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Zinnias : The Life of Clementine Hunter

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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SYNOPSIS

Prologue

Act I

Early life: from school to the cotton fields • Introducing Cammie Henry

Act 2

Domestic work in the “Big House” • Clementine helps Alberta Kinsey • Francois Mignon encourages Melrose’s new painter

PROGRAM NOTES

Clementine Hunter is one of the most important American artists of the 20th century. Self-taught, she produced thousands of paintings drawn from her experiences working and living on a southern cotton plantation during the last century. Her works hang in the Smithsonian Institution, the American Folk Art Museum, the African American Museum in Dallas, the Ogden Museum in New Orleans, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and numerous other museums and private collections. Hunter’s art will play a major role in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, scheduled to open on the Mall in Washington, DC, in 2015.

Hunter was born Clémence Rubin in 1887 on Hidden Hill cotton plantation near Cloutierville, Louisiana. Her parents were sharecroppers in the fertile region that took its name from the oxbow lake known as Cane River. When Hunter was a teenager, her father gave up sharecropping to take a job that paid wages and moved his family to Melrose Plantation, one of the largest and most successful farms in the region.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Associate Production Manager

Neal Wilkinson

Advance Technical Director **Colin Van Horn**

Automation **Ryan Osborn**

Automation Consultant **Benjamin Merrick**

Rigging Supervisor **Janet Clancy**

Scenic Charges **Laura Nesson, Shana Siegel**

Scenic Artists **CJ Fore, Travis George, Valerie Light, Michael Minahan, Daniel Minzer, Megan Watters**
Set Construction **Cordero Acevedo, Scott A. Blackburn, Andrew Boyle, Timothy DiGregorio, Nathaniel Dobson, Anthony Gleason, Harrison Goodbinder, Simon Harding, William Kennedy, Jeremy Lydic, Alfredo Macias, Rebecca McAusland, Daniel Minzer, Jesse Monahan, Paul Peers, Jony Perez, Taylor Riccio, Philip Rossi, Courtney Smith, Brandon Alan Smith, Stephen Sury, Rocco Terranova, Colin Van Horn, Dan Walsh**

Props **Valerie Light, Michael Minahan**

Scenic and Props Assistant **Ronit Levin-Delgado**

Master Electrician **Ryan Osborn**

Act 3

Scherzo: Cane River Valley on a Saturday night!

Act 4

James Register spreads the news • Death moves through the Valley • Clementine gets an exhibition

Act 5

Melrose auction • Clementine and François leave the plantation • Northwestern State recognizes Clementine

Epilogue

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hunter continued to live on or near Melrose for the rest of her life. She toiled in the cotton fields and pecan groves for most of her youth and then worked as a domestic servant when she approached middle age. In 1924, she married Emmanuel Hunter, who also worked at Melrose; over the years, she raised a family of five children on the plantation.

Sometime in the late 1930s, after age 50, Hunter began painting with the leftover brushes and oils discarded by New Orleans artist Alberta Kinsey, a frequent Melrose visitor. Without formal training, Hunter painted her observations and memories. Her paintings are recognized as visual narratives, telling the story of the African American and Creole people who lived and worked on and around the plantation until their labor was replaced by mechanization after World War II. Even as recognition of her work grew, Hunter never left her home in the Cane River Valley. She continued to paint until a few days before her death on January 1, 1988, at the age of 101.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Assistant Master Electrician **David O. Smith**
Production Electricians **Rebecca Buck, Laura Chrismon, Jason Flamos, Elizabeth Flynn, Sam Gordon, Daniel Minzer, Adrianna Perlman, Ben Weill**
Sound Technician **Marc Critelli**
Assistant Costume Designer **Magdalena Klashnja**
Costumes Constructed by **Magdalena Klashnja, Clare McEwan, Shu Qin Chen, Vidalina Quiñones, Melanie Rudolph**
Wardrobe Supervisor **Kristine Biglin**
Wardrobe Assistants **AraBella Fischer, Amanda Jenks**
Hair and Make-up Assistant **Karine Ivey**
Choreography Assistant **Camille Cucjen**
Company Manager **Stacey Boggs**
Assistant to Mr. Wilson **Julian Mommert**

Casting by Mungiola Theatricals:Arnold J. Mungiola, Lindsey Bristol, and James Dieffenbach.

