

# NEXT STAGE



BY LYNN NOTTAGE DIRECTED BY DAVID SCHWEIZER  
MAY 5—JUNE 11, 2006 THE HEAD THEATER

Crumbs  
from  
the Table  
of  
**JOY**

## THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Director  
**David Schweizer**

Scenic Designer  
**James Noone**

Costume Designer  
**David Burdick**

Lighting Designer  
**Alexander Nichols**

Sound Designer  
**Mark Bennett**

Speech Consultant  
**Gillian Lane-Plescia**

Choreographer  
**Michael J. Bobbitt**

Production Dramaturg  
**Liana Thompson**

Casting Director  
**Judy Dennis**

Assistant Director  
**Adrian Wattenmaker**

## THE CAST

Gerte Crump  
**Patricia Ageheim\***

Ermina Crump  
**Edwina Findley\***

Godfrey Crump  
**LeLand Gantt\***

Ernestine Crump  
**Amina S. Robinson\***

Lily Ann Green  
**Kelly Taffe\***

Stage Manager  
**Mike Schleifer\***

Assistant Stage Manager  
**Lauren Wright\***

## SETTING

Brooklyn, 1950

Running time is approximately 2 hours, including one 15-minute intermission.

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States



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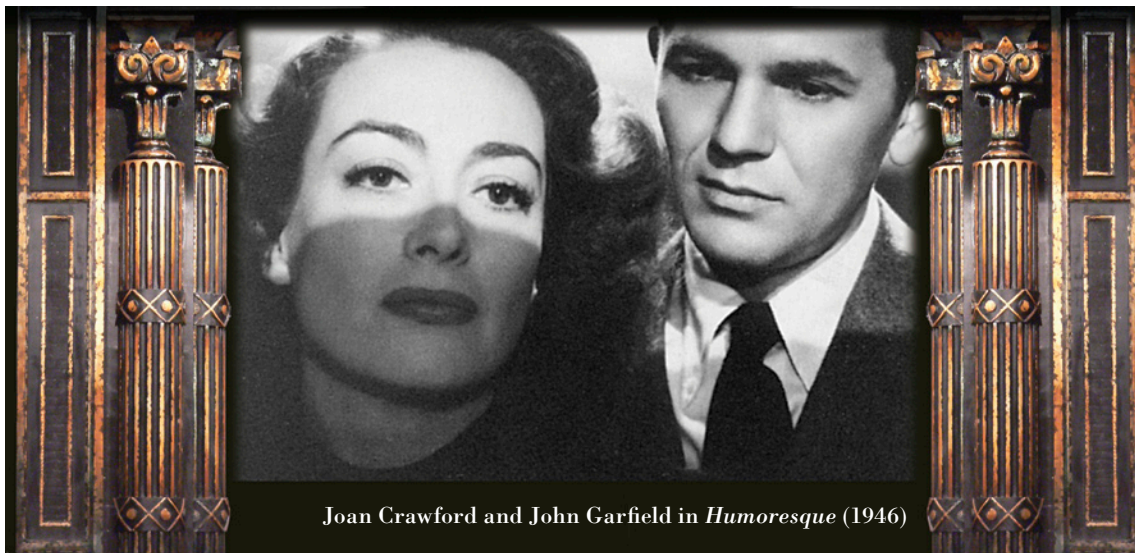
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Joan Crawford and John Garfield in *Humoresque* (1946)

## Setting the Stage

By Steve Lichtenstein

This is the story of Ernestine Crump. At 17, her world has been radically—and urgently—transformed: her mother has died; her father, Godfrey, has found solace in a religious leader; and the family has uprooted from Florida to a cramped basement apartment in Brooklyn, where the arrival of a Black family is hardly cause for celebration. Her younger sister, Ermina, is meddlesome and sassy, and her flirtatious and somewhat dipsomaniacal Aunt Lily enjoys antagonizing Godfrey and proclaims her Communism. And Ernestine’s new stepmother: the caring, desperate-for-approval Gerte? She’s white. And German.

Each Crump deals with loss and change in a different way. Ermina discovers boys. Lily moves into the apartment with an intoxicating whirlwind of booze and cigarettes, street wisdom, and indignation. Godfrey joins the church of Father Divine, to whom he sends his most important questions concerning salvation and faith. He also meets German immigrant Gerte on the train one day and decides almost immediately to marry her, much to the chagrin of the other Crumps. But amidst all the chaos around her—both inside her house and out—Ernestine knows that “something better is always on the horizon.” In her case, the horizon holds her upcoming graduation from high school and the allure and escapism of Hollywood pictures,

particularly the statuesque screen divas whose glamorous dress and elegant names so beguile her.

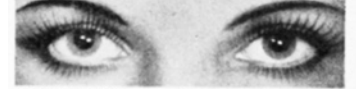
Ernestine also finds time to narrate her family’s story. As she stands on the cusp of adulthood, Lynn Nottage’s *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* depicts a nation caught between the need for self-improvement and the comfort of stagnation. Set in 1950, Nottage’s play shows the Crumps in a US stuck in a grey area of uncertain racial tension—before either *Brown v. Board of Education* or a formidable Civil Rights movement—where old racist notions gave way to either uneasy guilt or wanton aggression. In addition, the insular paranoia of the pre-McCarthy era—of Communists in our midst and the enemy next door—resulted in a time when everyone was suspect. *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* wryly portrays a family forced to confront the expectations and prejudices of the world around them, come to terms with their own biases and insecurities, and deal with how their relationships are affected by a shifting national conscience. Can Ernestine and Ermina deal with the social stigma of a white, foreign stepmother? Can faith and religion satisfy the pangs of loss and racism? Can the Crumps survive in a white world? Will Ernestine discover her place in the world?

