

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Theatre Arts & Dance presents

**365 Days/
365 Plays
(One-Act)**

**BY
SUZAN-LORI
PARKS**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021-
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2021**

STREAMED

Artistic & Production

ARTISTIC & PRODUCTION

DIRECTOR Danielle Cain

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Gabe Fernandez

STAGE MANAGER Carly Bozeman

COSTUME DESIGN Teresa Kopaz

DIGITAL DESIGN Raquel Moreno

SOUND DESIGN Mercedes Clanton

LIGHTING TECHNICIAN Chris Peterson

CAMERA CREW Elise Clark

EDITING CREW Jack Hagerman

TECHNICAL MENTOR Tony Bish

VIDEO COORDINATOR Eliza Hemenway

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR Theo Bridant

DRAMATURG Avery Flasher-Duzgunes

DRAMATURG MENTOR Scott Horstein

SPECIAL THANKS Noah Hewitt, Christine Cali

ACTING ENSEMBLE

Mariah Forster

Katie Goff

Julianna Hakopian

Maya Pratt-Bauman

Daija Temple

Phi Tran

Annaliese Van Sickle

Robert Wiles

Deaj Williams

“365 Days/365 Plays (One-Act)” is presented by arrangement with
Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
<http://www.concordtheatricals.com>

Inaction in Action - tasks must be completed

Full ensemble

Start Here

KRISHNA Deaj Williams

ARJUNA Maya Pratt-Bauman

Veuve Clicquot

CONDEMNED Robert Wiles

WAITER Annaliese Van Sickle

CHORUS OF MURDERED WOMEN Daija Temple, Katie Goff, Mariah Forster, Maya Pratt-Bauman, Julianna Hakopian

The Ends of the Earth - a throng chases a man

MAN Phi Tran

THRONG Mariah Forster, Katie Goff, Julianna Hakopian, Maya Pratt-Bauman, Daija Temple, Annaliese Van Sickle, Deaj Williams

The Executioner's Daughter

EXECUTIONER Katie Goff

PRISONER Mariah Forster

GUARD Maya Pratt-Bauman

Beginning, Middle, End

TRADITIONALIST Julianna Hakopian

FRESH ONE Daija Temple

RIOT POLICE Mariah Forster, Katie Goff, Annaliese Van Sickle

Hole - a man digs a hole with great relish, a woman climbs out of the hole with a suitcase

WOMAN Deaj Williams

MAN Robert Wiles

Jaywalking

1 Mariah Forster

2 Annaliese Van Sickle

The Great Depression

ONE Maya Pratt-Bauman

OTHER ONE Phi Tran

Empty

1 Julianna Hakopian

2 Robert Wiles

Burning

MAN Daija Temple

WOMAN Mariah Forster

The Leaving

OTHER Katie Goff

ONE Annaliese Van Sickle

FedEx to My Ex

THINKER Phi Tran

WOMAN Julianna Hakopian

CLERK Katie Goff

First Beginning - *watching a performance that includes a crash of cymbals, a fanfare of a 1000 sounds, and a galactic explosion*

1 Katie Goff

2 Mariah Forster

Supersize

MAN Maya Pratt-Bauman

SIGNER Deaj Williams

Decoy

WOMAN Daija Temple

MAN Robert Wiles

OTHER WOMAN Julianna Hakopian

WIPERS Mariah Forster, Katie Goff, Maya Pratt-Bauman, Phi Tran, Annaliese Van Sickle, Deaj Williams

Drag

MAN Julianna Hakopian

WOMAN Deaj Williams

Action in Inaction

Full ensemble

Director's Notes

Though Suzan-Lori Parks wrote **365 Days/365 Plays** nearly 20 years ago, the short plays still resonate. They touch on rampant capitalism, identity, bigotry, and the human search for significance. Her year's examination of humanity reveals something that is never perfect, but always striving.

The 18 plays chosen for this production also offer a look at beginnings and endings. *Start Here, Hole, Empty* and *The Great Depression* look at the **beginnings** of journeys, adventures and relationships. *Veuve Clicquot, The Ends of the Earth, The Executioner's Daughter*, and *Beginning, Middle, End* look at sometimes dark **endings**. *First Beginning* embraces both a beginning and an end! And the other plays show various versions of the **middle**, with all its suffering and confusion and complicated beauty.

Parks' view of humanity's journey on the earth is filled with complicated beauty. Not so perfect but always beautiful. It seems incredibly tender and compassionate to me, and a view we need now, in this particular moment of our journey.

