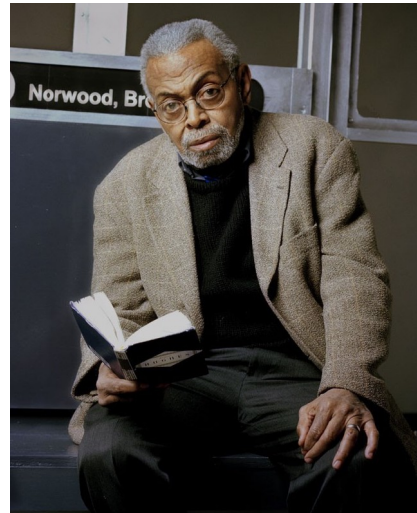


Amy Abrigo
Modern Dramaturgy
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Program Note Draft

“We will scream and cry, murder, run through the streets in agony, if it means some soul will be moved, moved to actual life understanding of what the world is, and what it ought to be.”

- Amiri Baraka



About The Playwright

From Black Theatre USA: Plays by African Americans

Edited by James V. Hatch, Ted Shine and Amy Abrigo

Amiri Baraka was born Everett Leroy Jones in Newark, New Jersey. He attended Rutgers University and, in 1951, transferred to Howard University. In 1954 he earned a B.A. in English from Howard University and then joined the military that same year, serving three years in the Air Force as a gunner. Baraka was a poet, playwright, author, and educator. He was founder-director of the [Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School](#) in Harlem in 1964, and later founder-director of Spirit House in Newark, where young African American playwrights' works were performed by the African Revolutionary Movers repertory theatre company. In addition to plays, he has published more than two dozen books, including poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. He has been the recipient of numerous grants, fellowships, and awards, and in 1972 was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Malcolm X College in Chicago. Baraka is hailed as the leader of the revolutionary Black Arts and Black Theatre movements of the 1960s.

What is Revolutionary Theatre?

Dutchman is often referred to as a piece of Revolutionary Theatre, the beginning of a movement called for by Amiri Baraka, but how is Revolutionary Theatre defined? According to Amiri Baraka, the Revolutionary Theatre should force change, expose, accuse and attack, be political, be of and for victims and help others see how they themselves are also victims. Not for victims to wallow in self pity but to see “strength in their minds and their bodies” (Baraka 1965). Above all, the Revolutionary Theatre is intentionally *not* meant to be another delightful light hearted easy-to-digest play ending in marriage and poetic justice. Instead, “it must be food for all these who need food, and daring propaganda for the beauty of the Human Mind . . . The Revolutionary Theatre is shaped by the world, and moves to reshape the world” (Baraka 1965). In his essay on the Revolutionary Theatre, Baraka famously states: “We will scream and cry, murder, run through the streets in agony, if it means some soul will be moved, moved to actual life understanding of what the world is, and what it ought to be.”

Timeline*

In 2019, people often refer to a time period ranging from the 1950s-1960s as the Civil Rights Movement. However, some individuals may be less aware of the history leading up to this era or the specific chronology of events taking place within the 1950s-60s. It is important to specify how events occurred chronologically as the timing of these events shaped the course of history and Baraka’s *Dutchman*. This timeline is an attempt to shed light on some of the events that heavily influenced the play and stemmed from Baraka’s call for Revolutionary Theatre.

- 1619 - [A Dutch Ship Brought The First Slaves to North America](#)
- 1793 - [Fugitive Slave Act Made it a Federal Crime to Assist a Slave Trying to Escape](#)
- August 21, 1831 - [Nat Turner Revolt](#)
- 1831 - [Abolitionism and the Underground Railroad](#)
- March 6, 1857 - [Dred Scott Case Concludes Scott is a Slave and Not a Citizen](#)

