



# OnStage/OnLine Spring Discussions Recap



Students at Concordia University watched Nina Simone sing “I Loves You Porgy” during an online discussion about Pillsbury Theatre’s upcoming play: *Nina Simone: Four Women*.

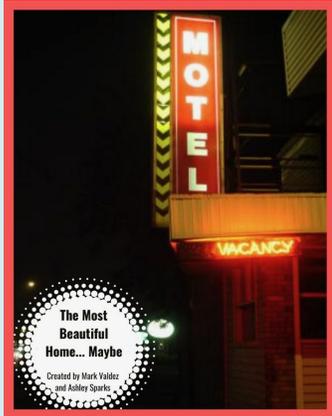
## PROMOTING AND DISCUSSING THEATER IN COLLEGE CLASSROOMS - ONLINE!

On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater is a theater outreach program fiscally sponsored through [Springboard for the Arts](#), with the goal of enhancing in-class learning, and building the next generation of theater audiences by making local theater relevant



to current events, personal values and narratives.

Traveling to academic classes, On Stage has brought local actors to facilitate discussions and read scenes from plays in current local production to a variety of classes and disciplines. But since Covid-19 hit in March 2020, we had to launch a new education experience for students. This new online program, [OnStage/OnLine](#), is a series of discussions based on plays that are 'in the works' to be produced and performed in the Twin Cities in the future, designed to: stimulate an interest in live theater, examine the cultural context of a play, and, of course, to have fun!



Over the past two months, OnStage/OnLine facilitated discussions with over 500 college students in twenty-nine online classes around the Twin Cities.

The first play that we discussed with students was a play that is currently being developed called, ***The Most Beautiful Home... Maybe***. Created by Mark Valdez and Ashley Sparks, this experiment in art-based problem solving seeks to build cross-sector relationships, foster dialogue, influence housing policies and ultimately enact social change. The play

brought together community stakeholders (including people experiencing housing insecurity, policymakers, commercial developers and community development corporations and advocates) to investigate and hear different perspectives about housing insecurity issues. Local theater educators (Wendy Knox, Maria Asp, Ansa Akyea, Austene Van, Nora Montanez and Jane Froiland) facilitated the discussions. [Mixed Blood Theatre](#) hopes to produce this play this fall or next spring.

The second play that we discussed with students was, ***Nina Simone: Four Women***. Written by Christina Ham. In this powerful play inspired by Nina Simone's song "Four Women," Simone and three other women find themselves in the rubble-filled 16th Street Baptist Church on the day of the 1963 bombing, in which four young girls



were killed. As riots erupt outside, the women must come to terms with the tragedy and with each other if they are to move forward. During this time, women, who played a critical organizing role in the Civil Rights era, were not allowed to march with men or speak at the ceremony except to sing for the crowd. Featuring Simone's most popular anthems that highlight how music was a powerful form of resistance for women during the Civil Rights Movement, *Nina Simone: Four Women* is a timely and electrifying testament to the radical and healing power of art. Local theater educators (Regina Williams, Thomasina Petrus, Maria Asp, Austene Van, Sun Mee Chomet and Nora Montanez) facilitated the discussions. [Pillsbury House Theatre](#) hopes to present this play this fall or next spring

\*Click on the images below to see the classes that we facilitated discussions with.



## ONLINE IN-CLASS DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

1. HENNEPIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE - GATEWAY TO COLLEGE (GTC) PROGRAM
2. MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN - ES 2430: HUMAN FACTORS
3. UNIVERSITY OF ST THOMAS - ENGL 324: THE HEALING ART OF DRAMA
4. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - ML 530: COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR LEADERSHIP
5. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - PSYC 2210: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: LIFE SPAN
6. MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE - CMST 2010: ARGUMENTATION AND ADVOCACY
7. PERPICH CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION - LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS
8. EAST SIDE FREEDOM LIBRARY - COMMUNITY DISCUSSION
9. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - COM 415: ADVANCE CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES
10. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - COM 490 - KEYSTONE: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT VOCATION
11. METRO STATE UNIVERSITY - SOCI 100: INTRO TO SOCIAL SCIENCE
12. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - PSY 493: SEMINAR: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
13. NORTH HENNEPIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE - TET 2150: PLAY ANALYSIS & UNIVERSITY OF ST THOMAS - SOCI 100: INTRO TO SOCIOLOGY
14. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - POL 150: INTRO TO POLITICAL SCIENCE
15. CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY - ED 330: HUMAN DIVERSITY AND RELATIONS
16. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - COMM 113: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