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**TEETHING LOTION**  
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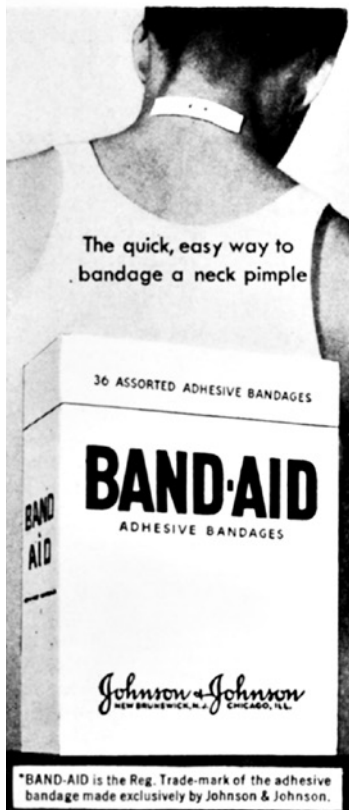
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# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

**L**YNN NOTTAGE is a playwright from Brooklyn. She is perhaps best known for *Intimate Apparel*, the most produced play in regional theaters during the 2005–06 Season. It received an AT&T OnStage Award for its world premiere co-production between CENTERSTAGE and South Coast Repertory in 2003. *Intimate Apparel* has also garnered many additional awards, including 2004 New York Drama Critics' Circle, 2004 Outer Critics Circle, John Gassner, Steinberg New Play, and ATCA's Francesca Primus Awards. In addition to *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* and *Intimate Apparel*, her plays include *A Walk Through Time*, a children's musical; *Mud, River, Stone*, a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize; *Por'Knockers*; *Poof!*, Heideman Award-winner; *Las Meninas*, also an AT&T OnStage Award-winner; and *Fabulation or, The Re-Education of Undine*, a companion piece to *Intimate Apparel*.



Her plays have been produced Off Broadway and regionally by The Acting Company, Actors

Theatre of Louisville, Alliance Theatre Company, Buffalo Studio Arena, Crossroads Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Intiman Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage, San Jose Repertory Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, Yale Repertory Theatre, and many others. She has been awarded playwriting fellowships from Manhattan Theatre Club, New Dramatists, and New York Foundation for the Arts, where she is a member of their Artists Advisory Board. She has also received an NEA/TCG grant for a year-long theater residency with

Philadelphia's Freedom Theatre, as well as a PEN/Laura Pels Foundation Award for Drama honoring her body of work. An anthology of her plays was published by TCG in 2004. She is a member of New Dramatists and a graduate of Brown University and the Yale School of Drama. Ms. Nottage is currently under commission from CENTERSTAGE to write a new play.

## In Ms. Nottage's own words:

"The 1950s was a moment in American history in which I felt so much change. It was the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. Music was going through this explosion. You had be-bop, rock 'n' roll—so much that was going on. Such a volatile and rich period. Yet everything I had seen was in black and white. And I wanted to make it colorful. So I started writing *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* to try to understand that era."

"On a panel I led about multiculturalism and theater, I once asked the question, 'When are we going to write plays that are inclusive?' We have to write plays that will reflect the culture we live in. I grew up in a multicultural neighborhood. I write plays that reflect my reality and that are honest to who I am."

"The popularity of August Wilson 15 years ago helped crack the door open for many African American playwrights because these regional theaters that have large subscription audiences suddenly became much more receptive to putting an African American play in a slot because of the success of August Wilson. I still think there's only one slot left for African American plays so I don't think that much has changed. I think what might have shifted though, is that that slot might now go to an African American woman every once in a while as opposed to an African American man."



# Glossary

**banshee** (*n*)—in Gaelic folklore, a female spirit whose appearance or wailing warns a family of an impending death

**convalescing** (*v*)—recovering one's health and strength after an injury or sickness

**copasetic** (*adj*)—slang term popular in the '50s, meaning extremely satisfactory or agreeable

**decorum** (*n*)—good taste in conduct or appearance; orderliness

**elixir** (*n*)—a medicinal concoction; a cure-all



ELIXIR

**etymologist** (*n*)—one who studies the history and origins of words and language

**gossamer** (*n*)—something light, delicate, or insubstantial

**gumption** (*n*)—the initiative to take action; boldness, spunk

**hibiscus** (*n*)—any of a large family of herbs, shrubs, or small trees with large showy flowers



HIBISCUS



BANSHEE

**moonshine** (*n*)—an illegally-made distilled whiskey



MOONSHINE

**persnickety** (*adj*)—fussy or snobby

**prescience** (*n*)—foreknowledge or anticipation of events

**proletariat** (*n*)—the lowest social or economic class of a community; the laboring class

**unabashedly** (*adv*)—blatantly or unapologetically

**unadulterated** (*adj*)—pure



get on  
and go!



with a new





## Reality and Fantasy in 1950

By Liana Thompson, Production Dramaturg

A memory play, *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* walks a fine line between the real and the imagined; reality can be trumped by fantasy, and fantasy can inform reality. Adding to the unique plane in which the play exists is the distinct place in history in which the play lives—five years after World War II, four years before *Brown v. Board of Education*, concurrent with the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy. A country in transition, a family transitioning, possibilities, roadblocks, and all that jazz.

