

KEY BLACK AND ASIAN PRODUCTIONS TO 1975

by *Stephen Bourne*

All plays listed below feature African-Caribbean or African-American personnel unless indicated as Asian in the Notes column. Research on Asian plays was done by Susan Croft.

The names of African, Caribbean, African American and Asian personnel are given in **bold**.

THM = Theatre Museum, P =Photos (*= THM copyright), T = Prints, R = Portraits, B = Playbills, S = Scripts, G = Programmes, Y = Publicity, D = Design, M = Model, V = Video, A = Reviews

NB = See note under Special Collections in Collections Summary for information on Royal Court and Roundhouse archives.

Connie Smith as **Tituba** in
The Crucible by Arthur Miller,
Royal Court, 1956.

Photograph by
Houston Rogers

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Production	Author/s	Open- ing date	Theatre	Director / Producer where relevant	Summary mentioning key black personnel	Material in THM Collections	References (See end of document)	Notes
Oroonoko	Thomas Southerne adapted from Aphra Behn	1825	Royal Coburg		Ira Aldridge	S	Marshall and Stock	Biog. file on Ira Aldridge
Othello	William Shakespeare	1832	Covent Garden		Ira Aldridge	R, B, S, T	Marshall and Stock	THM also holds illuminated scrolls presented to Aldridge
The Padlock	Isaac Bickerstaffe	1833	Surrey		Ira Aldridge	S, T, R	Marshall and Stock	
Les Bayaderes or Dancing Priestesses of Pondicherry		1838	Adelphi		Sandirounn, Ramgoun, Veydoun, Amany and Tille	B, T, A		Asian, from Hindustan, (followed by The Law of Brahma! Or The Hindoo Widow – with English actors)
The Black Doctor	Ira Aldridge	1841	City of London		Adaptation from the French in which Aldridge himself also appeared	S	Marshall and Stock	
Titus Andronicus	William Shakespeare	1852	Britannia, Hoxton		Ira Aldridge	T, S	Marshall and Stock	
Othello	William Shakespeare	1866	Royal Olympic		Morgan Smith	S, G	Hill	Smith also played Hamlet, Richard III, Macbeth, Shylock in the same tour

Uncle Tom's Cabin	from Harriet Beecher Stowe	1900	Elephant and Castle		One of many productions of this hugely popular show, some with 'blacked up' performers, this one featured J.G. Johnston as Uncle Tom and Lizzie Allen as Aunt Chloe	G, S		THM also holds sheet music for a production of Uncle Tom's Cabin
In Dahomey	Bert Williams, George Walker	1903	Shaftesbury		Bert Williams, George Walker, Aida Overton Walker	G, Y, A		
Caliph for a Day Savitri or Love Conquers Death The Gardener The Maharani of Arakan	K. N. Das Gupta Adapted from Mahabharata by K. N. Das Gupta Rabindranath Tagore Adapted by Tagore from George Calderon	1915	Town Hall Chiswick		Presented by the Union of East and West a Grand Performance in aid of the Wounded Indian Troops by the Indian Art and Dramatic Society (English cast) Musician Ali Khan	S – ext., G		Asian. One of many performances of Tagore's work by the Union of East and West
The Goddess	Niranjan Pal	1922	Duke of Yorks		Presented for 2 matinee performances by the Indian Players with a primarily Indian cast and crew	G		Asian. Also played at Ambassadors
Dover Street to Dixie		1923	London Pavilion	Charles B. Cochran (P)	Revue featuring Florence Mills and Will Vodery's Orchestra	G, Y		Biog.. file on Florence Mills
The Emperor Jones	Eugene O'Neill	1925	Ambassadors	James Light (P)	American drama starring Paul Robeson (Brutus Jones)	G, P, R, S, Y	Duberman, Bourne	Portrait of Robeson in The Sketch (23/9/25)

