

**Sponsored by Council Member Bill Perkins &
the New York City Council Cultural Immigrant Initiative**



Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

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NY Classical's "Diversifying the Classics" staged reading series is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.



Council on the Arts

King Lear

NY Classical will be presenting FREE performances of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* across Manhattan & Brooklyn!

Central Park at West 103rd & Central Park West
June 2 to June 21

Carl Schurz Park at East 86th Street & East End Avenue
June 23 to July 5

The Battery at Castle Clinton National Monument
July 7 to July 19

MetroTech Commons (Brooklyn) July 20 to July 26

Brooklyn Bridge Park at Pier 1 July 27 to August 2

Go to nyclassical.org to sign up for email updates!

Synopsis

Set in 1821, the play is based on the true story of the first African-American theatre company in New York City. It dramatizes the conflict that arises when free African-American, William Henry Brown—founder of The African Company—organizes a production of Shakespeare’s *Richard III* for a predominantly black audience, thereby challenging leading New York City producer Stephen Price, who is presenting an all-white version of the same play a few blocks away.

The Cast

Maechi Aharanwa* Ann Johnson
Lincoln A.M. Brown* Papa Shakespeare
Nixon Cesar* James Hewlett
Ian Gould* The Constable
David Heron* William Henry Brown
Candice McKoy* Sarah
John Michalski* Stephen Price
William J. Vila* Stage Directions

**appearing courtesy of Actors’ Equity Association*

Originally produced in 1987 by Penumbra Theatre Company
Lou Bellamy, Artistic Director.

Produced by Arena Stage, 1992,
Douglas C. Wagner, Artistic Director;
Tazwell Thompson, Director.

THE AFRICAN COMPANY PRESENTS RICHARD III is
presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service,
Inc., New York.

About The Playwright

Carlyle Brown is a writer/performer and artistic director of Carlyle Brown & Company, based in Minneapolis, which has produced *The Masks Of Othello: A Theatrical Essay*, *The Fula from America: An African Journey*, and *Talking Masks*. His plays include *The African Company Presents Richard III*, *The Little Tommy Parker Celebrated Colored Minstrel Show*, *Buffalo Hair*, *The Beggars’ Strike*, *The Negro of Peter the Great*, *Pure Confidence*, and others. He has received commissions from Arena Stage, the Houston Grand Opera, the Children’s Theatre Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, and Actors Theatre of Louisville. He is a recipient of playwriting fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, Theatre Communications Group, and the Pew Charitable Trust. Mr. Brown has been artist-in-residence at New York University School of the Arts Graduate Acting Program, The James Thurber House in Columbus, and Ohio State University Theater Department, where he directed his music drama *Yellow Moon Rising*. He has been a teacher of expository writing at New York University; African-American literature at the University of Minnesota; playwriting at Ohio State University and Antioch College; African-American theater and dramatic literature at Carlton College as the Benedict Distinguished Visiting Artist and “Creation and Collaboration” at the University of Minnesota Theater Department. He has worked as a museum exhibit writer and story consultant for the Charles Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit and the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage in Louisville. Mr. Brown is a core alumnus of the Playwrights’ Center in Minneapolis, an alumnus of New Dramatists in New York, and a member of the Dramatists Guild. He served on the board of directors of The Playwrights’ Center and Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the nonprofit professional theater, and on the Charleston Jazz Initiative Circle at the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, where his works and papers are archived. He is the 2006 recipient of The Black Theatre Network’s Winona Lee Fletcher Award for outstanding achievement and artistic excellence.

NY Classical is celebrating our 21st season! Our mission is to create and reinvigorate audiences for the theatre by presenting all-free productions of popular classics and forgotten masterpieces in public spaces throughout New York City.

NY Classical firmly believes that everyone—regardless of social, economic, or educational background—should have the opportunity to enjoy live professional theatre together as a community. Since 2000, NY Classical has presented over 700 free performances for more than 250,000 New Yorkers. We have produced extensively in non-traditional settings: outdoors in Central Park, The Battery, Carl Schurz Park, and Brooklyn Bridge Park and indoors in Brookfield Place, Roosevelt Island’s Tata Innovation Center, and the Church of the Epiphany.

