

# BACKSTORY



BY ATHOL FUGARD

## ‘MASTER HAROLD’... AND THE BOYS



Your behind-the-scenes look at TimeLine productions

YESTERDAY'S STORIES.  
TODAY'S TOPICS.

**TimeLine**  
Theatre Company

# a message



Dear Friends,

Early last year, as TimeLine announced its production of *'Master Harold' ... and the Boys*, a happy coincidence occurred. We learned two other companies would be presenting Athol Fugard plays, resulting in a mini-festival of this remarkable playwright's work. We are proud to join Remy Bumpo and Court Theatres to create Fugard Chicago 2010 to promote the three plays: *The Island* at Remy Bumpo, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* at Court and *'Master Harold'* at TimeLine. I hope you will visit [FugardChicago2010.org](http://FugardChicago2010.org) to connect with all three plays.

Fugard once referred to himself as "a 'regional' writer with the themes, textures, acts of celebration, of defiance and outrage that go with the South African experience." And while he is surely a provocative voice about the South African experience, he is by no means just a "regional writer." His works have had an impact all over the world, and the themes, while distinctly South African,

reverberate across a variety of cultures, generations and political landscapes.

*'Master Harold'* draws heavily upon Fugard's childhood and is often called his most personal play. The character of Hally, modeled after Fugard as a young man, declares: "I oscillate between hope and despair." This line, in many ways, captures the struggle of Fugard's body of work. In it you can hear wistful longings for social and political change juxtaposed with an outcry of frustration and rage—an oscillation between hope and despair.

While I have read and seen many Fugard plays, I had neither read *'Master Harold'* prior to a year ago nor seen it, even though it is regarded as his most popular play. I picked it up in a library in November 2008, just days after the presidential election, and the play, quite simply, knocked me out. In a week of national pride and unquestionable historical significance, reading *'Master Harold,'* I found myself so connected with that battle between hope and despair.

As you recall, the media was flooded with commentaries about the dawning of a new day for racial equality.

## The themes of Fugard's plays, while distinctly South African, reverberate across a variety of cultures.

And while I shared in the optimism of a long-overdue accomplishment, I also admit to feeling refreshed by the voices that reminded us of the work toward racial unity that was yet to be done. And I couldn't get *'Master Harold'* out of my mind. The themes of this play, set more than 50 years earlier, seemed quite prescient, with Fugard painting a portrait of all that does indeed unite us while also shining a harsh light on that which still lies underneath—all that divides us.

During one rainy afternoon in a tea room, *'Master Harold'* entrances us with an unlikely bond between a white teenager and two older black men who have worked for his family for years. It's a stunning, funny and heart-warming relationship, while sobering in its depiction of 1950s South Africa's inbred racism and system of apartheid.

Fugard gives us a deeply personal story. His story. His childhood. His memories of white-and-black relations. And his regrets, which haunted him for years and ultimately prompted the writing of this play. He lays bare his lifetime of hope and despair.

We now have the perspective of what Fugard has gone on to accomplish, how he has grown from that young boy in the tea room and developed into one of the most inspiring voices his country has known.

That evolution—from Hally, the confused adolescent, to Athol, the provocateur and activist—is perhaps the greatest sign that hope can indeed overcome despair and that history can be made by the unlikeliest of people, taking action in extraordinary times.

To bring this story to life, I'm happy to welcome Jonathan Wilson to TimeLine for the first time. Jonathan's distinguished career as a director spans 25 years, and he is no stranger to Fugard's work. He directed a stirring

production of *Playland* at Steppenwolf Theatre in 1994, a production that still rings in my head.

We are honored to share Athol Fugard's story with you and to ignite a conversation—here at TimeLine and at Remy Bumpo and Court through Fugard Chicago 2010—about not only how far South Africa has come but also where all of us still have to go.

Best,

## Special Events and Resources

# the conversation

TimeLine looks forward to engaging our audience in conversations inspired by our productions. We hope you will participate in the array of additional resources and online communities available:

### SUNDAY SCHOLARS

After the show on **Sunday, Jan. 31** is Sunday Scholars, a one-hour panel discussion featuring experts talking about the play's themes and issues. **Admission is free.** Visit [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com) to learn more.

### COMPANY MEMBER DISCUSSION

Our Company members shape the artistic vision and choose programming for TimeLine. On **Sunday, Feb. 28**, join them for a free post-show discussion.

### POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

On **Thursdays, Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and 11; Sundays, Feb. 14 and 21; and Wednesday, Mar. 3**, moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring cast and production staff.

