

An Anthology Of Early Plays: 1858-1938 - African American Life Series

Discover the rich heritage and transformative power of African American theater through An Anthology Of Early Plays: 1858-1938, a captivating collection that provides an insightful window into the propelling force of African American storytelling. Spanning over eight decades, this anthology is a testament to the resilience and creativity of African American playwrights during a crucial period in American history.

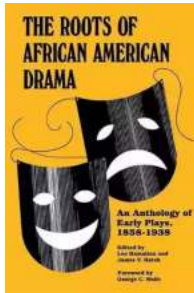
The Birth of African American Theater

As the abolitionist movement gained momentum in the mid-19th century, African Americans found a platform for their voices in the form of theater. The anthology starts in 1858 with the first recorded play by an African American, "The Escape," written by William Wells Brown. This groundbreaking work explores the struggles of enslaved individuals seeking freedom and sets the tone for the plays to come.

Exploring Key Themes

Throughout the anthology, a myriad of themes is meticulously explored, shedding light on the experiences and challenges faced by African Americans during this period. From the devastating impacts of slavery and the fight for freedom to the quest for identity and the depiction of African American life beyond stereotypes, each play presents a unique perspective on the African American experience in America.

The Roots of African American Drama: An Anthology of Early Plays, 1858-1938 (African American Life Series)



by David Hare(Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1090 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 456 pages

Screen Reader : Supported



A Voice for Change

These early plays were not only a medium for self-expression but also a way to incite change and challenge societal norms. The anthology includes groundbreaking works like "The Chip Woman's Fortune" by Willis Richardson, the first African American to have a play produced on Broadway. Richardson's play addresses issues of race, class, and gender, boldly confronting the prevailing biases of the time.

Influential Playwrights

The anthology features plays by influential African American playwrights who paved the way for generations to come. From the powerful work of Angelina Weld Grimké to Paul Green's exploration of lynching in "The Field God," each playwright contributes a distinct voice and perspective that adds depth and richness to the anthology.

Preserving African American Theater

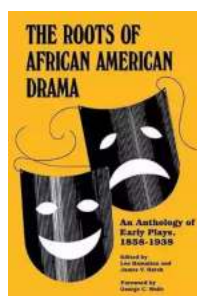
An Anthology Of Early Plays: 1858-1938 is not just a captivating collection of plays; it represents an effort to preserve and celebrate African American theater. By showcasing these early works, the anthology ensures that the

voices and contributions of African American playwrights are recognized, celebrated, and passed down through generations.

The Legacy Lives On

The impact of these early plays reverberates through the history of African American theater. They laid the foundation for future generations of African American playwrights, directors, and actors, shaping the narrative and providing a platform for African American stories to be told authentically.

An Anthology Of Early Plays: 1858-1938 - African American Life Series is a must-read for anyone interested in African American history, theater, and cultural representation. It allows readers to immerse themselves in the struggles, triumphs, and creativity of African American playwrights during a critical period in America's history. Through its captivating narratives and diverse perspectives, the anthology showcases the power and resilience of African American theater, ensuring that these early voices continue to inspire and shape the future of the arts.



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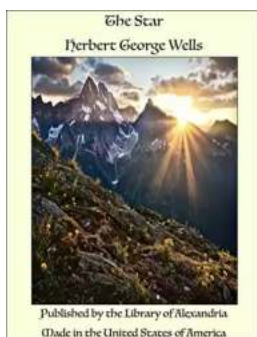


While many historically significant or interesting plays by white playwrights are easily found in anthologies, few by early African American writers are equally accessible. Indeed until the 1970s, almost none of these early plays could be located outside of a library.

The Roots of African American Drama fills this gap. Five of the thirteen scripts included here have never been in print, and only three others are presently available anywhere. The plays represent a variety of styles—allegory, naturalism, realism, melodrama, musical comedy, and opera. Four are full length, eight are one-acts, and one is a skit. Their subjects include slavery, share-cropping, World War I, vaudeville, religion, and legend and mythology.

In making their selections, the editors used a variety of criteria to insure each play is dramatically sound and historically important.

They also searched for those scripts that were unjustly consigned to obscurity. Each selection begins with headnotes that place it in its historical and cultural context. Biographic information and a bibliography of other plays follow each script, providing readers with added sources for study.



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