

Study Guide for Teachers
In preparation for Performance of

Two Wings to Heaven: The Bessie Coleman Story

Written and performed by
April Armstrong, Actor and Storyteller



Actress-Storyteller, April Armstrong as Bessie Coleman (photo by A. Armstrong; Graphics by The Turning Mill)

PLOT SUMMARY

April Armstrong, award-winning storyteller and actress, presents an original stage play that tells Bessie Coleman's triumphant story from childhood to renowned aviatrix using dialogue, song, movement and imagery; all while teaching about this period of history, the science of aeronautics, and the need for civil rights for women and people of color. This fanciful tale includes a dreamy visit from Harriet Tubman, Joan of Arc and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, historic figures whose stories gave Bessie the inspiration she needed to transform herself and her life into a lesson of how hope can win against insurmountable odds.



Queen Bessie with her “Jenny”

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Elizabeth “Bessie” Coleman (Born 1892, Died 1926)

Bessie Coleman, the daughter of a poor, southern, African American family, became one of the most famous women and African Americans in aviation history. "Brave Bessie" or "Queen Bess," as she became known, faced the double difficulties of racial and gender discrimination in early 20th-century America but overcame such challenges to become the first African American woman to earn a pilot's license. Coleman not only thrilled audiences with her skills as a [barnstormer](#), but she also became a role model for women and African Americans. Her very presence in the air threatened prevailing contemporary stereotypes. She also fought segregation when she could by using her influence as a celebrity to effect change, no matter how small.

Coleman was born on January 26, 1892, in Atlanta, Texas. She was one of 13 children. Her father was a Native American and her mother an African American. Very early in her childhood, Bessie and her family moved to Waxahachie, Texas, where she grew up picking cotton and doing laundry for customers with her mother.

The Coleman family, like most African Americans who lived in the Deep South during the early 20th century, faced many disadvantages and difficulties. Bessie's family dealt with segregation, disenfranchisement, and racial violence. Because of such obstacles, Bessie's father decided to move the family to "Indian Territory" in Oklahoma. He believed they could carve out a much better living for themselves there. Bessie's mother,

however, did not want to live on an Indian reservation and decided to remain in Waxahachie. Bessie, and several of her sisters, also stayed in Texas.

Bessie was a highly motivated individual. Despite working long hours, she still found time to educate herself by reading books from a traveling library. Although she could not attend school very often, Bessie learned enough on her own to graduate from high school. She then went on to study at the Colored Agricultural and Normal University (now Langston University) in Langston, Oklahoma. Nevertheless, because of limited finances, Bessie only attended one semester of college.

By 1915, Bessie had grown tired of the South and moved to Chicago. There, she began living with two of her brothers. She attended beauty school and then started working as a manicurist in a local barbershop.

Bessie first considered becoming a pilot after reading about aviation and watching newsreels about flight. But the real impetus behind her decision to become an aviator was her brother John's incessant teasing. John had served overseas during World War I and returned home talking about, according to historian Doris Rich, "the superiority of French women over those of Chicago's South Side." He even told Bessie that French women flew airplanes and declared that flying was something Bessie would never be able to do. John's taunting was the final push that Bessie needed to start pursuing her pilot's license. She immediately began applying to flight schools throughout the country but, because she was both female and an African American, no U.S. flight school would take her.



Soon after being turned down by American flight schools, Coleman met Robert Abbott, publisher of the well-known African American newspaper, the Chicago Defender. He recommended that Coleman save some money and move to France, which he believed was the world's most racially progressive nation, and obtain her pilot's license there. Coleman quickly heeded Abbott's advice and also started learning French at night. In November 1920, Bessie took her savings and sailed for France. She also received some additional funds from Abbott and one of his friends.

Coleman attended the well-known Caudron Brothers' School of Aviation in Le Crotoy, France, where she learned to fly using French [Nieuport](#) airplanes. On June 15, 1921, Coleman obtained her pilot's license from Federation Aeronautique

Internationale after only seven months. She was the first black woman in the world to earn an aviator's license. After some additional training in Paris, Coleman returned to the United States in September 1921.