### DRAMATURGY

A **study guide** is available at [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com).

### BLOG AND MORE!

Find behind-the-scenes insight and conversation on our blog, **Behind the 'Line**, via [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com).



For the latest, be a Facebook fan (**TimeLine Theatre Company**) and follow us on Twitter (**@timelinetheatre**)!

# the playwright

**“The sense I have of myself is that of a ‘regional’ writer with the themes, textures, acts of celebration, of defiance and outrage that go with the South African experience. These are the only things I have been able to write about.” — Athol Fugard, in *Mary Benson’s introduction to Fugard’s Notebooks: 1960-1977***

**“I have often described myself as an Afrikaner writing in English, and the older I get the more that seems to be the truth: that my English tongue is speaking for an Afrikaner psyche.” — Athol Fugard in *Cousins: A Memoir***

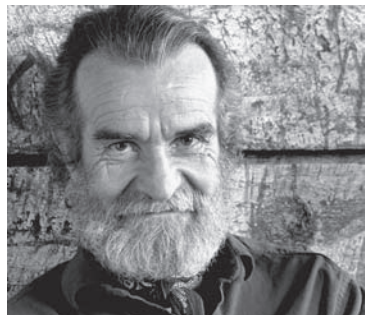
Harold Athol Lanigan Fugard was born June 11, 1932, in the Karoo village of Middleburg, Cape Province, South Africa. Raised in Port Elizabeth from the age of three, Fugard deems himself the mongrel son of an English-speaking father of Polish/Irish descent, Harold David Lanigan Fugard, and an Afrikaner mother, Elizabeth Magdalena (née Potgieter). Fugard was raised with his brother, Royal, and sister, Glenda. Because his father was disabled, he couldn’t support the family; Athol’s mother ran the family’s Jubilee Residential Hotel and the St. George’s Park Tea Room. As far as the family was concerned, Fugard was “just plain Hally,” but in an act of rebellion, to separate himself from his father’s

name, he bullied, blackmailed and bribed everyone into calling him Athol.

Fugard attended the University of Cape Town for two years, studying philosophy before dropping out to travel across Africa. He then served on the merchant ship the *SS Graigaur*, and sailed the trade routes of Southeast Asia. Upon returning to Port Elizabeth, he worked as a freelance journalist for the *Evening Post*. In 1956, he married actress Sheila Meiring (now a novelist and poet), with whom he founded Cape Town’s Circle Players, a theater workshop where his first play, *Klaas and The Devil*, premiered.

In 1958, Fugard was a clerk in the Native Commissioner’s Court in Fordsburg, the “pass law” court (a court where black Africans were taken when they were in violation of the pass laws that regulated their movement in urban areas). There he learned of the injustices of apartheid.

Due to the political persecution in apartheid South



Athol Fugard.

Africa, he and his wife moved to London to experience theater free from racial segregation and discrimination. While in London, Fugard penned *The Blood Knot* (1961). Upon returning to South Africa later that year, Fugard found that *The Blood Knot*, because of its interracial content, would not be permitted to play there after its first performance at the Dorkay House in Johannesburg, starring Fugard and South African actor Zakes Mokae. In late 1961, he took the production to un-segregated London.

Fugard and his family returned to South Africa in 1967. When the English television network BBC broadcast a new version of

*The Blood Knot* that year, the government seized his passport for four years and kept him and his family under surveillance, which included opening their mail and tapping the phone line. It would not be until 1971 that Fugard was permitted to leave the country; he directed his Obie Award-winning *Boesman and Lena* at London’s Royal Court Theatre.

During the 1960s and ‘70s in South Africa, when interracial mixing was illegal, Fugard worked as an actor, director and playwright with Cape Town’s interracial theater group, The Serpent Players. It was with The Serpent Players that Fugard met Mokae, the black musician and actor with whom he would collaborate throughout his career. Through the company, Fugard also met John Kani and Winston Ntshona, actors

who helped create some of Fugard’s most well-known plays and characters.

Fugard’s work during his career, especially with The Serpent Players, The Market Theatre, and theaters in London and the United States, has primarily focused on anti-apartheid themes.

There are six play categories to which Fugard’s work can be ascribed: the Port Elizabeth plays, the Township plays, Exile plays, Statements, My Africa plays, and Sorrows. The plays set in Port Elizabeth (roughly 1961-1982) depict the familial and personal struggles caused by apartheid. Fugard’s Statement plays (1972) directly attack apartheid. And as apartheid was ending in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Fugard’s My Africa plays confront the new challenges that face post-apartheid South Africa.

