

Upcoming Second Season Production

Directors Workshop:

Student Directed One-Act Plays

Eleven Productions over Three Bills, April 18-23

Call 221-2660 for more information

The William and Mary Theatre 1996/97 Season

Mainstage Productions

October 10-12; 17-20 Show Boat Books and Lyrics by

Oscar Hammerstein, Music by Jerome Kern.

Directed by Jerry Bledsoe

November 21-24 The Rose Tattoo by Tennessee Williams.

Directed by Richard H. Palmer

February 27-March 2 A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare.

Directed by Louis E. Catron

April 17-20 Arcadia by Tom Stoppard.

Directed by Richard H. Palmer

Second Season Studio Theatre Productions

Design for Living by Noel Coward

Translations by Brian Friel

Participation Policy

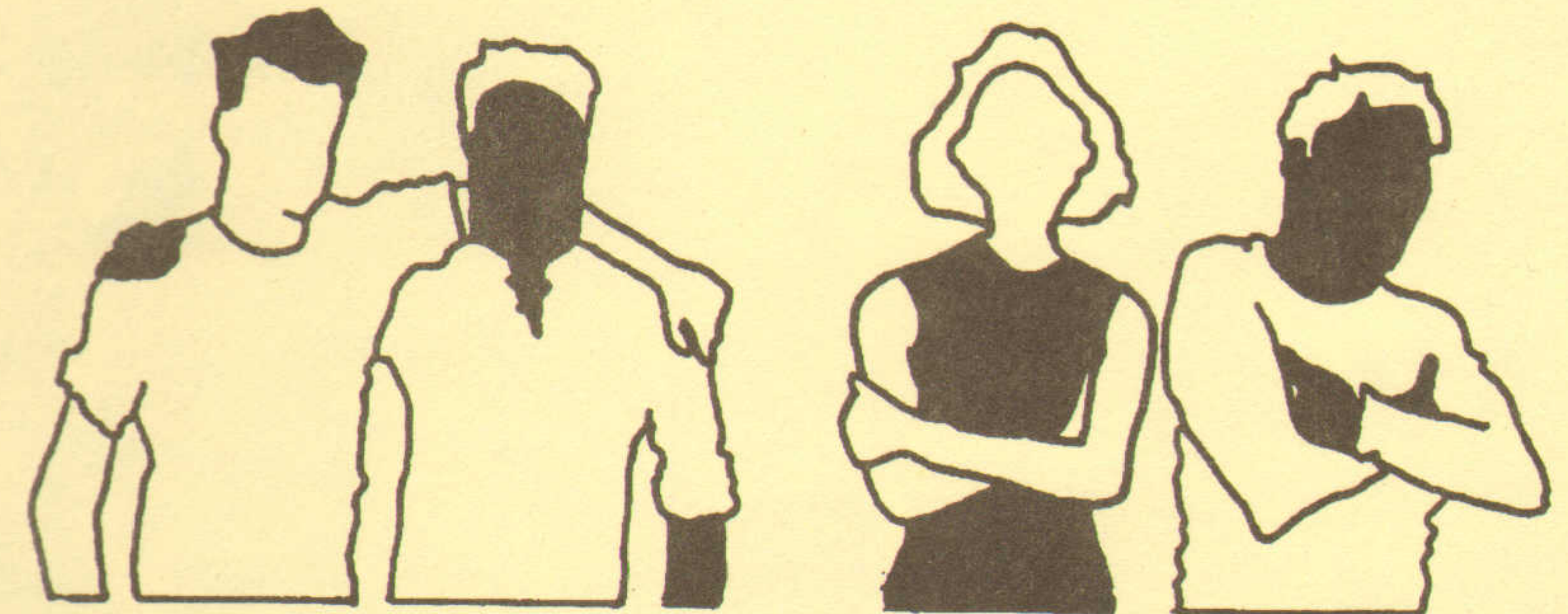
Participation in William and Mary Theatre productions is open to all students, faculty, and staff at the College of William and Mary without respect to age, sex, or ethnic background. Our intention is to find the person best able to handle each responsibility, given the educational and artistic objectives of our program. Guest artists sometimes may be invited to take part when their presence furthers these objectives.