Coleman's main goals when she returned to America were to make a living flying and to establish the first African American flight school. Because of her color and gender, however, she was somewhat limited in her first goal. Barnstorming seemed to be the only

way for her to make money, but to become an aerial daredevil, Coleman needed more training. Once again, Bessie applied to American flight schools, and once again they rejected her. So, in February 1922, she returned to Europe. After learning most of the standard barnstorming tricks, Coleman returned to the United States.

Bessie flew in her first air show on September 3, 1922, at Glenn Curtiss Field in Garden City, New York. The show, which was sponsored by the Chicago Defender, was a promotional vehicle to spotlight Coleman. Bessie became a celebrity, thanks to the help of her benefactor Abbott. She subsequently began touring the country giving exhibitions, flight lessons, and lectures. During her travels, she gave lectures and classes which strongly encouraged African Americans and women to learn to fly.

In February 1923, Coleman suffered her first major accident while preparing for an exhibition in Los Angeles; her Jenny airplane's engine unexpectedly stalled and she crashed. Knocked unconscious by the accident, Coleman received a broken leg, some cracked ribs, and multiple cuts on her face. Shaken badly by the incident, it took her over a year to recover fully.

Coleman started performing again full time in 1925. On June 19, she dazzled thousands as she "barrel-rolled" and "looped-the-loop" over Houston's Aerial Transport Field. It was her first exhibition in her home state of Texas, and even local whites attended, although they watched from separate segregated bleachers.

Even though Coleman realized that she had to work within the general confines of southern segregation, she did try to use her fame to challenge racial barriers, if only a little. Soon after her Houston show, Bessie returned to her old hometown of Waxahachie to give an exhibition. As in Houston, both whites and African Americans wanted to attend the event and plans called for segregated facilities. Officials even wanted whites and African Americans to enter the venue through separate "white" and "Negro" admission gates, but Coleman refused to perform under such conditions. She demanded only one admission gate. After much negotiation, Coleman got her way and Texans of both races entered the air field through the same gate, but then separated into their designated sections once inside.

Coleman's aviation career ended tragically in 1926. On April 30, she died while preparing for a show in Jacksonville, Florida. Coleman was riding in the passenger seat of her "Jenny" airplane while her mechanic William Wills was piloting the aircraft. Bessie was not wearing her seat belt at the time so that she could lean over the edge of the cockpit and scout potential parachute landing spots (she had recently added parachute-jumping to her repertoire and was planning to perform the feat the next day). But while Bessie was scouting from the back seat, the plane suddenly dropped into a steep nosedive and then flipped over and catapulted



her to her death. Wills, who was still strapped into his seat, struggled to regain control of the aircraft, but died when he crashed in a nearby field. After the accident, investigators discovered that Wills, who was Coleman's mechanic, had lost control of the aircraft because a loose wrench had jammed the plane's controls.

Coleman's impact on aviation history, and particularly African Americans, quickly became apparent following her death. Bessie Coleman Aero Clubs suddenly sprang up throughout the country. On Labor Day, 1931, these clubs sponsored the first all-African American Air Show, which attracted approximately 15,000 spectators. That same year, a group of African American pilots established an annual flyover of Coleman's grave in Lincoln Cemetery in Chicago. Coleman's name also began appearing on buildings in Harlem.

Despite her relatively short career, Bessie Coleman strongly challenged early 20th century stereotypes about white supremacy and the inabilities of women. By becoming the first licensed African American female pilot, and performing throughout the country, Coleman proved that people did not have to be shackled by their gender or the color of their skin to succeed and realize their dreams.

--David H. Onkst (edited by April Armstrong & Paul Buxton 2021)



Bi-planes in flight circa 1918

POETRY ABOUT FLYING

High Flight (An Airman's Ecstasy)

A poem by John Gillespie Magee (1922-41)

**Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
 And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
 Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
 Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
 You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
 High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
 I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
 My eager craft through footless halls of air . . .
 Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
 I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
 Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —
 And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
 Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.**

