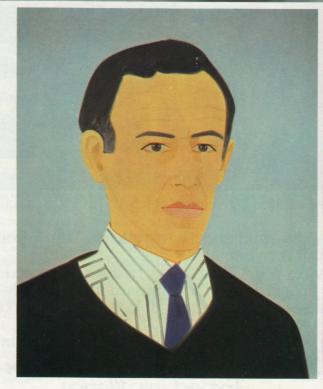
ARTS

Volume I, No. 4

August, 1983











A Contemporary Theatre

Gregory A. FallsProducing Director

Phil SchermerProducing Manager

Susan Trapnell Moritz Administrative Manager

presents

The Negro Ensemble Company Production of

A SOLDIER'S PLAY

by Charles Fuller

August 25-September 11, 1983

Director Douglas Turner Ward

Set Designer Felix E. Cochren

Costume Designer Judy Dearing

Lighting Designer Allen Lee Hughes

Sound Designer Regge Life

Production Stage Manager Edward DeShae

Stage Manager Janice C. Lane

Company Manager Larry K. Walden

THE CAST, in order of appearance

Tech/Sergeant Vernon C. Waters Adolph Caesar

Captain Charles Taylor David Davies

Corporal Bernard Cobb O. L. Duke

Private First Class Melvin Peterson Eugene Lee

Corporal Ellis James Pickens, Jr.

Private Louis Henson Samuel L. Jackson

Private James Wilkie Steven A. Jones
Private Tony Smalls John Dewey-Carter

Private Tony Smalls John Dewey-Carter

Captain Richard Davenport Charles Brown

Private C. J. Memphis Ben E. Epps
Lieutenant Byrd Danny Goldring

Captain Wilcox Stephen Zettler

THE PLACE: Fort Neal, Louisiana
THE TIME: 1944

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Understudies: Dan Lutzky and Cedric Turner

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement is made at the time of the performance.

The Negro Ensemble Company would like to express its appreciation to American Telephone and Telegraph Co. for its support in promoting this tour of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize winner A Soldier's Play.

SEPTEMBER 1983

The Negro Ensemble Company

On August 8, 1966, an article entitled "American Theatre: For Whites Only?" appeared in the Arts & Leisure section of *The New York Times*. In it, playwright Douglas Turner Ward challenged the white, middleclass nature of American theatre and defined the need for a broad-based, professional black theatre:

"...for a Negro playwright...the screaming need is for a sufficient audience of other Negroes, better informed through commonly shared experience, to readily understand, debate, confirm or reject the truth or falsity of his creative exploration."

A year later, Robert Hooks, Gerald Krone, and Ward founded the Negro Ensemble Company to produce a variety of plays and programs which, in Ward's words, "concentrate primarily on themes of Negro life, but also are resilient enough to incorporate and interpret the best of world drama—whatever the source." It has been doing so for fifteen years, and critic Ellen Foreman called it "the single national Black Theatre Company in America."

Bolstered by a three-year grant from the Ford Foundation, the NEC opened its first season in 1967 with *Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* by Peter Weiss, author of ACT's 1969 production, *Marat/Sade*. By the end of its premiere season, 60% of the NEC's capacity audiences were blacks new to the theatre experience and summer revivals of *Lusitanian Bogey* and *Daddy Goodness* were followed by the company's first national tour. After only one season, the NEC also received a special Tony Award for its innovations in artistic and audience development.

Perhaps the most notable new play of the company's early seasons was the 1970 production of *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*, a powerful study of urban family relationships by Lonne Elder III. ACT presented *Ceremonies* in its mainstage season the following year. Other playwrights produced during the first five NEC seasons include Derek Walcott, Ted Shine, Ray McIver, Alice Childress, Afolabi Ajayi, and Phillip Hayes Dean. Tours were sponsored to the Aldwych The-

ater in London, the Premio Roma Festival in Rome, and the 1972 Munich Olympics.

The first major commercial success of the NEC was Joseph A. Walker's *The River Niger*, produced in 1972 and moved in early 1973 from the 145-seat St. Mark's Playhouse to Broadway's Brooks Atkinson Theatre, where it ran for months and garnered the year's Tony Award for Best Play. It also made an equally successful national tour and, two years later, became the first NEC production to be translated into a feature film. Other company productions have been produced on nationwide television.