## The Rise and Fall of American Communism

During the Depression, the Communist Party gained followers in America as it allied with some of the same industrial workers who were leading union-building strikes. In addition to this commitment to the workers' struggle, the Communist Party also made racial justice a priority; therefore, in many African American communities, Communism gained particular popularity into the 1930s.

In the mid-1930s, however, the Communist Party made a political calculation and began backing more mainstream labor programs and the Democratic Party, seeming to abandon its earlier populist commitment. By 1937, the class struggle was losing ground it had earlier gained, and many workers who had joined the Party during the 1930s would leave it by the end of the decade. The exodus of members swelled further when Stalin signed a short-lived pact with Hitler in 1939.

Though the United States and the Soviet Union became allies during World War II, at its conclusion they quickly assumed adversarial stances. The ensuing Cold War helped spur a period of intense anti-Communism in America, which came to a head in the early 1950s. Early in 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy delivered a speech in which he claimed to have a list of 205 “known” Communists in the State Department. As he conducted a campaign to locate alleged Communist spies in the US government, McCarthy unleashed an anti-Communist hysteria. Though most accusations would eventually prove false, the careers of many journalists, actors, government officials, and other prominent figures were ruined throughout the early 1950s. The mere accusation or suspicion of harboring Communist sympathies, or being tied to anyone who did, was enough to taint anyone from the powerless to the powerful.



SENATOR JOSEPH MCCARTHY

## The Great Migration

A dramatic exodus of African Americans from country to city and from South to North, the Great Migration brought millions of Blacks to Northern cities. Between 1940 and 1950 alone, 1.5 million African Americans relocated.





Frost at night . . . warm sun at noon—  
that's ideal weather for a good crop of  
maple syrup and sugar.

## Old-fashioned real maple sugar flavor

In the maple sugar country, folks young  
and old love to follow the whiff of wood  
smoke to the sugar house . . . to enjoy  
that luscious treat—real maple sugar  
flavor.

To give you that flavor in Vermont  
Maid Syrup, we choose maple sugar that  
has a rich, full flavor. Then blend it with  
cane and other sugars. This blending en-  
hances the maple flavor—makes it richer,  
more delicious. Get Vermont  
Maid at your grocer's.

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## Vermont Maid Syrup

## French's WORCESTERSHIRE GIVES

# Scrambled eggs

wonderful  
new flavor



Melt in a skillet over a  
slow fire: 2 tablesp. butter  
or margarine. Beat and  
pour into the skillet: 6  
eggs, 6 tablesp. milk, 3  
teasp. French's Worces-  
tershire Sauce, ½ teasp.  
salt, ½ teasp. paprika.  
As the mixture thickens  
break it into shreds with  
a fork. Serves 4.

TOP-NOTCH QUALITY AT  
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Life in the South was harsh and unpleasant. Rampant poverty, segregation and discrimination, limited employment opportunities, and the lack of educational facilities for children all motivated many to leave their homes. Additionally, work in the agricultural sector—largely confined to sharecropping and tenant farming—waned as farming technology developed. Meanwhile, industrial jobs opened up in the North as wartime production kicked into gear and workers left to join the ranks of the American troops. This combination of factors led many north in search of work and a better life.

Jim Crow laws, enforcing segregation of the races in many states, were also a prime factor motivating the decision to leave the South. Many hoped to escape lynching, threats, beatings, and the daily degradation of this official segregation. The sting of Jim Crow can be felt in a letter published in the *Chicago Defender*, circa 1935:

*Dear Sir,  
I indeed wish to come to the North—  
anywhere in Illinois will do so long as  
I'm away from the hangman's noose  
and the torch man's fire. Conditions  
here are horrible with us. I want to  
get my family out of this accursed  
Southland. Down here a Negro man's  
not as good as a white man's dog.*

Good jobs, bright lights, big cities, equality, opportunity: the North was the setting for great dreams.



PARAMOUNT THEATRE, BROOKLYN, NY

## Brooklyn and New York City

Despite dreams of possibility, the massive northward migration brought into sharp relief how entrenched segregation and discrimination were on a national scale. In 1930, Blacks living in Brooklyn had been the least segregated in the borough; by 1950, they were the most segregated. This was due in part to a neighborhood mapping program by Home Owners Loan Corporation, which created race-defined zones for Blacks and Latinos, and caused sharp race divisions to pervade Brooklyn.

Throughout New York City, hotels, restaurants, and other places of leisure or recreation often flagrantly violated state laws barring racial discrimination and segregation—either by refusing to serve Black customers flat out or by making them feel unwelcome or uncomfortable. When the celebrated African American performer Josephine Baker visited the city with her French husband in 1948, she went to 36 hotels before getting a room. The late 1940s and early 1950s would see a marked change in service patterns, brought about by protests and lawsuits.



