Detroit ’67

By DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

Directed by JADE KING CARROLL

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS OUTSIDE, YOU ALWAYS HAVE FAMILY.

McCarter THEATRE CENTER

OCTOBER 9 – 28
mccarter.org

RESOURCE GUIDE

With Alignments to the National Core Arts Standards
and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content State Standards

Created by McCarter Theater Education and Engagement. 2018.
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Created by McCarter Theatre. 2018.
Alignments to the Common Core Curriculum Standards and NJ Core Curriculum Content State Standards

McCarter’s production of Detroit ‘67 and the activities outlined in this guide are designed to enrich students’ educational experiences by addressing many Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Common Core Anchor Standards as well as specific New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Visual and Performing Arts.

Pre-Show Activities

Pre-Show Prep

RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

SL.11-12.1.A. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

In Context: Research Activity

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Motivation for Motown

RI.11-12.4. Determine the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

RI.11-12.9. Analyze and reflect on documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.

NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work

What Happened?: The Events of the 1967 Race Rebellion

RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RI.11-12.9. Analyze and reflect on documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.

A Theater Reviewer Prepares
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and Analyze Artistic Work.
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work.
NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Post-Show Activities

Back to School Babble
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and Analyze Artistic Work.
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work

Performance Discussion and Reflection
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and Analyze Artistic Work.
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work.

Art from Action
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work.
NCAS. Relating Anchor Standard #11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Snapshot of the Show
NCAS. Creating Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
NCAS. Performing Anchor Standard #4. Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

A Love Song: Creative Writing Activity
W.11-12.3. Write narrative to develop real or imagined experience or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.11-12.5. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Reviewing the Reviewer
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and Analyze Artistic Work
NCAS. Responding Anchor Standard #8. Interpret Intent and Meaning in Artistic Work
NJSLSA.R3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
“I think the one thing I can say I’ve learned to embrace, that I didn’t always, is the idea of being a political writer. I did not look at myself as a political writer for a very long time because I’m not trying to push a political agenda, per se, or tell people what politics to embrace, but I am looking at how politics, in a certain light, impact people. I’ve learned to embrace that I have a very strong social justice call to my work. Even when the work is very personal and not pushing a political agenda, there is some sense of justice I am always seeking for my characters. How are they or are they not getting justice in their lives for the things that they want? How are they or are they not being measured fairly by each other and by the world? And how are they or are they not being considered by those who have status over them?”

Dominique Morisseau in an interview with The Interval
Pre-Show Prep

To provide intellectual and creative context for Dominique Morisseau’s *Detroit ’67*, as a class or in small groups, explore the *synopsis* and *character descriptions* located in the Appendix and on the McCarter website. Also, check out the article on director Jade King Carroll and playwright Dominique Morisseau titled, “The Powerhouse Women Behind *Detroit ’67*,” also located in the Appendix and online.


After engaging with the synopsis, character descriptions, and the article, ask students to journal about or discuss their reactions to the materials with any of the following prompts:

Did anything you read particularly pique your interest about the play or the characters it features? Explain your response.

The article on Jade King Carroll and Dominique Morisseau talks about only some of these artists’ extraordinary accomplishments. It also talks about how their paths have crossed before, on this show and others. How might their history impact their work together and this show?

Based on the character profiles, do these characters sound like any people you know in real life? Of whom do they remind you and why?

Finally, have students read “Playwright’s Rules for Engagement” by playwright Dominique Morisseau, found in the Appendix. This note from the playwright is frequently included in her plays’ playbills and encourage audience members to engage with works as they see fit. Morisseau created this inclusive and inviting list of “rules” in response to a negative experience she had as a theatre goer, which she outlined in this article for American Theatre Magazine:

After students have reviewed this list, possible discussion questions might include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>How do these “rules” align with your impressions of theatre? Is this what you expected then you read the title of the list? Why or why not?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Why might the playwright think it’s important to outline these “rules” for an audience member?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Can you think of a time when you have been moved by a film, play, piece of art or theatre? How did you react? Did societal expectations or rules alter the way you might have liked to react in the moment? If so, how? Who did you feel set these “rules” and how did you learn them?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Context: Detroit ‘67

In order to deepen your class’ knowledge and level of understanding of the play’s world and its characters and its playwright and her influences, have them research, either in groups or individually, one or several of the following topics:

**Historical and Cultural Context of Detroit ‘67**

The Civil Rights Movement in Detroit
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall
Governor George Romney
Detroit Race Riot of 1943
The 1967 Detroit Race Riots
“Soul Brothers” signs
Blind Pigs

**Detroit ‘67 Background and Inspiration**

*The Detroit Project* by Dominique Morisseau

Dominique Morisseau’s influences (including but not limited to August Wilson, Pearl Cleage, Lorraine Hansberry, Ntozake Shange)