Back to Methuselah	George Bernard Shaw	1928	Royal Court	Cochran (P) Sir Barry Jackson (D)	Mills Drama featuring Emma Williams (Minister of Health), Edith Evans, Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier and Cedric Hardwicke	G, Y, S		Mills
Show Boat	Oscar Hammerstein II	1928	Drury Lane	Felix Edwardes (P)	American musical featuring Paul Robeson (Joe)	G, Y	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	Biog. file on Robeson
Porgy	Dubose and Dorothy Heyward	1929	Princes	Rouben Mamoulian (D)	American drama starring Frank Wilson (Porgy) and Evelyn Ellis (Bess)	G, Y, S		Portrait of cast in The Bystander (27/3/29)
All God's Chillun' Got Wings	Eugene O'Neill	1929	Royal Court	Peter Godfrey (P)	American drama starring Frank Wilson (Jim Harris) and Emma Williams (Mrs Harris) with Henry Brown [Ray Ellington] (Jim, child)	G, Y, S		
Othello	William Shakespeare	1930	Savoy	Ellen Van Volkenburg	Drama starring Paul Robeson (Othello) Peggy Ashcroft (Desdemona)	G, Y, S	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	
The Hairy Ape	Eugene O'Neill	1931	Ambassadors	James Light (P)	American drama starring Paul Robeson (Yank)	G, A	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	

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All God's Chillun' Got Wings	Eugene O'Neill	1933	Embassy	Andre Van Gyseghem (P)	Revival (see 1929) starring Paul Robeson (Jim Harris) and Flora Robson (Ella Downey)	G, A, S	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	
Nymph Errant		1933	Adelphi	Charles B. Cochran (P)	Musical starring Gertrude Lawrence featuring Elisabeth Welch (Haidee Robinson)	G, A		Biog. File on Elisabeth Welch
Blackbirds of 1934		1934	Coliseum	Lew Leslie (P)	Revue starring Valaida	G, A		Also see materials on Blackbirds of 1935, same star, producer and theatre

Basalik	Peter Garland [Norma Leslie Munro]	1935	Arts	Muriel Pratt	Drama about African chief starring Paul Robeson (Balu)	G, A	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	
Glamorous Night	Ivor Novello	1935	Drury Lane	Leontine Sagan (P)	Musical featuring Elisabeth Welch (Cleo Wellington)	G, A		
Stevedore	Paul Peters and George Sklar	1935	Embassy	Andre Van Gyseghem	Paul Robeson	A	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	
Toussaint L'Ouverture	C L R James	1936	Westminster (for Stage Society)	Peter Godfrey (P)	Drama starring Paul Robeson (Toussaint) with Robert Adams, Orlando Martins, R E Fennell, John Ahuma, Lawrence Brown	G, A, Y	Duberman, Robeson Jr, Bourne	
Blackbirds of 1936		1936	Gaiety	Lew Leslie (P)	Revue starring Jules Bledsoe	G, A		
Blackbirds of 1936 (2 nd edition)	1936		Adelphi	Lew Leslie (P)	Revue starring The Nicholas Brothers	G, A		Biog. file on Harold Nicholas
Plant in the Sun	Ben Bengal	1938	Unity	Herbert Marshall	Drama starring Paul Robeson	G, A, P, S	Duberman, Chambers, Bourne	Materials in Unity Theatre Archive
The Sun Never Sets	Pat Wallace and Guy Bolton, adapted from Edgar Wallace	1938	Drury Lane		Drama starring Todd Duncan (Bosambo) Adelaide Hall (Fitema)	G, A		Biog. file on Adelaide Hall
Colony	Geoffrey Trease	1939	Unity	Herbert Marshall	Drama with Robert Adams and Orlando Martins	MS, G, A, Y, P	Chambers	Materials in Unity Theatre Archive
Gate revue	Designed by Hedley Briggs	c1940				D		
India Speaks (aka Map of India)	Mulk Raj Anand	1943	Unity	Ann Davies (P)	Living Newspaper on Indian struggle	Production file	Chambers	Asian. Materials in Unity Theatre Archive
All God's Chillun' Got Wings	Eugene O'Neill	1946	Unity	Ted Willis	Revival (see 1929 and 1933) starring Robert Adams (Jim Harris) and Ida Shepley (Hattie)	G, A, Y, P	Chambers	Materials in Unity Theatre Archive

