

Athol Fugard: A Timeline

- 1932 Harold Athol Lanigan Fugard is born June 11 in Middleburg, Cape Province, South Africa.

- 1938 Fugard attends Marist Brothers College, a private Catholic primary school.



1951-1953 Fugard attends the University of Cape Town, studying philosophy. He drops out after two years.

1953-1955 Fugard travels throughout Africa, serves on the merchant ship SS Graigaur (where he begins writing, later to be celebrated in his 1999 autobiographical play *The Captain's Tiger: A Memoir for the Stage*) and works as a freelance journalist for the *Evening Post* in Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Athol Fugard as a young man (left) with his cousin Johnnie on a Saturday walk through a bustling Port Elizabeth Main Street. (*Cousins: A Memoir*)

- 1956 Fugard marries Sheila Meiring, a South African actress and writer.

- Late 1950s The Fugards start The Circle Players in Port Elizabeth.

- 1956 He writes his first play, *Klaas and The Devil*; it is produced in Cape Town in 1957. His play *No-Good Friday* is produced in Cape Town, South Africa, then, in 1958, at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg, South Africa.

- 1957 *Nongogo* is produced in Cape Town, then in Sheffield, England, in 1974, and in New York City in 1978. *The Cell* is produced in Cape Town.

- 1958-1961 Fugard works with the Union Artists in Johannesburg. (The Union of South African Artists, known as Union Artists, was formed in the early 1950s to protect black artists from being exploited.)

- 1958 Fugard is a clerk in the native Commissioners Court in Fordsburg. He moves to Johannesburg. He is hired as the stage manager at the National Theatre Organisation.

- 1959 The Fugards move to London.

- 1960 Fugard begins writing *The Blood Knot*. It has one performance in Johannesburg in 1961 before being banned. It is produced later that year in London. It is produced Off-Broadway in 1964.

- 1961 The Fugards' daughter, Lisa, is born May 27. His father dies in October.

- 1961 Fugard premieres *The Blood Knot* with Zakes Mokae in Johannesburg at the Dorkay House.

- 1962 Fugard supports the anti-apartheid movement and encourages anti-apartheid demonstrations in London. *The Cure* is produced in South Africa.

- 1965 *Hello and Goodbye* is produced in Johannesburg; it plays at the Sheridan Square Playhouse in New York City in 1969.

- 1966 Fugard directs his new play *The Coat*.

- 1967 Fugard returns to South Africa. When the English television network BBC broadcasts *The Blood Knot* starring Jamaican actor Charles Hyatt as Zachariah and Fugard as Morris, the South African government seizes his passport.

- Late 1960s Fugard works with The Serpent Players, an interracial theater group.

- 1968 He writes *People Are Living There*. It is produced at the Hofmeyer Theatre, Cape Town, in 1969, then at Lincoln Center's Forum Theater in New York City in 1971. *The Occupation: A Script for Camera* is published in *Ten One-Act Plays*.



Willie Jonah (Old Man) and Angela Bassett (Lena) in the 2000 film version of *Boesman and Lena*. (www.iainfisher.com)

- 1969 *Boesman and Lena* is produced in Grahamstown, South Africa, then at Circle in the Square Theatre in New York City in 1970. *The Last Bus* is produced in Port Elizabeth.

- 1970 *Friday's Bread on Monday* is produced in Port Elizabeth.

- 1971 The South African government returns Fugard's passport and he is permitted to leave South Africa for England to direct his *Boesman and Lena*. *People Arriving There* is produced at the Forum Theater in New York. *The Coat* is published with Don MacLennan's *Third Degree* and is subtitled Two Experiments in Play-Making. *Orestes* is produced in Cape Town.

- 1972 *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* (written with John Kani and Winston Ntshona, actors with The Serpent Players) is produced in Cape Town, then on Broadway at the Edison Theatre in 1974. *The Island* (also written with Kani and Ntshona) is produced in Cape Town, then at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1973 and on



Athol Fugard (center) with actors John Kani (left) and Winston Ntshona, circa 1973. (*Evening Standard Hulton, Achive Getty Images*)

Broadway at the Edison Theatre in 1974. *Statements after an Arrest under the Immortality Act* is produced in Cape Town, then at London's Royal Court.