Another Broadway transfer came a season later, when Leslie Lee's *The First Breeze of Summer* moved uptown to the Palace Theatre. Other notable NEC productions of the late 1970s included *The Great MacDaddy* by Paul Carter Harrison, *Eden* by Steve Carter, *The Brownsville Raid* by Charles Fuller, and *The Offering* by Gus Edwards. In 1976, Phillip Hayes Dean's *The Sty of the Blind Pig* was presented at the Adelaide Festival in Australia, and the next season saw a series of NEC-conducted workshops in the Virgin Islands.

The major success of the company's 1979/80 season was Home by Samm-Art Williams, which later enjoyed a much-lauded Broadway run and subsequent limited-run engagement in Chicago. The greatest success in the NEC's fifteen-year history, though, has been Charles Fuller's A Soldier's *Play*. It was initially produced for a five-week run in November, 1981, but audience demand eventually kept it on the NEC stage for well over a year. In August 1982 a second company opened at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. This summer ACT is part of a unique national tour of the drama to several resident theatres; before coming to our mainstage it had an extended run at Chicago's Goodman Theatre and then went to Philadelphia.

(Based on "Portrait: The Negro Ensemble Company," the Goodman Theatre Guide, Stephen B. Scott, Editor; by permission. ©1983, Chicago Theatre Group, Inc.)

WHO'S WHO

CHARLES BROWN (Capt. Davenport), a native of Talladega, Alabama, was one of the cast in the original NEC production of A Soldier's Play. His credits as a member of the Negro Ensemble Company include Home, The First Breeze of Summer, The Brownsville Raid, The Great MacDaddy, Nevis Mountain Dew, and The River Niger. He also appeared in the Broadway productions of Home and The First Breeze of Summer and in Iron Mountain's production of The Poison Tree. Mr. Brown's movie credits include Without a Trace and Trading Places. His television credits include Welcome to Success: The Marva Collins Story, Family Reunion, and The Bureau. He will soon appear as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in a TV miniseries about the Kennedys.

ADOLPH CAESAR (Tech/Sgt. Waters) was the recipient of both an Obie and a New York Drama Desk Award for best supporting actor for his performance in the original NEC production of A Soldier's Play. Throughout his career, Mr. Caesar has worked with a variety of resident theatres, including Minnesota Theatre Company, the Arena Stage, the American Shakespeare Company, the New York Shakespeare Company, and the Lincoln Center Repertory. Since joining the Negro Ensemble Company in 1970, he has appeared in a number of their productions, including Sty of the Blind Pig, The Perry's Mission, Waiting for Mongo, The River Niger, The Great MacDaddy, Square Root of Soul, La Grima del Diablo, The Brownsville Raid, and A Season to Unravel. Mr. Caesar also enjoys a fine reputation throughout the country as a radio and TV announcer and narrator.

DAVID DAVIES (Capt. Taylor) is making his fourth appearance with the NEC. Previous NEC credits include About Heaven and Earth, Manhattan Made Me, and the New York production of A Soldier's Play. He worked on Broadway as the Gestapo officer on the train in Bent and went on ten times for Richard Gere. His Off-Broadway credits include Hamlet at the Roundabout Theatre and Sam Shepard's Back Bog Beast Bait, and he was a member of Michael Lessac's Colonnades Theatre Lab for three years. On TV, he was featured in the CBS special Mayflower - The Pilgrims' Adventure and played Desmond Lesoeur on ABC's One Life to Live. Mr. Davies spent a season at Trinity Square Repertory in Providence and last summer played Stanley in A Streetcar Named Desire. He is the artistic director of the Old Bay Playhouse in Maryland and chairman of the Division of Arts, Fordham University at Lincoln Center, where he teaches and directs.