Ballets Negres: Market Day	Berto Pasuka and Ballets Negres	1946			Ballet featuring Berto Pasuka, Richie Riley and Ballets Negres company	G, A, Y		Part of a bill
Caviar to the General	George S. George	1947	New Lindsey & Whitehall	Robert Henderson (D)	Robert Adams, Pauline Henriques (at New Lindsey), Ida Shepley (at Whitehall)	G, A		
Deep Are the Roots	Arnaud d'Usseau, James Gow	1947	Wyndham's	Peter Cotes	American drama starring Gordon Heath with Evelyn Ellis	P* (Houston Rogers collection), G, Y, A, S	Heath, Bourne	
Anna Lucasta	Philip Yordan	1947	His Majesty's	(P) for Jack Hylton by Walter Thompson Ash	American drama starring Hilda Simms (Anna Lucasta) with Frederick O'Neal, Earle Hymen, Georgia Burke, Frank Silvera	P, G, Y, S		Press coverage in Picture Post/Tatler
Native Son	Paul Green, Richard Wright	1948	Boltons	Colin Chandler (D)	American drama starring Robert Adams (Bigger Thomas) with Frank Singuineau, Carmen Manley, Vi Thompson, Harry Scott	P, B, Y, S		
Calypso	Hedley Briggs	1948	Wimbledon	Hedley Briggs	Musical starring Edric Connor (Napoleon) and Evelyn Dove (Marie) with Mabel Lee	P* (Houston Rogers collection), G		Photo of Mabel Lee in The Tatler
A Caribbean Rhapsody		1948	Prince of Wales's		Katharine Dunham, Eartha Kitt	G, A		Biog. files on Katharine Dunham, Eartha Kitt
Othello	William Shakespeare	1950	Arts Council tour	Kenneth Tynan (P)	Starring Gordon Heath (Othello) with Pauline Henriques (Emilia)	B, S	Heath, Bourne	
South Pacific / The King and I	Rodgers & Hammerstein	1951/3	Drury Lane	Joshua Logan/ Jerome Whyte	American musicals featuring Muriel Smith (Bloody Mary/Lady Thiang)	G, A		Biog. file on Muriel Smith
Porgy and Bess	George Gershwin	1952	Stoll	Robert Breen	American opera starring William Warfield (Porgy) and Leontyne Price (Bess)	G, A		

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The Jazz Train	Mervyn Nelson	1955	Piccadilly	Mervyn Nelson (D)	Revue featuring Edric Connor and all black cast	G, A		
Junction Village/ A Caribbean Revue	Douglas Archibald (Junction Village) Edric Connor (Caribbean Revue)	1955	Irving	Edric Connor (D/P)	Double bill of Caribbean comedy and revue featuring all black casts including Nadia Cattouse, John Harrison, Pearl Prescod and The West African Rhythm Brothers	G, A		
The Crucible	Arthur Miller	1956	Royal Court	George Devine	American drama featuring Connie Smith as Tituba	P*, G, A, S, NB		Revived 1965 featuring Pearl Prescod at the Old Vic.
The Member of the Wedding	Carson McCullers	1957	Royal Court	Tony Richardson (P)	American drama starring Bertice Reading	G, A, P, S, promptscript		Biog. file on Bertice Reading
Moon on a Rainbow Shawl	Errol John	1958	Royal Court	Frith Banbury (P)	Drama set in the Caribbean starring Earle Hyman with Barbara Assoon and Vinnette Carroll	S, G, NB		Observer prize-winning play. Biog. file on Errol John .
Pericles	William Shakespeare	1958	Stratford-upon-Avon	Tony Richardson (P)	Drama featuring Edric Connor (Gower)	D, P, G, S		Designed by Loudon Sainthill
Flesh to a Tiger	Barry Reckord	1958	Royal Court	Tony Richardson (P)	Drama set in the Caribbean starring Cleo Laine with Tamba Allen, Pearl Prescod, James Clarke, Lloyd Reckord, Johnny Sekka, Nadia Cattouse and Connie Smith	V of Barry Reckord interview; G, P, D, A, NB		Designed by Loudon Sainthill. Biog. file on Cleo Laine .
Simply Heavenly	Langston Hughes	1958	Adelphi	Laurence Harvey	American musical starring Bertice Reading	G, A, S		
A Taste of Honey	Shelagh Delaney	1958	Theatre Royal Stratford E15	Joan Littlewood (D)	Featuring Jimmie Moore as the black sailor	G, A, S		Later transferred to Wyndham's
Hot Summer Night	Ted Willis	1958	New	Peter Cotes	Drama starring Lloyd Reckord	G, A, S		