*Zakes Mokae (from left), Lonny Price and Danny Glover in the original Broadway production of ‘Master Harold’ ... and the Boys. (A Pictorial History of American Theatre)*



## TIMELINE: South Africa and apartheid through 1950

- **1651-52** Dutch settlers arrive in South Africa and the Dutch East India Company establishes a trading station at the Cape of Good Hope.
- **1756** Slaves are imported from West Africa, Malaysia and India, establishing white dominance over non-whites.
- **1806** Britain takes control of the Cape from the Dutch.
- **1810s** British missionaries arrive and criticize the racist practices of the Boers (Dutch settlers), who believe they are superior to Africans. They urge the Boers to treat Africans more fairly.
- **1830s-40s** The Great Trek: the Dutch/Afrikaner/Boers make the eastward and north-eastward migration away from British control. Slaves are emancipated.
- **1845-75** The system of segregation from India is introduced throughout the Natal region, under British colonial rule.
- **1867** Diamond mining begins in South Africa. Africans are given the most dangerous jobs, paid far less than white workers and housed in fenced, patrolled barracks.
- **1886** Gold is discovered in the Witwatersrand region. (This gold rush leads to the establishment of the city of Johannesburg.)
- **1899-1902** The Anglo-Boer War is fought between the British Empire and the two independent Boer republics of

Because of the strong hold apartheid had on South Africa's people and culture, Fugard's works weren't produced in the country until 1994, after the end of apartheid. Many premiered in London and at Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Conn. Fugard's American debut was *The Blood Knot*, produced Off-Broadway in 1964 by Lucille Lortel at the Cricket Theatre. Four of his plays have been produced on Broadway: *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (1974), *The Island*

(1974), *A Lesson from Aloes* (1980), *'Master Harold' ... and the Boys* (1982 and the 2003 revival). *Blood Knot* was revived in 1985 and given a Broadway production. Other Fugard works include *The Road to Mecca* (1984), *My Children! My Africa!* (1989), *The Captain's Tiger: A Memoir for the Stage* (1999), *Sorrows and Rejoicings* (2001) and *Exits and Entrances* (2004).

Fugard and his works have received numerous nominations and awards, includ-

ing the Tony, Obie, Lucille Lortel, Evening Standard, Drama Desk and Audie. In 2005, he was honored by the government of South Africa with the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver for his "excellent contribution and achievements in the theater." He has five honorary degrees and is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He is a professor of acting, directing and playwriting at the University of California, San Diego.



Faded image of Athol Fugard's parents and Willie outside the St. George's Park Tea Room, which his mother managed for 30 years.

oil of wintergreen and embrocation. (His groans have woken me up and I have gotten out of bed to help.)"

There would be little else emotionally that would supply Fugard with the strong role model he needed as a boy. As he grew, he came to resent his father's absentness, politics and weakness (physical and psychological). Fugard would continue to grapple with his relationship with his father, even past his

death in October 1961. He attempted to reconcile his feelings through his plays, including *'Master Harold'* and *Hello and Goodbye*.

In the end, Fugard still loved his father, regardless of the man that he was. He came to understand and accept his father's shortcomings. Fugard wrote this in *Notebooks* in June 1972: "My own judgment of my father—a gentle but weak man."

### The Jubilee Residential Hotel

Due to his father's inability to work, his mother managed the Jubilee Residential Hotel and St. George's Park Tea Room. The Jubilee was home to the Fugards, and a temporary home for travelers and Port Elizabethans. It was during these years that he

met Sam and Willie, the two black servants who would become Fugard's greatest friends. In the six years that the family lived at the Jubilee, young Athol would spend much of his time in the servants' quarters and exploring every room in the hotel.

the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, caused by the discovery of gold in the northern regions of South Africa and the British attempting to reassert power over the Afrikaners. After three years, a peace treaty is reached, but the Boers lose their independence to the British.

- **1908** A constitutional convention is held to establish South African independence from Britain. The all-white government decides that non-whites may vote but not hold office.
- **1910** The South Africa Act takes away all political rights of Africans in three of the country's four states. This creates the Union of South Africa and transfers power to the white minority. Louis Botha is the country's first prime minister, and Jan Smuts is deputy prime minister.
- **1912** The South African Native National Congress organizes Africans in the struggle for civil rights.
- **1913** The Black (or Natives) Land Act gives 7.3 percent of the country's land to Africans, who make up 80 percent of the population. Africans are prohibited from owning land outside their "homeland." Africans are allowed to be on "white" land only if they are working for whites.
- **1914** The (Afrikaner) National Party is formed. The Afrikaner Rebellion takes place; it involves the National Party opposing South African participation in World War I on the British side because of past ties to Germany.
- **1919** Botha dies. Smuts succeeds him as prime minister.

