were some awkward staging moments and wandering actors. The pace of the show was quick but uneven; some moments seemed a bit slow, while others seemed to lack time for reflection by either characters or audience. The composition of the actors was good and picturization well done, but inconsistent. The tone of the production was even, demonstrating the light, quick touch of the director.

Addressing some specific directorial choices, I would like to use some examples. In staging, I very much liked Kathy’s creative use of the ensemble to illustrate action. For example, the moment where the flood carried away the body near the top of the play. Kathy used dynamic groupings for crowd scenes, but focus was sometimes lacking. I found myself wondering where I should be looking, when I could hear dialogue, but not identify who was speaking in crowd scene. I sometimes wondered if the director was simply putting all the bodies she had on stage, instead of thinking about what would be an appropriate number, both visually and for the content of the scene. Many of the actors seemed to wander aimlessly. Perhaps they needed to move less, but have a stronger sense of purpose when they do move. There seemed also to be quite a lot of playing upstage while delivering lines. Perhaps more use of inverted triangles, with the point of focus downstage instead of upstage would have helped? A moment where the pacing could have slowed down a bit was the end of the play, when Daniel stops to give Ti Moune a coin outside the gates. This series of moments seemed rushed and the tempo of their actions seemed too fast. I wanted to savor them. Overall, though, a commendable achievement and a job well done!

As a final consideration, the choice of this play for this director, company, and school(s) was an excellent one. It was an ambitious, yet ultimately rewarding choice for all involved. I know the project was rewarding as an intensive learning environment. I saw evidence of this in the dedication and collaborative work of the company, the staff, the parents, and the director. All are to be congratulated on a fun, enjoyable evening and a solidly executed production. Bravo!

George Bellah  
CWU Theatre Arts Chair &  
Graduate Coordinator



## Self-evaluation

First I must say that each and every time I work in our performing arts center I am grateful to the citizens of our county. It was funded by a bond referendum. This wonderful facility is the envy of many in our state. It is the finest school system theatre complex in Georgia, and it is considered one of the finest in the nation.

The main house with its fly system was the performance space we utilized for this production. This allowed our set designer to incorporate both a backdrop and hanging foliage. The 68 foot wide stage floor allowed for two large set pieces, a mountain/hotel beauxhomme and a tree. Large casters were used on both these pieces which made it possible to rotate their use during intermission. This was part of the reason an intermission was built into the show.

Bob Putnam designed and constructed the set with the assistance of his art students from Jonesboro High School. The set was visually beautiful and indicative of an island in the Caribbean. Bob is a creative genius. I just wish that the hut had been completed before opening night. I thought of having it moved during intermission from down left to down right, but that would have interfered with some of our blocking and the elementary entrance at the end of the show. If we could have worked with it earlier, I would have moved the hut and the tree to stage right for the first act and then moved the hut and tree to left and the house to right for the second act. I think this would have helped to maintain a visual balance throughout the show; however, I certainly have nothing but the greatest admiration for Bob Putnam and his visual creation of our island.

The technical director of the performing arts center, Mary Kraack, designed the lighting. For special lighting she used intelligent lighting, gobos, and pin spots. I had made a request for the use of a pin spot in several places in the show. We do not see them used very often in our school

plays, but I have seen them quite often in professional theatre. I was extremely pleased with the visual appearance and dramatic effect the pin spot had on Ti Moune when she was distraught over her loss of Daniel.

Some of my concern with the lighting plot was addressed by Mary when she explained that she had trouble with the computerized board. For some reason there was difficulty moving in and out of the intelligent lighting system. In addition, the foliage seemed to block some of the light, so perhaps it should have been hung differently. The fog machine is also controlled from the light booth, and even when it was properly cued, it was late. These problems were in the end overshadowed by some of the special effects Mary produced with the storm at the very beginning of the show and the beautiful stars on the backdrop at the end of the show. Of course the pin spot on Ti Moune will remain in my memory forever.

Mary Ramsaier stepped into her position as costume designer later than other members of our production staff; however, I feel she did an outstanding job with the design and construction of the costumes. I met and talked with her about my ideas but emphasized how important I thought it was that this costume plot be her own creation. I did not even take the original sketches I had from the other designer. I told Mary that if she wanted to look at them, I would be happy to send them to her. She never asked to see them but immediately began to work on her own designs. Only two days later, she showed me sketches and internet designs she found. She then prepared, and emailed me for approval, a sheet for the cast that explained costume needs.

When Mary made arrangements with a local costume rental house to meet and select some things, she got several possible appointment times and then invited me to go at my convenience. I was overwhelmed at her generous spirit and obvious respect for my position as director. We

lost no time in completing costuming although we had made the change in designer, in fact, Mary actually finished her work with time to spare.

The sound board was run by Carolyn Marcus and Josh Acree. While they were efficient in remaining attentive to the needs of the show, the system did not provide the best sound. The pit overpowered the performers much of the time, and during the first night, Daniel's microphone died just before his big solo. I was assured that this was not due to a battery problem, and he was given another one as soon as he walked into the wings. All along this has been one of my greatest concerns. This concern is shared by many, and as a result of this production and the problems we experienced, plans are underway to correct this situation.

Theresa Kimball served as our stage manager. She provided direction and "calm" backstage while supervising our crew of students. Tiffany Schley, the rail supervisor, was the student back stage I came to depend upon. On several occasions Theresa was unable to make a rehearsal. Tiffany was right there fulfilling my every request. There were no major problems back stage during the run of the show, and I attribute this mainly to Theresa and Tiffany.

Working with Ronda Price is a joy. She has an incredible work ethic and always creates choreography that is both challenging and yet attainable. She is highly disciplined and expects the cast to work to their full capacity each and every time she rehearses with them. Ronda makes non-dancers feel and look like dancers, and designs more challenging routines for those in the company who have dance experience. I have tremendous respect for her and her work. Ronda is considerably younger, but we share a passion for the work we do which provides a connection that years cannot separate.

Kelly Roberts is one of the most incredible human beings I have ever known. She has the singing voice of an angel and an intuitive spirit of one too. Kelly was our music director. We

have worked together the last three years, and I believe we have created a strong bond. Our close relationship provides an understanding that seems to go beyond words. We were able to work through difficulties with individual cast members and other problems with a greater ease and sophistication than I recall ever having experienced. I certainly felt more strength and control of all my duties because of the tremendous support from Kelly. Our rehearsal process began with Kelly teaching the music. By the time that I seriously was working with the cast, they were like putty in my hands. Collaborating with Kelly was tremendously rewarding and pleasurable.

Although the pit orchestra overpowered the singers much of the time, the quality of sound was one of the best I have ever experienced. Stacy Brown conducted, and he and his assistant band director Todd Manson created a percussion show as an overture. This was a real audience pleaser and created an island atmosphere; however, if I should ever do this show again, I would probably elect to use a very small musical ensemble. This is all that the show really needs, and then there would not be the problem of balance.

I have never worked with a more talented, intelligent, or attentive group of young people. This cast seemed driven to excel. This kept me highly motivated to meet their need to excel; thereby, applying the knowledge that I had acquired during the Central Washington Theatre Production Master's Program was not only a requirement of this project, but really became a necessity.

Improvisation worked wonderfully with this group, and we created many of the stage pictures through improvisational exercises. We talked levels and triangles all the time, but with such a large group I noticed even during performances some straight lines. I worked with all the cast on

development of character, not just the principals. We formed families amongst the company, and it was a joy to see some of these same family members interacting off stage.

This show lends itself to creating an understanding of visual metaphor. We talked about animals and other living things on the island when we worked on "One Small Girl." I have strong visual images of their creations, and I have had others who saw the show to tell me how interesting it was to see the cast using metaphorical symbolism.

The most problematic area was working with dialect, articulation, and projection. Many in the cast had previous experience, but creating a "show dialect" seemed to inhibit their ability to speak clearly. I kept reminding them that the sound system would not fix sloppy speech. We did work with individuals, and our executive producer even came early to one of our last rehearsals to help with this. His participation woke them up to how important this must be, but I believe experience is the best teacher. Scheduling more time for this in the rehearsal schedule would help.

John Odom served as our producer. We worked together previously on The Wizard of Oz. John was our music director on that production, and perhaps his having worked on that show gave him an understanding of just how important a good producer is to the production. He handled many aspects of business that would otherwise have been my responsibility, freeing me to focus on the artistic elements.

Having a producer for a high school production is not unheard of, but certainly this is normally not the case. When I do a show at my own school, I am the producer and director. While there is a feeling of control in being both producer and director, collaboration is one of my greatest strengths, so I enjoyed having a producer to accept the responsibility of the business

aspects of production. John always took time to check up on me and our staff by dropping by many of our rehearsals. He was there to provide assistance if needed and help where possible. John certainly contributed to the success of this production and I will forever be in his debt.

Susan Herbert, our county fine arts secretary, created the professional looking Once On This Island program; however, her contributions were far greater than this single aspect. Susan was supportive of the production staff in almost every area. From the first production staff meeting we had until the final performance, she was there. I called upon Susan and her sound judgment many times during this project and always found her to be resourceful and helpful. My admiration and love for this lady goes far beyond words.

Our Coordinator of Fine Arts, Mr. Paul Robbins, was and has been for a long time my mentor. He stays behind the scenes, planning and delegating, advising and encouraging, but it is his vision that I admire the most. Paul created the county musical project over seven years ago. Because of his relentless spirit in working for us, and faith in those of us who work for him, I have been strengthened as an individual and as a director. I hope Paul has a feeling of tremendous gratification in knowing that he is responsible for the success of a project that affects the lives of so many. The ultimate success of Once On This Island must be attributed to Paul.

My philosophy of direction has always been to share the concept with the production staff and allow them to freely create their own designs. I enjoy working with talented people who go far beyond my comprehension when designing in their own areas of expertise. The creative imagination of a group is far greater than that of one. This philosophy has always worked for me and while learning much more about play production during this master's program, I have also received validation for beliefs I brought into the program. The course work and production project provided me with great opportunities to grow. By learning more about all areas of play

production, I am now more knowledgeable and therefore capable of sharing and communicating with a talented cast and production staff; whereby, together we can more successfully create the world of the play.