**Detroit ‘67 in Production Today**

Biography of Dominique Morisseau (playwright)
Biography of Jade King Carroll (director)
Biography of Riccardo Hernandez (set design)
Biography of Karin Graybash (sound design)
Biography of Dede Ayite (costume designer)
Biography of Nicole Pearce (lighting designer)

Encourage students to use a variety of resources (i.e. Encyclopedias, books, magazines, the internet, etc.) to conduct their research. After the students have conducted their research, ask them to compile their findings into a short essay, PowerPoint, or Prezi presentation. Following the presentations, ask students to reflect upon their research process and discoveries, as well as connections they see to one another’s work.
Motivation for Motown

Motown’s music plays a huge role in Detroit ‘67. The characters love music and are often found on stage singing, dancing, and enjoying the sounds of the 60s. In 1959, Berry Gordy Jr. founded Motown, a black-owned, American record company in Detroit, Michigan. The record company played a crucial role in producing the music of black artists and in the racial integration of popular music as the company was able to achieve significant “crossover” success, or success with white audiences. Motown are also credited with creating the Motown Sound, a style of soul music that has pop influences integrated into it.

Have students read the lyrics of two Motown songs featured in the show and answer the corresponding discussion questions in small groups or pairs. The lyrics and corresponding questions can be found in the Appendix.

Once students have analyzed the lyrics and responded to the corresponding questions, play the songs for them. Links are included here:

| “Dancing in the Street” by Martha and the Vandellas: | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KhbM2mqhCQ |
| “People Get Ready” by the Impression: | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l04yM7-BWbg |

Possible questions to spark discussion after listening to the songs include:

| Describe the music. What emotions does it evoke in you? Joy? Sadness? Hope? |
| How does the music work with or against the lyrics? |
| Does hearing the lyrics set to music change the meaning for you? Does the meaning potentially change throughout the song itself? |
| What do you think matters more when it comes to the creation of songs: the music or the lyrics? Explain your answer. |
| Are the themes of these songs similar to those that we hear today? Which themes? Why might that be? |

Encourage students to find contemporary songs that share the same themes as one of the two songs that they just examined. Ask students to share their songs in small groups and explain why they chose this particular song as a contemporary partner for the Motown piece they studied.
What Happened?: The Events of the 1967 Race Rebellion

The 1960s promised good fortune for the city of Detroit. The automobile industry was taking off, the population had peaked in the previous decade, and the mayor at the time was considered to be the most progressive mayor in a major American metropolis. Nevertheless, there were early signs of trouble. The city was undergoing economic stress and there was an influx of white Detroiter leaving the city. Similarly, despite the fact that 40% of Detroit’s population was black, only 5% of police officers were. Black Detroiter were constantly voicing their frustrations with the dangerous, violent, and racist policing practices that were being executed by white officers. These frustrations over police brutality and racial profiling came to a head the morning of July 23rd, marking the beginning of the 1967 Race Rebellion.

While Detroit ‘67 does not focus on the 1967 Race Rebellion specifically, the story unfolds with the uprising as the backdrop and the events of the play are consequently influenced by the events of the Rebellion. To enhance students’ understanding of the play and to foster a personal connection to the world in which it’s set, ask students to explore The Detroit Free Press’ timeline of the events of the 1967 rebellion in Detroit (linked below). They can review the timeline as a class, individually, or in small groups. You may even want to assign select portions of the timeline to individual groups to engage with. Encourage students to click through the yellow-highlighted sections to read the annotation from historians and experts.

The Detroit Free Press – Detroit ‘67 Timeline:

After studying the timeline, ask students to reflect on what they’ve discovered. Possible discussion questions or journal prompts may include:

- Did anything surprise you about the timeline and events of the uprising in 1967? Explain your response.
- Identify the three most pivotal moments of the uprising, in your opinion.
- How did looking at this historical moment broken down by individual events and updates impact your understanding of the uprising? Does it change the way you view the uprising?
- If the uprising were to occur today, what might be different about the way the events were covered by the media? Where would you look to receive information about the events?
- Different people categorize the events in Detroit on July 23–27, 1967 in different ways. Was it a “riot”, an “uprising” or a “rebellion”? What do these words mean to you? How are they alike? How are they different?
- What events in recent history does this remind you of? Why? What are the similarities and what are the differences?

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A Theater Reviewer Prepares

A theater critic or reviewer is essentially a “professional audience member,” whose job is to report the news, in detail, of a play’s production and performance through active and descriptive language for a target audience of readers (e.g., their peers, their community, or those interested in the Arts). To prepare students to write an accurate, insightful and compelling theater review following their attendance at the performance of Dominique Morisseau’s Detroit ’67, prime them for the task by discussing in advance the three basic elements of a theatrical review: reportage, analysis and judgment.

- **Reportage** is concerned with the basic information of the production, or the journalist’s “four w’s” (i.e., who, what, where, when), as well as the elements of production, which include the text, setting, costumes, lighting, sound, acting and directing (see the Theater Reviewer’s Checklist in the Appendix). When reporting upon these observable phenomena of production, the reviewer’s approach should be factual, descriptive and objective; any reference to quality or effectiveness should be reserved for the analysis section of the review.