## 'Master Harold' in Real Life

# the inspirations

**'Master Harold' ... and the Boys is considered Fugard's most personal play. In an attempt, perhaps, to forgive his past behaviors and reconcile relationships with his family and friends, the play draws heavily from his childhood.**

### Fugard's father

The relationship between Fugard and his father would be central to his personal character, relationships as a child and, later, his dramas. Never simply good or bad, the relationship was a roller-coaster of emotion, resentment and love (on young Athol's part). Even after his father's death in 1961, it was difficult for Fugard to

speak about exactly how he felt toward him.

Harold David Lanigan Fugard, crippled from a childhood accident, was a jazz pianist, ladies man, alcoholic and racist bigot. Papa Fugard did not provide young Athol with a strong, capable father figure, but rather subjected him to his "pointless, unthoughtout prejudices" against any non-white South African. He

was an absent father and distant in his relationship with his son, but the two would bond over music and storytelling, as he wrote in *Cousins: A Memoir*:

"My father is in bed and I am sitting in a chair at his bedside. The cramps in the stump of his gammy leg—which had him whimpering all through his life—are particularly bad, and I am massaging his leg with

# Port Elizabeth and St. George's Park the setting

In *Cousins: A Memoir*, Fugard recalls his days at the Jubilee:

“We had moved into the Jubilee Residential Hotel after the death of my paternal grandmother. ... Hardly a stone’s throw away, at the bottom of the hill, was Main Street, then Port Elizabeth’s principal business and shopping center. It was 1940 and I was eight years old at the time.

“If I remember correctly, there were sixteen rooms ... all furnished with only the bare essentials: bed, dressing table, wardrobe, washstand with enamel jug, basin, potty and a chair. I can’t remember any pictures on the walls of those dark little rooms. ... During our six years in the hotel I managed to sleep in thirteen of the rooms. I can remember very clearly how much I regretted the three that had eluded me when we finally sold up and left in 1946. It felt as if I had failed to complete a major mission in my life. ...

“In fact as regards people and incidents, the Jubilee was far and away the most exciting of the four homes of my youth. ... A hop and a skip downhill and you were slap in the middle of Main



Athol Fugard's parents in the St. George's Park Tea Room. (*Cousins: A Memoir*)

Street—and in those years, 1940 to 1946, it was a genuine main street ... At one end was the city hall: white, square and as solid as the wedding cakes my mother baked and decorated as a sideline, and at the other, beckoning me through all my childhood and youth, was Africa.”

## Sam and the kite

Fugard's relationship with Sam Semela, the waiter at the Jubilee, is central to *Master Harold*—and to his childhood. It was a strange dichotomy to young Athol: He was only 10, yet he had power over an older man. Wanting to model himself after Semela, Fugard recognized the qualities that made him a man, a surrogate father.

Semela worked at the Jubilee and St. George's Park Tea Room for 15 years. Young Athol was especially

fond of him; they would read books together and entertain each other in the servants' quarters. In a brief March 1961 passage in his *Notebooks*, Fugard recalls the day when Semela made him a kite:

“The kite which he produced for me one day during those early years when Mom ran the Jubilee Hotel and he was a waiter there. He had made it himself: brown paper, its ribs fashioned from thin strips of tomato-box plank which he had smoothed down, a paste of flour and water for glue. I was surprised and bewildered that he had made it for me. ... Realise now he was the most significant—the only—friend of my boyhood years. On terrible windy days when no-one came to swim or walk in the park, we would sit together and talk.”

Port Elizabeth is one of South Africa's major urban areas. Located on the Eastern Cape, the city is well suited to the import/export industry. Fugard recalls that Saturday morning was Port Elizabeth's bustling day of the week. Shoppers, motorcars, trams and buses filled Main Street. He and his father would see monster movies at local cinemas located near the Jubilee Hotel. Slightly further was Jetty Street, filled with beggars and brothels. At the end of the street was the railway station and docks where coloured fishermen worked. Just beyond Port Elizabeth was the Donkin Reserve, an open area of grassy fields where young Athol flew kites with Sam Semela.

Home to Port Elizabeth's sport teams, St. George's Park is the second oldest cricket club in South Africa and the sixth oldest cricket ground in the world. It was created on an open field alongside a cemetery outside of Port Elizabeth.