DISCUSSIONS START FEBRUARY 18TH

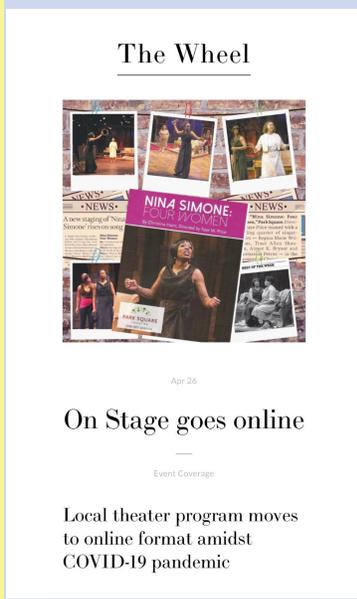
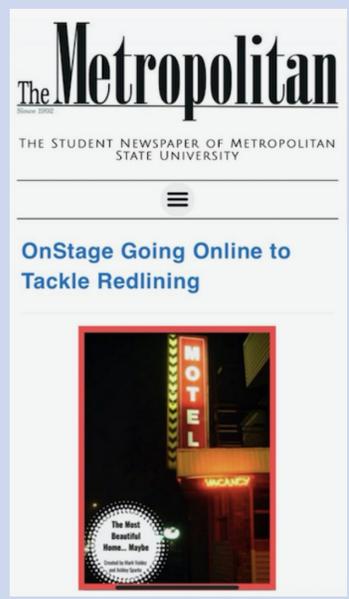


## ONLINE IN-CLASS DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

1. ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY - COMM 3070: GENDER AND RHETORIC
2. HENNEPIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE - GATEWAY TO COLLEGE (GTC) PROGRAM
3. CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY - ED 330: HUMAN DIVERSITY AND RELATIONS
4. UNIVERSITY OF ST THOMAS - SOCI 297: HATE CRIME
5. UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS - THTR 223 HISTORY OF AMERICAN THEATER
6. EAST SIDE FREEDOM LIBRARY - COMMUNITY DISCUSSION
7. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - PSYC 1100: PSYCHOLOGY OF DEATH AND DYING, PSYC 1110: INTRO TO PSYCHOLOGY, PSYC 2200: ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY.
8. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - PSYC 2210: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: LIFE SPAN
9. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - COM 254: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
10. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - ENGL 3061: LITERATURE AND MUSIC
11. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - EDC 571: NAVIGATING CHANGE IN EDUCATION
12. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - ENGL 4232: AMERICAN DRAMA BY PLAYWRIGHTS OF COLOR
13. AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY - MUS 242: JAZZ HISTORY
14. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - COMM 113: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
15. NORMANDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - THTR 1110: TWIN CITIES THEATRE

DISCUSSIONS START MARCH 24TH

# Check out these NEWS ARTICLES below about OnStage/OnLine's recent discussions!



## ONSTAGE/ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

- Total number of students who participated in the discussions: **774**
- Of the students we visited, **86%** had seen a play before, but only **4%** had ever seen a Frank Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre or Pillsbury House Theatre play.
- Only **45%** of the students we talked to had read about Nina Simone or listened to her music before our discussions.
- When asked "when would you feel comfortable going to see a play",
  - 33%** - "Now... but if it was socially distant AND masks were required"
  - 26%** - "Not quite yet... but soon and when it feels safe"
  - 24%** - "NOW"
  - 17%** - "Not until most people have taken the vaccine"
- 97%** of students said that the discussion added to their fuller understanding to what they have been discussing in class.

**93%** of students said that as a result of the discussion, they are more inclined to see this play when it is presented at a theater.

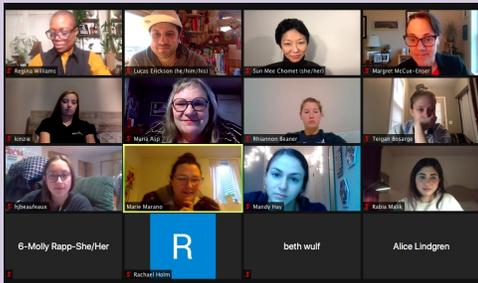
**96%** of students said that after participating in the discussion, they are more inclined to see **OTHER** live theater productions.