The Department of Theatre and Speech

Chair Richard H. Palmer
Faculty Jerry H. Bledsoe, Tamara L. Burk, Louis E. Catron,
Susan L. Chast, Lorelee Clark, David H. Dudley,
John C. Goodlin, Steve Holliday, George Jack,
Bruce A. McConachie, Patrick Micken, Patricia M. Wesp
Professors Emeritus Marion Brown, Howard Scammon, Roger Sherman
Department Secretary Beth Turbeville
Theatre Production Assistant Steve Koehler

William and Mary Theatre

presents



WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN

April 11, 12, 13 at 8 p.m.

April 14 at 2 p.m.

Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall
The College of William and Mary

The William and Mary Theatre

presents

WALK TOGETHER CHILDREN

Facilitated By Bruce McConachie
Scripted By Hermine Pinson
Music By Everett Collins
Scenic Design By Richard H. Palmer
Costume Design By B. Christine McDowell
Lighting Design By Steve Holliday
Technical Direction By David H. Dudley

The Company

Vivian Appler	George Jack	Tristan Poje
Brian Boyd	Elaine Kessler	Tevera Stith
Alicia Caleb	Nina Millin	Sylvia Tabb-Lee
Kevin Cusick	Bonnie Morrison	Russell Taylor
Dan Figg	Colleen Mylott	Dan White

Musicians

Everett Collins	Michael Jones
Robert Frances	Kirt E. Moody
	James Patterson

Special thanks to: Anna Grace Foster, Susan Glisson, Patrick Golden, Mary Keeling, Wayne and Sue Kettner, Bobby Ann Loper, Michael Lord, Stephanie McConachie, Ronnie Nowak, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, the Virginia Gazette, the William and Mary Housekeeping Staff, and to the many students not in the present production who recorded and transcribed these memories.

We gratefully acknowledge the sponsorship of the following organizations: The Gladys and Franklin Clark Foundation, The Hunt-Scammon Endowment Fund, Alternate ROOTS, The American Studies Program at the College, The Williamsburg Regional Library, Neighborhood Connections of James City County, The Community Action Agency, Citizens for Community Progress, The JCC Historical Commission, and ALL TOGETHER

PLEASE: NO PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE PRODUCTION.

*This theatre is equipped with an Infrared Listening System for the hearing impaired.
Headsets are available free of charge in the theatre's lobby.*