1974 Fugard works with the Space Theatre in Cape Town.

1975 *Dimetos* is produced in Edinburgh, then at the Comedy Theatre in London in 1976. It is produced in New York City in 1980.

1977 Fugard pens *The Guest: An Episode in the Life of Eugene Marais* (written with Ross Devenish).



James Earl Jones (from left), Maria Tucci and Harris Yulin in *A Lesson from Aloes*, written and directed by Athol Fugard, in its American premiere at Yale Repertory Theatre in 1980. (Photo by Gerry Goodstein)

1978 *A Lesson from Aloes* is produced in Johannesburg, then at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Conn., in 1979-1980. Later in 1980 it moves to Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre.



Lonny Price (from left), Zakes Mokae and Danny Glover in the Broadway premiere of *'Master Harold' ... and the Boys*, 1983. (*A Pictorial History of American Theatre*)

- 1980 *The Drummer* is produced in Louisville, Ky. Fugard's 1959 novel *Tsotsi* is published; the title means "hoodlums" in Afrikaans. His mother dies.

- 1982 *"Master Harold" ... and the Boys* is produced at Yale Repertory Theatre and is remounted later that year on Broadway at the Lyceum Theatre.

- 1983 Fugard publishes his *Notebooks: 1960-1977*.

- 1984 *The Road to Mecca* is produced at Yale Repertory Theatre. It plays at the Lyttelton Theatre in 1988.

- 1985 *The Blood Knot* is revived as *Blood Knot* in what Yale Repertory calls a 25th anniversary production. As with the original single-performance production in Johannesburg, Fugard directs and stars. Mokae also reprises his role.

The revival moves to the John Golden Theatre on Broadway (1985-1986).



John Kani (left) and Sean Taylor in the 1993 Donmar Warehouse production of *Playland*. (www.iainfisher.com)

1987 *A Place with the Pigs: A Personal Parable* is produced at Yale Repertory Theatre.

1989-90 *My Children! My Africa!* is produced by the New York Theatre Workshop at the Perry Street Theatre in New York City.

- 1992 Fugard writes *My Life*.

- 1993 *Playland* is produced at the Donmar Warehouse in London.

- 1994 Fugard's *Cousins: A Memoir* is published.

- 1995 *Valley Song* is produced at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, then at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ.

- 1998 *The Captain's Tiger: A Memoir for the Stage* is produced at the McCarter Theatre, then at the Manhattan Theatre Club, Stage II, in New York City.

- 2002 *Sorrows and Rejoicings* is produced at the Second Stage Theatre in New York City.

- 2004 Fugard writes *Exits and Entrances*.

- 2005 Fugard's novel *Tsotsi* is made into a movie and wins the 2005 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film of the Year in 2006. Fugard is honored with the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver for his "excellent contribution and achievements in the theatre" from the government of South Africa.

- 2006 Fugard premieres *Booitjie and the Oubaas* at Cape Town's Baxter Theatre

- 2007 Fugard's *Victory* premieres at the Theatre Royal in Bath.

- 2009 Fugard premieres *Coming Home* at Long Wharf Theater, New Haven, Conn.

Port Elizabeth for White South Africans



Athol Fugard (center) with his sister Glenda and their father. (*Cousins: A Memoir*)



Humewood Beach, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, circa 1957. (<http://www.mype.co.za>)



Jumping girls from Schadeberg's South Africa in the 1950s photos. (Photo by Jurgen Schadeberg)



KES (King Edward's VII School) schoolboys in Johannesburg, circa 1958. (Photo by Jurgen Schadeberg)

Former Port Elizabeth resident Gaston Crepelle and son in OK Bazaars, 1960. (Photo by Gaston Crepelle)



Union of South Africa Minister of the Interior T.E. Donges at bat during a cricket match, April, 1950. (Photo by Margaret Bourke White, Time and Life Pictures and Getty Images)



Zoo, from Schadeberg's South Africa in the 1950s photos. (Photo by Jurgen Schadeberg)



Port Elizabeth Main Street, circa 1953. (Photo by Gaston Crepelle)



Excerpts from Athol Fugard's *Notebooks: 1960-1977*

Port Elizabeth day: windy, very white. High cloud, wispy like smoke or cottonwool teased out until you can see through it. No colour was definite. Green of trees or grey distance, walls and men walking away and paper in the streets, all seemed the same through the smoky haze.