- With **analysis** the theater reviewer segues into the realm of the subjective and attempts to interpret the artistic choices made by the director and designers and the effectiveness not of these choices; specific moments, ideas and images from the production are considered in the analysis.

- **Judgment** involves the reviewer’s opinion as to whether the director’s and designers’ intentions were realized, and if their collaborative, artistic endeavor was ultimately a worthwhile one. Theater reviewers always back up their opinions with reasons, evidence and details.

Remind students that the goal of a theater reviewer is “to see accurately, describe fully, think clearly, and then (and only then) to judge fairly the merits of the work” (Thaiss and Davis, Writing for the Theatre, 1999). Proper analytical preparation before the show and active listening and viewing during will result in the effective writing and crafting of their reviews.
“When you say Detroit, people have an automatic reaction that this is a failed city...I wanted to change that, to show that this is a place of epic stories, of great dreams, of passion and love. I wanted to do for Detroit what August Wilson did for Pittsburgh.”

Dominique Morisseau in an interview with the Star Tribune
Post-Show Questions for Discussion

Use the following questions as a means for students to evaluate their experience of the performance of Detroit ‘67, as well as to encourage their own imaginative and artistic response. Consider also that some of the Pre-Show activities might enhance students’ appreciation of both the play and its playwright post-performance.

Detroit ‘67 Back to School Babble

On the bus returning from the theatre, have students write down 5 words to describe the feelings and thoughts they have about the production they just saw. For homework, ask students to elaborate on two of their chosen words either as a journaling assignment, a school-based online forum, or via social media, using #Detroit67Play and @mccartertheatre on Instagram and Twitter.

Questions to Ask Students about the Production

- What themes of the play especially stood out in production? [Themes might include: family, resiliency, police brutality, racism etc.] What themes were made even more apparent or especially provocative in performance? Explain your responses.
- Is there a moment in the play that specifically resonated with you either intellectually or emotionally? Which moment was it and why do you think it affected you?
- Was there anything about the play—for example, its story, structure, characters, language, dramatic style—that felt new or different to you in relation to your experience of other plays you have experienced (either on the page or in performance)?
- Did you personally identify with any of the characters who were portrayed in Detroit ‘67? If so, which one?
- What pieces of information about the motives and desires of the characters were revealed by the music that was used in the play?

Questions to Ask Students about the Style and Design of the Production

- Was there a moment in Detroit ‘67 that was so entertaining or engaging that it remains with you? Write a vivid description of that moment. As you write your description, pretend that you are writing about the moment for someone who was unable to experience the performance.
- The director of a show is the person who is charge of executing a vision for the production. The directorial vision is what the director wants the play to communicate to the viewers. Summarize director Jade King Carroll’s directorial vision. What do you think she hoped the audience would take away? How did you come to this conclusion?
o What did you notice about Riccardo Hernandez’s scenic design? Did it provide an appropriate, effective, and/or evocative setting for the story of Detroit ‘67? How and why, or why not? What considerations do you think went into his design choices?

o What happened with the lights in the show? How did Nicole Pearce’s lighting design affect the show? In what moments did the lighting design especially enhance the world of the play?

o What did you notice about the costume designs by Dede Ayite? What do you think were the artistic and practical decisions that went into the creation of the costumes for this production?

o What did you notice about the music and sound design by Karin Graybash? Can you remember what you heard and describe it in words? How did the consistent presence of music affect the entire show? Dominique Morisseau specifically chose each of the songs that she wanted to have in the play and wrote them into the script. How did the songs compliment or challenge the action that was taking place on the stage?

o How did the overall production elements (costumes, set, lights, sound, etc.) suit the story, inform the characters, and reflect the central themes of Detroit ‘67? How did these choices support or compete with the directorial vision?

"’We weren’t getting cast because they weren’t doing non-traditional casting and they weren’t doing any work by writers of color...so I decided to write my own play.’’"

Domonique Morisseau in an interview with the Star Tribune
Art from Action: Visual Art Analysis

While Dominique Morisseau used her words and the form of playwriting to depict a world in Detroit ‘67. Other artists use alternative forms of art to depict their memories or to honor the Detroit Race Rebellion of 1967, including songs, poetry, and visual art.

One example of this is Allie McGhee’s Black Attack (1967). Ask students to examine the piece, found on the following website.


As a resident of Detroit during the uprisings, McGhee used his art to articulate his memories of the rebellions and the people that survived it. Use the questions below to spark a conversation about the painting as well as its relationship to the show.

What images do you see within the painting?

Abstraction in art indicates a departure from reality in the depiction of images. What is your reaction to the abstractness of the painting? How does that make you feel? Why do you think the artist chose an abstract interpretation as opposed to a more literal one?

Can you see the American flag? What about the hand or the face? Do you see the sun? What might these images mean? What other images do you see within this work?