- 1861 - 1865 [American Civil War](#)
- January 1, 1863 - [The Emancipation Proclamation](#)
- 1867 - [Howard University Founded](#)
- 1881 - [Tuskegee Founded by Booker T. Washington](#)
- 1896 - [Plessy vs. Ferguson](#) Upheld the Constitutionality of Racial Segregation
- 1900s - Washington, Carver and Du Bois
- 1909 - [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\) Founded](#)
- 1914 - [Marcus Garvey and the UNIA Suggest Going "Back to Africa"](#)
- 1914 - 1918 [World War I](#)
 - [Harlem Hell Fighters](#)
- 1916 - [The Great Migration Begins](#)
- 1910s - 1930s - [Harlem Renaissance](#)
- 1921 - [Black Wall Street Destroyed](#)
- 1929 - 1939 [The Great Depression](#)
 - 1936 - [Jesse Owens Wins Four Gold Medals, Defying Adolf Hitler's Hope for Proof of Racial Superiority](#)
- June 22, 1938 - [Joe Louis Wins Title Fight Against Max Schmeling](#)
- 1939 - 1945 [World War II](#)
- 1942 - [Congress of Racial Equality \(CORE\) Founded](#)
- November 10, 1943 - [Smith v. Allwright](#)
- June 22, 1944 - [G. I. Bill Gave Some Veterans the Opportunity of Attending College](#)
- 1945 - [Cold War Begins](#)
- April 15, 1947 - [Jackie Robinson "Crossed the Color Line" of Major League Baseball](#)
- July 26, 1948 - [President Harry S. Truman Signed an Executive Order to Integrate the Military](#)
- 1948 - [Dixiecrats Founded, George Wallace Says "Segregation Forever!"](#)

- 1950s - [The Creation of White Suburbia](#), TVs in the Home
- May 17, 1954 - [Brown v. Board of Education Incentivizes White Violence](#)
- August 28, 1955 - [Emmett Till Murdered](#)
 - September 23, 1955 - All-white jury deliberated for less than an hour before issuing a verdict of “not guilty”
- December 5, 1955 - December 20, 1956 - [Montgomery Bus Boycott](#)
- September 1957 - [Little Rock Nine](#)
- 1959 - [Fidel Castro Establishes the First Communist State in the West](#)
- 1960 - [JFK Includes Civil Rights Legislation in His Presidential Campaign Platform](#)
- February 1, 1960 - [Sit-In Movement Begins](#)
- April 1960 - [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee \(SNCC\) Founded in Raleigh, North Carolina](#)
- May 1961 - [Freedom Rides](#)
- 1962 - [Integration of Ole Miss](#)
- June 11, 1963 - [President John F. Kennedy \(JFK\) Addresses the Nation on Civil Rights](#)
- June 12, 1963 - [Medgar Evers Murdered](#)
- August 28, 1963 - [March on Washington / MLK Gives “I Have A Dream” Speech](#)
- September 15, 1963 - [Birmingham Church Bombing](#)
- November 22, 1963 - President [JFK Assassinated](#) / Lyndon B. Johnson Becomes President
- March 1964
 - [Dutchman premiered at the Cherry Lane Theatre](#)
 - [Malcolm X Leaves Nation of Islam](#)
- 1964
 - [Baraka founded the Black Arts Repertory Theatre and School \(BARTS\)](#)
 - [Baraka founded the Black Arts Movement](#)
- June 1964 - [Freedom Summer and the “Mississippi Burning” Murders](#)

- July 1964 - [Civil Rights Act](#)
- August 1964 - [America Enters the Vietnam War](#)
- February 21, 1965 - [Malcolm X Assassinated](#)
- March 7, 1965 - [Selma to Montgomery March](#)
- August 6, 1965 - [Voting Rights Act](#)
- 1960s - 1970s - [Rise of Black Power](#)
- 1966 - [The Black Panther Party is founded in Oakland, California](#)
- April 4, 1968 - [Martin Luther King Jr. Assassinated](#)

*Detailed timeline available online at dutchmandfile.weebly.com

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