Production Staff

Production Stage Manager Carrie Glasby
Assistant Director Emily Shooltz
Assistant Stage Managers Suzannah Ancell, Amanda Foley
Assistant to the Scenic Designer Eric D. Heinen
Assistant Lighting Designer Evan C. Parker
Assistant to the Costume Designer Kristin Schorr
Choreographer Kristin Schorr
Dramaturg Robin Veder
Scripting Assistance Cameron Ayres, Tevera Stith
Properties Masters Kermit Kaleba, Ruth Mariampolski
Properties Shift Crew Brooke Cadorette
Scenic Artists Neal Lawrenson, Milena Pisano
Scene Painters Robert Doherty
Fly Technicians Daryl Cox, Tiffany Price
Sound Engineering by Brian Ramey
Master Electrician Kathryn B. Phillips
Second Electrician Keith Humphrey
Wardrobe Crew Shannah Kendall, Leigh Clark
Costume Shop Staff Gwen Sharoff, Vanessa Owens, Melanie Carver
Scene Shop Carpenters Eric D. Heinen, Sara Birkhead, Mike Jessup
Scene Shop Assistants Slade Billew, Milena Pisano,
Jay Putnam, Caitlin Wittig
Electrics Shop Assistants Jeffrey L. Brangan, Matthew J. Kopans
Graphic Designer Kevin Cusick
Publicity Director Brian Reiss
Box Office Manager Kathryn Van Meter
Assistant Box Office Manager Chris Carter
House Manager Jeff McDermott
Scenic Technicians Allison Boye, Brooke Cadorette,
Whitney Cali, Alex Carra, Andrea Clark, Daryl Cox,
Tanya Czarkowski, Alicia Dorsey, James Eanes,
Jay Hamric, Abigail Harper, Kermit Kaleba, Matthew Kopans,
Neal Lawrenson, Ginny MacNemar, Ruth Mariampolski,
Rosemary Mellion, Sean Monahan, Natalie Neaton, Arabella Pettit,
Tiffany Price, Brian Shallcross, Kathleen Sullivan, Christy Woods
Lighting Technicians Terry Barnes, Amy Bates, Michael Bertoni,
Joshua Beyer, Slade Billew, Michael Binns, Jerry Coyne,
Sam Cross, Steven Dougherty, Keith Enslow, Lisa Garner,
Christopher Hall, Tim Hamilton, Terry Hammons, Carole Hirsch,
April Johnson, Troy Keen, Michael Laskofski, Blake Maffei,
Michael McGowan, Greg Myers, Ben Olive, Matt Perkins,
Jay Putnam, Keion Smith, Matt Verkey, Erica Walsh, Joshua Whipple

The Williamsburg Grassroots Theatre Project

Director Bruce McConachie
Co-Director Robin Veder
Coordinator of Community Relations Kristin Schorr
Coordinator of Communications Eric Heinen
Community Liaison Billie Shannon
Consultants and Artists-in-Residence Dudley Cocke,
Theresa Holden, Robbie McCauley
Community Participants Sarah Wright Belpree, Dr. and Mrs. Blayton,
Bill Bryant, Tony and Alvene Conyers,
Phillip Cooke, Rubye DeWitt, Elise Emmanuel,
Myrtle Engs, Madeline Gee, Rev. Harold Hines,
Lois Hornsby, Nancy James, Caroline Jordan,
Bob and Penny Kidd, Patty Kips, Rev. Moody,
Esterine Moyler, Stella Neiman, Julie Oxreider,
Shade Palmer, Pat Paschall, Doris Rainey,
Nathaniel Reed, Thad Tate, Bob Welsh,
and many others.

Our thanks to the many other Williamsburg-area residents who shared their stories with us.

The Williamsburg Grassroots Theater Project

We all know how important history is to this town. But what about recent history? What about the events that happened twenty or thirty years ago, but that still shape our lives? Isn't it time for the students of the College to recognize the wisdom of long-time Williamsburg area residents and draw on their memories? These are the concerns that motivated the creation of Walk Together Children, the first major production of the Williamsburg Grassroots Theater Project.

Grassroots theater is theater by and for everyday people. Although its traditions go back to story-telling in ancient times, it was initiated as a formal, modern movement by Cornell University Professor Alexander Drummond in the 1930s, a time when many people were looking to the regional and local arts as a source for American identity. Since then it has survived through the work of educators, community leaders, and theater professionals. Our collaborator, Roadside Theater, has been doing grassroots theater at its home in the Appalachian mountains, around the U.S., and abroad since the 1970s.

The Williamsburg Grassroots Theater Project is a collaboration between Williamsburg area residents, students and faculty of the College of William and Mary, and artists-in-residence Robbie McCauley, a New York performance artist, and Dudley Cocke and Theresa Holden of the Roadside Theater Company. All of our artists-in-residence have supervised similar grassroots theater projects in other towns. Together we have made a play about race relations in Williamsburg during the Civil Rights era.

In Walk Together Children, you will see actors tell the stories of real people who lived in Williamsburg during the 1950s and '60s. We have changed the characters' names, and here or there we cut back a longwinded speech, but we have tried to maintain the heart of each story.