Special thanks to Art Shiver and to Montclair State’s Department of Theatre and Dance.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Robert Wilson (Concept/Direction/Set and Light Design) was described by the *New York Times* as “a towering figure in the world of experimental theater.” Wilson, born in 1941 in Waco, TX, is among the world’s foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music, and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide. Wilson’s awards and honors include two Guggenheim Fellowship awards (1971 and ’80), the nomination for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama (1986), the Golden Lion for sculpture from the Venice Biennale (1993), the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize for lifetime achievement (1996), the Premio Europa award from Taormina Arte (1997), election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2000), and Commandeur des arts et des lettres (2002), among others.

Together with composer Philip Glass, he created the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach*. With productions such as *Deafman Glance*, *KA MOUNTain and GUARDenia Terrace*, *Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, *CIVIL warS*, *Death Destruction & Detroit*, and *A Letter for Queen Victoria*, he redefined and expanded theater. Wilson’s collaborators include diverse writers and musicians such as Susan Sontag, Lou Reed, Heiner Müller, Jessye Norman, David Byrne, Tom Waits, and Rufus Wainwright. Wilson has also left his imprint on masterworks such as *The Magic Flute*, Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Dreamplay*, *Peer Gynt*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, and *Krapp’s Last Tape*.

Toshi Reagon (Music Direction and Orchestration/Libretto and Music Composition) is a talented, versatile singer, composer, and musician with a profound ear for sonic Americana—from folk to funk, from blues to rock. She masters each of these genres with vocal strategies that easily spiral and swoop from the expressively sinuous to the hard-charging, a combination of warmth and mischief. While her expansive career has landed her comfortably in residence at Carnegie Hall and Madison Square Garden, you can just as easily find Reagon turning out a music festival, intimate venue, or local club. She finds home on any musical stage. Reagon has had the pleasure of working with Lizz Wright, Ani DiFranco, Carl Hancock Rux, Nona Hendrix, Pete Seeger, Chocolate Genius, and many other amazing artists. Reagon performs solo and with her band of all-stars, BIGLovely, featuring Fred Cash, Robert Burke, and Adam Widoff.

Reagon has collaborated as composer and music director with Urban Bush Women on *Bones and Ash*, Jane Comfort and Company on *Underground River and Asphalt*, LAVA on *We Become*, and with Robert Wilson and Bernice Johnson Reagon on *The Temptation of Saint*

Anthony. She has been the recipient of a NYFA award for Music Composition and the Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance. She is a National Women’s History Month honoree and the 2010 recipient of OutMusic’s Heritage Award and 2012 Stonewall Honors Award. Her latest release is *There and Back Again*. www.toshireagon.com

Bernice Johnson Reagon (Libretto and Music Composition) is a singer/composer/producer, author, and cultural historian. Born in southwest Georgia, Reagon became a student leader during the Albany Civil Rights Movement, while in college during the early ’60s, and performed on the initial national tour of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Freedom Singers. Reagon founded and for 30 years led the internationally renowned women’s a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock. Her work as scholar, producer, and score composer includes a number of documentary projects: music consultant for the Emmy Award–winning series *Eyes on the Prize* (Blackside/PBS) and *We Shall Overcome* (Ginger Productions); the Peabody Award–winning radio series *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions* (National Public Radio and Smithsonian Institution); and the Peabody Award–winning PBS film series on slavery *Africans in America*.

Her initial collaboration with Robert Wilson was as composer and librettist of the opera *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (2003 premiere in Germany). Reagon, with her strongest collaborator, daughter, composer/bandleader/singer Toshi Reagon, and jazz pianist/composer Jeri Allen, was the score composer of the HBO Peabody award–winning film *Beah: A Black Woman Speaks*. Her pioneering work as a scholar, teacher, author, and artist has been recognized with the Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities (2003), the Leeway National Award for Women in the Arts (2000), the Presidential Medal for contribution to public understanding of the Humanities (1995), the MacArthur Fellowship (1989), and the 2009 Howard University Distinguished Alumni Award in Humanities, Music, and Civil Rights.