What connections can you make between this piece of art and Detroit ‘67?

How does this make you feel in the context of today?
**Snapshot of the Show**

This activity challenges students to identify key moments in the play and distill them into **tableau** (frozen pictures) to convey the emotion or feeling of that pivotal moment.

To start, divide students into groups and ask them to think back to their experience of the play and answer the following questions. They should work to come to a consensus among their groups, identifying key moments within the play. Be sure to stress that they should keep their ideas within their groups and not share them with other students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was the climax, or the turning point of the show?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the biggest moment of conflict in the show?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the happiest moment in the show?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once each group has come up with answers to the questions above, challenge them to create tableaus for each of the moments they identified.

A **tableau** can be described as a frozen picture that is made up of bodies working together to tell a story. It is a snapshot of a singular moment, created by “actors” and clearly portrays a location, relationships, an emotion, or even an idea for the “audience.” For this activity, students will take turns serving as the “actors” and the “audience.”

Tableaus can help give students the chance to recreate moments from the show but also, to reflect on the play to find pivotal moments within the story. Students should use their bodies to not only portray the characters, but also anything that is particularly important to the scene, including props or set pieces.

Give the students no more than five minutes to create one tableau for each moment that they’ve identified with the preliminary questions. After that, have each of the group present their first tableau for the class. Limit any commenting or questions on the tableaus until every group has presented. Have the class discuss what they saw and have each group explain their choice for their tableau. Repeat for the second and third tableaus created by each group.

During the discussions, use the following questions as a jumping off point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Were all of the moments the same? For those that were, were all of the tableaus the same? What moments differed? Where were there similarities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did your classmates use their bodies differently when portraying the same moments? Were you uncertain about any of their choices? If so, where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did seeing other peoples’ choices and interpretations challenge the way that you thought about the important moments of the show? How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Created by McCarter Theatre. 2018.
A Love Song to Home: Creative Writing Activity

When asked about why she chose to write Detroit ’67 by the Public Theater before its premiere, Dominique Morisseau said,

“I started writing this play as a love song to my city... And I really am interested in depicting my city differently than how the media does. Detroit is an amazing city. It’s an amazing place. It has an amazing spirit. I think people don’t really know who we really are, and so part of my interest is in uncovering that in a great way.”

Have students discuss this quote using the following discussion questions.

| Where do we see this love for the city shine through in Detroit ’67? |
| What was your idea of Detroit prior to seeing this show? Where did these perceptions come from? Has your perception changed? How and why? |
| What does ‘home’ mean in Detroit ’67? What is it referring to? The city? The house? The family? |

Following this conversation, have students write their own “love song to their home.” Like Morisseau, they can choose to have their “love song” take the form of another piece of writing - it could be a play, a piece of poetry, a journal, a letter, etc. Possible questions to begin their writing process might include:

| Define the word ‘home’ for yourself. Is home a place? A person? A feeling? |
| How has your relationship with home changed over the years? |
| What art form best represents you and your home? Will your love song be a letter, a speech, a song, a play, an essay? Be creative! Use your own style and unique voice. |

Upon completing their projects, have students share their final piece with another student or with the class, if they so choose.
**Detroit ’67: Reviewing the Reviewer**

A theater critic or reviewer is essentially a “professional audience member,” whose job is to provide reportage of a play’s production and performance through active and descriptive language for a target audience of readers (e.g., their peers, their community, or those interested in the arts).

To start, have students research online for theatrical reviews of Detroit ’67 production at McCarter Theatre. Once a number of reviews have been culled from online, break students up in to pairs and ask them to analyze and critique the review both for their critical perspective and for their quality of writing. Ask them to consider:

- *Did the reviewer use active and descriptive language? What words or phrases particularly stood out in the review?*

- *Did the reviewer consider/discuss all of the elements of production (i.e. scenic elements, costumes, lighting, music, acting and direction)?*

- *Did the reviewer seem to understand and articulate the intentions of the play and provide a personal judgment as to whether or not the production succeeded?*

Then, have students take on the role of theater critic by writing a review of the production. Reviewers often ask themselves:

- *What is the playwright and this production attempting to do?*

Just like the ones that the students read, the critic also offers personal judgment as to whether the artistic intentions of a production were achieved, effective and worthwhile. Things to consider before writing:

- *Student reviewers may want to use words generated from the “Back to School Bus Babble” exercise of this guide.*

- *Theater critics/reviewers always back up their opinions with evidence and details.*

- *The elements of production that can be discussed in a theatrical review are the play text or script (and its themes, plot, characters, etc.), scenic elements, costumes, lighting, sound, music, acting and direction (i.e., how all of these elements are put together). [See the Theater Reviewer’s Checklist located in the Appendix.]*

Encourage students to submit their reviews to the school newspaper for publication, and ask them to email them to us at adaniels@mccarter.org.
Directors Jade King Carroll addressing the cast, creative team, and McCarter staff at the first day of rehearsal Meet and Greet. Photo by Tom Miller.
**Detroit ’67 Synopsis**

1. In July 1967 Detroit, Chelle, sets up her basement for a party she’s having the upcoming weekend. Her close friend Bunny arrives in the basement and starts helping with set up. They discuss the new inheritance Chelle and her younger brother Lank came into when their father recently died. Chelle, a widow, looks forward to using the money to pay for her son Julius to attend the Tuskegee Institute. At the same time, now that she and Lank are settled into a new living arrangement in their parents’ house, Chelle plans to re-start the underground parties she used to run in her basement to bring in extra money until her son’s tuition is fully paid.