Webpage: <https://nationalpoetryday.co.uk/poem/high-flight/>

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY LIST

<p style="text-align: center;">Amelia Earhart</p> <p>Amelia Mary Earhart was an American aviation pioneer and author. Earhart was the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She set many other records, wrote best-selling books about her flying experiences, and was instrumental in the formation of The Ninety-Nines, an organization for female pilots.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Aviatrix (Aviator) a female pilot.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bank (right or left)</p> <p>Pushing the control stick in the cockpit to the left or right makes the ailerons on one wing go down and the ailerons on the other wing go up. This makes the plane tip to the left or right.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Barrel Roll</p> <p>A barrel roll is an aerial maneuver in which an airplane makes a complete rotation on both its</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jenny</p> <p>The nickname for the Curtiss JN-4 bi-plane, North America's most famous World War I <i>aircraft</i>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jim Crow Laws</p> <p>Any of the laws that enforced racial segregation in the U.S. South from the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the mid-20th century.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Khaki</p> <p>A textile fabric of a dull brownish-yellow color, in particular a strong cotton fabric used in military clothing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kittyhawk, North Carolina</p> <p>The site of the first controlled, powered airplane flight by Wilbur and Orville Wright on December 17, 1903</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Looping the loop</p> <p>To fly in a complete vertical circle.</p>
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longitudinal and lateral axes. It is sometimes described as a "combination of a loop and a roll

Bi-Plane

an early type of aircraft with two pairs of wings, one above the other.

Canvas

a strong, coarse unbleached cloth made from hemp, flax, cotton, or a similar yarn. The wings and fuselages of early airplanes were often covered with canvas.

Cardboard

pasteboard or stiff paper.

Colored (people)

A term, often used in an offensive way, to describe a person who is wholly or partly of nonwhite descent.

Cotton gin

A machine that quickly and easily separates cotton fibers from their seeds. With the invention of the Gin, cotton growing became so profitable for the planters that it greatly increased their demand for both land and slave labor.

Crank

To manually turn the propellers of an airplane in order to start the engine

Disenfranchisement

A practice that has the effect of preventing a person exercising the right to vote.

Dismay

Consternation and distress, typically that caused by something unexpected

Doughboys

The nickname commonly used to refer to American troops in World War I (1914-1918)

Elevator

Elevators are flight control surfaces, usually at the rear of an aircraft, which control the aircraft's pitch, and therefore the angle of

Manicurist

A person who gives manicures professionally.

Negro

A member of a dark-skinned group of peoples originally native to Africa south of the Sahara

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

African-American poet, novelist, and short story writer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Patent

A patent is the granting of a property right by a sovereign authority to an inventor. This grant provides the inventor exclusive rights to the patented process, design, or invention for a designated period in exchange for a comprehensive disclosure of the invention.

Perseverance

persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success

Propellers

a mechanical device for propelling a boat or aircraft, consisting of a revolving shaft with two or more broad, angled blades attached to it

“Race” Paper

News publications in the United States, such as the Chicago Defender, serving the African-American Community

Roll, Pitch and Yaw

Rotation around the front-to-back axis is called roll. Rotation around the side-to-side axis is called pitch. Rotation around the vertical axis is called yaw.

Rudder

A flat piece hinged vertically near the stern of an airplane for steering.

Segregation

The enforced separation of different racial groups in a country, community, or establishment.

<p>attack and the lift of the wing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fuselage The main body of an aircraft</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Goggles Close-fitting eyeglasses with side shields, for protecting the eyes of pilots from glare, dust, water, etc while flying in an open cockpit</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Harriett Tubman Harriet Tubman (1820 – 1913) was an escaped enslaved woman who became a “conductor” on the Underground Railroad, leading enslaved people to freedom before the American Civil War.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Indian Reservation An area of land managed by a federally recognized Native American tribe under the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs rather than the state governments of the United States in which they are physically located.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">St. Joan of Arc A 16th Century French heroine and military leader inspired by religious visions to organize French resistance to the English</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vigilante a member of a self-appointed group of citizens who undertake law enforcement in their community without legal authority, typically because the legal agencies are thought to be inadequate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">World War I (WWI) A global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918.</p>
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THEATER ARTS VOCABULARY LIST:

<p>Adaptation – alter a text to make it appropriate for the stage</p> <p>Cast – the group of actors who work together to perform the show</p> <p>Characterization – use body, voice, and movement to create a representation of a person or animal</p> <p>Costume – the clothing the actor wears to help make the character more believable</p> <p>Dialogue – words that actors say to each other to tell the story</p> <p>Pantomime – performers move and express ideas without words</p> <p>Prop – an object an actor holds in his/her hand and uses to help make the performance realistic</p>

INQUIRING MINDS:

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS, WORKSHOPS OR ESSAYS

- How can work based on historic content be fashioned to entertain?
- How does one edit a historical character for a theatrical play?
- How can you make the invisible visible for stage?
- Have you ever witnessed a transformation? In nature, your neighborhood, in your own body, in your thinking?
- What can you discover about your history that you don't yet know? Who or what are your resources for history? For your personal history?
- Who in history would you like to interview?
- What do you do when you are confronted with an unjust law?
- Have you ever challenged the system by going against a rule or law? What motivated you to do that?
- What other women do you know about who have been first at doing something important?
- Have you ever been the first in your family, school, community to do something?
- Has there ever been a time you felt as if you were flying? What ways can you encourage others to fly?
- What are ways that we could learn more about Bessie Coleman?

ACTIVITIES & LESSONS

Lesson Plan with worksheets, including a crossword puzzle

Webpage: <https://simplesolutions.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Black-History-Bessie-Coleman-lessons.pdf>

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Activity: The Interview (all grades)

Have students work in pairs. Each team researches a historic figure they both admire. Next, have them craft questions (3 to 5) for the historic figure answer in a one to two minute, on-camera interview. Rehearse the interview. Video each team. Playback and watch the interviews together as a class and give feedback.

Follow – up questions and activities:

- ✓ What did you find out about the person being interviewed?
- ✓ What surprised you about the interview?
- ✓ How did you know the Interviewer was speaking to that specific public figure?
- ✓ What question came up for you as the listener that inspires you to do more research?

Activity: Mixed Media (all grades)

Have students pick a short story, a paragraph, a fairytale, a folktale, a quote, a poem or newspaper article. Have the class work in pairs or teams of 3 or 4. Create a re-telling of a small portion of their chosen medium by re-imagining it in a different medium. Rehearse and share work.

Examples:

- ✓ Turn the work into a ballet, or hip-hop dance.
- ✓ Write a storyboard for a film, then shoot one frame.
- ✓ Make a collage about one character within the story and their challenges.
- ✓ Write a poem from a newspaper article.
- ✓ Create a podcast or radio play of the paragraph, include sound effects.
- ✓ Compose a song about an event in the chosen story.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Elementary School:

- Nobody Owns the Sky: The Story of "Brave Bessie" Coleman by Reeve Lindbergh and Pamela Paparone (Jan 6, 1998) Candlewick **ISBN-10:** 0763603619
Grades 1-4
- Bessie Coleman: Fly To Your Dreams Paperback by [Bryant Holt](#) (Author), CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform; 1st edition (May 2017).Paperback. **ISBN-10** : 1546780572, **ISBN-13** : 978-1546780571
Grade level : 2 - 3
- Bessie Coleman: Bold Pilot Who Gave Women Wings (Movers, Shakers, and History Makers) by Martha London (Author). Capstone Press (August 2020) Paperback. **ISBN-10** : 149668818X, **ISBN-13** : 978-1496688187
Grades: 3 - 5
- Bessie Coleman: Daring to Fly (On My Own Biographies (Hardcover)) by Sally M. Walker (Author), Janice Lee Porter (Illustrator). First Avenue Editions TM; 1st edition (January 2003). Paperback. **ISBN-10** : 0876141033, **ISBN-13** : 978-0876141038
Grades: 2 - 4

Middle School:

- Fly High!: The Story of Bessie Coleman by [Louise Borden](#) (Author), [Mary Kay Kroeger](#) (Author), [Teresa Flavin](#) (Illustrator). (Jan 2004) Publisher: Aladdin **ISBN-10** :0689864620
ISBN-13: 978-0689864629
Grade: 3 - 7
- Bessie Coleman: First Black Woman Pilot (African-American Biographies) by Connie Plantz (Jul 2001) Enslow Publishers, **ISBN-10:** 0766015459
Grades: 4-8
- Up in the Air: The Story of Bessie Coleman (Trailblazer Biographies) by Philip S. Hart and Barbara O'Connor (May 1996) Carolrhoda Books, **ISBN-10:** 0876149786
Grades: 4-6

High School:

- African-American Aviators: Bessie Coleman, William J. Powell, James Herman Banning, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., General Daniel James Jr (Capstone Short Biographies) by Stanley P. Jones and L. Octavia Tripp (Mar 1998), Capstone Press, **ISBN-10:** 1560656964
Grades 6-High School
- Bessie Coleman: Daring Stunt Pilot (Graphic Biographies) Paperback by Trina Robbins (Author), Ken Steacy (Illustrator). Capstone Press; 1st edition (January 1, 2007), **ISBN-10 :** 073687903X, **ISBN-13 :** 978-0736879033
Grades: 3 – 9

Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator

by Doris L. Rich (Author), Mae Jemison (Afterword). Smithsonian Books; Revised edition (May 1993). **ISBN-10 :** 1560986182, **ISBN-13 :** 978-1560986188
Grades: 9- Adult

INFORMATIVE VIDEOS:

- SMITHSTONIAN CHANNEL BIO
Bessie Coleman wanted to fly, and she wouldn't take no for an answer. As the first African American woman with a pilot's license, she proved her skill as a stunt pilot.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wckEiKzCBqc>
- THE FLYING ACE: a high flying whodunnit, featuring an all-Black cast and produced by Richard E. Norman of Norman Studios. Richard Norman recognized the growing need for positive films featuring Black actors in 1920's. THE FLYING ACE is the only remaining feature film from the Norman Studios: the historic studio that was one of the most prominent producer of "race films" which featured all Black actors.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBbgMNBCUcI>
- PBS's AMERICAN MASTERS - Unladylike2020: The Changemakers
Illuminating the stories of extraordinary American heroines from the early years of feminism, American Masters — Unladylike2020 is a multimedia series consisting of a one-hour special for broadcast and 26 digital short films featuring courageous, little-known and diverse female trailblazers from the turn of the 20th century.

Video: <https://www.pbs.org/video/unladylike2020-c8uw7u/>

Bessie Coleman segment: <https://www.pbs.org/video/aviator-bessie-coleman-ztdgjl/>

SUGGESTED WEBSITES ON BESSIE COLEMAN:

- <http://www.bessiecoleman.com/>
- <http://www.bessiecoleman.com/default.html>
- <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph391579/m1/15/>

Texas State Historical Association. The Texas Historian, Volume 60, Number 2, November 1999, periodical, November 1999; Austin, Texas.

DETAILS ABOUT THE PLANE BESSIE COLEMAN FLEW

- <https://www.glennhcurtissmuseum.org/the-jenny.php>

PILOTS, AIRPLANES AND FLYING

Videos from Curtiss Aircraft:

Video: <https://www.glennhcurtissmuseum.org/video-library.php>.

Webpage: <https://www.readworks.org/>

(permission pending)

How Airplanes Fly:

https://www.puyallup.k12.wa.us/UserFiles/Servers/Server_141067/File/Instruction%20&%20Learning/Parent%20Resources/April%202014%202020%20Readworks/sixth%20grade/How%20Do%20Airplanes%20Fly.pdf

Article on Black pilots today:

https://www.phillytrib.com/news/across_america/less-than-3-of-americas-commercial-pilots-are-black-these-men-want-to-change-that/article_74235f00-7265-529b-a066-1b7b714c9cbc.html

Article on Black Women Pilots Today

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/diversifying-flight-deck-us-pilots-black-women/story?id=72880810>

OTHER RELEVANT BOOKS, WEBPAGES AND VIDEOS

World War 1:

War Horse (Scholastic Gold)

by Michael Morpurgo (Author). Scholastic Press; 2608th edition (September 2010).
Paperback. **ISBN-10** : 9780439796644, **ISBN-13** : 978-0439796644

Grades: 4 - 7

<https://www.michaelmorpurgo.com/>

World War 2:

A-Train: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman

by Charles W Dryden (Author), Benjamin O. Davis Jr (Foreword)

University Alabama Press; 1st edition (April 1997).Hardcover. **ISBN-10** : 0817308563,

ISBN-13 : 978-0817308568

MEET THE CAST



Photo credit: Jeremy Folmer

APRIL ARMSTRONG is an actor, storyteller, singer, teaching artist and published writer. She has performed on professional stages throughout the USA. As an actress, April is most noted for her performance as the legendary singer Billie Holiday, in the tour-de-force one-woman show, *LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL*, written by Lanie Robertson. She has also performed the role of "Sara" in the musical *RAGTIME* (Broadway National Tour), and as of "Carrie Pipperidge" in *CAROUSEL* (Broadway National Tour, Casa Manana). April has played Off-Broadway as Jimmy Carter/Professor Cynthia Cooper in the NY premiere of *CONFIDENCE AND THE SPEECH*. On film, her voice can be heard in the movie *WASHINGTON SQUARE*, directed by Aneskia Holland, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh and Albert Finney. April has appeared on television in *THE OTHER TWO* for Comedy Central, on *CITY ON A HILL* for Showtime and *LAW & ORDER: SVU*.