*"Your team brought such deep wisdom, experience and insight that fostered an inviting, thought-provoking session for all. Your design- with clips of Nina's music, selected reading sections and discussion- was really outstanding. The parallel themes in the play and in George Floyd's murder- the brutality of racial injustice - were striking."*

**Carolyn Evans**  
Professor at Augsburg University

*"Kudos to you for introducing Nina to a new generation. The reaction by the students made me shut my eyes and say "Thank God." The class was especially poignant this week in Mpls as we witness the infamous police trail... I would like to make a donation to support your work... Please pass this note along to your colleagues."*

**Student**  
University of Minnesota



An OnStage/OnLine discussion with students at St. Catherine University.



An OnStage/OnLine discussion with students at Concordia College.



An OnStage/OnLine discussion with students at Augsburg University.



An OnStage/OnLine discussion with students at the University of St. Thomas.

*"I think it really hit home with the students and the depths of emotions they were feeling was palpable, even in our virtual surroundings! I think*

*"It is always a joy to have this opportunity. This was a great way to invite the students to connect with each other in a laid back non-graded*

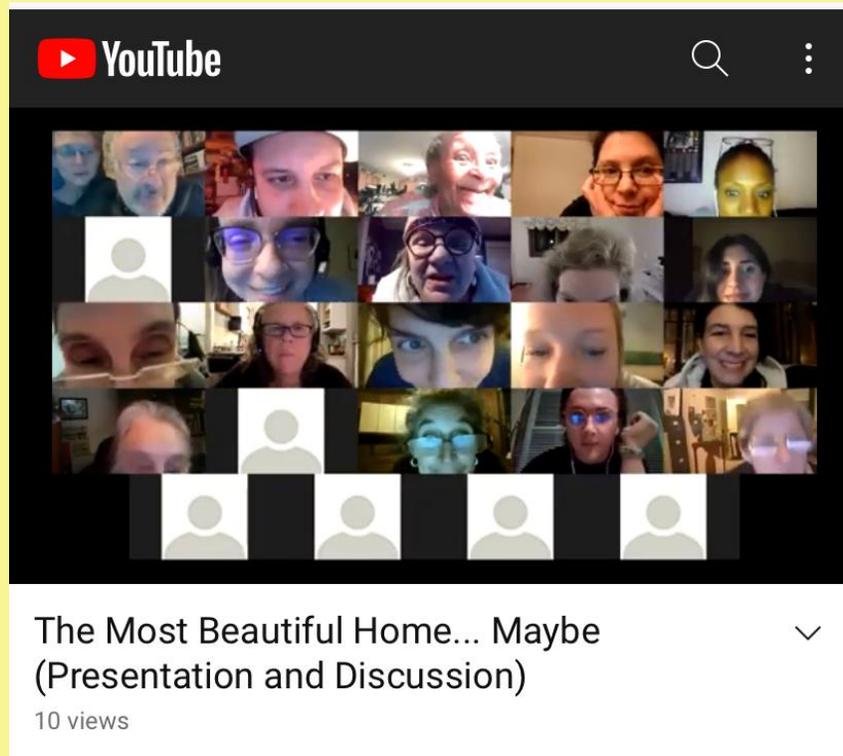
*most of the students really now realize the power of theatre and the arts in general when it comes to illuminating, exploring, and dealing with so many issues that face our society and world."*

**Willie Johnson**  
Professor at Normandale Community College

*discussion. What I gathered from teaching online last semester is that many people are needing and craving these ways to connect."*

**Kathleen Crawford**  
Professor at MCTC

**CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW to watch a discussion about *The Most Beautiful Home... Maybe* with friends of the East Side Freedom Library:**



**Check out these INSTAGRAM posts below!**



Students at Augsburg University describe what you need in a home during online discussions about Mixed Blood Theatres upcoming play: *The Most Beautiful Home... Maybe*.





**WE WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE PLAYS  
FOR THE 2021/22 SEASON THIS SUMMER!**



**DONATE TO ON STAGE**

We can't wait to return to classrooms!! And we anticipate we will this fall!! In response to needs shared by our community of nonprofits and schools, GiveMN is offering another statewide giving campaign for May 2021 - **SpringForwardMN**.

Your support is greatly appreciated during this time as On Stages continues to support local artists and educators as we continue to schedule as many engaging discussions with Twin Cities classes as possible.

Thank you!

**[onstagemn.org](http://onstagemn.org)**

EMAIL ON STAGE