JOSEPHINE BAKER

It is into this world—of increasingly segregated neighborhoods, of the precursors of the Civil Rights movement, of the burgeoning Communist scare—that the Crumps move when they arrive in Brooklyn in the fall of 1950.

# 1950

## A Brief Timeline of Notable Events

**January 12**—British submarine *Truculent* collides with a Swedish oil tanker in River Thames, killing 64 people.

**January 15**—A Volcanic cloud kills 5,000 people in Mount Lamington, New Guinea.



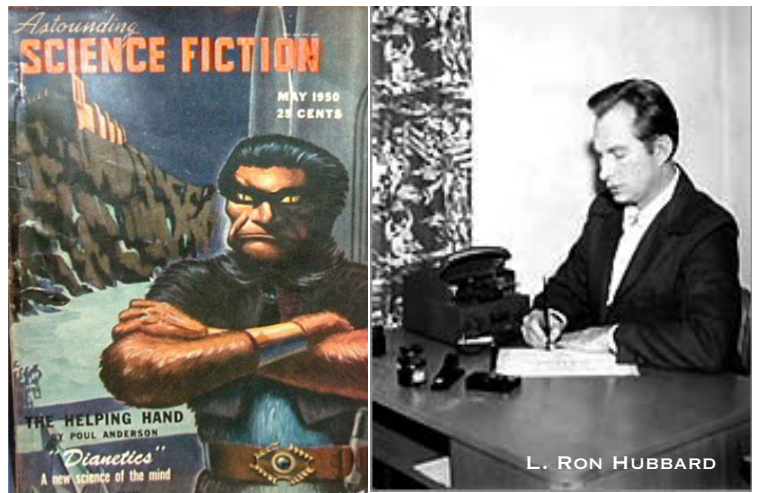
**January 31**—President Harry S. Truman announces a program to develop the hydrogen bomb.

**February 9**—In his speech to the Republican Women's Club at the McClure Hotel in Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joseph McCarthy charges that there are communists in the US Department of State.

**March 3**—Poland states that it intends to exile all Germans.



**March 8**—The Soviet Union claims to have an atomic bomb.



**May 9**—Science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard publishes the popular self-help book *Dianetics: The Modern Science Of Mental Health*, which eventually leads to the founding of the Church of Scientology.

**May 25**—The Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel is formally opened to traffic in New York City.

**June 24**—A commercial airliner crashes into Lake Michigan, killing 58 people. The reason for the disaster is unknown; only fragments of the plane and the bodies of passengers were ever found.



**June 25**—The Korean War begins. In the US, people begin to hoard supplies in case of rationing and shortages.

**August 5**—Florence Chadwick swims the English Channel in 13 hours, 22 minutes.

**August 15**—An earthquake and floods in Assam, India kill 574 people. 5,000,000 people are believed to be homeless as a result.



**September 7**—Game show *Truth or Consequences* debuts on television.



**October 1**—The comic strip *Peanuts* by Charles M. Schulz is first published in seven US newspapers.

**October 11**—The FCC issues a license to Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) to begin color TV broadcasting, causing a controversy when RCA claims that they had developed a superior color broadcasting device.



**October 26**—Sister Mary Teresa begins her charity work in Calcutta; she later becomes known as Mother Teresa.

**November 1**—Puerto Rican nationalists Griselio Torresola and Oscar Collazo attempt to assassinate US President Harry S. Truman, who is staying at the Blair-Lee House in Washington, DC during White House repairs.

**November 24**—*Guys and Dolls* debuts at Broadway's 46<sup>th</sup> Street Theatre.

**November 25**—A winter storm ravages the Northeast US, bringing 30 to 50 inches of snow and below zero temperatures, killing 323 people.

## Average Costs, 1950:

**Car: \$1,750**



**Gasoline: 27¢/gal**



**House: \$14,500**

**Bread: 14¢/loaf**

**Milk: 82¢/gal**



**Average Annual Salary: \$3,800**

**Minimum Wage: 75¢/hour**

**Postage Stamp: 3¢**



# People and Things from the 1950s

By Steve Lichtenstein, Public Relations Associate

The characters in Lynn Nottage's *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* make a number of references to popular people and things of the time. But because they don't include any descriptions for these references, we thought it'd be helpful to provide a brief, introductory—but by no means exhaustive—look at some of the more famous namedroppers.



FREEMAN GOSDEN AND CHARLES CORRELL

## Amos 'n' Andy

With a weekly audience of 40 million listeners (nearly one-third of the US population at the time), *Amos 'n' Andy* was one of the first and most successful syndicated radio shows in history. From its roots as a weekly serial on WMAQ in Chicago, the story of two Black men who leave Atlanta and head for the Windy City to find success with a taxi company spawned catchphrases, a movie, and a television series. Created and voiced by Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll—two White actors—the show actually began in 1926 on Chicago's WGN as *Sam 'n' Henry*, one of the first radio serials. After the station declined the actors' request to syndicate the show to other stations, they quit and moved the show to WMAQ, where it debuted as *Amos 'n' Andy* in March 1928. Gosden and Correll performed all of the male roles, providing

more than 170 distinctive voices during the show's first decade. Fueled by high drama and weekly cliffhangers, the show was broadcast on 70 stations; at the height of its popularity, movie theaters stopped their feature each night to broadcast the 15-minute episode of *Amos 'n' Andy*. The show spawned a 1930 film—the poorly received *Check and Double Check*—and eventually became a TV show, running from 1951–53. The television version featured African American actors Alvin Childress and Spencer Williams in the title roles, though they were instructed to emulate the voices of Gosden and Correll as much as possible. Though the show was immensely popular, it also aroused controversy for its use of 19<sup>th</sup>-century minstrel-show stereotypes to portray African Americans. The show was protested regularly, and the NAACP was instrumental in its cancellation. *Amos 'n' Andy* was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1988.