As a Storyteller, April has traveled as far as Bali, Indonesia to tell her stories. In 2020, she was awarded the J.J. Reneaux Emerging Artist Award from the National Storytelling Network. She won the 2015 BRIO Award for Storytelling from the Bronx Council for the Arts. Her debut CD, *The Cat Came Back* won a Parent's Choice Award (Silver). April and her jazz trio have performed her concert, *Stories and Songs with a Jazzy Twist* at the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem, Flushing Town Hall and The Abrams Art Center Theater (NYC) and toured for the Kravis Center throughout West Palm Beach. This year April performed virtually as featured teller for the 2020 National Association of Black Storytellers' (NABS) Conference, The National Storytelling Network Conference; The Grapevine and the Story Space.

Her cds, *The Cat Came Back; Stories and Songs with a Jazzy Twist and Birds of a Feather* are available on I-Tunes and Amazon.com. April is a co-writer of the bestselling book (The Wall Street Journal), *THE BIG MOO*, published by Penguin Press and edited by Seth Godin, on how to **remarkablize** your business.

MARIO SPROUSE (Keyboard & Composer) has been active in the arena of music, theater and film for over 50 years. Most recently he has been cataloging the massive music/media collection of the late, legendary, Gordon Parks, for whom he was the musical assistant for over 20 years. Mr. Sprouse was the Music Supervisor for three of Parks' films: *Moments Without Proper Names*, *Martin – a film ballet* and the Emmy-nominated HBO documentary *Half-Past Autumn: The Life and Works of Gordon Parks*; working with late veteran African-American documentary film maker, St. Claire Bourne. He also produced Gordon Parks' first CD of original classical music created to accompany his new book *A Star for Noon*. Mr. Sprouse is a member of the Board of Directors of the Gordon Parks Foundation.

Carmen McRae, Hubert Laws, Cornell Dupree, Buster Williams, Freddie Hubbard and Grover Washington, Jr. are some of the jazz artists who have recorded his musical arrangements. Orchestrations and original songs written by Mr. Sprouse have been performed live by Gregory Hines and Phylicia Rashaad. Mr. Sprouse has provided musical arrangements for several short films, including *Beer Nuts*, directed by Lynn Ancona, *Mr. Dangle*, directed by Mary Gregory, and *The Bally Master*, directed by Gary Beeber, which won the 7th Annual Coney Island Film Festival for Best Documentary Short. Most recently Mr. Sprouse was the music supervisor, composer and arranger for

the critically acclaimed documentary film *Art Bastard* which chronicles the life of artist Bob Cenendella.

In 2005, Mr. Sprouse won an award for as the Best Musical Director from Spotlight On Productions for the play with music *...from the front porch* written and performed by Renee Flemings.

SARA BERG (Director, Stage Manager) has worked as a director, dramaturge, actor and producer in NYC professional theater and cabaret, and was Founding Co-Artistic Director of Titans Theatre Company. Sara's numerous producing/directing credits include "Prince & Cinderella" at Penumbra Theater, and many productions for Six Figures and Titans Theatre Company, including: Julie Flanders' "Living in Pieces", "Food for Life" by Clea Rivera at LaMaMa Theatre ETC and "Esther: A Feast of Masks" by Ellen Kushner, "A Brief Night Out" & "SPEAK", a concert rock and roll theater piece for Summerstage, by Marla Mase and Tomas Doncker, "Lady Susan or The Captive Heart: A Bodice Ripper", "The Color of Vengeance", "Getting Grandma's Goat" & "The Surprising Measure of Buried Treasure" by Lynn Marie Macy. Sara also directed numerous plays for Cesi Davidson in her "Short Plays to Nourish the Mind and Soul" series in Harlem, and "Duck Sauce", "Entonces Vivamos" and "Nursery Rhymes in the 99" for Artistic New Directions Ensemble's Eclectic Shorts Festivals.