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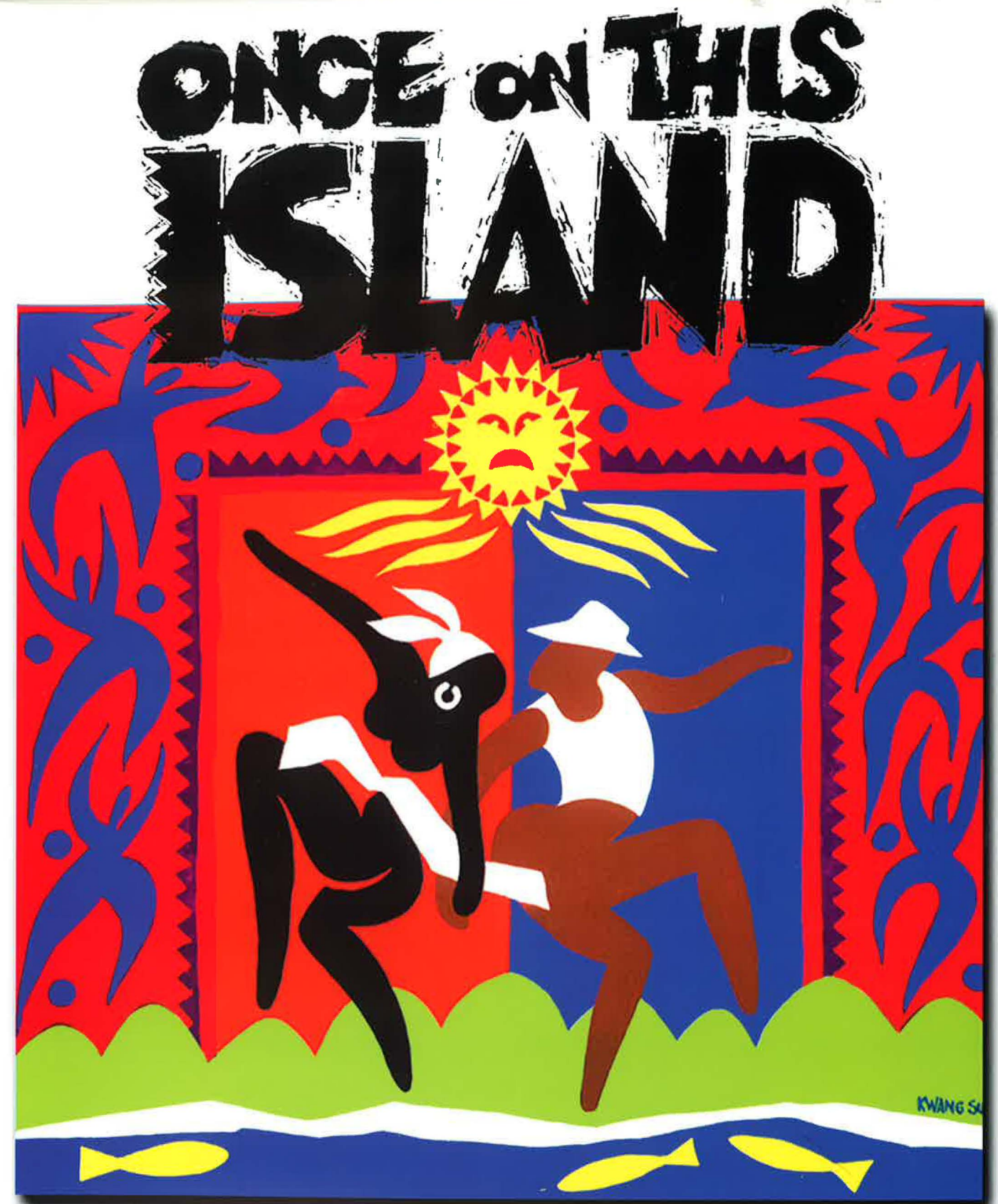
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**CLAYTON COUNTY SCHOOLS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

The 2003  
All-County, All-Star, Honor Musical

# **ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**

Lynn Ahrens  
Book and Lyrics  
Stephen Flaherty  
Music

Based Upon Rosa Guy's  
*My Love, My Love*



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## Production Notes

*Once on This Island* is a delightful musical fable with book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty. It is based on Rosa Guy's novel *My Love, My Love*, which in turn was inspired by Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid*. The show was first presented Off-Broadway by Playwrights Horizons as part of its 1989-1990 seasons.

The show is deceptively simple: a group of Caribbean Island peasants waits out the night of a terrible storm by performing a fairy tale of star-crossed lovers; but inherent in this tale are the serious themes of class distinction and racial prejudice which plague our own society. Through music, song and dance, the musical explores universal issues that affect us all - love, anger, forgiveness, faith, maturity and death.

*Once on This Island* explores the tradition of storytelling, not only as entertainment, but as a means of passing down history, values and insights from one generation to the next. It deals with the classic themes of love, loss and redemption through the fabric of Caribbean culture, art, religion and social structure. The show is set on an unspecified island in the French Antilles on the night of a violent tropical storm. In a small hut, a group of island peasants huddles together around a fire. A young child cries out in fear as the storm rages, and the peasants try to soothe and divert her by acting out a story about the power of love. The telling of the story spans the course of the night, as the peasants weave their tale in song and dance. By the end of the night, the storm has subsided, the peasants have survived, and the little girl has learned the meaning of the story.

*Once on This Island* was first developed in a workshop setting at Playwrights Horizons in New York City during the 1989-1990 season. It received the AT&T "New Plays for The Nineties" Award, and was chosen as one of the "Ten Best Plays for '89-'90" by the *Burns Mantle Yearbook*. After opening to rave reviews in May 1990 and enjoying a sold-out run off-Broadway, *Once on This Island* made a smooth transition to Broadway, where it was produced at the Booth Theatre. The cast remained intact, the show remained virtually unchanged and the production proved once again to be successful with critics and audiences alike. The show began its Broadway run on October 18, 1990, and played 469 performances.

*Once on This Island* was nominated for eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Book, Music and Lyrics, and was nominated for Best Musical by the New York Drama Critics Circle. The original cast album was recorded by RCA-Victor and became one of the top selling CD's of the year.

## Plot Synopsis

In a small hut on the night of a raging storm, peasants on an island in the French Antilles huddle together around a fire to wait out the wind and the rain. As lightning flashes and thunder roars, a little girl cries out in fear. In order to calm her, the peasants begin to tell her a story. In the opening number, "We Dance," the peasants describe their world, in which their lives are ruled by powerful gods and their island is ruled by the wealthy "*grands hommes*." They explain the peasants and *grands hommes* belong to "two different worlds, never meant to meet."

In "One Small Girl," they begin the tale of Ti Moune, who fell in love with a *grand homme* after being "chosen by the gods for a magical fate." They describe how the gods spared her life during a flood when she was a child, and how loving adoptive parents raised her. By the end of the song, Ti Moune has grown into a beautiful young woman.

In "Waiting for Life," Ti Moune (who is now working in the fields) yearns for the future she feels she has been promised by the gods. She reminds them they have singled her out and tells them not to forget her. A *grand homme* dressed in white drives past her in his automobile and she fantasizes he will someday carry her off to a grand new life.

In "And The Gods Heard Her Prayers," the gods of Earth, Water, Love and Death decide to give Ti Moune her *grand homme* as a test to prove whether love or death is the more powerful god. They will each play a part in this test.

Agwe (the God of Water) begins the proceedings by causing a night of "Rain". He causes the young *grand homme* (Daniel) to crash his car on a dark road, and allows Ti Moune to discover him. Ti Moune cradles Daniel in her arms, realizing the gods have answered her prayer.

Despite the objections of the peasants, Ti Moune cares for Daniel. As her father (Tonton Julian) goes off in search of Daniel's family, her mother (Mama Euralie) observes Ti Moune has become obsessed with Daniel. Tonton Julian discovers Daniel's family lived behind the guarded gates of a fine hotel. The peasants fear Ti Moune's folly will invoke the wrath of the gods. They "Pray" to ward off evil as a terrible storm begins.

Inside her hut, Ti Moune pledges her love to the unconscious Daniel in the song "Forever Yours." She imagines him healthy and pledging his love for her in return. Papa Ge, (the Demon of Death) interrupts the song, arrives to claim Daniel's life. Ti Moune promises to give up her own life and soul if Papa Ge will spare Daniel. He gleefully agrees to her bargain.

The peasants perform "The Sad Tale of the Beauxhommes," a pantomime in which they enact the history of the island. They begin with the French conquest of the island and describe how a French aristocrat (Armand) fathered a son by a black peasant girl. The son (Beauxhomme) grows into a man and leads a revolution against the French, driving them off the island and thereby inheriting their wealth. Before he leaves, Armand puts a curse on Beauxhomme: Beauxhomme and his descendants will forever long for France but be sentenced to remain on the island because of their black blood.

The Storytellers return to the story of Ti Moune: Tonton Julian leads Daniel's family to Daniel, who is carried back to his world. Ti Moune insists on following Daniel. Although her parents plead with her to remain with them, they finally allow her to leave with their blessing ("Ti Moune").

Ti Moune's journey begins as the Storytellers enter as birds, trees, frogs and breezes. They introduce Asaka (Mother of the Earth), who promises Ti Moune "Mama Will Provide" all the things she is likely to need on her way. As Ti Moune ventures on, the Storytellers portray the vendors, city folks and tourists she meets, as well as the guard at the gates of the Hotel Beauxhommes. They mime her journey and the things "Some Say" she must have experienced.

Ti Moune enters Daniel's room. He lies in bed, still feverish from his injuries. After she convinces him she has come to heal him, he agrees to let her stay. As Ti Moune lies down beside him, Erzulie (the Goddess of Love) appears and presides over them in the song "The Human Heart."