A Raisin in the Sun	Lorraine Hansberry	1959	Adelphi	Lloyd Richards	American drama starring Earle Hyman and Juanita Moore	G, A, S		
A Passage to India	Santha Rama Rau adapted from E.M. Forster	1960	Comedy	Donald McWhinnie (D)	Cast included Zia Mohyeddin, Rashid Karapiet and Asian extras	G, A, S		Asian
The Maimed	Barto Smit	1960	Royal Court	Keith Johnstone (D)	Drama set in South Africa with Nadia Cattouse and Tommy Eytte	G, A, NB		
No Count Boy	Paul Green	1960	Theatre Royal, Stratford E15	Clifton Jones (D)	New Negro Theatre Company with Tamba Allen, Mark Heath, Johnny Sekka, Neville Munroe, Clifton Jones, Gloria Higdon and Carmen Munroe	S,G,A		Double-bill with William Saroyan's Hello, Out There!
La Mère/The S Bend	Clifton Jones	1960	Theatre Royal, Stratford E15	Clifton Jones (D)	New Negro Theatre Company double-bill (second production) with Carmen Munroe and Dudley Hunte etc	G		Biog. file on Carmen Munroe
Six in the Rain/Sea at Dauphin	Derek Walcott	1960	Royal Court	Lloyd Reckord (D)	New Day Theatre Company Caribbean drama double-bill with Barbara Assoon, Lloyd Reckord etc	G, A, P, S		Possible material in Royal Court archive
You in Your Small Corner	Barry Reckord	1960	Royal Court	John Bird (D)	Drama with Lloyd Reckord and Pearl Nunez [Pearl Connor]	Vs of Pearl Connor and Barry Reckord interviews; G, A, NB, Promptsript		Revived at Arts Theatre Club, 1961 with Neville Munroe .
King Kong	Harry Bloom, Pat Williams, Todd Matshikiza	1961	Princes	Leon Gluckman (P)	Musical set in South Africa. Nathan Mdllele, Joe Mogotsi, Peggy Phango, Alton Kumalo	G, A	Mogotsi	

A Wreath for Udomo	William Branch, based on novel by black South African Peter Abrahams	1961	Lytic, Hammer-smith	Phillip Burton	Drama set in South Africa with Edric Connor, Earl Cameron, Lloyd Reckord, Andre Dakar and Evelyn Dove	G, A		
The Blacks	Jean Genet	1961	Royal Court	Roger Blin	All black cast including Lloyd Reckord, Joan Hooley, Harry Baird	G,A, NB		
Black Nativity	Langston Hughes	1962	Criterion	Vinnette Carroll	American gospel musical	G, A		Revived 1964 at the Vaudeville. Biog. file on Vinnette Carroll