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Nationally Advertised  
Tooth Brush  
in America

**only 23¢**

IN DUST-PROOF CARTON

**Pro-phy-lac-tic**  
**NYLON**  
Tooth Brush



## Bette Davis

April 5, 1908–October 6, 1989

Bette Davis is remembered almost as much for her fiery personality and off-screen battles as she is for her six-decade film career, which spanned nearly 100 movies and 10 Academy Award nominations, including Oscar wins for *Dangerous* and *Jezebel*. Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, and often referred to as either “The Queen of Hollywood” or “The First Lady of the American Screen,” Davis was the first woman to head the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and the first actress to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award (1977) from the American Film Institute. Known for her scathing wit and often combative demeanor, Davis was notoriously considered to be hard to work with, and had several high-profile rivals, including fellow actress Joan Crawford. She also claimed to have nicknamed the Academy Award “Oscar.” Davis spent most of her later years acting in TV movies—garnering an Emmy Award for *Strangers: The Story of a Mother and Daughter* (1979)—before succumbing to breast cancer in 1989. She is also known for that song about her eyes.

**Notable films:** *Dangerous* (1935), *Jezebel* (1938), *All About Eve* (1950), *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962)



BETTE DAVIS

## Charlie Parker

August 29, 1920–March 12, 1955

Originally nicknamed “Yardbird”—later trimmed to “Bird”—Charlie Parker is widely considered the best and most influential jazz saxophonist of all time. He became a figurehead for the Beat generation and a founder of bebop, and incorporated melody, rhythm, and harmony in such an innovative way that he was able to maintain a creativity that pleased both critics and the masses. He was also known to fuse other musical styles into his jazz, including classical and Latin music. Born and raised in Kansas City, Parker moved to New York in 1939. There, he worked several jobs to pay the bills while playing music in after-hours bars in Harlem with the likes of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, pianist Thelonius Monk, and guitarist Charlie Christian. It was during this time that they

developed bebop. As a teenager, Parker was injured in an auto accident and subsequently developed a morphine addiction, which turned into a heroin addiction in his adult years. Though his death at the age of 34 was officially ruled to be the result of pneumonia and a bleeding ulcer, Parker’s heroin habit surely contributed, severely shortening a nonetheless brilliant career.



CHARLIE PARKER

**Notable recordings:** *Bird & Pres* (1946), *Bird & Diz* (1950), *Summit Meeting at Birdland* (1951), *The Greatest Jazz Concert Ever* (1953)

## Bebop

Bebop emerged in the 1940s as a style of jazz that contrasted to the music of the big bands. It featured a small group of musicians—4 to 6 players—rather than the 10+ associated with big bands. The music itself was characterized by more complex melodies and chord progressions, and more emphasis on the role of the rhythm section, than other forms of jazz. Phrases within the music were often irregular in length, making bebop interesting to listen to but, in contrast to music of the big bands, difficult to dance to. Perhaps its most significant characteristic was the highly diversified texture created by the rhythm section—a considerable contrast to the insistent four-beat approach that was taken by swing musicians. The development of bebop is attributed in large part to trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and saxophonist Charlie Parker. The unique styles of Gillespie and Parker contributed to and typified the bebop sound. Using the blues and the harmonic framework of swing standards,

What a star this "Z"  
turned out to be!



LIP

TIP

ZIP

Since you don't change oil as often as you buy gasoline, you may not be as conscious of the great difference the *right* motor oil can make in the performance of your car . . . especially if it's Pennzoil. For Pennzoil is pure Pennsylvania oil stepped up by 60 years' refining improvements that add zip, smoothness and long life to your engine. Naturally there's no substitute for Pennzoil . . . so take a tip, sound your "Z" loud and free.

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DISPLAY THIS SIGN



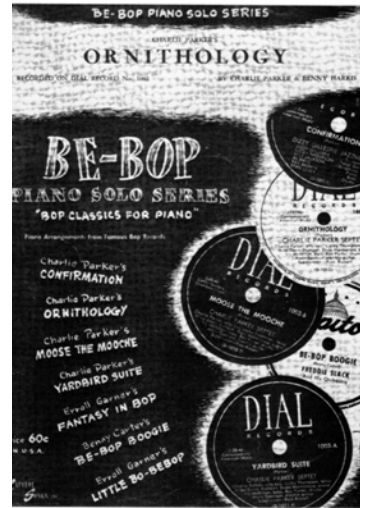
PENNZOIL® GIVES ALL ENGINES AN EXTRA MARGIN OF SAFETY

PEOPLE & THINGS CONTINUED

beboppers replaced popular melodies with new, more complex bebop melodies. Staples of the bebop repertoire included "Ornithology," "Donna Lee," "Groovin' High," and "Hot House." Their fast pulse and rich harmonic vocabulary defined a new direction for jazz—and a new art form. Although bop was solidly grounded in earlier jazz styles, it was considered revolutionary at the time of its development.