In "Pray" (Reprise), the Storytellers gossip about the unlikely union of a *grand homme* and a peasant girl as Daniel and Ti Moune fall deeply in love. The gossips insist although Ti Moune may be Daniel's lover, she will never become his wife.

On a starlit evening, Ti Moune tells Daniel of her dreams for their future. He replies she is different from "Some Girls" he has known as says "some girls you marry, some you love." As he sings, another girl dresses before a mirror, her elegant movements and clothes in contrast to Ti Moune's simplicity and earthiness.

At a ball at the Hotel Beauxhommes, the *grands hommes* eagerly wait for a glance of Ti Moune. She arrives, dressed beautifully but simply ("The Ball"). Daniel introduces Ti Moune to Andrea Devereaux, the girl we saw dressing for the ball. At Andrea's request, Ti Moune dances, enchanting everyone at the ball ("Ti Moune's Dance"). As Ti Moune celebrates her triumphant performance, Andrea asks her to perform at the wedding of Andrea and Daniel.

Daniel tells Ti Moune he was promised to Andrea as a child and "this is how things are done." Ti Moune is in shock and Daniel bluntly tells her they could never have married.

Desolate and alone, Ti Moune hears critical voices from the past. Papa Ge appears and reminds her of her promise, reprising "Forever Yours." He gives Ti Moune a chance to save her life: instead of surrendering her own soul, she may choose to kill Daniel. Reminding her of Daniel's betrayal, Papa Ge gives her a knife.

Ti Moune is about to kill Daniel when Erzulie appears to remind her of her love for Daniel. Ti Moune hurls down the knife, choosing her love for Daniel over her desire to live. Erzulie, Goodness of Love, has triumphed over Papa Ge, Demon of Death.

Ti Moune is thrown out of the Hotel Beauxhommes. She waits for weeks, not eating or sleeping, until Daniel and Andrea pass by her after their wedding, tossing coins to the peasants. She calls out to Daniel and he pauses by her side for a moment before moving on. She curls up in despair, and from her hand falls the coin Daniel has pressed into it.

Mama Euralie begins a lament for Ti Moune, "A Part of Us." The Storytellers enact Ti Moune's death. She is passed gently from one god to the next, until at last Asaka takes Ti Moune to her breast, and lays her to rest in the earth.

Ti Moune is resurrected from the earth as a beautiful tree that will shelter peasants both and *grands hommes* for many years to come. The Storytellers tell the little girl how Daniel's young son encountered a beautiful peasant girl in the tree and the spirit of Ti Moune set the two free to love one another. The Storytellers explain this is "Why We Tell the Story," singing to the little girl that "out of what we live and we believe, our lives become the stories that we weave."

As the little girl begins to retell the story, the Storytellers resume their places around the fire. The stars come out as the lights fade on them.

## Musical Numbers

<i>Prologue/We Dance</i>	Company
<i>One Small Girl</i>	Mama, Tonton, Little Ti Moune, and Storytellers
<i>Waiting for Life</i>	Ti Moune and Storytellers
<i>And the Gods Hear Her Prayer</i>	The Gods
<i>Rain</i>	Agwe and Storytellers
<i>Discovering Daniel</i>	Ti Moune
<i>Pray</i>	Tonton, Ti Moune, Mama, Armand, and Storytellers
<i>Forever Yours</i>	Ti Moune, Daniel, and Papa Ge
<i>The Sad Tale of the Beauxhommes</i>	Storytellers
<i>Ti Moune</i>	Mama, Tonton, and Ti Moune

### Intermission

<i>Mama Will Provide</i>	Asaka and Storytellers
<i>Waiting for Life – Reprise</i>	Ti Moune
<i>Some Say</i>	Storytellers
<i>The Human Heart</i>	Erzulie
<i>Pray – Reprise</i>	Ti Moune, Daniel, Armand, and Storytellers
<i>Some Girls</i>	Daniel
<i>The Ball</i>	Andrea, Daniel, Ti Moune, and Storytellers
<i>Ti Moune's Dance</i>	Ti Moune (Dancer)
<i>Andrea's Sequence</i>	Andrea, Daniel, and Ti Moune
<i>Promises/Forever Yours - Reprise</i>	Papa Ge, Ti Moune, and Erzulie
<i>A Part of Us</i>	Mama, Storyteller Child, Tonton, and Storytellers
<i>Why We Tell The Story</i>	Company

## The Cast

Little Ti Moune (Orphan child) . . . . .	Taylor Asbury
Ti Moune (Beautiful peasant girl with a childlike innocence) . . . . .	Anita Coachman
Ti Moune's Dance . . . . .	Antonia Poarch
Daniel (Handsome, aristocratic young man who is a <i>grand homme</i> ) . . . . .	Phillip McKibbin
Mama Euralie (Ti Moune's adoptive mother) . . . . .	Chevonne Hughes
Tonton Julian (Ti Moune's adoptive father) . . . . .	Lee Smith
Erzulie (Goddess of Love) . . . . .	Emily Cook
Agwe (God of Water) . . . . .	Robert Lundy
Papa Ge (Demon of Death) . . . . .	Tom Presley
Asaka (Mother of the Earth) . . . . .	Rachel Holmes
Andrea (Elegant, refined young woman who is a <i>grand homme</i> ) . . . . .	Lydia Myers
Armand (French aristocrat) . . . . .	Anthony Dorsey

## Story Tellers

Kendahl Brown	Rukiya Mathis	Nicole Small
Nikeisha Burgess	Andrew McKibbin	Rhea-Ann Smith
Angel Hampton	Ali Ramsaier	Ronndell Smith
Lindsay Hargis	Gaby Ramsaier	Camona Walker
Jonathan Herrera	Kelsey Ross	Sarah Witherington
Javier Johnson		

## Storyteller Children

### Performing Friday and Sunday

Marita Benson	Zakia Ford	DeVondra Michael
Taylor Clayton	Sarai Fore	Diamond Moore
Alfred Crea	Chynna Hodges	Amanda Mullany
Alexandra Devonshire	Cree Honrine	Emily Nordlum
Anna Dixon	Cameron Huntsinger	Richard Norris
Aliesha Donald	Chastity Jackson	Monica Valdivia
Kymerli Flowers	Briana McGriff	Iesha White (young child)

### Performing Thursday and Saturday

Doriane Alston (young child)	Elisha Foster	Brittany Roper
DeVante' Burns	Alexia Green	Alexis Slocum
Patrick Cantu	Lakia Hampton	Breana Williams
Peta-Gaye Cope	Kir Johnson	Cheyne Williams
Jade Davis	Hayley Pearce	Keonna Williams
Danielle Emfinger	Dynasti Piper	LaKeitra Withrow
Cynthia Escamilla	Demetria Roach	

## Chorus

Tonie Asbury	Joe Lewis	Jackie Teske
Jonathan Burden	Veronica Meek	Josh Teske
Stefanie Gonzales	Micah Shepherd	Ariana Thomas
Katie Johnson	Ereka Slaughter	Sarah Waldrip
Chris Korizon	Melora Slotnick	Jenni Woodie

## Dancers

Corina Adams	PaviElle Lockhart	Antonia Poarch
Andrea Barnes	Shemetra McGruder	Donimique Sims
Cheryl Burke	Shana Mitchell	Parthena Stokes
Christopher Caldwell		

## Orchestra

Damani Alston	Rachel Gandy	Eva Rivera
Niki Bland	Micah Hudson	Ricky Roby
Nashondra Bray	Kendall Isadore	Andrew Semidey
Andrea Brown	Jonathan Jones	Jeff Toale
Kenny Brown	Katie Landers	Talaya Waller
Amber Calloway	Tasaday Lynch	Josh Ward
Andrew Davis	Amanda Maddox	Brandie Warren
Janette Doerksen	Matt Polovich	Kenny Wuerstlin
Ashley Fuller		

## Percussion Ensemble

Pearson Brantley	Kreston Edenfield	Rashaun Smith
Kenny Brown	Ashley Goolsbee	Bianca Tucker
Kristen Brownlee	Tyler Pate	Josh Ward
Michael Burrell	Sundeeep Patel	Alvin Wiggins
Sam Dunston		

## Production Staff

Produceer  
Director  
Music Director  
Accompanist  
Choreographer  
Assistant Choreographer  
Stage Manager and Assistant Director  
Orchestra Conductor  
Costumes  
Set Design and Construction  
Technical Director  
Make-up  
Props Chair  
Lighting Design  
Intelligent Light Control  
Light Board  
Follow Spots  
Sound  
Locking Rail Supervisor  
Program and Tickets  
Curriculum Materials

John Odom  
Kathy Baker  
Kelly Roberts  
Antonio Hunt  
Ronda Price  
Lindsey Clinton  
Theresa Kimball  
Stacy Brown  
Mary Ramsaier  
Bob Putnam  
Mary Kraack  
Lindsey Clinton  
Daisy Thompson  
Mary Kraack  
Nancy Newcomb  
Julie Delgado  
Sapna Sawhney and Keshia Letson  
Carolyn Marcus  
Tiffany Schley  
Susan Herbert  
Vance Edeker, Kelly Green

## Stage Crew

Atti Bigby  
MaQuinta Dixon  
Courtney Hatch

Vanessa Louis  
Carolyn Marcus  
Ashley Middleton

Tristan O'Cain  
Jessica Thompson  
Sarah Weinreich

## Costumes

Lilly Hale  
Elyse Hall  
Nickia Harris

Renika Harris  
Megan Ives  
Tiffany Kelly

Ashley Korizon  
Alisha Lufkin  
Georgia Williams

## Make-up Crew

Karla Bonilla  
Leslie Johnson

Shannon Mays  
Michael Nelson

Jeremy Nunes  
Jesi Webb

## Set Construction and Painting

Jonesboro High Art Club  
Arez Aran  
Brook Arrington  
Sean Bastarache  
Lena Cook  
Danielle Davis  
Max Davis  
Julie Delgado  
Gregory Duhart  
Chris Duryea

Evan Giles  
Sean Gladden  
Rebekah Harkness  
Hillary Hibben  
Lauren Kirchner  
Michael McBrayer  
Chris Murray  
Christie Neujahr  
Tristan Paul  
Mark Philpot

Cole Putnam  
Kani Saeed  
America Salomon  
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Stacy Woodall  
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Allison Youngblood

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## Director's Notes

*Once On This Island* deals with the universal themes of childhood fears and dreams, the differences of class and race, the capacity of love, the force of nature, as well as death and resurrection. These themes are presented in a simple storytelling fashion with the rhythmic musical patterns of the Caribbean. The show is based on Rosa Guy's novel *My Love, My Love*, a novel based on Hans Christian Anderson's *Little Mermaid* fairy tale. Of course *Once On This Island* has Caribbean elements that add spice to an otherwise corny story. The idea of storytelling is prevalent throughout and relates directly to the simple title, a title that symbolizes the idea of the island as a universal concept.