- Cricket was introduced to South Africa with the arrival of British settlers in the early 1800s; the Port Elizabeth Cricket Club was formed in 1859.
- South Africa's first bowling club was established Aug. 14, 1882. The first lawn, or “green,” was opened Jan. 5, 1884, by the bowling fraternity.
- St. George's Park staged the first Test Cricket match to be played in South Africa on March 12, 1889. This was the first Test ever played outside England or Australia.
- St. George's Park held South Africa's first Rugby International against England on July 30, 1891.
- St. George's Park hosted England's Princess Elizabeth in 1947 when she and her parents toured South Africa.
- The first women's international Test Cricket was in 1960.
- Today, St. George's Park is an 18,500-seat stadium holding cricket, bowling, rugby, tennis and soccer events.

St. Georges Park, circa 1982. (*The Herald*)



■ **1920s** Black workers are fired from jobs, which are now given to white workers returning from World War I.

■ **1923** The South African Native National Congress changes its name to African National Congress. The Native (Black) Urban Areas Act introduces residential segregation in South Africa. A provision in the act also provides cheap labor for the white mining and farming industry.

■ **1933** J.B.M. Hertzog and Jan Smuts win the general election; Smuts becomes deputy prime minister.

■ **1936** The Representation of Blacks Act weakens the political rights for Africans and allows them to vote only for white representatives. The Native Trust and Land Act increases the land set aside for Africans to 13 percent of the country's total area.

■ **1939** The Ossewabrandwag is formed. It is a pro-Nazi, nationalist Afrikaner organization opposing South Africa's entrance into World War II on the Allied side. Smuts becomes prime minister.

■ **1940** J.B.M. Hertzog and Daniel François Malan (prime minister from 1948-54) form the Herenigde Nasionale Party (Reunited National Party). This party initiates the policy of apartheid.

■ **1946** Smuts sets up the Fagan Commission to investigate changes to the segregation system. The commission recommends relaxing control over Africans in urban areas. More than 75,000 Africans go on strike in support of higher wages: African mine workers

# the dancing

Dating to the country's colonization, South Africa's ballroom-dancing culture was initially influenced by the Dutch settlers, who brought the dances with them from Europe. Once enslaved, the natives/slaves would mimic and imitate their masters' dances and music. As time progressed and more Europeans arrived, they brought social dances like the minuet, quadrille, cotillion and contredans to South Africa's native culture.

In the first half of the 20th Century, thanks to gramophone and cinema recordings, American jazz and African-American performers were seen and heard in large cities like Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Ragtime, the modern waltz, and the foxtrot were incorporated into post-World War I culture, and ballroom dancing and jazz-band music became special social events. These dances became more for the white elite than for native blacks or conservative Afrikaners, who deemed ballroom dancing immoral and promiscuous.

Black and coloured townships embraced ballroom dancing as an expression of pride, a form of protest and stress relief. Jazz musicians

and middle-class workers would pack the many late-night township dance halls. Jazz band and dance competitions, where white judges evaluated the performers' abilities, excited Africans in domestic and restaurant service, who seemed to be the best ballroom dancers. "Rainbow balls," the non-white answer to ballroom-dancing events, consisted of coloured jazz musicians playing all styles of jazz and blues music, black and coloured dancers and, later, white judges. The music was a blend of Afrikaans folk music, Afro-American beats, American jazz and swing, and that of the British elite (two-steps and waltzes).

In the early 1920s, Madge Mans, a South African dance

teacher, created the South African Dance Teacher's Association and the South African Ballroom Championship. The widespread popularity of ballroom dancing led to the creation of the Amateur Dancers Association in South Africa in 1933, where social dancers, including non-whites, could test their skills as a step toward professional competition. The white elite, who dominated the competition circuit and native Africans adhered to the strictures of ballroom-dance rules and regulations. Black dancers, though, were excluded from prominent competitions.

Whether social or competitive, ballroom dancing swept across South Africa in the early 20th Century.

South African dance hall, circa 1951. (Jurgen Schadeberg)



# the interview

Early during the rehearsal process, **TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP)** interviewed director **Jonathan Wilson (JW)** about his career and his work on *'Master Harold' ... and the Boys*.



**(PJP)** How did you get your start in the theater?

**(JW)** My high-school English teacher, Fr. Claude Biechler, introduced me to the chair of the Theatre Department at Rosary Hill College in Buffalo, N.Y. At the time, it was an all-female institution that soon opened its doors to men in art, pre-med and theater. I was one of the first two males allowed into the school. I graduated with a BFA degree in play direction. A year later, Rosary Hill became a full coeducational institution and is now called Daemen College.