You will see the actors tell stories that were originally told by people who are different from them in age, background, and race; you will sometimes see black actors playing white characters and white actors playing black characters. We hope that this will prompt you to think about the cultural experiences that divide and unite us, despite or because of race.

How did this project happen? Folks who had stories to tell about the Civil Rights era shared them with College students. Some of this sharing happened in interviews, but most occurred in story circles, a form for story-telling that you will see in Walk Together Children. In a story circle, each person speaks for a few minutes about a specific event that moved or angered her or just made him think about the world a little differently. After the performances on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights (but not Sunday afternoon), we invite the audience to join us for a story circle about race relations in Williamsburg today.

Following the story circles last fall, the students worked with our artists-in-residence to transform these stories into theater. On November 18, the students shared their progress with Williamsburg community members at a Potluck dinner. Since that time, Professor Hermine Pinson has been weaving these stories into a script, with the help of students and other members of the Williamsburg Grassroots Theater Project's Steering Committee: Carol Talbot, Shade Palmer, Iris Lynch, Richard Sherman, Eric Heinen, Lisa Rayner, Bruce McConachie, and Robin Veder.

Our production of Walk Together Children wraps up the first phase of the Williamsburg Grassroots Theater Project and begins the next. We will close this year with a potluck dinner on April 20th. We invite all of you who have participated in this project, or who would like to join us for next year's focus on race relations and economic conditions in Williamsburg today to join us at the potluck. Please leave your name, address, and phone number on the lobby display or call Kristin Schorr at 564-9253. We'd love to see you there!

By Robin Veder

VARIETY

Theatre walks in locals' shoes

New play presents racial issues from 'Burg's recent past

By Délice Williams
Flat Hat Staff Writer

With the historic area right across the street, it is almost impossible for the College community to forget that Williamsburg has a deep connection with the past. We sometimes do forget, however, that that history continues after the eighteenth century.

William and Mary Theater intends to change that misconception with its latest production *Walk Together Children* (formerly *Jim Crow Gotta Go*). The play, which examines race relations and the effects of desegregation in Williamsburg during the civil rights era, is based on the real-life stories of residents who lived in the city during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s.

"The main focus is on the stories told to us by people in Williamsburg," Bruce McConachie, director and theater professor, said. "The stories build on each other and move from Williamsburg in the 1950s through the difficulties of desegregation in the '60s and into the continuing problems with integration by 1970."

McConachie began work on the project last February as part of an effort to expose the theater department to "grass-roots theater," a style that focuses on local history and



Russell Taylor and Sylvia Tabb-Lee star in William and Mary Theatre's production of *Walk Together Children*, a play based on the civil rights movement, playing April 11, 12, and 13 at 8pm and April 14 at 2pm at PBK Hall.

issues. He and other collaborators on the project decided to focus on race relations after discussing the project with community leaders.

"We considered several different subjects before we settled on race relations during the '50s and '60s," McConachie said. "I'm not sorry we did settle on this one, but there are many more stories that we can tell in an hour and 45-minute show."

McConachie's spring theater class did much of the legwork for the project. They interviewed local residents and participated in "story circles" to gather material for the play. The "story circles" were informal discussions where local residents shared their experiences from the civil rights era. Their statements were then recorded and transcribed.

English professor Hermine Pinson wrote the script for the play based on those transcripts.

"I got the transcripts, and at that point it was a matter of making many, many creative decisions that I did not make alone," Pinson said.

"[I had to decide] whether to turn a story into a dramatic scene or let the character sit there and tell it," Pinson said, "or I had to decide how to change the language without destroying the spirit of the story or the character. Those were all the small details that have had an impact on the final product."

Pinson became involved with *Walk Together Children* after she was asked to be on the advisory board for the production.

"The project struck me as really so compelling that I asked to play a larger role," Pinson said. "When I started [it] I didn't know what writing this play would involve. It's called upon all my resources as a writer."

Pinson also felt personally affected by the play and its subject matter.

"As a person who grew up in the South, the Deep South, and the Southwest I had to confront some issues that I had not considered on that level in quite some time," Pinson said.

