



## On Stage Spring Discussions: RECAP / NEXT UP!



On Stage Educators Warren Bowles (left), Patrick Bailey, Wendy Knox, Erin Farste and Melvin Carter Jr. taking a break from creating the in-class curriculum for the History Theatre play, *Diesel Heart*.

**PROMOTING AND  
DISCUSSING  
THEATER IN  
COLLEGE**

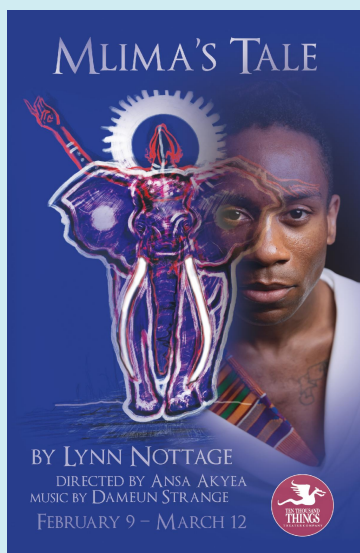
# CLASSROOMS

## 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 (in-person and online), On Stage has brought local actors and educators to facilitate discussions and read scenes from plays in current local production to a variety of Twin Cities classes and disciplines.



In February 2023, On Stage facilitated fifteen discussions with 350 college students about the [Ten Thousand Things](#) play, *Mlima's Tale*.

We learn from *Mlima's Tale* that elephants may become extinct in as few as 20 years because of poaching for their ivory. This unusual play was written by Lynn Nottage, the Pulitzer prize winning playwright of *Ruined* and *Sweat*. The play was inspired by a magazine article about how wild elephants are illegally hunted down by “contract poachers” and their ivory tusks smuggled out of Africa and sold for profit. Continuing in her tradition

of crafting thought-provoking, socially conscious dramas, Lynn Nottage’s play tells the story of Mlima, an elephant struck down by poachers for his magnificent tusks. Beginning in a game park in Kenya, the play tracks the trajectory of Mlima’s tusks through the ivory trade market while Mlima’s ghost follows close behind—marking all those complicit in his barbaric death. Local theater educators (**Clay Man Soo, Thomasina Petrus, Austene Van, Wendy Knox, Maria Asp, and Ansa Akyea**) facilitated the discussions. After our discussions, **43** students paid to go see the show!

On Stage facilitated discussions about *Mlima's Tale* at the following colleges:

**University of Minnesota** (Environmental Sciences class)

**University of St. Thomas (x2)** (Theater and English classes)

**St. Catherine University (x2)** (Sociology classes)

**Augsburg University** (Communications class)

**Hamline University (x3)** (Environmental Sciences classes)

**Saint Paul College** (Culinary Arts class)

**Macalester College** (English class)

**Century College (x2)** (Sociology and Environmental Sciences classes)

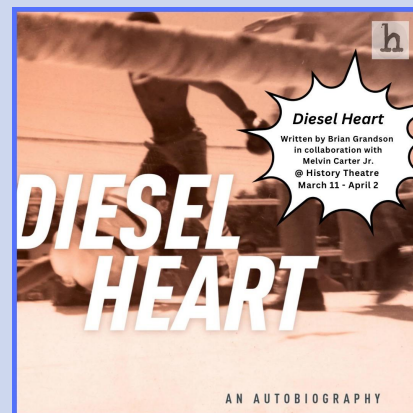
**Normandale Community College (X 3)** (Communications, English, and

## Check out these NEWS ARTICLES below about On Stage's recent collaboration with Ten Thousand Things and History Theatre!



In March 2023, On Stage facilitated eighteen discussions with over 350 college students about the [History Theatre](#) play, *Diesel Heart*.

Written by Brian Grandison in collaboration with Melvin Carter Jr. Directed by Warren C. Bowles. Melvin Whitfield Carter Jr., the father of St. Paul's current mayor, is a true son of Rondo, the city's storied African American neighborhood. He was born in a city divided along racial lines and rich in cultural misunderstanding. Growing up in the 1950s and '60s, he witnessed the destruction of his neighborhood by the I-94 freeway—and he found his way to fighting and trouble. But Carter turned his life around. As a young man, he enlisted in the US Navy. He used his fighting ability to survive racist treatment, winning boxing matches and respect. And as an affirmative action hire in the St. Paul Police Department, facing prejudice at every turn, this hardworking, talented, and highly principled officer fought to protect the people of the city he calls home. *Diesel Heart* is the story of a leader who created a powerful family legacy by standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity. Local theater educators (**Warren Bowles, Anna Hashizume, Erin Farste, Patrick Bailey, Wendy Knox, Maria Asp, and Ansa Akyea**) facilitated the discussions. After our discussions, **159(!)** students paid to go see the show!