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Do Somethin' Addy Man!	Jack Russell	1962	Theatre Royal, Stratford E15	Herbert Marshall (D/P)	The Ira Aldridge Players in a London-Caribbean musical with music by George Browne and an all-black cast	G, A	Chambers	
Cindy-Ella or I Gotta Shoe	Caryl Brahms and Ned Sherrin	1962	Garrick	Colin Graham	Musical starring Cleo Laine, Cy Grant, Elisabeth Welch and George Browne	G, A, V interview with Cy Grant .		Revived 1963 at the New Arts Theatre. Biog. file on Cy Grant
Othello	William Shakespeare	1963	Old Vic	Casper Wrede (D)	Starring Errol John (Othello) and Adrienne Corri (Desdemona)	G, A, S		
The Blood Knot	Athol Fugard	1963	New Arts	John Berry	Zakes Mokae	G, A, S		Revived Hampstead Theatre Club 1966 with Zakes Mokae
No Strings	Samuel Taylor and Richard Rodgers	1963	Her Majesty's	Joe Layton	American musical starring Beverly Todd	G, A, S		
In White America	Martin Duberman	1964	New Arts	Peter Coe (D)	American documentary drama starring Gordon Heath and Earl Cameron	V of Earl Cameron interview; G, A, S		
The Crucible	Arthur Miller	1965	Old Vic	Laurence Olivier	Revival (see 1956) featuring Pearl Prescod (Tituba)	G, A, S		

Blues for Mr Charlie	James Baldwin	1965	Aldwych	Burgess Meredith (D)	American drama performed by the Actors Studio Theatre Company of NY	G,A,S		
Man Better Man	Errol Hill	1965	Scala		Trinidad Theatre Company for Commonwealth Arts Festival	G,A,S		
The Road	Wole Soyinka	1965	Theatre Royal, Stratford East	David Thompson (D)	Commonwealth Arts Festival production with Bari Jonson and Rudolph Walker	G,A,S		Biog. file on Rudolph Walker
Song of the Goat/ The Masquerade	John Pepper Clark	1965	Scala	John Ekwere (D)	Commonwealth Arts Festival production performed by the Eastern Nigerian Theatre Company	G,A,S		
The Owl and the Pussycat	Bill Manhoff	1966	Criterion	Shirley Butler (D)	American comedy starring Diana Sands	G,A,S		
The Lion and the Jewel	Wole Soyinka	1966	Royal Court	Athol Fugard (D)	Drama with Lionel Ngakane	G,A,S, P, NB		
Neighbours/ Dutchman	James Saunders/ Leroi Jones (Dutchman)	1967	Hampstead Theatre Club	Charles Jarrott (D)	Drama double bill starring Calvin Lockhart	G,A,S		
Black New World	Donald McKayle	1967	Strand		Dance musical	G,A		
A Midsummer Night's Dream	William Shakespeare	1967	Saville	Frank Dunlop (D)	Featuring Cleo Laine as Hippolyta / Titania	G,A,S		Previously presented at Edinburgh Festival, 1967.
The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God	George Bernard Shaw	1968	Mermaid	Basil Ashmore (D)	Mona Hammond as First Reader with Edith Evans as Female Narrator	G,A, original book		Biog. file on Mona Hammond
A Lesson in a Dead Language / Funnyhouse of a Negro	Adrienne Kennedy	1968	Theatre Upstairs	Rob Knights (D)	Cast included Nina Baden-Semper, Stefan Kalipha	G,A,S		Possible material in Royal Court archive
Janie Jackson	Robert P. Hillier	1968	New	Peter Cotes (D)	Marlene Warfield, Earl Cameron, Adelaide Hall	G,A		