"I know that for me, as well as for some of the actors, the process of

See WALK Page 12

Walk

Continued from Page 7

shaping the play using the stories told by community members has been almost a cathartic one," Pinson said. "For those of us who came of age during that period (no matter where we were in America), we had to revisit the inception of integration on a level that we hadn't dealt with in quite some time."

Pinson did stress, however, that the project has also been an educational experience.

"It gave me a different view of the city than I had as an outsider just coming in to work here," Pinson said. "It made me feel like I knew the community and like I was becoming part of the community."

McConachie shared Pinson's sentiments.

"I think all of us have learned a great deal about Williamsburg," McConachie said. "It wasn't the sight of great disturbances—there

were no riots or police dogs—but there was a great deal of personal and social anxiety for local residents of both races, and many of those problems were never adequately addressed."

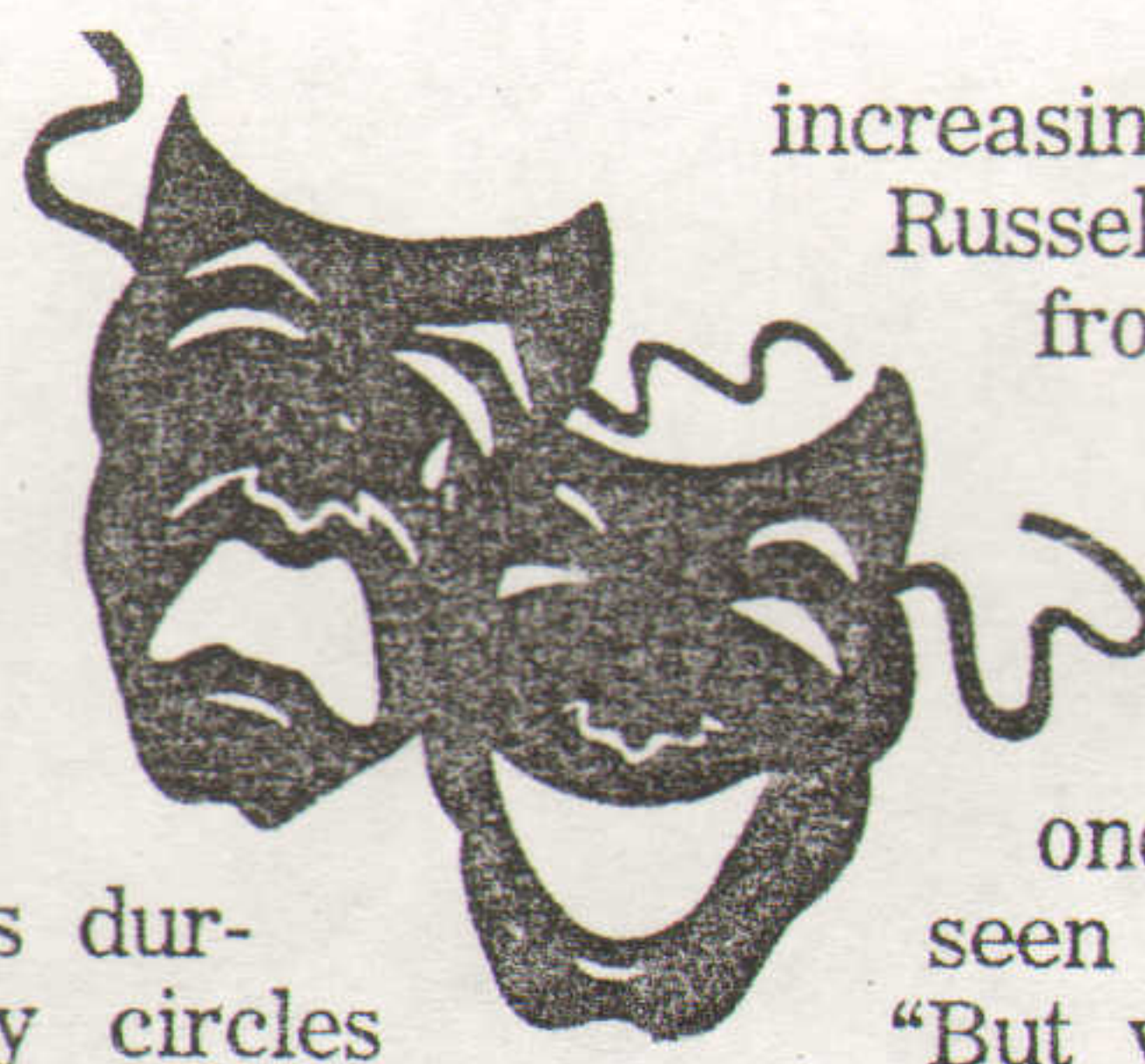
McConachie also stressed that the play is an opportunity for Williamsburg to "get to know itself better."