2. Lank and his best friend Sly enter the basement with their purchases for the party. Chelle fumes when they reveal how they ignored her shopping list to buy an 8-track tape player and new 8-track tapes instead of the supplies she needed. Sly and Lank push her further, propositioning Chelle to use the inheritance to buy a nearby bar that is being sold. She refuses, noting the 8-track player must be for that new bar. Lank claims that a stake in the community would stop the cops from pushing them around, but Chelle does not care. Quietly, Lank confirms with Sly that he still wants in on the business deal, and plans to bring Chelle around later. Bunny and Sly exit the basement, leaving Lank alone to continue trying to persuade Chelle. Lank argues that he wants to stop hustling—earning a living through unlawful means—while Chelle maintains that the money’s stability is more important. Their discussion ends with no decision reached.

3. Later that night, Sly and Lank furtively carry into the house an unconscious white woman with marks of physical violence on her face and body. They argue about whether they’ve made the right decision in picking her up; they could be in great danger if they are caught with a white woman. Chelle, who has been inadvertently woken up by Lank and Sly, enters, sees the woman and demands an explanation. Lank and Sly say that they saw her stumbling along Chicago Boulevard. When they asked if she needed a ride, she said, “Get me outta here,” and then passed out in the car. Aware of the danger she, Lank, and Sly are in with the woman in their house, but with no better plan, Chelle bandages the sleeping stranger and leaves her in the basement on the couch.

4. In the morning, the woman wakes up and inspects her face and her surroundings. Lank comes down the stairs to bring her breakfast and find out what happened to her the night before. He asks her personal questions, but she gives him no information about who she is. Chelle enters the basement and offers to call the woman’s family. The woman refuses with stuttering and pauses. She says she has no money and wants to work for her keep at their house, as long as it is safe. Lank proposes that she help Chelle with the bar and the party, and, against Chelle’s better judgment, she caves and allows the woman to stay for a week and work for them. They learn her
name is Caroline. When Caroline goes upstairs to find some clean clothes, Chelle warns Lank not to touch her—adding, “keep your friendliness to yourself.”

5. Later that evening, Chelle, Lank and Bunny continue to prepare for the party, when a well-dressed Sly with a bottle of liquor arrives to help. Caroline brings the punch down to the basement and then excuses herself to finish more chores upstairs. Lank and Sly hang up a velvet painting of two naked black women; Chelle deems it tacky, while Bunny considers it sexy. Lank puts a choice song on the 8-track, which prompts Sly to remember how they danced with women when they were younger. Sly entices Chelle to dance, while Lank and Bunny enjoy a much more “down n’ dirty” dance next to them. Caroline quietly enters and watches them dance—especially Lank—but then disrupts the scene with a giggle. Chelle pulls away from Sly and gets back to business ordering the others in the completion of the party preparation. Privately, Sly tells Lank they have to move quickly and put down a deposit on the bar. Lank says he’s in, but he still has to figure out how to tell Chelle.

6. The day after the party, Chelle counts the money made and gives Caroline her cut, happy with how Caroline worked the crowd. Chelle leaves to run errands, giving Caroline privacy to play music and dance. Lank walks in and watches her for a while before she notices his presence. Lank and Caroline flirt over their shared musical interests; Caroline enjoys listening to Motown and is surprisingly familiar with Lank’s favorite songs. Caroline asks about the series of drawings (a star, a fist, and a black girl’s face) on the basement walls and Lank explains the family member artist and personal meaning behind each. After learning a little about Caroline’s divorced parents, Lank remembers his father working hard every day of his life at the Ford Motor Company, but admits he wants his own business, something no one can take away from him. Lank asks Caroline who hurt her on the night he picked her up, but she thinks it is best to leave that night in the past. As their conversation becomes more and more personal and intimate, they come very close to kissing, but Chelle enters and breaks up the moment. Caroline awkwardly leaves the basement to fetch ice and Chelle glares disapprovingly at Lank.