JOHN DEWEY-CARTER (Private Smalls) was also associated with the Mark Taper

Forum production of A Soldier's Play. His stage credits include No Place to Be Somebody, Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death, Ceremonies in Dark Old Men, Piano Bar, and most recently the world premiere of Heal Thyself It's Wednesday at the Liberty Theatre in Los Angeles. His film and television credits include T. J. Hooker, Hill Street Blues, The White Shadow, Galactica 1980, Buck Rogers in the Twenty-Fifth Century, The Dukes of Hazzard and To Kill a Cop. He starred in Beyond the Universe, a movie made for cable TV, and Mustache, which aired recently on HBO.

O. L. DUKE (*Corporal Cobb*) appeared in several roles in the original NEC production of *A Soldier's Play*. He started his acting career at Los Angeles Community College, where he played Edmund in *King Lear*. He was recently featured in the CBS-TV movie *Dream House* and has appeared in several minor roles in films produced in New York.

BEN E. EPPS (Private C. J. Memphis) is making his debut with the NEC with this production, after five years with New York University's Creative Arts Team where he was resident composer and lyricist. Among the many shows he has written are Saloogie, which premiered at LaMama in New York, Rosa Parks' Back of the Bus, and Joe Louis the Brown Bomber, which played The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Other theatre credits include Rush Toward Freedom, Mother Courage, and Godspell at the Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. Ben received his first gold record for "Bounce, Rock, Skate, Roll," and his latest single, "Party on the Corner," is on RCA Salsoul Records.

DANNY GOLDRING (Lt. Byrd) also makes his debut with the NEC with this production. He was most recently seen as Mat Burke in O'Neill's Anna Christie at the American Folk Theatre in New York. He also performed the role of Yank in O'Neill's The Hairy Ape for the National Radio Theater of Chicago and appeared as Joel in the award-winning comedy Lunching at the Drury Lane Theatre at Water Tower Place. On television, Mr. Goldring portrayed Beau Mitchell in Search for Tomorrow and was seen in the NBC series The Chicago Story.

SAMUEL L. JACKSON (Private Henson), one of the original cast members of NEC's A Soldier's Play, is a native of Tennessee and a graduate of Morehouse College. He appeared as Cephus Miles in two touring companies of Home. He also appeared in the American Place Theatre production of Dear Lord Remember Me. Mr. Jackson's other stage credits include roles in Mother Courage and Her Children, Spell #7, Boogie Woogie Landscapes, Inacent Black, The Five Brothers, and The Mighty Gents. His movie credits include Ragtime.

STEVEN A. JONES (*Private Wilkie*) most recently appeared in the original production of the NEC's *A Soldier's Play*. Earlier at the NEC, he appeared in *Zooman and the Sign*. He also worked with the Living Stage at the Arena Stage and appeared in productions at the Washington Theatre Club, the Back

Alley Theatre, the New Playwrights' Theatre, and the Roundabout Theatre in Washington, D.C. He has worked in television and industrial films, and taught and directed at the Duke Ellington School for the Arts. Mr. Jones is an alumnus of Karamu Theatre, Cleveland. He lives with his wife and two sons in Washington, D.C.

EUGENE LEE (Private First Class Peterson) also was one of the original cast members of A Soldier's Play. His other NEC credits include Barry in Manhattan Made Me and Cephus Miles in the touring production of Home. He also appeared in the NEC production of Sons and Fathers of Sons. Most recently, in the NEC production of one-acts entitled About Heaven and Earth, he played the Black Militant in The Redeemer and Ogilvy in Night Line. At the Crossroads Theatre Company he was seen in Eden, Ceremonies in Dark Old Men, and One Monkey Don't Stop No Show. At the Workshop of Players and Artists, he appeared in Back to Back. Mr. Lee's television credits include The White Shadow, Good Times, Nurse, and Cotton Candy.

DAN LUTZKY (*Understudy*) is making his second appearance with the Negro Ensemble Company in the touring company of *A Soldier's Play*. He has worked extensively with Off- and Off-Off-Broadway theatres.