Hair	Gerome Ragni, James Rado and Galt MacDermot	1968	Shaftesbury	Tom O'Horgan	American musical. Cast included Peter Straker	G,A		
The Boys in the Band	Marc Crowley	1969	Wyndham's	Robert Moore (D)	American drama Cast included Reuben Greene	G,A,S		
The National Health	Peter Nichols	1969	Old Vic	Peter Nichols	Comedy with Cleo Sylvestre and Isabelle Lucas	G,A,S		Biog. file on Isabelle Lucas
Martin Luther King	Ewan Hooper	1969	Greenwich Theatre	Alan Vaughan Williams	Drama with Barl Jonson (King)	G,A		Opening of Greenwich Theatre
The Blacks	Jean Genet	1970	Round House	Minos Voulanakis	Cast included Carmen Munroe, Nadia Cattouse	G,A,S, NB		
Boesman and Lena	Athol Fugard	1971	Theatre Upstairs	Athol Fugard	Blake Modisane, Zakes Morae, Yvonne Bryceland	G,A,S, NB		
Show Boat	Oscar Hammerstein II	1971	Adelphi	Wendy Toyne	Revival (see 1928) starring Cleo Laine (Julie)	G,A,S	Mogotsi	
As Time Goes By	Mustapha Matura	1971	Theatre Upstairs	Roland Rees	Alfred Fagon, Mona Hammond, Oscar James, Stefan Kalipha, Frank Singuineau, Corinne Skinner, T-Bone Wilson	G,A,S, NB		

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The Black Macbeth	from Shakespeare	1972	Round House	Peter Coe		A, NB		
Umabatha	Welcome Msomi	1972	Aldwych	Pieter Scholtz	Drama on theme of Macbeth – Zulu version	G,A, pamphlet		Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Season
Gone with the Wind		1972	Drury Lane	Joe Layton	Musical based on classic film with Isabelle Lucas (Mammy)	G,A		
An Othello	Charles Marowitz	1972	Open Space	Charles Marowitz	Rudolph Walker	G,A,S, NB		Script in Open Space Plays

Sweet Talk	Michael Abbenetts	1973	Theatre Upstairs	Stephen Frears	Mona Hamond, Joan-Ann Maynard, Don Warrington, Ailister Bain	P,S. Video of Michael Abbenetts		
Sizwe Bansi is Dead	Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona	1973	Theatre Upstairs	Athol Fugard	John Kani and Winston Ntshona	G,A,S, P,NB		Revived on mainstage in 1974. Biog. file on John Kani
Pippin	Roger Hirson and Stephen Schwartz	1973	Her Majesty's	Bob Fosse	American musical with Elisabeth Welch (Berthe)	G,A and costume bible		
The Island	Athol Fugard scripted with John Kani and Winston Ntshona	1974	Royal Court	Athol Fugard (D)	John Kani and Winston Ntshona	P, S, V (NVAP, same cast, 2000), P* 2000, NB		Subsequently revived by same cast numerous times inc. 2000.
Play Mas	Mustapha Matura	1974	Royal Court/ Phoenix	Donald Howarth	Mona Hammond, Norman Beaton, Stefan Kalpha, Rudolph Walker, Tommy Eytte, Frank Singuineau, Trevor Thomas	G,A, P, S, NB	Beaton	Biog. file on Mustapha Matura
Phaedra Britannica	Tony Harrison from Jean Racine	1975	Old Vic	John Dexter	Production set in India under the British Raj. Cast included Alaknanda Samarth	D, P* (Anthony Crickmay), G, A, V of Alaknanda Samarth interview	Edelstein	
The Black Mikado	W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan,	1975	Cambridge		Musical based on Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado starring Norman Beaton, Derek Griffiths, Patti Boulaye, and Floella Benjamin	G,A	Beaton	Biog. file on Norman Beaton . Music arranged by George Larnyoh and Eddie Quansah

Renga Moi	Robert Serumaga	1975	Aldwych	Robert Serumaga	Ugandan Abafumi Company	G,A		Peter Daubeny's World Theatre Season
The Death of a Black Man	Alfred Fagon	1975	Hampstead Theatre Club	Roland Rees	Gregory Munro, Mona Hammond, Anton Phillips	G,A		Alfred Fagon archive collection
Kwa Zulu		1975	New London/Piccadilly	Joan Brickhill / Louis Burke	Musical	G,A		
Ipi Tombi	Bertha Egnos	1975	Her Majesty's	Bertha Egnos	Musical G,	A		

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