7. That night, Caroline is asleep on the basement sofa when Chelle and Lank burst in. Lank tells Chelle that a neighborhood bar called Duke’s is on fire. When Chelle does not understand why Lank is so riled up as if it is his personal business, Lank reveals he bought the neighboring bar, which they might now lose in the fire. Lank leaves with Chelle furious at him for going against her wishes for their shared inheritance.
8. The following morning, Chelle hangs clothes on a line to dry in the basement as Bunny walks into the house. Bunny and Chelle update each other on the riots, until Chelle asks Bunny to talk about something else. Bunny asks where Caroline is and then confides in Chelle that a woman from the Red Stallion, a strip club, has gone missing. Bunny also adds that the missing woman used to fool around with an important city cop, which makes both women concerned for their safety. Sly comes in alone and reports that the cops came up to him and Lank poking around their new bar and harassed them. Lank stood up for himself and was arrested; the cops did not believe he owned the place. Chelle and Sly rush to bail Lank out of jail, leaving Bunny to update Caroline on the news. Shaken by the circumstances, Caroline says she has to leave and does.

9. Later that night, Bunny is asleep on the sofa when Chelle comes back home with Lank who has been assaulted by the police. She takes care of Lank’s bruises and cuts as they argue about the bar. Bunny tells them that Caroline left, and Lank wants to stay up to wait for her to return. Chelle expresses her concerns to Lank that he is falling for a white woman; she does not believe there is any way their relationship could work. After Chelle goes to bed Caroline returns. She sees Lank’s bruises and confesses her romantic involvement with a cop at the Red Stallion, where she waitressed, and shares that on the night Lank found her, the cop had beaten her badly and she had run away. Caroline admits her plans to leave Detroit due to the danger her presence in the city poses for both herself and for Lank. They acknowledge the feeling of connection between them and Lank plays Gladys Knight and the Pips’ “Everybody Needs Love” for her. Lank requests Caroline close her eyes and listen to the lyrics, and they sit with the music, listening without a word.

10. Chelle is cleaning the basement when Sly comes in looking for Lank to go to a meeting at their bar. While waiting for Lank, they discuss the state of the city—people gathering to throw rocks, streets filled with smoke, the mayor sending tanks into the street and calling for the National Guard, Governor Romney requesting thousands of troops to handle the riot. In the midst of their conversation, Sly begins to romance Chelle gradually. Sly remains confident no one in the community will burn down “Sly and Lank’s Feel Good Shack,” which is what they plan to name their bar. Sly sweet talks Chelle away from cleaning and holds her as they dance to The Four Tops. Their deep emotional bond becomes clear. Sly expresses his desire to be with Chelle, but she only smiles in return, without a clear response to his move towards romance. Lank comes in with information about the police lurking around their bar and the men leave for the meeting.

*Spoiler Alert! If you don’t want to know what happens at the end of the show, STOP HERE!*
11. Later, with the occasional sound of tanks in the background, Chelle and Bunny drink wine together while waiting for Lank and Sly to return from their meeting. Caroline tells them that she is leaving on a train before dawn. When she hears about the cops looking around Lank and Sly’s bar, Caroline becomes worried and admits to Chelle that the cops are probably looking for her. Chelle rages at Caroline for bringing her brother into her mess with the cop she used to see, and tells her that she and Lank will always be different due to the color of their skin. Bunny encourages Caroline to leave early for the train; Caroline complies. Chelle admits to Bunny that the way Lank feels about Caroline makes her feel inadequate. Bunny calms Chelle down saying how much Lank cares about her. Lank walks in completely disoriented and with blood on his shirt, tells them that the cops killed Sly, and collapses.

12. Days later, in the basement, Chelle drinks coffee and Lank drinks liquor. Chelle shares that Julius has called about coming home because he heard the US Army is entering Detroit. Chelle told him to hold off. Lank asks about Caroline. Chelle tells him that she left town on the train. Lank confesses to Chelle that he felt like there were fewer rules Constraining him when he was with Caroline, and that he could be a more honest version of himself. Lank then divulges the truth about Sly’s death: the two were running after the cops they found snooping around their bar. A tank came down the road and Lank stopped, but Sly kept running. The tank shot at Sly who was chasing the cops, and Lank held Sly in his arms while he died. In order to help Lank with his sadness, Chelle attempts to turn on the 8-track player. She says she will support Lank’s dream of owning the bar and they will use it to remember Sly. Lank withdraws to pick up Sly’s sister for the funeral, leaving Chelle to dance alone to The Four Tops’ “Reach Out, I’ll Be There,” the last song she and Sly danced to before his death.
DETROIT ’67 Character Profiles

CHELLE (MICHELLE)
A black woman in her late thirties and widowed mother to son, Julius, who attends college at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Chelle embodies strength, steadfast firmness and isn’t easily impressed. Beneath her outward pride however, is a loving and devoted heart for her family and community.

Chelle

...You my baby brother. You and Julius...you the only two guys in my life that matter anymore. And I’m not gonna just sit back and let you get beat up by nobody. Not Patrice Cooper. Not the pigs. Not even yourself. (beat) I love you best. Just like Daddy told me to. Ain’t nothin’ can come along and be better than that...

(Act 2, Scene 2)

LANK (LANGSTON)
Younger brother to Chelle, in his early thirties. Lank is a loving and charismatic man with a charming and elusive effect on women. A dreamer and an aspiring business man, Lank has his hopes set on starting his own legitimate neighborhood club.