Danielle Cain

The Humble Beginning of 365 Days/365 Plays

by Avery Flasher-Duzgunes, Dramaturg

On November 13, 2002, groundbreaking playwright Suzan-Lori Parks began the unique challenge of writing one play each day for an entire year. She originally considered the first of January, 2003, but instead began that very day, November 13, in order to honor the notion of daily inspiration. Rain or shine, and regardless of other commitments, Parks ritually wrote exactly one short play each day. The original dramaturg for the first official production of this cycle, Rebecca Ann Rugg, described this engagement as a powerful form of devotion, meaning both a commitment to the task at hand as well as a spiritual practice. Rugg states in her article “Dramaturgy as Devotion” that “participants frequently spoke of their happiness at the opportunity to reconnect with their original desires to make theatre and also with a reanimated feeling of connection to the deep purposes of making art.”

Originally, the 365-day challenge was strictly a personal undertaking aimed at process rather than production. Accordingly, the plays contain some very abstract stage directions. For example, “Inaction in Action” (the first play in tonight’s performance) contains stage directions that might be thought of as radical time vectors, where characters are trying to complete tasks for a supposedly infinite amount of time without ever getting them done. Parks’ stage directions for this play begin, “*Onstage are 365 things to do, that is, 365 tasks. What are the tasks? Yr choice.*”

Instead of building up to a climax, the plays amalgamate as something greater than the sum of their parts. In other words, they are not steps on a ladder, but a series of elevated platforms that relate to and inform each other. The 365-day cycle highlights the earth’s trip around the sun, with time being cyclical as opposed to linear.

This layout evokes themes of spiritual growth and rebirth, ever-present throughout the plays. The cycle of plays is a temporal map of the seasons, with times of year expressing different moods and concepts. Parks wrote “Empty” (the tenth play in our performance), for instance, in the middle of January, and the play is about the potential presented by an empty space. Both the play, along with the winter season when it was written, suggest empty darkness with hope on the horizon.

The pieces make nods to the Hindu religion and cyclical reincarnation, reminding us how strongly content is linked to form in *365 Days/365 Plays*. Parks explicitly references Hinduism in “Start Here” (play two in our performance), a telling of the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna from the *Bhagavad Gita*, a Hindu scripture. Here, Krishna convinces Arjuna to embrace spiritual interconnectedness and a more collective interpretation of humanity. This helps inspire Arjuna to take action as they head into a great battle.

365 Days/365 Plays has been performed in different ways over the years. Between November 2006 and November 2007, Curious Theatre in Colorado organized a national effort to perform all the plays – over 700 theater companies across the country signed up to perform a week’s worth of plays each, one play a day for a week. A 2017 production by Full Circle Theatre Company in Minneapolis 2017 intertwined forty-six of the plays, and ran for two weeks. Our performance tonight contains a sampling of eighteen different plays chosen from various points in the calendar. We hope you enjoy the unique aesthetic presented tonight in Sonoma State’s staging of Suzan-Lori Parks’ great cycle, *365 Days/365 Plays*.



Play # 1, "Inaction in Action" – Left to right, with green screen: Maya Pratt-Bauman, Julianna Hakopian (behind), Annaliese Van Sickle, Daija Temple (behind), Mariah Forster, Robert Wiles, Phi Tran, Katie Goff, Deaj Williams.



Play # 1, "Inaction in Action" – Left to right, with effects: Annaliese Van Sickle, Julianna Hakopian, Maya Pratt-Bauman, Daija Temple, Mariah Forster, Robert Wiles, Phi Tran, Katie Goff.

The Style of Playwright Suzan-Lori Parks

by Avery Flasher-Duzgunes, Dramaturg

Suzan-Lori Parks was born in 1963 in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and grew up with two siblings in a military family. Parks wrote poems and songs in her childhood, and was largely drawn to the idea of being a writer after reading the poetic novel *To The Lighthouse* by the great English writer Virginia Woolf. While attending Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, she took short-story writing classes at Hampshire College down the road with James Baldwin, the great American novelist, playwright, and activist, who inspired her to look into playwriting as a career.

Throughout the years, Parks has written numerous screenplays, teleplays, and stage plays, becoming the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Drama, awarded for her play *Topdog/Underdog* (2001), which tells the story of two African-American brothers struggling against poverty and racism while reflecting on their past together.

One of Parks' most prominent plays is *The America Play* (1994), about an African-American gravedigger named The Founding Father. The Founding Father bears a resemblance to Abraham Lincoln and impersonates him at a museum as a side gig, allowing tourists to shoot him with toy guns, reenacting his assassination. Much of the play involves the Founding Father giving his spiel on the history of Lincoln and why he appreciates him so much. As he does this, he is consistently interrupted by tourists dressed as John Wilkes Booth who wish to partake in the simulation. His wife, Lucy, and son, Brazil, are also major characters in the play and discuss the meaning of his life as an impersonator after he has left them. This play exemplifies a common theme throughout Parks' works, the mark of America's dark history.

