

Awele Makeba's

I'm Not Getting On, Until Jim Crow Gets Off Teen and Women Activists in the Montgomery Bus Boycott

An interactive theatre performance for middle/high school students based on primary source documents to explore the 3Cs of history--Context, Chronology and Causation



JoAnn Robinson
Verbally Assaulted 12/1949



Claudette Colvin
Arrested 3-2-1955

*"I didn't
want to
be in the
spotlight."*

Mary Louise Smith
Arrested 10-21-1955



Rosa Parks
Arrested 12-5-1955

"Awele Makeba's work inspires new questions about how to teach and learn history. Her presentation cannot help but provoke an emotional response that engages all facets of our common humanity and makes us question how much we really understand the past. This is her success: she unsettles our understanding of what we thought we knew so that we can come to know in new ways."

Sam Wineburg, Professor, Cognitive Studies in Education, Stanford University

"Awele Makeba's stirring performance is theatre at its best. She weaves together the voices of four women, Claudette Colvin, Mary Louise Smith, JoAnn Robinson, and Rosa Parks and documents their acts in defying the Jim Crow laws during the Montgomery (Alabama) Bus Boycotts in 1955. Their roles as "upstanders" are important lessons - ones that continue to challenge us today- about participation as a responsible citizen in a democracy and about lessons of courage and faith. In bringing this untaught history to the stage and, indeed, to life, Makeba also reminds us that empathy and the capacity to understand and to own history helps us realize the best in ourselves."

Margot S. Strom, Executive Director, Facing History and Ourselves www.facing.org

When a theater-going experience is enhanced and heightened by the students' ability to play active roles in questioning, examining and seeing a link between the play and their everyday lives, it can become an invaluable lesson in finding the rewards in exploration, interpretation and creative thinking.

National Performances, Workshops, Residencies, CDs
<http://www.awele.com>

Program Details

An interactive theatre performance on teen and women activists in the Montgomery Bus Boycott based on oral histories and primary source documents to explore the 3Cs of history: context, chronology and causation. Format: The stories are presented through a talking timeline for the audience to see the Montgomery Bus Boycott's significance in advancing democracy in the United States.

Awele steps in and out of character, different historical players' voices/stories weaving the historical narrative while interacting with the audience as she deconstructs (and the audience explores) the complexities of this layered her/history. Students travel via oral histories and stories from 1949 -1958. Links are also made to contemporary themes and issues in the 21st century.

Audiences are given opportunities to collaboratively build working definitions of key concepts presented in the performance, discuss content with their peers and with the researcher/writer/storyteller, interview characters about their motivations and the consequences of their actions, ask questions of Awele about her research, and the program concludes with the creation a human sculpture/image theatre to celebrate youth activism.

Curriculum Links: 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, Reconstruction black codes and laws; Plessy v. Ferguson; Brown v. Board of Education Performance Guide and internet resources posted at <http://www.awele.com>

Workshop: participants will use primary source materials, process drama and storytelling to examine the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Engaging Students in Historical Inquiry

- consider the 3 C's of history: context, chronology, and causation
- increase/enhance content knowledge by thinking deeply on how issues shape our world
- examine historical evidence and develop different explanations and arguments over its meaning, its significance, and how best to explain and understand the ideas and motives of its author(s)
- explore multiple perspectives and explore decisions based on democratic principles and beliefs
- identify multiple causation (motivation, effect, result, or consequence)

National U. S. History Standards

4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties.

4A: The student understands the "Second Reconstruction" and its advancement of civil rights.

Therefore, the student is able to

7-12 Explain the origins of the postwar civil rights movement and the role of the NAACP in the legal assault on segregation. [Analyze multiple causation]

5-12 Explain the resistance to civil rights in the South between 1954 and 1965. [Identify issues and problems in the past]

Social Studies Standards

Strand #2 Time, Continuity, and Change; Strand #5 Individuals, Groups, and Institutions;

Strand #6 Power, Authority, and Governance