Lank

I’m tired of bein’ laid off at the plant and runnin’ joints outta my basement like I got somethin’ to hide. Like the only way I can be somethin’ is underground. I’m ready to be above ground just like them white folks. Ain’t no tellin’ what Detroit could be if we was all put to good use.

(Act 1, Scene1)

BUNNY (BONITA)
A friend of Lank and Chelle’s, also in her thirties, Bunny is fun, spunky and sexy, and doesn’t let anything get her down. Bunny is the life of the party, and she literally brings the party too, as she is the one who tips off folks about which secret after-hours clubs to attend based on her network of connections.

Bunny

Oooo girl, if I had me any kind of inheritance, I’d see the world. Tellin’ you, I’d be in Rome and Paris and all them high ‘n’ mighty places with my mink coat and my painted nails and my tea and crumpets – or whatever them folks be havin’. I wanna be just like them white gals we be seein’ at the picture show. Sittin’ back on one of them satin sofas, fannin’ myself and readin’ magazines til’ my man come back home from makin’ his thousands to scoop me up and lay me right.

(Act 1, Scene1)
SLY (SYLVESTER)
In his late thirties, Sly is a fiercely loyal best friend of Lank, who is also sweet on his sister Chelle. Sly is also a fellow dreamer and optimist, and his own authentic brand of honest “hustler” and “numbers man.” Sly comes off coolly as a hip and slick sweet-talker.

*Sly*

...Tomorrow’s alright. Keeps you livin’. But if you look far enough ahead, you start to see tomorrow ain’t all there is. It’s plenty of days after that. And when you got somebody close to you...somebody to hold onto and slow dance with...you wanna believe in everything. You wanna believe stuff can happen that’ll make you smile. You wanna dream...and even if the dream don’t work out...even if it don’t last...at least it felt real good tryin’.

(Act 2, Scene3)

CAROLINE
A young white woman of a similar age range to the rest of the characters. Coming from a mysterious past of dangerous circumstances, she seems to be perpetually looking for a place that she can safely be herself and call home. Though troubled, Caroline remains soft, beautiful, and has a quiet strength about her.

*Lank*
What you believe in?

*Caroline*
I... (beat) I don’t really know anymore. Things I thought I believed — changed. It’s like I woke up and suddenly I’m not the same person I thought I was. I’m just in this moment and...everything before it is bullshit. (beat) It’s good you found something for yourself. I wish.

(Act 1, Scene 5)
The Powerhouse Women behind *Detroit ‘67*
By Anna Morton, Literary Manager

![Dominique Morisseau and Jade King Carroll](image)

“I think when we hear certain things about ourselves over and over we start to believe in them…That’s the power of writing. The media really has the power to manipulate peoples’ beliefs. So I too want to manipulate peoples’ beliefs and get people to start believing in [Detroit] again.”
—Dominique Morisseau

“As a director, I need to know why a story is important. Why does this story need to be told now?”
—Jade King Carroll

In the early days of December of 2012, McCarter hosted a developmental reading of a new play by Dominique Morisseau entitled Paradise Blue. Directed by Jade King Carroll, the play-in-process was the second in Morisseau’s Detroit Trilogy and the follow-up to Detroit ‘67 which, at the time, was about to have its world premiere in New York City. This season, Morisseau and Carroll will reunite here six years later for a production of Detroit ‘67. McCarter is thrilled to welcome both artists back to this theater, and to have the opportunity to introduce Morisseau’s important work to a wider audience.

Morisseau, who grew up in Detroit, was inspired to write a collection of plays that explored the city’s history at three distinct moments in order to both discover more about Detroit for herself and to shed light on the multifaceted nature of a place that is often negatively characterized in the public consciousness. Morisseau’s profile has risen in the years since the McCarter reading of Paradise Blue;
in fact, the final play in her Detroit Trilogy, Skeleton Crew, was on the list of top ten most-produced plays in the American theatre for the 2017-2018 season.

Carroll has a long history at McCarter; she first came to the theater with her father, Baikida Carroll, who is a longstanding friend and collaborator of Artistic Director and Resident Playwright Emily Mann. In 2005, Carroll returned to McCarter after graduating college as the Directing Intern for the 2005-2006 season, where she worked as an assistant director and producing assistant on mainstage shows including August Wilson’s Gem of the Ocean and Christopher Durang’s Miss Witherspoon. Since then, her professional career has taken off and she has directed at regional theaters across the country, including three productions and numerous readings of Morisseau’s plays.

After Carroll’s lauded productions of The Piano Lesson and Intimate Apparel delighted and moved McCarter audiences in recent seasons, Detroit ’67 is an especially exciting homecoming. With Carroll’s dramaturgical background, her focus on history, and her facility working with actors on nuanced dialogue and character relationships, she is the perfect director to bring Morisseau’s sharp, detailed, and rich writing to life on the McCarter stage.
PLAYWRIGHT'S RULES FOR ENGAGEMENT

From playwright, Dominique Morisseau

Consider this an invitation to be yourselves in this audience.