**(PJP)** Why have you made Chicago your home?

**(JW)** During the summer of 1976, I was in the midst of completing a doctoral

program in theater at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and looking for a job. I got an interview at Loyola University Chicago for a joint appointment in theater and African-American studies. Fortunately, I got the job and am currently in my 33rd year at this wonderful Jesuit institution. From 1976 until 1988, I lived in Rogers Park. In 1988, my wife and I brought a home in Evanston.

**(PJP)** Is Jonathan "the teacher" in a university setting any different from Jonathan "the director" in a professional setting?

**(JW)** No. I think of the theater and the classroom as an exercise in the study of culture. I love to learn.

are paid 12 times less than their white counterparts and forced to do the most dangerous jobs. Police use violence to force unarmed workers back to their jobs; more than 1,000 are injured and at least 12 are killed.

■ **1948** The Sauer Commission, created in opposition to the Fagan Commission, recommends that apartheid be implemented. The Herenigde Nasionale Party, with an apartheid platform, wins the general election by a majority of parliamentary seats but not overall votes.

■ **1949** The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act outlaws interracial marriages. The African National Congress adopts the Programme of Action, ushering in a period of mass campaigns against non-white civil disobedience, boycotts and strikes.

■ **1950** The Population Registration Act classifies people into three racial groups: white, coloured (mixed race or Asian), and native (African/black). The Immorality Act forbids all sexual relations between whites and non-whites. The Suppression of Communism Act prohibits anything that might promote political, social or economic changes. The law also allows the minister of justice to ban any person posing a threat to the state's control.

■ **June 26, 1950** The date is known as Freedom Day. Demonstrations and strikes are held in opposition to the Suppression of Communism Act. The bill becomes law, outlawing the Communist Party of South Africa, which was founded in 1921, along with many forms of opposition to apartheid.

The theater provides the opportunity for either me and my students or me and my fellow audience members to study the mysteries of life. Who am I? Can I find a home in the outside world? Why do people do what they do? What is the meaning of life? Is there life after death?

In the theater and the classroom, I find myself preoccupied with the idea of helping people understand people. I teach my students the skills of acting and directing with the hope they will use the knowledge to help others. As director, I enjoy learning about cultures other than my own, yet at the same time finding the rituals and customs that link cultures to one another. For example, what is the connection between the inner-city ghetto of Buffalo (where I grew up) and this cozy little tea room in South Africa? What is the connection between art and science or theater and theology? I believe my work as teacher and director is the same: to pursue the truth and to bring that truth to the stage with the utmost clarity.

**(PJP)** You're no stranger to Athol Fugard's writing, having directed *Playland* at Steppenwolf Theatre in 1994. How is *'Master*

*Harold'* similar to and/or different from *Playland*?

**(JW)** *Playland* is an intense study of a white Afrikaner's encounter with a black South African man on a New Year's Eve night. They are forced to come to terms with how they are alike and different from one another. *'Master Harold'* is an autobiographical study of the complicated relationship between Fugard and his father and his memories of being nurtured by two African servants. In *Playland*, we are dealing with a social/political encounter. *'Master Harold'* is a personal look at the difficulties of growing up in Fugard's household.

**(PJP)** You and I started talking about *Master Harold'* early in 2009. What is it that draws you to this play?

**(JW)** The struggles of a teenager in South Africa trying to come to terms with who he is in a somewhat dysfunctional family. His situation is made even more complicated by having two black men in his life who are long-time employees of the family and victims of the apartheid situation going on in the 1950s. I am drawn to Hally's complicated struggle to find himself. To do so, he must deal privately with an alcoholic father and pub-

licly with a growing political consciousness of the racial divide happening outside his front door.

**(PJP)** Have your impressions of the play changed since our initial discussions?

**(JW)** Yes. It is vitally important that the childhood memories that Hally shares with his surrogate fathers Sam and Willie reveal a sensitive and loving child. The audience must make an endearing connection with this young man early in the production if they are to understand his painful and embarrassing behavior later in the play.

**(PJP)** The casting process for *'Master Harold'* was very exciting, and the level of talent we saw for the three roles was extraordinary. What ultimately led you to cast Alfred Wilson, Daniel Bryant and Nate Burger as Sam, Willie and Hally?

**(JW)** All three actors are exceptionally talented. They have strong and healthy physical/vocal instruments. Their interpretive skills are impressive, making it so much easier to get into the depths of characterization and relationships. They had a good feel for this play in the audition process. And I have had the good fortune

## “I believe that the function of theater in society is to help people make the connection between art and life.”

to work with all three on other creative projects. I have a high regard for their work as artists and enormous respect for them as human beings.