Notable Bebop musicians: Julian

Adderley, alto saxophone; Clifford Brown, trumpet; Charlie Christian, guitar; Kenny Clarke, drums; Tadd Dameron, piano; Miles Davis, trumpet; Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Dexter Gordon, tenor sax; Wardell Gray, saxophone; Barry Harris, piano ; J.J. Johnson, trombone; Thelonious Monk, piano; Fats Navarro, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; Chano Pozo, conga; Sonny Rollins, saxophone; Sonny Stitt, saxophone



Jim Crow laws

After Reconstruction ended in 1877 and federal troops left the South, local and state governments passed a series of laws severely limiting the new freedoms that African Americans had finally gained after the Civil War. Those who instituted these laws called them Jim Crow laws, referring to an antebellum minstrel character named "Jump Jim Crow"—a racist depiction of a poor, uneducated, Southern Black man. Some examples of Jim Crow laws, which varied from state to state:

- All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races.
- All marriages between a white person and a Negro, or between a white person and a person of Negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited.
- The schools for white children and the schools for Negro children shall be conducted separately.



## Joan Crawford

March 23, 1905–May 10, 1977

A revered, Academy Award-winning actress, Crawford began her film career in the 1920s playing flappers. She soon moved on to specialize in portraying determined young women who found romance through adversity, in tales that enamored Depression-era audiences. By the mid-1930s, she was one of the most famous and wealthy women in America; a series of well-received movies she made with Clark Gable made them the most successful romantic duo of the day. After a brief decline at MGM, Crawford moved to Warner Bros. in 1943 and revitalized her career, starring in *Mildred Pierce*, which brought her only Oscar for Best Actress. Her new role as leading lady of Warner Bros. deprived Bette Davis of that

title, sparking a decades-long rivalry. After a career spanning more than 40 years and 80 films, Crawford died of a heart attack in her New York apartment in 1977. Her eldest daughter, Christina, published the memoir *Mommie Dearest* shortly after Crawford's death, in which she accused her mother of physical and emotional abuse. The book later became a legendary cult film starring Faye Dunaway as Crawford, and informing children everywhere about the dangers of wire hangers.

**Notable films:** *Grand Hotel* (1932), *Mildred Pierce* (1945), *Possessed* (1947), *Sudden Fear* (1952), *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962)



JOAN CRAWFORD



JOSEPH MCCARTHY

## Joseph McCarthy

November 14, 1908–May 2, 1957

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy became the state's junior senator in 1947, serving until his death in 1957. In a country already anxious about perceived threats from the Soviet Union, McCarthy's speech on February 9, 1950—stating that he had the names of Communist sympathizers within the State Department—fanned the rising hysteria. Throughout the early part of the decade, McCarthy was both the public face and driving force for a movement to identify and expose alleged Communists, first within the government and then throughout public life. Accusing anyone who opposed him of having Communist sympathies and using his power with ruthless force, McCarthy won wide popularity for the perception that he was protecting the country from imminent danger. From Washington to Hollywood, the

anti-Communist hysteria spread as citizens turned on, and turned in, their fellows. In March, 1954, journalist Edward R. Murrow's popular show *See It Now* used McCarthy's own speeches to criticize his attacks, one of the first times that McCarthy was publicly challenged. The show, and McCarthy's predictable attacks in response, spawned a public backlash and marked the beginning of the senator's decline. On December 2, 1954, the Senate voted to censure McCarthy for conduct "unbecoming a member of the United States Senate." He died of acute hepatitis in 1957 at the age of 48. The phrase "McCarthyism" has lived on as a term to describe the practice of publicizing unsubstantiated allegations of subversion or disloyalty, or the use of questionable methods to quell opposition.

## Marlene Dietrich

December 27, 1901–May 6, 1992

The German-born screen star was a violinist before going to acting school in 1921. After first performing in German movies, she got a role in the European talkie *The Blue Angel* in 1930. Dietrich then moved to Hollywood, first appearing in *Morocco*—for which she received her only Oscar nomination—then in several performances as *femmes fatales*, before finally rising to more prominent roles in films like *Judgment at Nuremberg* and Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil*. Dietrich, a passionate anti-Nazi, was very outspoken in her politics; after becoming an American citizen in 1937, she spent time overseas entertaining US troops. From the 1950s through the mid-1970s, Dietrich spent time on stage as a cabaret performer, singing an array of songs from her movies and popular tunes of the day. She married once and had one daughter, in 1924. It was often speculated that Dietrich was bisexual, and some of her rumored lovers included major stars of the day, such as Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford.