The ensemble energy of our multitalented group of both cast and production staff has created an imaginary island in the French Antilles for you. A strong commitment of time and talent has made this possible. From all over our county these creative people have come to share their talent, and confirm our school system's belief that the arts nourish and sustain the academic achievement of students in all curricular areas. A special tribute to our production staff of students and adults who have worked behind the scenes to create this fairy tale island, combined with the efforts of our talented cast, "we tell the story..."

Kathy Baker, Theatre Director

## Music Director's Notes

After I was approached with the invitation to join the production staff of *Once On This Island*, I was given the CD. Not knowing anything about the show, and having no preconceptions about what I would hear, I casually put the CD in the player in my car and began to listen as I made my ten minute trip from work to home. The moment the drums kicked in and I heard those beautiful accents, I was hooked. My ten minute trip lasted over an hour because I ended up driving anywhere, EVERYWHERE just so I didn't have to stop my car and quit listening to the music! I must've looked like a fool driving down the road banging the steering wheel to the beat and screaming "Wow!" as I drove. It is this excitement, this amazing intensity and energy that I have strived to bring to our show both during rehearsals and throughout the run of the performance.

I could not be prouder of the students! Singing in harmony while attacking tricky rhythms and dialects is a difficult task, but our kids make it look easy. Elementary children, you won my heart during rehearsals with your unfailing focus and your desire to do your best. Middle and high school students, your talent overwhelms me, and it is truly a pleasure not simply to work with you, but also to see you mature and flourish. And I am honored to work with such a talented and dedicated production staff. Together, we have created magic, and I enjoy watching you work with such passion and determination!

There are many others to thank...the parents for supporting their child's efforts, my family for allowing me to work such crazy hours, the staff at the PAC for letting us take over(!)...we hope that, after you see this production, you feel that it was all worth it! And to the audience, sit back and enjoy the ride. Forget the stresses of the day, and let our storytellers take you to the Caribbean Islands, where you will learn the tale of "One Smoll Gehl" (translated, that's "one small girl"), her life, and her love.

Kelly Roberts, Music Director

Please remember that video taping, recording, and photographing performances of *Once On This Island* are strictly forbidden under copyright law and performance contract.

It is essential at the performances to silence all phones, beepers, and other similar devices. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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is very proud of Keonna Williams, Lakia Hampton, Patrick Cantu and Alexis Slocum for their participation in "Once on This Island". We are delighted when our students strive to "Give Their Best." Congratulations and best wishes for a successful performance from the staff and student body of

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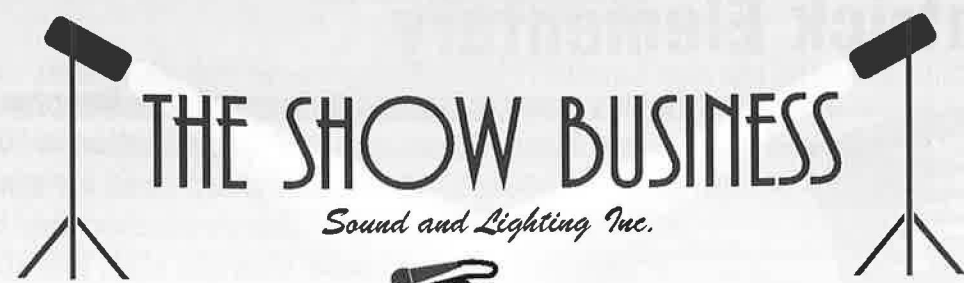
**Lydia Myers  
Tom Presley  
Kelsey Ross  
Micah Shepherd  
Rhea-Ann Smith  
Jackie Teske  
Sarah Witherington**



## Personal Ads

- TO: **Zakia Ford**  
GOOD LUCK, Zakia, you are a Star. The wings that you were given have let you fly, now go and kiss the sky.
- TO: **Chris Caldwell, Veronica Meek, Lee Smith, and Mrs. Kathy Baker**  
We are proud of you!  
Morrow High School Fine Arts Department
- TO: **Cree Honrine**  
"Break a Leg", Cree. We are very proud of you here at Suder Elementary After School. Go for it.  
Sherry Jones, Paula Gant, Co-Coordinator
- TO: **Sarah Waldrip**  
You are our shining star. Keep on shining!  
Ma and Pa
- TO: **Monica Valdiria**  
To my niece Monica, I wish you good luck with your musical production. I know that you and your fellow actors have worked hard!  
Love, Aunt Adiela
- TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations and Best Wishes on your first production.  
Love, Rev. David Scott and The Emmaus Road Baptist Church Family
- TO: **Aleisha Donald**  
We are very proud of you. Keep up the good work. We love you.  
Love, Mom, Grandma, and Ebony
- TO: **Marita Benson**  
Marita, you are special and I'm so proud of you for your hard work in the musical.  
Love, Miss Pat
- TO: **Monica Valdiria**  
To my daughter Monica. I am proud of you. Good luck and I love you.  
Your Dad
- TO: **Anita Coachman**  
The spotlight is on you, Anita! Best of luck as Ti Mouné. We are proud of you!  
The Lovejoy High School Choral Department
- TO: **Phillip McKibbin**  
Honor Musical Number Four! You've come a long way Phillip. We are proud of you. You're a great "Daniel!"  
The Lovejoy High School Choral Department
- TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations to my beautiful and talented Neeka Poo. We love you.  
Uncle Morris, Auntie Kita, and Tiara

- TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Good Luck! You're a great kid!  
Love always, Jo Barnett
- TO: **Ali Ramsaier**  
Keep working hard and great things will come your way. We know what you've done, and couldn't be prouder. Remember good things come to those who wait!  
Love, Mom, Dad, Gaby and Mary
- TO: **Marita Benson**  
My best wishes for a very successful performance for my special friend, Marita Benson.  
Charlotte Underwood
- TO: **Sarah Waldrip**  
I just want to let you know that the world is a much brighter place with you in it.  
Love, Cowboy Joshua Gentle
- TO: **Alexandra Devonshire**  
May all your dreams come true – our little actress.  
Love, Aunt Irene, Emy, and Sarah Anne
- TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations on your first musical production. We are so proud of you and love you very much. May God always bless you!  
Love, Mama and Daddy
- TO: **Richard Norris**  
We are so proud of your talent and gifts. We hope you have a great show. Break a leg!  
Love, Aunt Lauri, Mac and Tom
- TO: **Gaby Ramsaier**  
We are so proud of you. You've done so well in school and with your play. They gave you the perfect part, a storyteller, and we know nobody can talk like you!  
Love, Dad, Mom, Ali, and Mary
- TO: **Marita Benson**  
Marita, we wish you the best.  
Love, Mr. Zeb and Family
- TO: **Jenni Woodie and Joe Lewis**  
Keep the song alive! Best of Luck to Joe Lewis and LHS Concert Choir senior and President, Jenni Woodie.  
The Lovejoy High School Choral Department
- TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Good Luck Cree!  
Dennis and Cindy
- TO: **Lee Smith**  
Lee, we love you, and we are very proud of you. We'll always be there for you each step of the way.  
Love, Mom, and Dad



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TO: **Richard Norris**  
Richard, congratulations on your third cast production. You may have found your calling! We are very proud of your work at the PAC.  
Love, Mom, and Dad

TO: **Marita Benson**  
Marita, we wish you the very best in what you are doing! We love you and your family.  
Roger and Lynn Beckham

TO: **Jonathan Burden**  
Congratulations, we are so proud of you! May you always embrace your own special song. With all our love.  
Love, Mom and Dad

TO: **Haley Pearce**  
Congratulations on a wonderful performance! We are proud of you!  
Mrs. Ridenhour and all of the Harper Heroes

TO: **Brittany Roper**  
We're proud of you Brittany! Keep reaching for the stars and let the Lord lead the way you'll go far.  
Love, Mom, Dad, and Alisha

TO: **Cameron Huntsinger**  
The world is your stage. Follow your heart and may your dream come true. I am very proud of who you are and what you will become.  
Love, Mom

TO: **Marita Benson**  
You are so special, Marita Benson! Good luck! We love you!  
Lisa Willis and family

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
We're proud of you Cree!!!  
The Office Staff at Suder Elementary

TO: **Alexandra Devonshire**  
Congratulations Allie! We are very proud of you.  
Love, Mom, Dad, Preston, and Mitchell

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Good Luck from all the Suder Wildcats!  
Mrs. Day, Staff, and Students

TO: **Sarah Waldrip**  
We are so proud of you and all your accomplishments. We know you will go extremely far in life.  
Love, Meagan and Michele

TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations on your first musical. You are a sweet angel and we love you!  
Love, Grandma Faye and Granddaddy Isadore

TO: **Emily Cook**  
We're going to watch you shine, Emily, as "Erzulie". Best of Luck. We are proud of you!  
The Lovejoy High School Choral Department

TO: **Mt. Zion Elementary Students**  
Congratulations to our very talented cast members of *Once on this Island*. We are so proud of you!  
Mount Zion Elementary Faculty and Staff

TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations Alexis. We are so proud of you!  
Love, Uncle Kelvin, Auntie Paris, Lil Kelvin, and Joshua

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Good Luck! Have fun with this performance, and I will be looking forward to your next!  
Katherine Smith

TO: **Richard Norris**  
Congrats on your latest production. Keep studying and break a leg!  
Your Friend, Dave

TO: **Sarah Waldrip**  
May all your dreams come true! You are truly a blessing to all of us and to all you will meet in the future.  
The Mercer Family

TO: **Alicia**  
Congratulations Alicia from The Youth Department of Holy Zion C.O. D. Church

TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
To our little entertainer. We are proud of you!  
Love, Uncle BaBa and Auntie Nett

TO: **Alexandra Devonshire**  
Good Luck my talented Granddaughter. I love you very much!  
Love, Grandma Teckemeyer

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Congratulations! I Love You! Best of Luck in your performance.  
Love, Your Nana, Ruth McMillian

TO: **Sarah Waldrip**  
You are truly an inspiration to all of us. You continue to enlighten us with your wonderful personality every day.  
Love always, Alicia Nichols

TO: **Marita Benson**  
Marita, we are so proud of you. You are our "Shining Star".  
Love, Mom and Dad

TO: **Kelsey Ross**  
Everyday you make us proud. Good luck. We love you.  
Love, Mom, Dad, and Tyler

TO: **Richard Norris**  
Congratulations on being chosen for this production. I am proud of your work as an honor student! You make your Grandmother smile.  
Love, MiMi

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Dear Cree! I am so proud of you! You'll always be #1 with me! Have fun with this performance, and everyone will be waiting for your next performance.  
Love always, Mom

TO: **Ali Ramsaier, Nicole Small, Jonathan Herrera, Andrew McKibbin**  
Best of luck Ali, Nicole, Jonathan, and Andrew as you "tell the story..." We are proud of you!  
The Lovejoy High School Choral Department

TO: **Cree Honrine.**  
Congratulations! Clayton Salvage, silk flowers, wedding bouquets and bobble...etc... Home accessories!  
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TO: **Alexandra Devonshire**  
Greetings from Florida "Sunshine Allie".  
Love, Papa, Nana, and Pepper

TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Congratulations to our angel on your first production.  
Love, Granddaddy Slocum and Grandma Lillian

TO: **Iesha White**  
You go Iesha, three productions. We are all so proud of you. Love you so much.  
Love, Mum and all your brothers and sisters

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Congratulations! Keep up the great work in "Performing Arts". We are proud of you.  
Love, Grandpa Glen and Sally Honrine

TO: **Phillip McKibbin**  
What a way to go out! We are so proud of all you do. Always share your talents with others.  
Love, Mom, Dad, and Aimee

TO: **Cree Honrine.**  
Congratulations! Pat and Jerry's 261-A South Main Street, Jonesboro, GA 770-472-2020

TO: **Monica Valdiria**  
I am very proud of you my lovely daughter. Keep it up, and you are sure to go far!  
Love, Mom

TO: **Andrew McKibbin**  
You have always been a great storyteller! Have fun being one on stage. We are very proud of you.  
Love, Mom, Dad, and Aimee

TO: **Alexis L. Slocum**  
Best Wishes and Congratulations on the musical. We always knew you would be a star!  
Love, Donte and Aleah Slocum

TO: **Marita Benson**  
Marita, you are an extraordinary young lady. I'm very proud of you and wish you the best on your first musical.  
Love, Miss Rose

TO: **Dynasti Piper, Ashley Heard, Cynthia Escamilla, Alexia Green, Elisha Foster, Devante' Burns, Aleisha Donald, Breanna Williams, and Doriane Alston.**  
Congratulations! Brown Elementary

TO: **Vanessa Louis, Tristan O'Cain, and Sarah Weinreich**  
We are proud of you for serving on the production staff.  
Morrow High School Fine Arts Department

TO: **Cree Honrine**  
Congratulations! Candlicious-Triple Scented/Hand poured candles/refills. Wanda Williams, 770-775-1676 <http://klik.to/candlicious> Jackson, GA 46 fragrances

TO: **Cameron Huntsinger**  
Congratulations to Cameron on a great performance. We are so proud of you and the wonderful times we spend together.  
Love, Granny and PawPaw

TO: **Sarai Fore**  
Congratulations Sarai! We are so proud of you!  
East Clayton Elementary School

TO: **Zakia Ford, Marita Benson, Kymberli Flowers, and Briana McGriff**  
Congratulations! We are so proud of you! Keep up the good work and remember us when you are famous!  
Love, Mrs. Mulder and Ms. Turbeville

TO: **Jade Davis**  
I'm proud of you! Always aim for the Stars!  
Ms. Baker

TO: **Jade**  
Congratulations Jade!  
We are proud of you.  
Love, Your Callaway Knight Family

## Fine Arts Teachers

These teachers have significantly contributed to the lives of countless children. Without their tireless, unselfish commitment to providing a quality arts education for every child, productions such as *Once On This Island* would not be possible.

A'ishah Abdullah	Babb Middle	Chorus	Jennifer Greven	Kendrick Middle	Orchestra
JoAnn Alexander	Pointe South Middle	Chorus	Patrice Grier Newell	Mount Zion High	Visual Arts
Marcia Anderson	West Clayton Elementary	Visual Arts	Darlene Guida	Kilpatrick Elementary	Music
Catrina Andrews	Roberts Middle	Visual Arts	Becky Halliday	Harper Elementary	Music
Jo Baker	Callaway Elementary	Music	Kevin Haynes	Riverdale High	Visual Arts
Kathy Baker	Morrow High	Theatre	Kimberly Hearn	Haynie Elementary	Music
Claudette Barker	Hawthorne Elementary	Music	Brent Higgins	Fountain Elementary	Visual Arts
James Barkley	North Clayton High	Chorus	John Hill-Lloyd	Lovejoy Middle	Visual Arts
Nicole Barthelmeus	Brown Elementary	Visual Arts	Pedro Hines	Lake Ridge Elementary	Visual Arts
Richard Bell	Lovejoy High	Orchestra	Shunita Hines	Oliver Elementary	Visual Arts
Rosanne Bennett	Pointe South Middle	Visual Arts	Chris Hoffman	Riverdale High	Orchestra
Scott Bennett	Lovejoy High	Visual Arts	Stephanie Hoffman	Northcutt Elementary	Music
Kathy Blackmon	Kemp Elementary	Music	Anne Holderfield	Swint Elementary	Visual Arts
Thomas Blalock, Jr.	Forest Park Middle	Band	Lisa Holland	Mt. Zion Elementary	Visual Arts
Rosemary Blankson	West Clayton Elementary	Music	Tina Holmes-Davis	Babb Middle	Band
Anne Brooks	Riverdale Middle	Chorus	Denise Howard	Kendrick Middle	Visual Arts
Kay Brown	Pointe South Elementary	Visual Arts	Sandra Howard	Lovejoy Middle	Chorus
Stacy Brown	Jonesboro High	Band	Joni Hunnicutt	Suder Elementary	Music
Mariah Buchanan	Mundy's Mill Middle	Visual Arts	Antonio Hunt	Fountain Elementary	Music
Pauline Buchanan	Hawthorne Elementary	Visual Arts	Derick Jackson	Northcutt Elementary	Visual Arts
Valerie Buchanan	Lovejoy Middle	Paraprofessional Band	Chainey Jones	North Clayton Middle	Orchestra
Claudia Bullington	McGarrah Elementary	Music	Christina Jones	Mundy's Mill High	Orchestra
Angela Bush	Arnold Elementary	Visual Arts	Linda Jones	Oliver Elementary	Music
Brenda Campbell	Pointe South Elementary	Music	Brenda Kelley	Mundy's Mill Middle	Orchestra
Howard Carroll	North Clayton High	Band	Lynda Kerr	Forest Park High	Visual Arts
Chad Chatham	Tara Elementary	Music	Theresa Kimball	Mount Zion High	Theatre
Don Cheyne	Roberts Middle	Band	Lynn King	Forest Park Middle	Orchestra
Stacy Christian	Huie Elementary	Visual Arts	Barbara Kirberger	Lee Street Elementary	Visual Arts
Dorothy Clinkscales	Anderson Elementary	Visual Arts	Michael Knotts	North Clayton Middle	Band
Lindsey Clinton	Mundy's Mill High	Dance/Theatre	Russell Laib	Lee Street Elementary	Music
Cepada Cloud	North Clayton Middle	Visual Arts	Kirby Langley	McGarrah Elementary	Visual Arts
Paul Cook	River's Edge Elementary	Music	Ryan Lincey	Morrow High	Assistant Band
Anita Cooke	East Clayton Elementary	Visual Arts	Janalyn Lindley	Forest Park High	Orchestra
Cindy Cooper	Jonesboro Middle	Band	Bridget Long	Adamson Middle	Orchestra
Jeff Corso	Riverdale Middle	Band	Julia Lotti	Jonesboro High	Chorus
Celina Crawford	Jonesboro Middle	Chorus	Sam Lowder	Lovejoy Middle	Orchestra
Jennifer Dalzell	Haynie Elementary	Visual Arts	Mary Ellen Lundy	Jonesboro High	Theatre
Pam Dedeaux	Lake Ridge Elementary	Music	Ed Manderson	Swint Elementary	Music
Dawna Demster	Roberts Middle	Orchestra	Todd Manson	Jonesboro High	Assistant Band
Mike Dorough	Roberts Middle	Chorus	Joanne Maples	Arnold Elementary	Music
Leslie Driver	Babb Middle	Visual Arts	Michelle Marino	Church Street Elementary	Visual Arts
Vance Edeker	Smith Elementary	Music	Walter McKelvey	Morrow High	Band
Michole Eldred	Mundy's Mill High	Visual Arts	Jackie McLeod	Lake City Elementary	Visual Arts
Lyn Eldredge	Adamson Middle	Visual Arts	Candice McPherson	Harper Elementary	Visual Arts
Kyna Elliott	Morrow Middle	Orchestra	Phil McPherson	Mundy's Mill High	Chorus
Marie Elliott	Lovejoy Middle	Band	Kathleen Milburn	Forest Park Middle	Chorus
Joyce English	Hendrix Drive Elementary	Visual Arts	Carol Mohor	River's Edge Elementary	Visual Arts
Sarah Feather	East Clayton Elementary	Music	Adriana Mondone	Adamson Middle	Band
Danielle Feinstein	Roberts Middle	Paraprofessional Band	Janet Montgomery	North Clayton Middle	Chorus
Julianna Finkley	Forest Park Middle	Visual Arts	Linda Morris-Woods	Mundy's Mill Middle	Chorus
Pamela Fraticelli	Riverdale Elementary	Music	Erin Mulder	Morrow Elementary	Music
Maria Freeman	Huie Elementary	Music	Vivian Nall	Kilpatrick Elementary	Visual Arts
Craig French	Forest Park High	Assistant Band	John Odum	Lovejoy High	Chorus
Randolyn Friedlander	Riverdale Elementary	Visual Arts	Cathy Pace	Babb Middle	General Music
Bob Fulton	Kendrick Middle	General Music	Celeste Patterson	Riverdale Middle	Visual Arts
Alvin Gaston	North Clayton High	Assistant Band	LaTonya Peoples	Riverdale Middle	Orchestra
Keith Gilbert	Forest Park High	Band	John Peskey	Morrow High	Orchestra
Kelly Green	Smith Elementary	Visual Arts	Michael Pla	Riverdale High	Band