JAMES PICKENS, JR. (Corporal Ellis) made his debut with the Negro Ensemble Company in the original production of A Soldier's Play. His previous work in New York includes Columbia University's Muck Festival, The Good Ship Credit at the Richard Allen Center for Cultural Art, Over the Wall at the Westbeth Theatre, and appearances in Boy and Tarzan at the Henry Street Settlement, American Theatre of Actors, and 13th Street Theatre. He also has appeared at Circle Repertory Company and on television in All My Children and Saturday Night Live. Mr. Pickens is an alumnus of Karamu Theatre, Cleveland.

CEDRIC TURNER (Understudy) first appeared in the Negro Ensemble Company's production of A Soldier's Play as Corporal Cobb. Other credits include Daddy Daddy at LaMama and Camptown at Ensemble Studio Theatre. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, he holds a B.A. in theatre arts from the University of Louisville. Mr. Turner has appeared in dinner theatre in various roles; he has disc jockeyed his own radio talk show and is currently writing a full-length musical.

STEPHEN ZETTLER (Capt. Wilcox) performed in the original company production of A Soldier's Play. He has been seen in The Amazin' Casey Stengel at the American Place Theatre. Mr. Zettler began acting in New York with the Impossible Ragtime Theatre, appearing in Birdbath and Trifles. Recently he appeared in All My Sons and Bury the Dead with the Veteran's Ensemble. Mr. Zettler grew up in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania.

(continued on page 18)

Information in *Who's Who* is provided by the Negro Ensemble Company.

Art In The Lobby

In 1983 ACT continues its policy of providing space in its upper lobby to individual artists. ACT feels this gives our audience a chance to view new visual art work, enhances their theatre experience, and affords ACT the opportunity to be of public service to the greater arts community. Purchases of Art in the Lobby directly benefit the theatre.

During the run of *A Soldier's Play*, we present the works of five young artists: **John Beau Bond**, **Milo Duke**, **Christina Nichols**, **Ray Pelley**, and **Rob Schouten**. This exhibit has been brought to us through the assistance of curator/agent Carolyn Hartness, who describes their art as "a synchronistic exploration of universal symbols and their relation to the human condition. These artists share a desire for a popular art that will stimulate the potential for creative visualization in their public. They call this 'Dharmic Engineering.'"

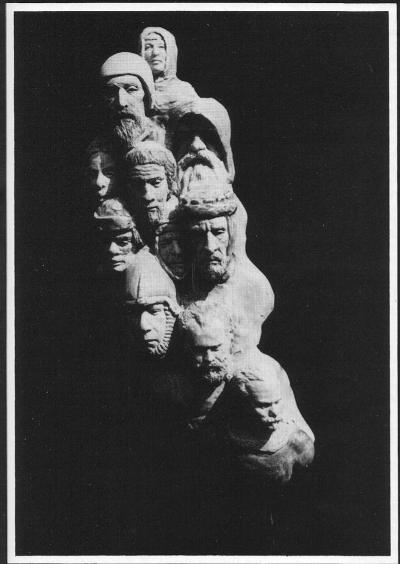
To purchase art work on display, contact the House Manager or call the ACT Office at 285-3220.



Milo Duke



Rob Schouten



John Beau Bond



Ray Pelley



Christina Nichols

DIRECTOR DOUGLAS TURNER WARD is the Artistic Director and co-founder of the Negro Ensemble Company, Inc. He directed the original production of *A Soldier's Play* at the NEC and the Broadway productions of *The River Niger* and *Home*.

PLAYWRIGHT CHARLES FULLER received the 1982 Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, the Outer Critics' Circle Award and the Theatre Club Award for A Soldier's Play. His other plays with the Negro Ensemble Company include The Brownsville Raid, In the Deepest Part of Sleep, and the Obie Award-winning Zooman and the Sign. He is the recipient of playwriting fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, CAPS, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Mr. Fuller lives and works in Philadelphia.

SET DESIGNER FELIX E. COCHREN designed the scenery for the original A Soldier's Play production. His design credits include both the Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of NEC's Home, the NEC productions of The Sixteenth Round and the Broadway production of Inacent Black. He also designed scenery and costumes for the Syracuse Ballet, Alburn Community, and Salt City Playhouse. Audiences have seen his work at the Richard Allen Center for Cultural Art, AMAS Repertory Theatre, New Heritage Theatre, Central Casting Theatre, and Indianapolis Civic Theatre. He is currently Resident Production Designer for the Billie Holiday Theatre. Mr. Cochren is a double recipient of the 1979 Audelco Award for both scenic and costume design.