Notable films: *Morocco* (1930), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961)



MARLENE DIETRICH

## Olivia de Havilland

July 1, 1916–



OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND

Born in Tokyo, de Havilland early moved with her family—including sister and fellow actress Joan Fontaine—to California, where her film career began with *Alibi Ike* in 1935. She acted in a series of movies with Errol Flynn, including *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), before famously appearing as Melanie Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind*—landing her first Academy Award nomination. Increasingly frustrated at being typecast as the “damsel in distress” and sure that she could play more varied roles, de Havilland launched a successful lawsuit to limit the power the film studios had in deciding roles for their actors, gaining the actors more sway instead. The resulting de Havilland Law, as it is still known, won the actress many friends and much respect in Hollywood, and led to better roles for her and many of her peers. She would win the Academy Award for Best Actress for her roles in *To Each His*

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*Own* (1946) and *The Heiress* (1949). She continued acting sporadically through the 1980s.

**Notable films:** *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *To Each His Own* (1946), *The Heiress* (1949), *Hush...Hush*, *Sweet Charlotte* (1964)

## Scottsboro Boys

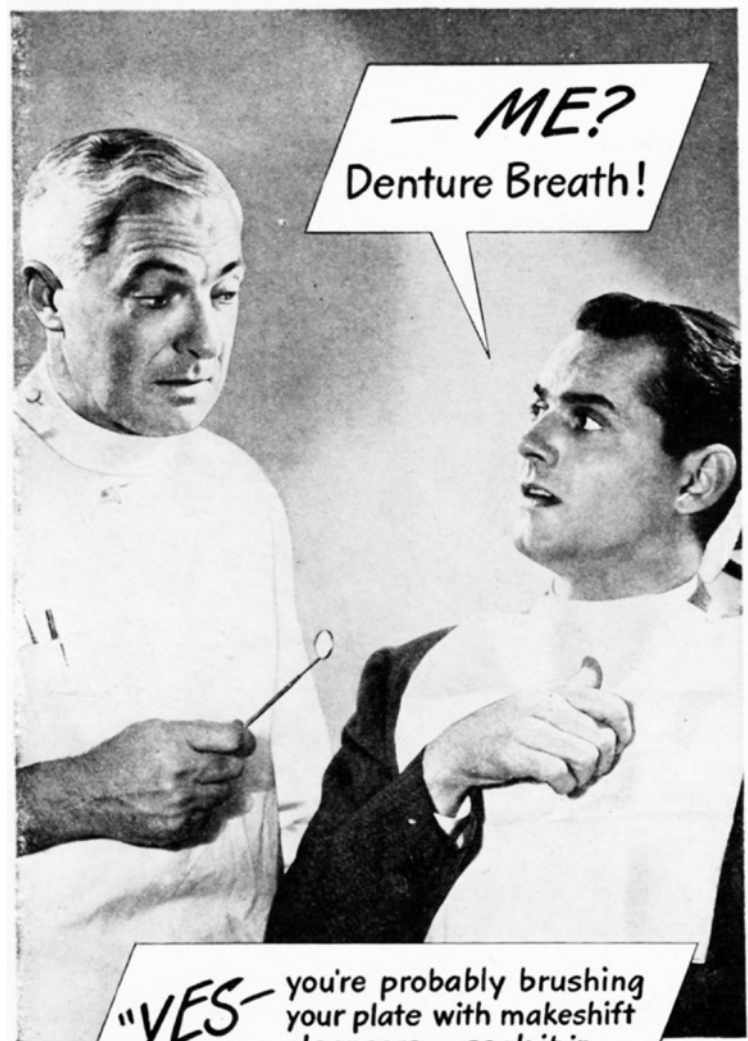
On March 25, 1931, nine young African American men, ranging in age from 13 to 21, were on a Southern Railway freight train bound for Birmingham, Alabama. When a fight broke out between the boys and some white passengers, the white men were forced off the train, at which point they called the police to meet the train at the next station. The nine boys were charged with assault and taken to Scottsboro, Alabama, the Jackson County seat, where two white women also on the train—Victoria Price and Rudy Bates—agreed to accuse them of rape. All nine were eventually tried and convicted—eight of them sentenced to death—despite the protests of the NAACP and testimony from Bates in which she denied being raped. Though all the defendants eventually won freedom, their case has long been considered one of the most egregious travesties of the American justice system. The Scottsboro Boys were the inspiration for the Tom Robinson case in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**The Scottsboro Boys**—Olen Montgomery, Clarence Norris, Ozzie Powell, Willie Robertson, Charles Weems, Eugene Williams, Andrew Wright, and Leroy “Roy” Wright



THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS

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# DIVINE FAITH

by Otis Ramsey-Zöe, Literary Manager

In 1932, a charismatic preacher calling himself Father Divine—and proclaiming himself an incarnation of God—set up shop in Harlem, where he founded the International Peace Mission Movement. This organization featured some now-familiar elements: the worship of its leader as God; cooperative, communal living wherein believers labored without pay and forfeited their possessions to the group; adherence to vows of the strictest morality, celibacy, and charity; and a doctrine of equality for all. Divine’s ministry offered a response to people’s cries for justice, peace, and understanding by claiming to offer freedom from some of society’s burdens.

Father Divine first surfaced around 1914 proclaiming his divinity; records of his earlier life—possibly as a man named George Baker, who earned a living doing lawn work in Baltimore—are obscure. What is certain is that, in 1919, Divine and a group of followers moved to Sayville, Long Island. There, he converted his home into a residence for believers, claiming that he intended to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. His ministry steadily attracted followers, and in 1932 he named it the International Peace Mission Movement. Not fully welcome in Sayville, Divine moved the Mission’s headquarters to Harlem. (He would later move again—to Philadelphia—in 1942.) By 1934, international congregations were taking root as far away as Europe and Australia.