**(PJP)** Can you talk a bit about your design process for this show?

**(JW)** Athol Fugard sets his play in a tea room in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. So set designer Tim Mann spent lots of time imagining how that tea room should look and feel in the Time-Line space. After weeks of contemplation and some early production meetings, we finally settled on one of his sketches. We agreed that the actor/audience arrangement should be proscenium to capture the realistic intimacy of the tea room.

I remember having good talks with costume designer Alex Meadows about how Sam and Willie, the waiters in the restaurant, should be dressed. He and I discussed the kind of boarding school Hally attends and what his uniform should look like.

Heather Gilbert, the lighting designer, discussed with me how the room should look on a wet and windy day and what the internal lighting sources should be.

Sound designer Chris Kriz and choreographer Sandra Kaufman were concerned with finding the right music to underscore the quickstep and a slow fox trot that are danced intermittently throughout the play. Dialect coach Nan Withers-Wilson spent lots of time with each actor, working on a phonetic breakdown of the South African dialects. And dramaturg Kelli Marino provided numerous research documents on the play and playwright for the actors and me to read.

**(PJP)** This is your first time directing at TimeLine, yet I know much of your career has been focused on plays with historical themes. Can you talk a bit about how you connect with our mission?

**(JW)** TimeLine's mission of producing historically based plays has been my mission

since my undergraduate days at Rosary Hill College. My directing thesis production was Martin Duberman's *In White America*, which chronicles the rise of the civil-rights movement in America.

During the mid-'70s, my production of *The Man Nobody Saw* for the Buffalo Police Academy was utilized as a vehicle for discussing how officers accost and arrest offenders. In the late '80s, I directed Howard Sackler's *The Great White Hope*, a study of Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion of the world. In the early '90s, I had the opportunity to direct Endesha Ida Mae Holland's *From the Mississippi Delta*, an autobiographical study of the playwright's life from prostitute to Ph.D., and Jeff Stetson's *Fraternity*, a political look at the four children who died in the bombing of a Birmingham, Alabama, church. And there have been many others.

I love directing plays that connect art and life. I believe that the function of theater in society is to help people make this vital connection. I applaud TimeLine's commitment to making these important connections, and I am honored and proud to be a part of its work.

# backstage

## Save the Date: Step Into Time Benefit

**T**imeLine Theatre Company cordially invites you to Step Into [PRIME] Time: The Age of Television for an evening of innovation, exploration and celebration. Please join us on Friday, March 26, 2010 in the ballrooms of the beautiful and historic Germania Place for a gala benefit celebrating our much anticipated final production of the season, the Chicago premiere of *The Farnsworth Invention* by Aaron Sorkin. This brilliant new play is about the battle between two ambitious visionaries for the rights to one of the greatest inventions of all time: the television.

We hope you will join us for a glamorous night of revelry exploring defining moments and unforgettable memories from more than 60 years of television. Guests will enjoy appetizers and spirits to set the mood, as well as a gourmet dinner and entertainment crafted exclusively for the event. Most important, you'll be supporting the ongoing work of TimeLine Theatre Company, Chicago's award-winning home for provocative theater inspired by history.

For more information about the event, please contact Development Manager Lydia Swift at 773.281.8463 x26 or visit [timelinetheatre.com/step\\_into\\_time](http://timelinetheatre.com/step_into_time).



Bethany Thomas entertains the crowd with a showstopper during TimeLine's 2009 Step Into Time: Wintergarten Variet  benefit.

### Supporting TimeLine is easier than ever!

Donate online via [timelinetheatre.com](http://timelinetheatre.com) and opt for a "recurring donation" to effortlessly make monthly, quarterly or annual gifts. You'll be continuously supporting the art on our stage!

## The History Makers Celebration

**O**n December 1, members of TimeLine's History Makers Society gathered at Quartino Restaurant to celebrate a milestone year of making history at TimeLine Theatre.



TimeLine Board members Gloria Friedman (from left) and Debra Siegel with History Makers Penny Shaw and Paul Kampner and Company member Nick Bowling at the History Makers celebration in December.

Guests mingled with fellow History Makers, Company members and staff over cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, and enjoyed the feature presentation of the evening: A discussion between founding Company member Nick Bowling and director Kimberly Senior. Nick, who celebrates directing his 15th

TimeLine production this year, was instrumental in getting TimeLine started 13 seasons ago, while Kimberly has been a part of our artistic family for just a few seasons. Representing both a rich past of theatrical excellence and a bright future of innovation, these artists are an important part of the TimeLine family—just as our History Makers are!