By producing at zero cost to our audiences, we reach a broad demographic of our urban community, and serve as an important cultural and educational programming resource for our venues. To date, we have staged 42 all-free productions by classical playwrights including Shakespeare, Molière, Chekhov, Shaw, and Wilde.

Tonight’s performance is part of NY Classical’s ***Diversifying The Classics*** reading series, which aims to focus attention on little known classic plays or new plays with classical roots that expand the canon from a cultural immigrant perspective.

Maechi Aharanwa (Ann Johnson) Aharanwa’s Off Broadway credits include *Mothers* and *If Pretty Hurts* (Playwrights Horizons) and *The Winter’s Tale* at Theatre for a New Audience. She has also been seen regionally in *The Call* (Theatreworks Hartford) and *Seven Guitars* at The People’s Light and Theatre in Pennsylvania. Her television appearances include *Elementary* and *Person of Interest*. She is a graduate of The Juilliard School and a past winner of the Princess Grace/Gant Gaither Theatre Award.

Lincoln A.M. Brown (Papa Shakespeare) Brown’s credits include Off Broadway appearances in *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (Classical Theatre of Harlem) and *Moon On a Rainbow Shawl* (The New Federal Theatre). Other credits include *Boesman and Lena* and *All My Sons* at the New Day Repertory Theatre and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Florida Shakespeare Festival and the Danbury Shakespeare Festival.

Nixon Cesar (James Hewlett) Cesar appeared in *Mother Courage* at The Public Theatre with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline. Other New York and Off Broadway credits include Paul Calderon’s *Master of The Crossroads* as well as Arthur Miller’s *A View from the Bridge* and *The Hook*, adapted by Ron Hutchinson from Miller’s screenplay of the same name. Cesar earned an Audelco Award nomination for his role in David Heron’s *Love and Marriage and New York City* (The Billie Holiday Theatre).

Ian Gould (The Constable) Gould is an Associate Artist with NY Classical and has appeared in their productions of *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* among others. Other credits include *The Show Off* at the Pecos Theatre as well as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* at The Acting Company.

David Heron (William Henry Brown) Heron's Off Broadway credits include *The Winter's Tale* (NY Classical), *The Emperor Jones* (Irish Rep), and his own play *Love and Marriage and New York City* (Billie Holiday Theatre). He has been seen regionally in *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare Festival St. Louis), *Marley-The Musical* (Baltimore Centerstage) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Colonial Theatre of Rhode Island.

Candice McKoy (Sarah) A graduate of the ACT Conservatory in San Francisco, she has appeared in New York and regionally in productions such as *Intimate Apparel* (Portland Stage), *Single Black Female* (Actors Playhouse), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sonnet Rep), and David Heron's *Love and Marriage and New York City* (Billie Holiday Theatre) for which she earned an Audelco Award nomination. Her television and film appearances include *The Path* and *Man on a Ledge*.

John Michalski (Stephen Price) Michalski is a Juilliard graduate and Associate Artist of NY Classical—appearing in numerous productions including *The Rivals*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Measure for Measure*, among others. Off Broadway and regional credits include *Under My Skin* and *Homer's Odyssey* (Handcart Ensemble), *One Man, Two Guvnors* (Repertory Theatre of St. Louis), and *The Crucible* (Pioneer Theatre, Salt Lake City).

William Vila (Stage Directions) He is also known as Triple-5, Singer, Pianist, Actor, Stage Manager, Playwright, and Long Distance Bus Driver. #mrbillthebusdriver

New Heritage Theatre Group, the oldest Black non-profit theater company in New York City, originated in 1964 under the name New Heritage Repertory Theatre by the late Roger Furman, a revered playwright, director, actor and lecturer, who began his career in the 1940s with the American Negro Theatre in Harlem. Its mission, to preserve and sustain classic works of Black theatre.

In 1983, **Voza Rivers**, an award winning music and theatre producer took over the company, and reorganized under the name New Heritage Theatre Group (NHTG). Voza expanded the mission to provide training, experience and international exposure to veteran and emerging artists. New Heritage Theatre Group presentations reflect the historical, social and political experiences of African and Latino descendants in America and abroad.

In 1997, **Jamal Joseph**, an award winning writer, director, documentary film maker and educator, became the Executive Artistic Director.