

AMERICAN THEATRE

A PUBLICATION OF THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

SUPPORT
AMERICAN
THEATRE & TCG



The 2004 world premiere of "Maria Kizito" at 7 Stages Theatre in Atlanta.

OCTOBER 2019 | THEATRE HISTORY | OCTOBER 7, 2019 | 0 COMMENTS

This Month in Theatre History

From the birth of James Allen Bland and Victory Gardens to landmark premieres for Mary Martin and Erik Ehn, October has been a momentous month for theatre.

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

BY THE OSCAR G. BROCKETT CENTER FOR THEATRE HISTORY AND CRITICISM**165 YEARS AGO (1854)**

Future composer and performer James Allen Bland is born in the Flushing section of Queens, N.Y. Bland, a Black artist born to free parents only four years after the first census to report no enslaved people living in New York City, will draw on the songs he hears former enslaved people sing during his time at Howard University. In the 1870s he will perform with the group considered the first successful all-Black minstrel company, the Georgia Minstrels.

100 YEARS AGO (1919)

The Broadmoor Art Academy is established in Colorado Springs, Colo., offering classes in drama and music and serving as home to the city's chapter of the National Drama League. Later this month the Drama League, under the name Art Academy Players, stages its first play, George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires*. During the Depression the institution will expand, opening as the [Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center](#) in 1936.

65 YEARS AGO (1954)

Peter Pan; or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up, a musical based on J.M. Barrie's play, with music by Mark Charlap and lyrics by Carolyn Leigh, opens on Broadway with [Mary Martin](#) as the title character. Martin is the latest in a long line of women to take on the role, a convention dating back to the debut of Barrie's 1904 play. Some historians will consider the production a landmark moment in queer representation.

45 YEARS AGO (1974)

[Victory Gardens](#), part of Chicago's Off-Loop movement, presents its inaugural show, the world premiere of *The Velvet Rose* by Stacy Myatt. Though the production is not a success, the company will be, nurturing local writers and producing many other premieres in the coming decades. In 1996 the organization will launch its Playwrights Ensemble, and the company will receive the Outstanding Regional Theatre Tony in 2001.

25 YEARS AGO (1994)

[Milagro](#), founded in 1985 as the Miracle Theatre Group by José Eduardo González and Dañel Malán in Portland, Ore., opens Cherrie Moraga's *Heroes and Saints*, a play that explores the effects of cancer-causing pesticides on Chicana farm laborers in California. The piece, commissioned by the [Los Angeles Theatre Center](#), received its world premiere two years earlier at the Mission Theater in San Francisco in a production by [Brava Theater Center](#).

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

15 YEARS AGO (2004)

Atlanta's [7 Stages Theatre](#) up its second run (after one in April) of the world premiere of Erik Ehn's *Maria Kizito*. The play, presented in remembrance of the Rwandan genocide of nearly 800,000 people, mainly Tutsis, that took place a decade earlier, is based on the story of the real-life nun Sister Kizito, who helped keep protect thousands of Tutsis then participated in their slaughter.

Related



[This Month in Theatre History](#)

September 3, 2015

In "Nationwide"



[This Month in Theatre History](#)

February 5, 2019

In "February 2019"



[This Month in Theatre History](#)

October 1, 2015

In "Nationwide"

☺