Melissa Plese	Brown Elementary	Paraprofessional Visual Arts	Alonzo Taylor	Church Street Elementary	Music
Bryan Pope	Mount Zion High	Assistant Band	Daisy Thompson	North Clayton High	Theatre
Natachia Pope	Edmonds Elementary	Visual Arts	Angela Turbeville	Morrow Elementary	Visual Arts
Rhonda Price	Mount Zion High	Dance	Kimleon Turner	North Clayton Middle	General Music
Mike Puckett	Mount Zion High	Band	Susan Van Wick	Morrow Middle	Band
Robert Putnam	Jonesboro High	Visual Arts	Dawn Wadsworth	Morrow High	Visual Arts
Corie Roberts	Mount Zion High	Orchestra	Christal Wagner	Morrow Middle	Chorus
Kelly Roberts	Mt. Zion Elementary	Music	Mario Webb	Kendrick Middle	Chorus
Ryan Robertson	Babb Middle	Orchestra	Marilyn Weigle	Kemp Elementary	Visual Arts
Vincent Rosse	Mundy's Mill High	Band	Linda Wenz	Suder Elementary	Visual Arts
Doug Rowell	Anderson Elementary	Music	Jeffrey Whitfield	Forest Park High	Theatre
Roger Ruzow	Hendrix Drive Elementary	Music	Amy Wilkins	Tara Elementary	Visual Arts
Michael Ryan	Lovejoy High	Band	DeLacey Wilkins	Adamson Middle	Chorus
Dennis Samchok	Mount Zion High	Chorus	Rachel Williams	Forest Park High	Chorus
Alberto Sanchez	Pointe South Middle	Orchestra	Sonya Williams	Pointe South Middle	Band
Kathy Saucier	Jonesboro High	Orchestra	Beverly Wilson	Morrow High	Chorus
Maggie Sheehan	Jonesboro Middle	Visual Arts	Julius Wilson	Riverdale High	Assistant Band
Dana Siewert	Callaway Elementary	Visual Arts	Rusty Wilson	Mundy's Mill Middle	Band
Susan Simich	Lovejoy High	Dance/Theatre	Glynda Wong	Lovejoy High	Visual Arts
Leigh Ann Smith	Edmonds Elementary	Music	Julie Woodall	Lake City Elementary	Music
Jessie Spivey	North Clayton High	Visual Arts	Olga Yampolsky	Jonesboro Middle	Orchestra
Sara Stephens	Kendrick Middle	Band	Nichelle Young	Riverdale High	Chorus/Theatre
Rachel Suba	Morrow Middle	Visual Arts	Alan Zoloth	Brown Elementary	Music

## Lead Teachers

Kathy Baker

Richard Bell

Scott Bennett

Mike Dorough

Darlene Guida

Sam Louder

Rusty Wilson

## Clayton County Public Schools Administration

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**Clayton County Public Schools  
Annual All Star Honor Musical**

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**

Clayton County Schools Performing Arts Center  
January 16, 17, 18, 2003 7:30 P.M.  
January 19, 2003 2:30 P.M.

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Elementary Art Contest Participant - **FREE ADMISSION!**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**

Clayton County Public Schools Performing Arts Center  
January 16, 2003 - 7:30 PM  
January 18, 2003 - 7:30 PM

Clayton County Public Schools Performing Arts Center  
January 17, 2003 - 7:30 PM  
January 19, 2003 - 2:30 PM





# 'Once on This Island'

## All County Honor Musical to shine spotlight on Clayton students' talent

By ROCHELLE CARTER  
rcarter@ajc.com

Young love. Strife between the haves and the have-nots. Rejection, death and redemption. And all involved are still in school.

This is not a case of a high school love that's gone terribly wrong. This is the story line of the latest production of the Clayton All County Honor Musical. The 100-member cast of second- through 12th-graders is performing the Broadway musical "Once on This Island."

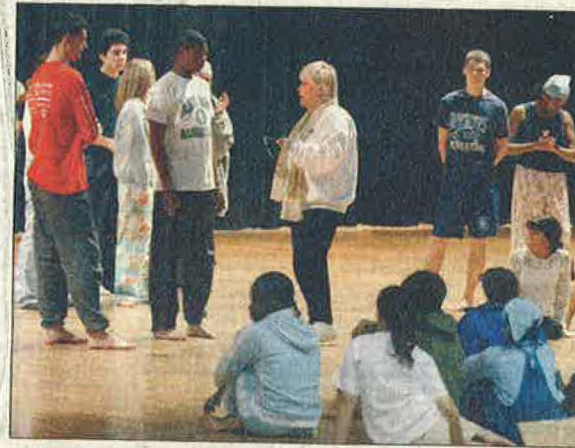
"We don't have costumes. We don't have special lighting. But I got special chills," director Kathy Baker told actors Tom Presley of Jonesboro High School and Anita Coachman and Phillip McKibbon, who attend Lovejoy High. The three had rehearsed the climactic scene with Baker in which Ti Moune, a poor island girl played by Anita, attempts to stab her rich lover Daniel, played by Phillip, at the urging of Tom's character Papa Ge.

"That was pure, that was natural," Baker said. "I don't want the purity and naturalness to change."

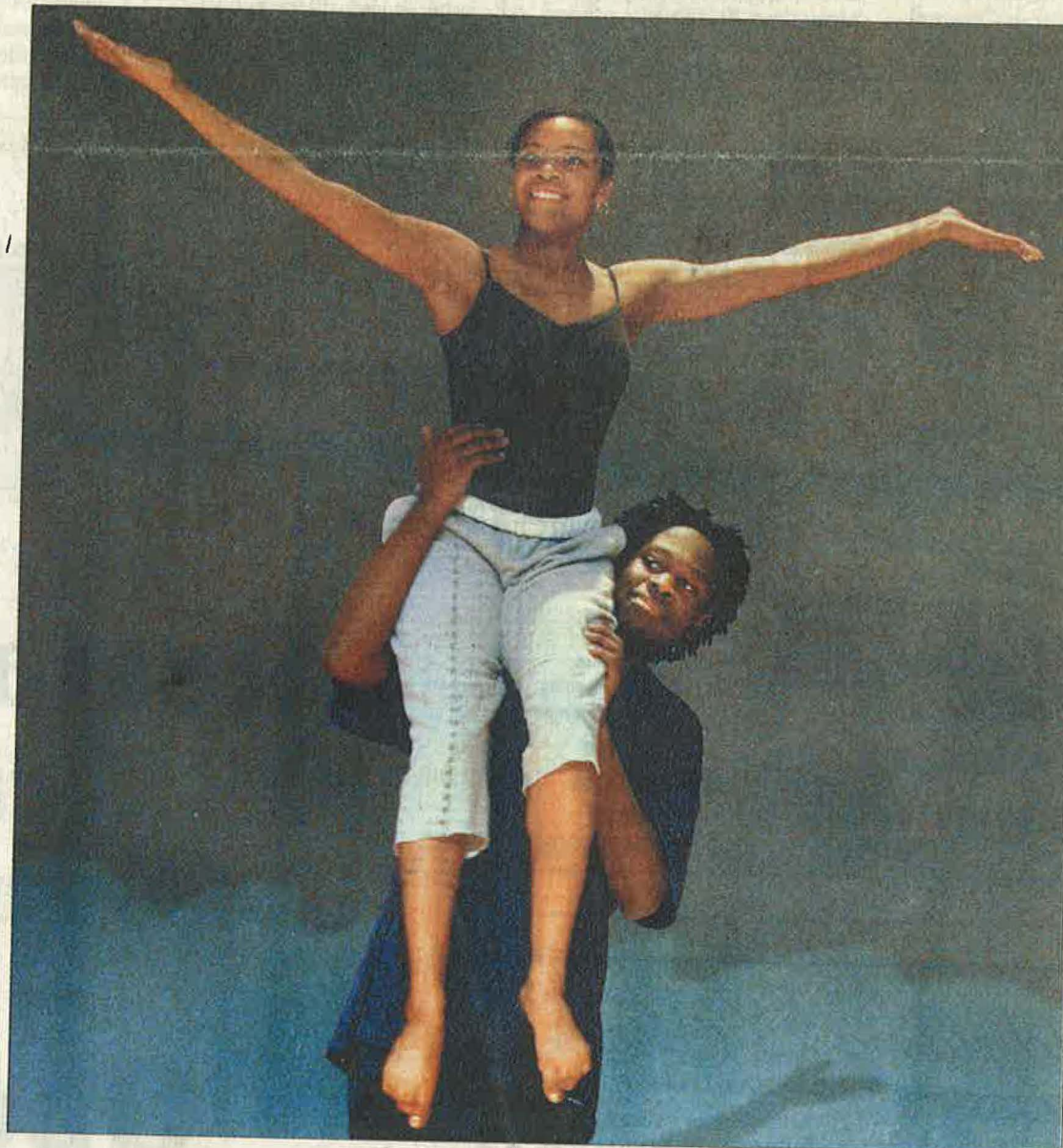
The All County Honor Musical cast is an assemblage of the most artistically talented students in Clayton County. The student performers — many who have no previous theatrical training — sing, dance and act like seasoned professionals.