You are allowed to laugh audibly.

You are allowed to have audible moments of reaction and response.

My work welcomes a few "um hmms" and "uhn uhhnns" should you need to use them. Just maybe in moderation. Only when you really need to vocalize.

This can be church for some of us, and testifying is allowed. This is also live theatre and the actors need you to engage with them in a way that doesn't distract or thwart their performance.

Please be an audience member that joins with the village, either silently or vocally, in support of the journey we will take collectively.

Exhale together. Laugh together. Say "amen" should you need to.

This is community.

Let's go.
Motivation for Motown Worksheet

Read the lyrics below and then complete the accompanying questions.

"Dancing in the Street"
By Martha and the Vandellas

1. Calling out around the world
2. Are you ready for a brand new beat
3. Summer's here and the time is right
4. For dancing in the street

5. They're dancing in Chicago (dancing in the street)
6. Down in New Orleans (dancing in the street)
7. In New York City (dancing in the street)

8. All we need is music, sweet music
9. There'll be music everywhere
10. There'll be swinging, swaying, and records playing
11. Dancing in the street

12. Oh, it doesn't matter what you wear
13. Just as long as you are there
14. So come on, every guy, grab a girl
15. Everywhere around the world

16. They'll be dancing (dancing in the street)
17. They're dancing in the street (dancing in the street)

18. It's an invitation across the nation
19. A chance for folks to meet
20. There'll be laughing, singing, and music swinging
21. Dancing in the street

22. Philadelphia, P-A (dancing in the street)
23. Baltimore and D.C. now (dancing in the street)
24. Can't forget the Motor City (dancing in the street)
25. All we need is music, sweet music
26. There'll be music everywhere
27. There'll be swinging, swaying, and records playing
28. Dancing in the street

29. Oh, it doesn't matter what you wear
30. Just as long as you are there
31. So come on, every guy, grab a girl
32. Everywhere around the world

33. They're dancing
34. They're dancing in the street (dancing in the street)
35. Way down in L.A. (dancing in the street)
36. Every day, they're dancing in the street (dancing in the street)
37. Let's form a big, strong line (dancing in the street)
38. Get in time, we're dancing in the street (dancing in the street)
39. Across the ocean blue (dancing in the street)
40. Me and you, we're dancing in the street

1. What stands out to you about the song lyrics? 

2. Who do you think is singing this song?

3. Who are they singing to?
4. What is the singer trying to say?

5. What do you think is the significance of the cities that the lyricist chose to address?

6. Only one city is called by their nickname (Line 24). What city? Why might the lyricist have chosen to do that?

7. The song was recorded in 1964 and was later adopted as a civil rights anthem. Why might that be considering the lyrics?

8. What is the overall tone of the song? How do the lyrics make you feel?

9. What do you expect the music that goes with these lyrics to sound like?
“People Get Ready”
By the Impressions

1. People get ready, there’s a train a-comin'
2. You don’t need no baggage, you just get on board
3. All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
4. Don’t need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

5. So people get ready for the train to Jordan
6. Picking up passengers coast to coast
7. Faith is the key, open the doors and board ‘em
8. There’s hope for all among those loved the most

9. There ain’t no room for the hopeless sinner
10. Who would hurt all mankind just to save his own, believe me now
11. Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner
12. For there’s no hiding place against the kingdom’s throne

13. So people get ready, there’s a train a-comin'
14. You don’t need no baggage, you just get on board
15. All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
16. Don’t need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

1. **What stands out to you about the song lyrics?**
   
   
   
   
   

2. **Who do you think is singing this song?**
   
   
   
   
   

3. **Who are they singing to?**
   
   
   
   
   

Created by McCarter Theatre. 2018.
4. What is the singer trying to say? 

5. What do you think they are referring to in Line 1 when the lyricist talks about a train coming? 

6. What role does religion play in this song? 

7. Who might Line 10 be referring to? 

8. What is the overall tone of the song? How do the lyrics make you feel? 

9. What do you expect the music that goes with these lyrics to sound like?
### Theater Reviewer’s Checklist

Use this form as an aid to heighten your awareness before the play and prompt your memory after it.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production:</th>
<th>Date of Production:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Playwright:</td>
<td>Venue: McCarter Theatre Center</td>
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#### Key ✓ Element: TEXT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major characters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main ideas/themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of language</td>
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<td>Other textual elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to theater’s architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to world of the play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other scenic elements</td>
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#### Key ✓ Element: COSTUMES

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<td>Relationship to characters of the play</td>
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<td>Other costume elements</td>
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Adapted from Christopher Thaiss’ and Rick Davis’ *Writing for the Theatre* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), p. 45
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Key Element</th>
<th>LIGHTING</th>
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<td>Other directorial elements</td>
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