Over these many years, TimeLine Theatre has experienced tremendous change, perhaps none as stunning as 2009's growth and success. It has been our honor to see firsthand how the remarkable support of our History Makers has affected the theatre. The success of TimeLine can be attributed in no small part to the continued generosity of our donors. Everyone at TimeLine thanks all of you who are History Makers—your support truly does make history happen at TimeLine Theatre.

### Interested in joining the History Makers Society?

Gifts of \$1,000 or more grant you exclusive access to events, artists and special History Maker level benefits at TimeLine. To learn more, contact Development Manager Lydia Swift at 773.281.8463 x26 or visit [timelinetheatre.com/donate](http://timelinetheatre.com/donate). We hope you consider making history with us today!

## In appreciation: The Benefits of Being a TimeLine Donor

**T**hroughout the year, TimeLine is delighted to invite our donors to special opportunities to mingle with the artists, Company members and staff. These events were created as a way to bring our supporters even closer to the art at TimeLine in grateful appreciation for their generosity.

Upcoming donor appreciation events include:

**Private Play Reading  
February 9, 2010**  
*Invitation extended exclusively to donors giving \$150 or more*

Donors are among the select few to experience the reading of a play under consideration for next season and to engage in a conversation with TimeLine Company members about the season selection process.

**Donor Breakfast  
May 16, 2010**  
*Invitation extended exclusively to donors giving \$500 or more*

Donors are invited to join Artistic Director PJ Powers and Managing Director Elizabeth K. Auman for a light breakfast as they discuss their future vision for TimeLine Theatre.

## BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

*Dramaturgy @ Historical Research by Kelli Marino*

*Written by Kelli Marino, PJ Powers, Lydia Swift and Lara Goetsch*

*Edited by Karen A. Callaway & Lara Goetsch*

*Photography and Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch*

*'Master Harold' ... and the Boys Photo by Ryan Robinson*

*Backstory is published four times each season.*

*Pictured on front cover (from left): Dialect coach Nan Withers-Wilson and director Jonathan Wilson; costume designer Alex Wren Meadows; actors Nate Burger and Alfred Wilson; set model by scenic designer Timothy Mann; and actor Daniel Bryant.*

*Pictured on back cover (from left): Stage manager Ana Espinosa; director Jonathan Wilson; actor Alfred Wilson; actor Nate Burger; actor Daniel Bryant; and lighting designer Heather Gilbert.*

### **Our Mission:**

TimeLine Theatre presents stories **inspired by history** that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre that engages, educates, entertains and enlightens.



# 'Master Harold' ... and the Boys

# the play



January 23 - March 21, 2010

previews 1/20 - 1/22

by **ATHOL FUGARD**

directed by

**JONATHAN WILSON \***

Acclaimed for both its universal themes of humanity and its unforgettable dialogue, this widely admired masterpiece explores life in South Africa during the 1950s era of apartheid.

When a white 17-year-old and two black workers he has known all his life connect on one rainy day, their wide-ranging discussions illustrate all that unites us, and the gulf of what still divides us.

## Cast

Daniel Bryant\*\*: *Willie*

Alfred Wilson\*\*: *Sam*

Nate Burger: *Hally*

\*The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

\*\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

## Production Team

Timothy Mann, U.S.A.:

*Scenic Designer*

Alex Wren Meadows:

*Costume Designer*

Heather Gilbert, U.S.A.:

*Lighting Designer*

Christopher Kriz:

*Sound Designer*

Julia Eberhardt:

*Properties Designer*

Kelli Marino:

*Dramaturg*

Ana Espinosa and

Cheney Tardio:

*Stage Managers*

James Ogden:

*Production Manager*

*Those designers and scenic artists identified by U.S.A. are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO.*

## Location

'Master Harold' ... and the Boys is performed at TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave., Chicago.

## JANUARY 2010

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## FEBRUARY 2010

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

## MARCH 2010

SU	M	T	W	TH	F	SA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21						

- Regular Performance
- Preview Performance
- Opening Night *Sold Out*
- Post-Show Discussion with cast & production crew *Free*
- Sunday Scholars a one-hour post-show panel discussion with experts on the themes and issues of the play *Free*
- Company Member Discussion a conversation with TimeLine's Company members *Free*

## SHOW TIMES

PREVIEWS 8 PM

OPENING NIGHT 7 PM

WEDNESDAYS & THURSDAYS 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 8 PM

SATURDAYS 4 PM & 8 PM

SUNDAYS 2 PM