

THE FREE SOUTHERN THEATER

WE PROPOSE TO ESTABLISH LIVE THEATER IN THE DEEP SOUTH. Beginning in Jackson, Mississippi, where the first Free Southern Theater is being formed, we will work toward the establishment of permanent stock and repertory companies, with mobile touring units, in major population centers throughout the South, staging plays that reflect the struggles of the American Negro, . . . before Negro and, in time, integrated audiences.

THE PLAYS: By Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, John O. Killens, Ossie Davis and other playwrights, Negro and white, who have confronted the moral and political dilemmas of race and rights in our time.

THE STAGE: Specially equipped central theaters plus communities centers, schools, churches and fields in rural areas.

THE COMPANIES: Participants from the local Negro communities and, with the cooperation of the appropriate unions, professional actors, directors and technicians.

We believe that the personal involvement, the freedom and the excitement that grow from live theater make this medium the most effective means of filling the void created by:

- the degrading effect of inferior education in segregated Southern schools,
- the omissions and distortions of local press, radio and television, which effectively keep the Negro in ignorance of the problems which most directly concern him,
- the deliberate exclusion of the Negro community from all but the most meager cultural resources

that combine to ensure the intellectual and cultural isolation of the Negro in the South.

A Free Southern Theater can demonstrate that the present reality can be altered and transformed, and that the Negro must play the leading role in that transformation. Our fundamental objective is to stimulate critical, creative and reflective thought necessary for effective participation in a democratic society.

Specifically, we hope to:

- promote the growth and self-knowledge of a new Negro audience,
- liberate the creative talent that has been denied the opportunity of expression,
- provide a forum in which the Negro playwright can deal honestly with his own experience, express himself in what may prove to be a new idiom, a new genre, a theatrical form and style unique to the Negro people as are blues, jazz and gospel in the realm of music,
- emphasize the universality of the problems of the Negro people,
- strengthen communication among Southern Negroes,
- add a necessary cultural and educational dimension to the present Southern freedom movement,
- assert that self-knowledge and creativity are the foundations of human dignity.

THE PILOT PROJECT in Jackson, Mississippi will officially commence on June 13th. Offering a ten week season, the company will present five shows in Jackson and near-by communities.

Each play will have a different director. Richard Scheckner, editor of the Tulane Drama Review, Ted Shine, professor of theater at Howard University, and Frank Greenwood, director and writer from the West Coast, are committed to the program for this year.

In progress is a theater workshop which has begun with a select group of students from Tougaloo and Jackson State Colleges; planned is an apprenticeship program, which will entail sending a number of promising participants to New York for more intensive study.

In Jackson, the Free Southern Theater is assisted by Tougaloo College, an accredited interracial institution that is free of the deadening control of the State Legislature and willing to provide support in many vital areas. Consequently, the pilot project will be known as The Free Southern Theater of Tougaloo College. The staff includes: Gilbert Moses, drama director, William Hutchinson, technical director, John O'Neal and Doris Derby, public relations.

Gilbert Moses, John O'Neal and Doris Derby are on the staff of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. William Hutchinson is Drama Director at Tougaloo College.

The Free Southern Theater will be administered nationally by the National Board of Sponsors, locally by the Local Board of Patrons. The National Board will provide artistic and fiscal guidance, encourage the participation of professionals and assist in fund-raising needs of its particular theater, enlisting the support, participation and enthusiasm of the community.

In one hand I hold tragedy and in the other comedy,
masks for the soul.

Weep with me you would weep,

Laugh with me you would laugh.

Tears are my laughter, laughter is my pain.

Cry at my grinning mouth if you will laugh

at my sorrow's reign.

I am the black jester:
the booted, booted fool of silly men.
Once I was wise,
Shall I be wise again?

----Langston Hughes

The Free Southern Theater will play a vital role in the Negro's
struggle for self-realization. It must succeed. Lend us your support.

Monies raised should be made payable to:

Theater Project

Tougaloo College

Contributions are tax-deductible.

Checks, scripts, and offers of participation should be mailed
to:

FREE SOUTHERN THEATER

c/o PHILIP ROSE PRODUCTIONS

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