COSTUME DESIGNER JUDY DEARING designed costumes for the original NEC production of A Soldier's Play. She also designed the Broadway productions of For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf, Trick, The Poison Tree, Lamb Post Reunion, The Mighty Gents, Black Picture Show, and What the Winesellers Buy. At the New York Shakespeare Festival she designed The Taking of Miss Janie and Derek Walcott's Remembrance, as well as Les Femme Noires and Unfinished Woman... Miss Dearing created the costume for Inside, danced by Judith Jamison for the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, and costumes for Evolution of the Blues at the Kennedy Center Opera House. She also designed the NEC production of Zooman and the Sign by Charles Fuller and The Dance and the Railroad, produced at the New York Shakespeare Festival, both of which were awarded 1981 Best Play Obie Awards. Her most recent credits include A Raisin in the Sun at the Studio Arena in Buffalo and Dear Lord Remember Me at the American Place Theatre.

LIGHTING DESIGNER ALLEN LEE HUGHES most recently received critical acclaim for his design of *K-2* on Broadway.
He also designed the original production of NEC's *A Soldier's Play*. This season he lit the American premiere of Tom Stoppard's *On the*

Razzle. His credits include Diane McIntyre's Sounds in Motion which toured Italy in 1981. He has designed for numerous resident theaters including the Denver Center Theater Company, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre and the Folger Theater Group. In New York his work has been seen at Lincoln Center and at the New York Shakespeare Festival. He was associated with the Broadway shows Bent, Hide and Seek, Charlie and Algernon, and Sophisticated Ladies.

SOUND DESIGNER REGGE LIFE designed the sound for the original NEC production of A Soldier's Play. His other NEC sound design credits include In An Upstate Motel, and he supervised the sound production of Zooman and the Sign and Weep Not for Me. At the New Federal Theatre he designed Louis. Mr. Life also served as a sound consultant to the BAM Theatre Company and worked on the motion picture Ragtime.

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER ED-WARD DeSHAE is in his second season with the NEC, where he has stage managed A Soldier's Play, Sons and Fathers of Sons, About Heaven and Earth, and Manhattan Made Me. As an actor and charter member of the D.C. Black Repertory Company, he has appeared in the Kennedy Center productions of The Blacks and Owen's Song, the Black Theatre Alliance Festival-Lincoln Center production of Five on the Black Hand Side. and Brownstone at the Second World Festival of Black and African Arts and Culture in Lagos, Nigeria. His directorial credits include No Place To Be Somebody, The River Niger, Livin' Fat, The New Cotton Club Review, and the Performing Arts Society of Los Angeles' production of Brownstone codirected with Vantile Whitfield. Mr. DeShae also works in film and broadcasting both in front of and behind the camera.

STAGE MANAGER JANICE C. LANE is in her third season as Stage Manager/Production Assistant. Her work with The NEC includes Charles Fuller's Zooman and the Sign, the original New York production, as well as the Los Angeles production of A Soldier's Play. She was also Production Stage Manager for Bill Gunn's New York production of Rhinestone and Alexis Deveaux's A Season to Unravel at New York University. Her theatrical interest began with The Ira Aldridge Players at Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER SUSAN TRAPNELL MORITZ came to ACT from two years as general manager of Dance



Theatre Seattle, where previously she served as educational director. Her work experience ranges from a stint in Paris as UNESCO bilingual aide to writing and editing positions in the Washington, D.C., area. She worked with the National Urban League and also taught English to youngsters in Algeria. Ms. Moritz holds a B.A. in French from the University of North Carolina and has completed her M.A. coursework in dance education at George Washington University. She also attended the University of Lyons in France.