Divine’s claim that he was God offered his followers freedom from blind faith. We think of faith as belief without proof, or what *Hebrews 11:1* calls “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Divine felt that, in an increasingly inhumane world, people were more likely to commit to

ideas of faith if they could justify their belief with proof. So for those needing to base their belief system on something tangible, Divine’s assertion that he was God—“personified and materialized” in the flesh—proved attractive.

In the midst of the Depression, the International Peace Mission also drew followers with its promises to release them from the burdens of material possessions and want. Believers who resided in a Heaven—the name Divine gave to his communal homes and communities—surrendered all of their belongings and worked without pay; in exchange, Father Divine provided food and shelter. Believers who did not live in any of the Heavens were encouraged to spend money only on essential needs, and then yield their remaining income and assets to the Peace Mission. Divine emphasized the importance of this gesture by preaching, “Lay not up treasures on earth where moth and thief and mouse break in and steal, but lay it up in Heaven with your Father.” He would then urge, “He who would enter into the Kingdom of God must have nothing he can call his own.” Followers who obeyed this charge and resigned property to Divine were called “Angels” and

were awarded new names like Ruth Rachel, Frank Incense, and Blessed Charity.

As “the Great Provider,” Divine hosted free Sunday evening meals for Angels and guests. Word of these “miraculous” feedings spread, and the free dinners eventually attracted such multitudes that, at one point, officials brought public nuisance charges against Divine. He was tried before a County Justice, convicted, fined \$500, and sentenced to a year in jail. Four days after the verdict, the Justice—a robust 55-year-





old man—died of heart failure. Many proclaimed that Divine had used his powers to strike down the Justice; the incident, seen as proof that Divine was God, contributed to the further growth of his ministry.

Perhaps the Peace Mission's most attractive features were its message of equality and its advocacy of civil rights. As early as 1936, Divine unveiled a plan for equal rights—the "Righteousness Government Platform"—and proposed a Federal Anti-Lynching Bill. In 1946, he married Edna Rose Ritchings, a white Canadian who assumed the title Mother Divine. He called their union "the marriage of the Lamb and the Bride," echoing *Revelations* 19:7. For his followers, the marriage of Divine and Ritchings represented a true portrait of racial equality. Indeed, in a sermon celebrating his sixth wedding anniversary, Divine declared, "I AM bringing all nations, languages, tongues, and people together! I have broken that line of demarcation as aforesaid, and I AM bringing an end to that Mason and Dixon line!"

Father Divine's enormous appeal was inextricably linked to national and international politics at the time of his ministry. Racial and economic inequality produced a hunger for his message—an opportunity that he seized and exploited. With each supposed miracle, word spread of this man who claimed

*I shall Unify them so effectively by the Law of the Spirit of Life that was in CHRIST JESUS until that Law will motivate the whole machinery of the human race. Aren't you glad!*

*Then we shall have a Righteous Government! Races, colors, and creeds will no longer be considered and you will not be low-rated and disgraced in consideration because of complexion. Aren't you glad! For this cause, every nation, language, tongue, and people shall love ME!*

*It is written:*

*"Out of one Blood, God created all nations to dwell upon the face of the whole earth."*

*That Blood is it that is in These Veins. I AM as much of one as I AM the other, therefore, I Came to bring an abolition to that line of demarcation and the word that is discriminatory in itself, which tends to Low-rate some and exalt some.*

*Can you not see the Mystery!*

(Father Divine, from his message given at Circle Mission Church of Philadelphia on November 2, 1943.)

to be God incarnate; despite controversy and skepticism, Divine's ministry grew. Belief in his claim to be God dissipated after Divine's death in 1965, but for those who remained faithful, his death was viewed as a final act of personal sacrifice.



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FOR FIRMER GUMS—CLEANER TEETH

# ACTIVITIES

## The Kitchen Table

*“...For me the journey begins downstairs at the kitchen table...”*  
—Lynn Nottage

Gather the people who inspire you around your kitchen table. These may be family members, friends, neighbors, community members, teachers, or people from your church. Tell each other stories about your life. Start with the best part of your day, week, month, or year. See where the stories go, and record any ideas that intrigue you.

Revisit these notes and turn them into a short story, monologue, poem, song, or play. Share this with the people who inspired you at another meeting around the kitchen table.

## Music of the 1950s

Take a trip to your local library and visit the music section. Most libraries either have a listening room or will allow you to check out music for a period of time. Find the bebop section. Listen to a few recordings by famous bebop musicians, such as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie.

What do you notice about this style of music? Now compare the sounds of that time period to your favorite style of music today. How is bebop different or similar?



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## Free Thinkers

*“...they find themselves living with a bon vivant aunt who is very much out of her time. She is a free-thinker, and at that period a free-thinker was assumed to be a Communist. So she is branded a Communist, even though she isn't. She is just an independent, modern woman.”*  
—Lynn Nottage

In this play, Aunt Lily is labeled a Communist because she is a free thinker. Have you ever been labeled by others because of your individuality? Write about a time when you were judged by someone. What thoughts, feelings, and consequences have you had to deal with because you choose to be an independent, free-thinker?