Parks is known especially for her unique, abstract playwriting style, which she outlines in her 1994 essay "Elements of Style." For example, she employs a structure in her plays that she refers to as "repetition and revision," or "rep and rev," where instead of a plot progressing from point A to point B, it repeats itself, each time with some spin or twist, until it eventually shifts to another plot point. This allows some time to be spent experimenting with particular events within the narrative before moving on to others. Parks' style also characterizes time as having a circular shape.

Parks describes passages in her scripts that she calls "spells," in which characters' names are shown in the scripts, often alternating between characters, but there is no dialogue. Here is an example from "Hole," the seventh of tonight's plays.

Man Suit yrself. Its a free country.

Woman Is it?

Man

Woman

Man Yr one of those agitators, arentcha?

This gives the director room to decide what meaningful action will transpire in these dialogue gaps.

Both *The America Play* and *365 Days/365 Plays* feature these signature elements. For instance, Parks uses “rep and rev” to structure scenes with The Founding Father character. While he is at his museum stand impersonating Lincoln, his conversations with customers tend to repeat in general structure, with a slightly different premise each time.

Likewise, in “Decoy” from *365 Days/365 Plays*, the sixteenth of tonight’s plays, “rep and rev” drives the narrative of the man trying to court a woman then having to repeat the same actions due to a mistaken identity. According to Parks, these elements are ultimately “...ideas, feelings, thoughts, takes on the world, riffs, ways of approaching the word, the page, the event, the subject, the stage, that keep me awake.”

Note for the curious: Dramaturgy is a theater discipline and profession that has existed formally since the eighteenth century. The dramaturg is the production’s story analyst. Using text analysis and research, the dramaturg consults on the director’s staging vision as well as on the playwright’s original intentions in the script. Dramaturgs also use program notes like these, as well as other forms of public engagement, to build conversation between the world of the play and the audiences and artists who enter it.



Play # 5, "The Executioner's Daughter" – Katie Goff, Mariah Forster in front of green screen.



Play # 5, "The Executioner's Daughter" – Katie Goff, Mariah Forster with effects added.

Welcome to the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance



EVERT B. PERSON THEATRE is an extraordinary learning laboratory, a fully-equipped live performance space containing professionally staffed costume and scene shops, where SSU students learn skills essential to the art of live dance, music and theater performance. For today's show, through performance-related coursework, the students have spent weeks in this building hammering, harmonizing, acting, welding, stitching, and cabling, under the mentorship of professional staff, designers, and faculty. We hope you enjoy the product of the students' learning and skill-building process.

2020-21 EVERT B. PERSON SCHOLARSHIPS

ACTING Maya Pratt Bauman

DANCE Abigail Eissman, Alessandra Balestrieri-Jennings, Zara Labbe, Jennifer Martuscelli

TECHNICAL THEATRE Elise Clark, Sabrina Hick

THEATRE STUDIES John Ruzicka

Christine Cali, Department Chair
Dr. Hollis Robbins, Dean, School of Arts and Humanities

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Marie Ramirez Downing Program Director

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 Movement, Devised Theatre Workshop

Danielle Cain Voice, Scene Study, Comedy of Manners, Shakespeare, Audition,
 Drama Ensemble

Laura Odeh Beginning Acting, Career Prep and Planning, Physical Theatre

Doyle Ott Critical Thinking, Children's Theater, Humanities Learning
 Community, Commedia dell'Arte, Feldenkrais, Theatre History

Paul Draper Professor Emeritus

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Christine Cali and Kristen Daley Dance Program Co-Directors

Christine Cali Contemporary Dance Forms, Choreography, Global Perspectives in Dance,
 Improvisation/Somatic Practices, Theatre in Action, Critical Thinking, Actor/Dancer
 Collaboration, Dance Ensemble, Spring Dance Choreography, Dance for Everybody

Kristen Daley Contemporary Dance Forms, Anatomy for Dance, Choreography,
 Dance History & Criticism, Yoga, Dance Conditioning, Actor/Dancer Collaboration,
 Dance Ensemble, Spring Dance Choreography, Global Perspectives in Dance

Jennifer Jaffe Ballet

Nancy Lyons Professor Emeritus

Farrah McAdam Dance Ensemble, Dance for Everybody, Hip Hop

Byb Chanel Bibene African Dance Forms, Contemporary Dance Forms

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Anthony Bish Program Director

Scene Design, Light Design, Prop Design, Stage Management, Portfolio

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Judy Navas Professor Emeritus

Guest Speakers

Olivia Bowman-Jackson

Abdur-Rahim Jackson

Farrah McAdam

Logan Marshall-Green

Guillermo Aviles-Rodriguez

Rulan Tangen

Oswaldo Ramirez

Beowulf Boritt

Adam Versényi

Jamie Nakama

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