Jacqueline Woodson (Book) is a three-time Newbery Honor winner—in 2006 for *Show Newy*, in 2008 for *Feathers*, and in 2009 for *After Tupac and D Foster*. *Hush* and *Locomotion* were both National Book Award finalists. She has been recognized by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee for *I Hadn’t Meant to Tell You This*, *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*, and *Locomotion*. *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* and *I Hadn’t Meant to Tell You This* both received Jane Addams Peace Award Honors. Her highly acclaimed novel *Miracle’s Boys* won the Coretta Scott King Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and aired as a mini-series directed by, among others, Spike Lee. Her work has appeared on numerous Best Books and Notable lists.

In 2006, Woodson was the youngest person ever to win the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Young Adult Library Services Association. Her citation for that esteemed award states, “Woodson’s sensitive and lyrical books reveal and give voice to outsiders often invisible to mainstream America.” Her other lifetime achievement awards include the 2004 ALAN Award, 2010 St. Katherine Drexel Award, and the 2012 Anne V. Zarrow Award. In 2009, she adapted her award-winning novel *Locomotion* for the stage. The play was presented by the Performances for Young Audiences Family Theatre at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in 2010 and began a national tour in 2012.

Lynsey Peisinger (Assistant Director) is a Paris-based choreographer and performer. She has cast and trained performers for Marina Abramović in Moscow, Los Angeles, and Basel and is working on *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*, directed by Robert Wilson. She recently presented performance works at Robert Wilson’s 2nd Annual Berlin Benefit 2011, Hyères Fashion and Photography Festival, and Kunstfest Weimar 2012. She received her MFA in choreography from the Dance Conservatory at Purchase College.

Carlos Soto (Costume Designer) has collaborated with Robert Wilson since 1997 as a performer, designer, and assistant on numerous European and American productions and installations. Recent projects include the redesign of costumes for *Einstein on the Beach* and performing as the young Marina Abramović in *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*. His various collaborations have spanned contemporary art and theater, having been presented at Performa 09, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, and the Guggenheim, among others.

Scott Bolman (Assistant Lighting Designer) previously collaborated with Robert Wilson on *The Odyssey* (National Theatre of Greece) and *KOOL* (Guggenheim Museum). Other recent projects include *FEAST* (Incubator Arts), *Fifty Ways* (Chautauqua Theater Company), *We Play for the Gods* (Women’s Project), *Brooklyn Village* (Roulette), *Song from the Uproar* (The Kitchen), *Brooklyn Babylon* (Brooklyn Academy of Music), Shen Wei’s performance at the *Q Confucius* exhibition (Rockbund Museum, Shanghai), and *Sty of the Blind Pig* and *The Understudy* (TheaterWorks Hartford). He was theatrical lighting consultant for Roulette performance space and the Barrow Street Theatre. He co-teaches design collaboration at Brown University and is a founding member of Wingspace Design Collective.

Jakob Oredsson (Assistant Set Designer) is an artist and scenographer from Sweden. His work has been shown at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery in Prague, Stoke Newington International Airport in London, the Watermill Center in New York, and

at Atelier Hotel Pro Forma and the Royal Library in Copenhagen. He received the Gold Medal for the Most Promising Talent in the Student Section at the 2011 Prague Quadrennial and has been artist in residence at the Watermill Center and Atelier Hotel Pro Forma. Oredsson received a BFA in Scenography at the Norwegian Theatre Academy, studied fine art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, anthropology at Lund University in Sweden, and architecture at The Cooper Union in New York. Currently he is a master’s student of architecture at the Pratt Institute in New York.