"Local history gets forgotten easily," McConachie said, "but the joys and the scars need to be recalled. We're glad to be facilitating this historical experience."

In order to encourage this self-awareness in the Williamsburg community, the theater department will sponsor discussions on race relations and economic conditions in the city. The discussions will be held following each performance of the play.

Walk Together Children will be performed at Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall on April 11, 12, and 13 at 8pm and tickets are \$5.

A community heals together



By Bill Tolbert

Stories of Williamsburg during the Civil Rights movement come alive April 11-14 when the William & Mary Theatre debuts its grassroots theater project, "Walk Together Children."

The play examines race relations and the effects of desegregation in Williamsburg. The theater company has taken the stories, songs and memories gath-

ered from locals during recent story circles and woven them into a production that deals with the issues of that time in a forthright and intimate manner.

The production is controversial, admitted Bruce McConachie, a W&M theater professor and director of the production. "Our production will not please everybody," he said. "But I view this as a chance to heal old wounds, rather than

increasing barriers."

Russell Taylor, a W&M senior from Glen Burnie, Md., and a cast member, agreed. "Rehearsals have been tense at times, because everyone is scared of being seen as a racist," he said.

"But we've had some great discussions on race, and I really think the production has the potential to make a great impact."

The play is a collaborative effort by W&M faculty members Hermine Pinson and McConachie, members of the college community, and neighbors outside the campus. Pinson is an English professor and the script writer.

In addition to W&M students, the cast includes Sylvia Tabb-Lee, an interpreter for African-American Interpretive Programs at Colonial Williamsburg, and daughter of the late Rev. J.B. Tabb Sr.

McConachie's grassroots theater class used a semester to look at the concept of grassroots theater and then gather stories from locals who lived in Williamsburg in the 1950s and '60s. The concept of grassroots theater is to give a voice to the community from which the story comes. This project does just that, McConachie noted.

"It deals substantially with the traditions, stories and songs that are indigenous to a specific place, and presents them back to

the community from which they are drawn," he said.

Information from the story circles went to Pinson, who developed the script. McConachie then developed the production with the help of professional storyteller and artist-in-residence Robbie McCauley.

The project forced the students involved to remain flexible, said Emily Shooltz, a W&M junior who is serving as assistant director. "It's a very different process than the average main stage William & Mary Theatre production, with a very different dynamic," she said.

"But the production has attracted a diverse cast that has brought lots of new creative

See Heals, page 2B

★ Heals

From page 1B

ideas to the process. So that's a big plus."

The project let students explore the issue of race during the rehearsal process. But, more importantly, the students have had a chance to meet local community members whose roles they are playing. That gives them a greater understanding of the local situation and the historical times, McConachie explained.

Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 11, through Saturday, April 13. A matinee is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday, April 14. Additional story circles on race relations in Williamsburg today will follow the three evening performances.

Want to go? All performances are scheduled at Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at the PBK box office Monday-Friday 1-6 p.m. and 1-4 p.m. Saturdays, or by calling 221-2674.