On Stage facilitated discussions about *Diesel Heart* at the following colleges:

**University of Minnesota** (Sociology class)



**University of St. Thomas** (Theater class)  
**Minneapolis College (x2)** (Communications classes)  
**Hennepin Technical College** (English class)  
**Century College** (Sociology class)  
**Macalester College** (English class)  
**Inver Hills Community College** (Sociology class)  
**St. Catherine University (x2)** (Sociology classes)  
**Metro State University** (Sociology class)  
**Augsburg University (x3)** (Psychology, Leadership, and Communications classes)  
**Normandale Community College (x3)** (Communications, Sociology and English classes)  
\*Unity Church-Unitarian (community discussion)

## ON STAGE SURVEY RESULTS FOR *MLIMA'S TALE & DIESEL HEART* DISCUSSIONS

**Total number of students who participated in the discussions: 720**

**Total number of students who bought tickets to the plays: 202**

**Of the students we visited, 85% had seen a play before, but only 5% had ever seen a Ten Thousand Things or History Theatre play.**

**94% of students said that the discussion added to their fuller understanding to what they have been discussing in class.**

**90% of students said that they were more inclined to see *Mlima's Tale* and *Diesel Heart* after participating in the discussion.**

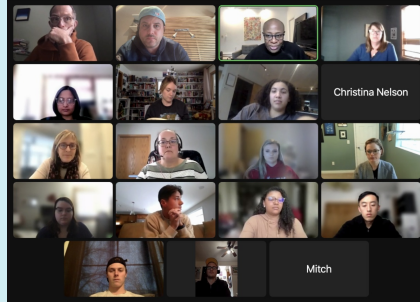
**83% of students said that they were more inclined to see other Ten Thousand Things or History Theatre plays after participating in the discussion.**

*"Your team - Ansa, Erin and Patrick - were wonderful! You all are engaging and fantastic listeners. The session offered a great balance of creating a warm, inviting atmosphere for participation while diving into important-critical-potentially transformative content."*

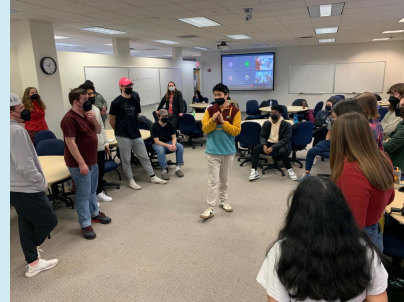
**Carolyn Evans**  
**Professor at Augsburg**  
**University**

*"They loved your team's visit! They liked that the day was active (moving around); that it was very different from regular classes. They found the conversations engaging and said the topics, activities, and staging of a scene made them want to go see the play!"*

**Catherine Craft-Fairchild**  
**Professor at University of St.**  
**Thomas**



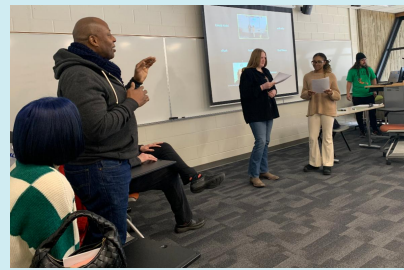
An OnStage/OnLine Diesel Heart discussion with students at Augsburg University.



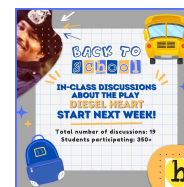
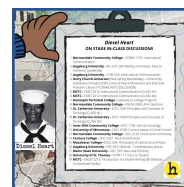
An On Stage *Mlima's Tale* discussion with students at Hamline University.



An On Stage *Mlima's Tale* discussion with students at Macalester College.



An On Stage *Diesel Heart* discussion with students at Century College



## COMING UP NEXT!



### ***The Courtroom: A Reenactment of One Woman's Deportation Proceedings***

**June 1 - 11 @ [Hamline University](#)**

**June 13 - July 2 @ [Jungle Theater](#)**

Transcripts Arranged by Arian Moayed. This unique show has garnered great critical attention in recent years, performed as a mock-trial and in real courtrooms to blur the lines of reality & theater to tell this impactful story. Arranged by Tony nominee Arian Moayed, ***The Courtroom*** explores and examines the U.S.

immigration system and those at its mercy. A re-enactment of deportation proceedings lifts excerpts from courtroom transcripts, and recounts the hearings of an immigrant from the Philippines on a K3 Visa who faced deportation once she inadvertently registered to vote in Chicago and voted after receiving a registration card. Some questions that could be touched on in the discussions include: *What does it mean to be an American? Have you ever left the U.S. before? If so, what did it feel like to be "an American"? How were you treated? Does the judicial system work for you?*

**In-person and online discussions for will take place in mid-late JUNE.**

**CLICK HERE TO SCHEDULE AN IN-CLASS DISCUSSION**

**WE WILL BE ANNOUNCING THE PLAYS FOR THE 2023/24 SEASON THIS SUMMER!**

**DONATE TO ON STAGE**

Your support is greatly appreciated during this time as On Stage continues to schedule engaging discussions with Twin Cities higher education classes, high school classes, and community organizations.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**





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