Campbell Young Associates (Hair and Make-up Designer) Luc Verschueren, Campbell Young, and their team have designed for *Spider-man*, *La Bête*, *Billy Elliot*, and *Mary Stuart* on Broadway and *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *Love Never Dies*, *Oliver*, *Priscilla*, and *Lord of the Rings* in London. Operas include *Einstein on the Beach* (world tour), *Tristan und Isolde* (La Scala), *From the House of the Dead* (Vienna Festival), and the *Ring Cycle* (Tokyo), as well as designs for English National Opera, Scottish Opera, and Netherlands Opera. Exhibitions include *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Millicent Johnnie (Scherzo Choreographer) choreographed *Scary Movie 5*, *Symphony for the Dance Floor* national tour, *The Burning* (Under the Radar Festival, Public Theater), and Universes’ *Party People* (The Oregon Shakespeare Festival) and for The Yard at Lincoln Center and Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, among others. She has worked with directors Peter Sellars, Malcolm D. Lee, Rhodessa Jones, and Patricia McGregor. Her music credits include Grammy-winning artists Bill Summers and Los Hombres Calientes, Usher and Chrisette Michele. She serves on the dance faculty at Southern Methodist University and was the resident choreographer and rehearsal director of the Urban Bush Women. She holds a BFA and MFA in dance from Florida State University.

Jane Rosenbaum (Stage Manager) is a freelance stage manager recently relocated to Miami. She has worked with Robert Wilson on *Snow on the Mesa*, *The Life and Death of Marina Abramović*, and *Einstein on the Beach*. She was production manager for the Martha Graham Dance Company and Island Moving Company. She holds an MFA in Theatre Practice from the University of Exeter, UK.

Shelby-Allison Hibbs (Assistant Stage Manager) is a freelance director, stage manager, and teaching artist and holds an MFA in Directing from Baylor University. She has worked with Jim Findlay’s BOTANICA, The Wooster Group, Adrienne Westwood, Slant Theatre Project, Target Margin Theatre, Ctown, and The Berkshire Theatre Group and as teaching faculty with The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey.

Opera

Opera

Opera

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
 Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts
 Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter

Concept, Direction, Set and Light Design **Robert Wilson**
 Music Direction and Orchestration **Toshi Reagon**
 Libretto and Music Composition
Bernice Johnson Reagon and **Toshi Reagon**
 Book **Jacqueline Woodson**

Assistant Director **Lynsey Peisinger**
 Costume Designer **Carlos Soto**
 Assistant Lighting Designer **Scott Bolman**
 Assistant Set Designer **Jakob Oredsson**
 Hair and Make-up Designer **Campbell Young Associates**
 Scherzo Choreographer **Millicent Johnnie**
 Stage Manager **Jane Rosenbaum**
 Assistant Stage Manager **Shelby-Allison Hibbs**
 Dance Captain **Francesca Harper**
 Casting by **Mungoli Theatricals, Arnold J. Mungoli, CSA**

CAST (in order of appearance)
 Clementine Hunter **Carla Duren**
 Clementine's Papa, Emmanuel Hunter, Ensemble **Charles E. Wallace**
 Clementine's Mama, Ensemble **Josette Newsam-Marchak**
 Cuckoo Charlie, Auctioneer, Ensemble **Cornelius Bethea**
 Charlene, Ensemble **Francesca Harper**
 Rosie, Ensemble **Jennifer Nikki Kidwell**
 Cammie Henry, Ensemble **Karma Mayet Johnson**
 Alberta Kinsey, Ora Williams, Ensemble **Darynn Zimmer**
 François Mignon, Ensemble **Robert Osborne**
 James "Pipes" Register, Ensemble **Nat Chandler**

and
 Angel **Sheryl Sutton**

MUSICIANS
 Violin **Juliette Jones**
 Bass **Fred Cash, Jr.**
 Guitar, Vocals **Jason Walker**
 Guitar **Adam Widoff**
 Drums **Robert Burke**

Produced by the Office of Arts & Cultural Programming, Montclair State University.

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Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter was developed in residence at The Watermill Center and at the Alexander Kasser Theater at Montclair State University.

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Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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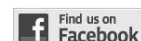
Robert Wilson
Bernice Johnson Reagon
Toshi Reagon
Jacqueline Woodson
Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter

January 26–February 3, 2013

Alexander Kasser Theater
Montclair State University



To view our complete season and for more information, visit www.peakperfs.org.



Cover: Photograph of Clementine Hunter by Carolyn Ramsey (courtesy of the Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwestern State University of Louisiana).

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