Competition to be a part of the cast was stiff; 349 students auditioned. One hundred students made the cut. The production crew and pit orchestra are also made up of students from Clayton County's public schools. Drama, art and music teachers throughout the system are donating their time to work on the production, said Baker, who teaches at Morrow High School. Overall, 200 people are involved in bringing "Once on This Island" to the stage. Performances will be Jan. 16-19 at the Clayton County Schools

► Please see **MUSICAL, J5**



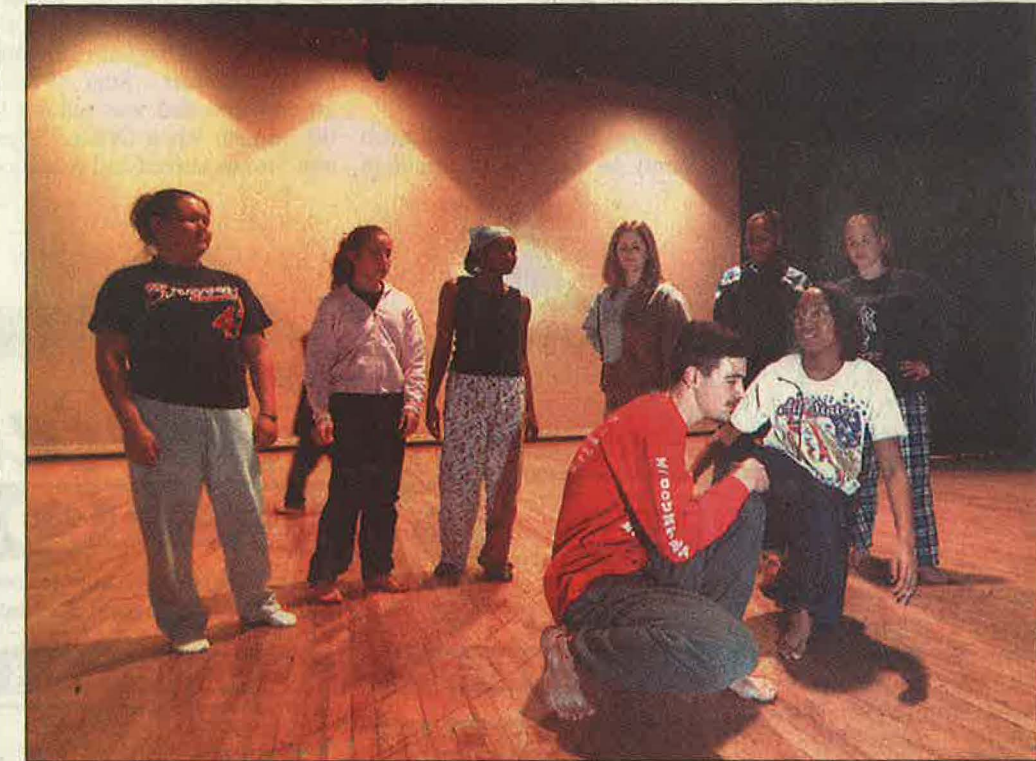
Morrow High drama teacher **Kathy Baker** (center) directs Clayton County's best student actors for the upcoming All County Honor Musical.



**Antonia Poarch** is held aloft by **Christopher Caldwell** during a rehearsal Friday at the Clayton County Schools Performing Arts Center. The two are among the 100-member All County Honor Musical cast that will present "Once on This Island" Jan. 16-19.

Photos by JOHNNY CRAWFORD / Staff

## TAKING THE STAGE



Photos by Bill Yoder

The main characters of 'Once on this Island,' **Philip McKibben** as "Daniel" and **Anita Coachman** as "Ti-Moune" rehearse a scene at the Clayton County Performing Arts Center.

# 'Once on this Island'

■ Clayton musical scheduled to open Jan. 16.

By TRINA TRICE  
ttrice@news-daily.com

**K**atie Johnson has dreams of performing on Broadway.

She gets one step closer by being one of a cast of 200 Clayton County students performing in the school system's seventh annual All County Honors Musical "Once on This Island."

The musical is a Caribbean adventure loosely based on the popular fairy tale "The Little Mermaid." The story of Ti Moune, a poor island girl who rescues, nurses and falls in love with Daniel, the son of a wealthy family, is told with colorful costumes and catchy songs.

Students are working in a variety of functions for the production, ranging from performing on stage, building sets, and assisting the technical crew.

In September students in grades two through 12 auditioned for the honors musical. The process was a grueling and long



**Ronda Price** is the choreographer for the dance scenes.

See ISLAND, Page 3



# Musical to shine spotlight on Clayton students

1/2003

Continued from J1

Performing Arts Center in Jonesboro.

This is not your regular school play, Baker said. The performers come to rehearsal knowing their lines and ready to work, she said. They have rehearsed twice a week after school since October and gave three full days during winter break to prepare.

"Discipline is not a problem," Baker said. "You feel like you are working on the college level because ... they are intelligent, they are motivated."

Sophomores Rachel Holmes of Jonesboro and Ali Msaier of Lovejoy have been in every Honor Musical production since the first, "The Music Man," when they were in fifth grade. For them, theater and acting is a career they want to pursue.

Acting "is like an outlet from normal life," Rachel said.

"And people don't make a lot of you for it," Ali added. "There is no place else I want to be. This is my second



JOHNNY CRAWFORD / Staff

Some of Clayton County's youngest and most talented performers rehearse the musical "Once on This Island" at the Clayton County Schools Performing Arts Center.

home."

"Once on This Island" is the group's seventh performance. It is a Caribbean adventure loosely based on the popular fairy tale "The Little Mermaid."

"It's not your average love story, where everything ends happily ever after," Rachel said. "She doesn't get the guy."

Audience members will

share the story of Ti Moune, a poor island girl who rescues nurses and falls in love with Daniel, the son of a wealthy family. The young lovers' story becomes a symbolic quest to test the strength of love against prejudice and oppressive traditions.

"It's a show that deals with a number of universal themes," Baker said. By the end of the performance,

## IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND

Performances of the Clayton County All County Honor Musical production of "Once on This Island" will take place at the Clayton County Schools Performing Arts Center, 2530 Mount Zion Parkway, Jonesboro, at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 16-18 and at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 19. Tickets are \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door.

audience members will see that "love is so powerful that it's an important story to pass down from generation to generation."

This is Baker's third year directing the All County Honor Musical. She is working on her master's degree through a summer program at Central Washington State University in Ellensburg, Wash. This performance is her thesis.

The performance is being screened for the state thespian conference that will be held here next month.

"We're excited about being able to show off," Baker said.

## ISLAND

Continued from 1

one for judges such as Kathy Baker, theater director and fine arts chair at Morrow High School. Baker is taking on her third year of directing the honors musical.

"The auditions were open to any public school student in Clayton," Baker said. "There are some parents who say this (program) keeps them in Clayton County. But it was a long process, it was very demanding for us. Each year it seems like we're auditioning more kids."

For this year's production more than 300 students auditioned. That's more than last year when about 230 students auditioned.

In an effort to alleviate the length and difficulty of auditions, Baker would like to see fine arts teachers at each school screen students for their best performers. She also suggested that schools might be limited to how many students they can send to audition

## What to know

The seventh annual All County Honors Musical "Once on This Island" plays at the Clayton County Schools Performing Arts Center Jan. 16-18 at 7:30 p.m. and Jan. 19 at 2:30 p.m. Advance tickets are \$5, and \$7 at the door on the day of performance.

based on the total number of students at the school.

Dancers Christopher Caldwell, Cheryl Burke, Antonia Poarch, Shanna Mitchell and Dominique Sims are reveling in the experience of working with so many other students.

"It's fun and challenging," Sims said. "I know the hard work we're doing will come out great in the end. The process is hard, but by the end it will come out nice because we put a lot into it."

Although Caldwell has been in other theater productions at the PAC, he hadn't been in one as large as this year's honors musical, he said.

"I've never been in a play this

big," Caldwell said. "(Baker) is my drama teacher so I'm used to her. But with something this big, it's different (working with her) but it's good. I like the rehearsals. I look forward to it. But I get sore though, too."

The rehearsal schedule can be challenging, some students said, but it all comes down to the end result, which is what pushes them.

Parent Vanessa Johnson values the experience her daughter Katie, a sixth-grader at Adamson Middle School, is getting.

"This will help her because she wants to go on Broadway," Vanessa Johnson said. "And it's bringing her out of her shell."



















Asak a  
mikka earth



earth tones  
red, yellow, brown, gold?

braided  
print?  
skirts  
panels of  
different  
pattern  
fabrics

sea tones  
greens  
silver  
blues



give  
feel of  
water

solid  
silk  
lots of  
texture



water  
color





staples -  
short color  
at 1/2 in  
you see  
hand (hand)

Le Mou...