PRODUCING MANAGER PHIL SCHERMER is ACT's Technical Director and a designer as well. In the past seventeen years his lighting design credits have included The Greeks, Loose Ends, Custer, Catholics, Wings, Fanshen, The Club, The Water Engine, A Christmas Carol, The Shadow Box, and many others. At The Empty Space Theatre, he designed lighting for American Buffalo, A Prayer For My Daughter, Heat, and Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi. He also has designed lighting for The Seattle Repertory Theatre and its 2nd Stage and sets for ACT, the 2nd Stage and The Empty Space.

PRODUCING DIRECTOR GREGORY A. FALLS is the founder of A Contemporary Theatre. He has directed more than fifty productions here, including The Greeks, Catholics, Getting Out, Fanshen, Henry IV Part 1, and Ballymurphy. He also created five original children's theatre revues and three Christmas shows, plus a scripted version of The Odyssey with playwright Kurt Beattie and original scripts of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, The Forgotten Door, A Wrinkle In Time, The Pushcart War, and Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. For ten years, Mr. Falls was Executive Director of the U.W. School of Drama. He is past president of the National Theatre Conference and the Washington Association of Theatre Artists, a founding board member of the United Arts Council of Puget Sound, and founder of the Champlain Shakespeare Festival.

A Contemporary Theatre's productions are supported, in part, by a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission and by the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a Federal agency. ACT also gratefully acknowledges support by the King County and Seattle Arts Commissions, by PONCHO, and by the Corporate Council for the Arts (CCA).

A Contemporary Theatre is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for non-profit theatres, the League of Resident Theatres, the American Arts Alliance, the Washington State Arts Alliance, Allied Arts of Seattle, and the League of Seattle Theatres.

A Contemporary Theatre P.O. Box 19400, Seattle, WA 98109 Located at 1st Ave. W. & W. Roy St. Box Office: (206) 285-5110 Administrative Offices: (206) 285-3220

Gregory A. Falls, Producing Director

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1983 Seattle Trust Guest Artists

ACT is honored to present The Negro Ensemble Company as our 1983 Seattle Trust Guest Artists. As part of the Guest Artists Program, there will be a free, public discussion in the theatre on **Thursday**, **September 8th**, beginning at **3 p.m.** Please join

Next at ACT

ACT's 19th mainstage season will close with Caryl Churchill's sometimes shocking, often hilarious *Cloud 9*, September 22nd through October 13th.

DramaLogue magazine called Cloud 9 "one of the most innovative and daring pieces of playwriting ever perpetrated."

While it is indeed a brilliant new look at sexuality, sexual politics and experiences, it is difficult to explain its fascinating "confusion" of character, time, gender, and nearly everything else.

Cloud 9 is still running Off-Broadway, at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, and has garnered three Obie Awards and two Drama Desk Awards. It originated in workshops in England and was presented at London's Royal Court Theatre, followed by its presentation in New York under the direction of Tommy Tune, with music by Maury Yeston.

ACT's production of *Cloud 9* will be directed by Jeff Steitzer.

NOTICE TO LATECOMERS

As a courtesy to our audience and in consideration of their safety, we cannot permit seating during the performance. Those arriving late or wishing re-entry into the theatre will be seated during pauses, scene changes, and intermission only.

WARNING

In consideration of other audience members and because of contractual obligations with our artists, the use of any photographic or recording device in the theatre cannot be permitted. The use of flash cameras is both inconsiderate and dangerous to the artists.

Smoking and consumption of food or beverages are permitted in the downstairs main lobby only.

POST-PLAY DISCUSSION

A free, informal discussion of A Soldier's Play will take place in the theatre on Sunday, August 28th, immediately following the 2:30 p.m. matinee, at approximately 4:45 p.m. You and your guests are invited to attend and participate, along with members of the company.

Sunday, September 11 is the date set for a special theatre party/fundraiser to benefit the Northwest Chapter of the National Conference of Black Lawyers—an organization of legal workers dedicated to "seeking out and eradicating the roots and causes of racism, poverty and powerlessness; making use of legal discipline for the advancement of economic, political and educational institutions for black people."

Tickets are available for the matinee performance of *A Soldier's Play* on September 11. For information, contact Ruperta Alexis-Caldwell at 329-8897.

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SCRIPTS

Scripts of the plays are available at the Literature Department desk, first floor, Seattle Public Library, 4th and Madison.