LEAP

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Registration begins February 28, 2005.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:
summer sessions '05

Intensive Language Institute...Universities at Shady Grove

Director
Scenic Designer
Lighting Designer
Costume Designer
Sound Designer
Dramaturg Team
Scot Reese
Jennifer Moss
Justin Thomas
Ana Marie A. Salamat
Roni Lancaster
Andrew J. Guban,
Corey Roberts,
& Aaron Tobiason

February 10 – 19, 2005
Robert & Arlene Kogod Theatre
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
University of Maryland

Christian Zonts (BA 1999) recently booked a National Budweiser commercial starring Dale Earnhardt Jr. Zonts will be playing a rapper. Filming this commercial makes him eligible to join the SAG union. Keep your eyes out for it in the next couple months! He can now be seen on a national commercial for Kentucky Fried Chicken.

THE HOLES IN OUR COMMUNITY
Corey Roberts, M.A. candidate in Theatre History and Criticism

"My development, and the development of black theater, is an attempt to send an arrow into the literature of America, to make a hole large enough for our humanity to move through..."
—Charles H. Fuller Jr., Playwright

Sometimes, it is the painful 'holes' in our communities that force us to rethink our own humanity. In 1980, Charles H. Fuller Jr. premiered New York audiences with "Zooman and the Sign," a play based on the accidental killing of a young girl on the front porch of her Philadelphia home. "Zooman" portrays the breakdown of the black community on many levels; the individual, the nuclear family, and the neighborhood are all weakened after the death of twelve-year-old Junny Tate. Fuller's arrow did, indeed hit its mark; audiences and critics alike could not help but absorb the gravity of the black community's plight expressed in this play.

Both race and violence inhabit the world of "Zooman and the Sign." A first look at "Zooman" reveals a violent adolescent that has become a burden to both his community and the state. Fuller, however, invites audiences to look deeper into the character and his circumstances. While it could be familiar and comfortable to ascribe this young man's behavior to inherent characteristics of African American men, Fuller highlights those aspects of the local community and greater society that shaped him into the misguided youth he became. In this way, "Zooman" stands not only for his African American community (in the original production, located in 1980s Philadelphia; in this production, contemporary Washington, D.C.), but also for the teachers, schools, role models, and state facilities that greatly influenced his social development.

The Tate family's situation also extends beyond the confines of their local city streets. At first glance the community of passive neighbors seems cowardly in their refusal to identify "Zooman" as Junny's murderer. Yet the neighborhood harbors a disdain and fear of the police forces that are sworn to protect them. What is it to live in a world without community protection? Is there even such a thing in the world of this play as community or neighborhood? In asking these questions, we invite audiences—both on campus at Maryland and throughout the country—to see how they participate in their own communities. Just as the Tates formed an important part of their neighborhood, members of the University of Maryland campus form the foundation of this community. We have a responsibility to act with concern and compassion for humanity so that ignorance and violence no longer continue to weaken our foundation.

"Zooman and the Sign" was accorded much praise during its premiere in 1980. Under the direction of Douglas Turner Ward, the Negro Ensemble Company production experienced a healthy run of "Zooman," earning Fuller two Obie awards. Later the play was adapted for a television rendition starring Louis Gossett Jr., filmed in 1995. Fuller's other awards include fellowships from such prestigious organizations as the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations, as well as both the 1981 Pulitzer prize and the New York Drama Critics' Award for "A Soldier's Play."