Fossil  
Shirley

New  
Zion





Erzulie<sup>^</sup>  
goddess  
of love

Silver/white  
face

Silver

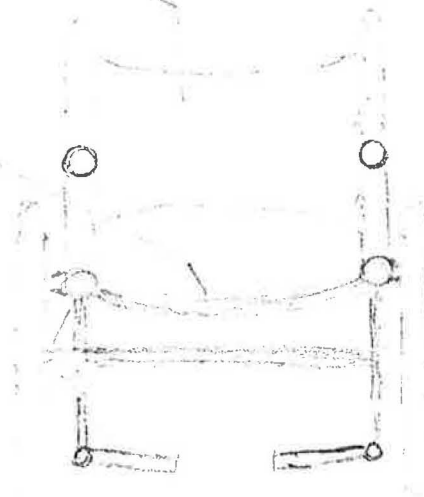
Silver  
lace on  
tulle  
veiling  
back

Please note: Content on this page was redacted due to copyright concerns.

18<sup>th</sup> Century French costumes

Leather Back

Leather seat





Demon of  
art

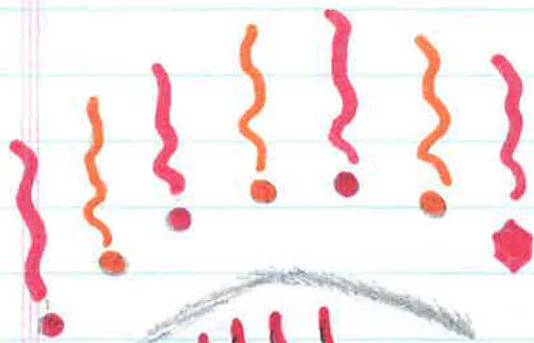
all  
black

(different  
fabrics/  
textures)

red  
quart  
type  
mark

gold chain  
collar

cape lined in red (block illusion)



Ornate as follows  
of your design

- jeweled forehead
- red & gold
- royal markings

Hair in braids  
w/ red & gold flowers  
placed thru-out

body to face in  
red



Good as a sketch  
in 1 month

- focus on cheek, jaw  
? brow prosthetic
- consider the lining
- black as a prosthetic

stick  
Head pose?

stick finger pieces



Good or Bad  
of water

- blue is specific
- used in...
- skin, wet gel
- ...

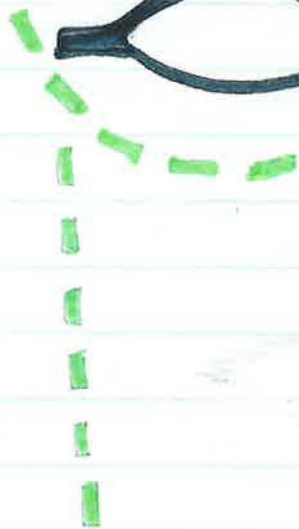
Hair

wet controls  
possible ribbon use

skin more body gel

some ...





Islanders / Native

- only marking w/ colors
- shapes O, A, H, S

head wraps?

markings on arms  
legs





Shay Gabe

Have color  
score designs on  
all characters

have beads,  
rolls, dreads  
extensions

designs on arms  
→ Kay

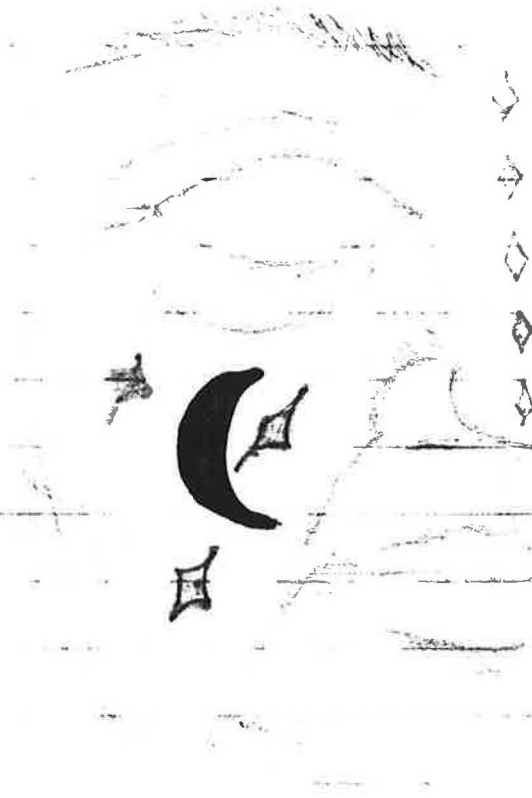
Nobles, upper class



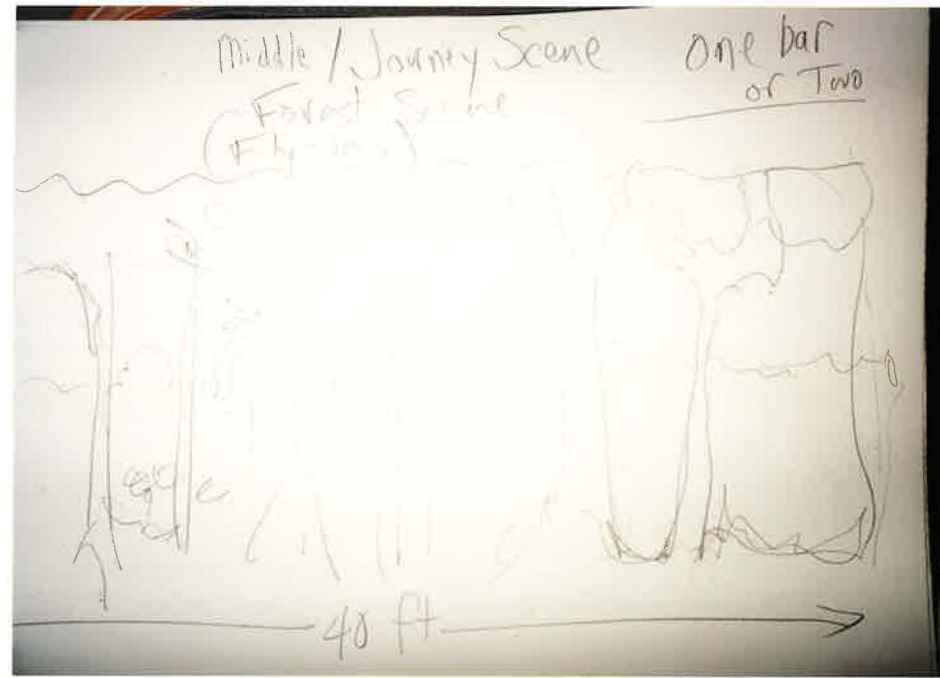
- no color
- over shadowed
- straight, narrow lines and angles

white headwraps,  
hats, ? ribbons

hoping



- new moon
- old moon
- moon
- design
- day





**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**  
**PRODUCTION CONTRACT INFORMATION**

The following are basic responsibilities expected of students while they are working on this year's All County Honor Musical. The production staff would like to ask parents to sign the attached form to indicate knowledge of the responsibilities, and we are asking students to sign the attached form as a contract which signifies their agreement to fulfill these responsibilities.

Please review the dates listed below as dates you would need to reserve as possible rehearsal dates. The final schedule with rehearsal times and locations will be released at the company meeting on OCTOBER 10, 6:30 p.m., at the PAC. \*Additional times may become necessary.

OCT. 15, 17, 19 (9-1), 22, 24, 26 (9-12), 29, 31 (MS & HS only)

NOV. 2 (9-1), 5, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 25

DEC. 5, 10, 12, 17, (21, 30, and Jan. 3 will be all day rehearsals 9-5)

JAN. 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15

JAN. PERFORMANCES: JAN. 16, 17, 18, evenings, JAN. 19 matinee

1. Production preparation lasts approximately 12 weeks. I understand that all students are not required to attend all production days, but I will attend on those days for which I am scheduled, and this will include some evenings, holidays, Saturdays, and even a Sunday afternoon.
2. I understand that I will turn in a list of my current obligations, other than production work, at my audition or at my first technical meeting. I understand that I will not be automatically released from production rehearsals or technical responsibilities because of these current obligations, but that every consideration will be given where possible. I also agree not to add any obligations that will prevent me from working or rehearsing during the times I committed to be available.
3. I agree to make the director aware of any emergency that might arise which would prevent me from attending a rehearsal or technical work session.
4. I agree to be on time for all rehearsal and/or work sessions. In case of emergency, I agree to let the director know of late arrival as soon as I can.
5. I agree to complete my responsibilities and meet deadlines for the following: learning lines and blocking, preparing for rehearsals, finishing technical work by certain deadlines. I understand that meeting these deadlines means meeting them with quality work.
6. I agree to follow safety rules that will be outlined for me.
7. I agree to cooperate with all staff and students involved in the production.
8. I agree not to use this production as an excuse for not fulfilling other obligations such as class work. This is an added voluntary activity.
9. I understand that missing rehearsals, lateness, lack of fulfilling deadline responsibilities, lack of cooperation, or grade problems could mean that I will be dismissed from the show.

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND  
PRODUCTION CONTRACT**

Parents, please read the following, sign, and return to the company meeting on OCTOBER 10.

I have read the responsibilities described for production work on *ONCE ON THIS ISLAND*. I understand that my son/daughter has agreed to fulfill those responsibilities.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent signature)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(home)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
(work)

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Students, please read the following, sign, and return at the company meeting on OCTOBER 10.

I have read the responsibilities described for production work for both acting and technical work. I agree to fulfill those responsibilities.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(student signature)

School \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Fine Arts Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## Dialect for "Once On This Island"

### English word/letter

### Caribbean pronunciation

A

"ay", as in "grow me a(y) garden"

The

modified "thay": not "the breezes" but "thay  
"breezes"

-r (-ar, -ir, -or, -er)

leave it off: not "garden" but "gahden"  
not "girl" but "gehl"  
not "world" but "wehld"  
not "her" but "heh"

-i

modified "ee": not "will" but "weel"  
not "river" but "reevah"  
not "this" but "this"

-ur

"-her": not "curse" but "kehrse"

in

"een"

"In the rain" becomes "een thay rain"

"It's as if the girl's possessed" becomes "Eet's as eef thay gehl's possessed"

How to mark your music: **Asaka, grow me a garden**

**BRING PENCILS TO REHEARSALS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**