Autumn in P.E. comes as a slightly chilly wind-swept day. A few grey grey ones, a few clear ones — and with the latter, when the sun sets the yellow, lime-washed buildings glow with an orangy bright, reflected light.

Tonight a clear silent evening. A cricket starts up and in its short leaping chirp the suggestion of a panting — the same rhythm as if the earth was tired. Like a sound of the starts. Distant throb of the surf.

A street lamp hidden from view by a bush with huge velvety leaves. The edge of the leaves refracting the light in a serrated thread of silver like a strand of a cobweb in silhouette against a black sky So clear and precise that I could have traced the line with a pencil.

Two sounds: car door slamming and a woman laughing then a few syllables of scorn. For the rest, silence.

Port Elizabeth for Black or Coloured South Africans



A woman launders clothes by hand outside her brick and tin home in Alexandra on January 24, 1986. (Joanne Rathe for *Boston Globe*)

(Photo by Joanne Rathe for *Boston Globe*)



Soweto housing camp, Johannesburg, circa 2002. (www.trtravels.com)

Walmer Township



Khayelitsha Cape Town Township, circa 2006. (www.capetown.dj)

Walmer Township



On a Sunday afternoon, golfers practice on a dirt field overlooking Alexandra Township on February 23, 1986. (Photo by Joanne Rathe for *Boston Globe*)

Whites sit on a bus stop bench with blacks, February 1990. (Photo by Joanne Rathe for *Boston Globe*)



Townships: In South Africa, a township is a segregated town. During Apartheid, thanks in part to the Group Areas Act, townships became a place where native blacks and non-whites were forced to relocate, away from their homes which were now for "whites only". These townships are located on the outskirts of major

cultural and industrial centers/cities. Townships are overpopulated, under-resourced areas where one and two families will reside in a house of three to six rooms, and water is filled with diseases, and shacks and stores are created out of salvaged materials like metal scrap and mesh fencing.

'Master Harold' ... and the Boys in Production

'Master Harold' ... and the Boys began the same way that many of Fugard's works began, through improvisation with his collaborators John Kani and Winston Ntshona. This excerpt from Fugard's 1972 Notebooks refers to the first conception of 'Master Harold':

The image I presented to Johnny and Winston was three or four tables and chairs representing the lounge of a local hotel, crowded with a type of arrogant and self-satisfied white student being served by two black waiters. Time — Saturday night; structure — the two of them, waiters, in the lounge before the arrival of the first customer, then the crescendo of activity and tensions to the climax of last orders please'; and finally, the two of them alone again, as they tidy up and come to terms with another day in their lives.

Stripped away externals — red-nosed characterisation, effects (hundreds of bottles and glasses), orders — in an effort to find our basic challenge. Decided that this consisted of one table, one chair and their relationship to it as 'the servant'. Obviously the table and chair (empty) is a symbol of whiteness; they are black. A white master symbol — black servant relationship.

First exploration: prepare and place the table and chair, and then wait. Just wait. Winston placed the table and chair, and waited. Johnny took over, and waited. Winston took over and waited. Johnny took over and waited — finally Johnny replaced the table and chair.

Then analysed sub-text experiences. Gratifyingly rich. Their individual relationships to the table and chair — subordinate, resentful, dependent.

* Note: "After about a week that idea aborted and the next idea they took on led to Sizwe Bansi is Dead.

Productions of "Master Harold"

The world premiere of 'Master Harold' ... and the Boys, directed by Athol Fugard, was at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Conn., in March 1982. Zakes Mokae played Sam, Danny Glover played Willie and Zeljko Ivanek played Hally.

The play moved to Broadway's Lyceum Theatre in May 1982, again with Fugard as the director, Mokae as Sam and Glover as Willie. Lonny Price played Hally.



Zakes Mokae (center) with Lonny Price (left) and Danny Glover in the Broadway premiere of 'Master Harold' ... and the Boys, 1983. (Playbill)

"When the tension erupts in 'Master Harold,' it rips through the audience so mercilessly that the Lyceum falls into an almost deathly hush. [...] we're forced to confront our own capacity for cruelty — and to see all too clearly just who it is we really hurt when we give in to it."

— Frank Rich, *The New York Times*

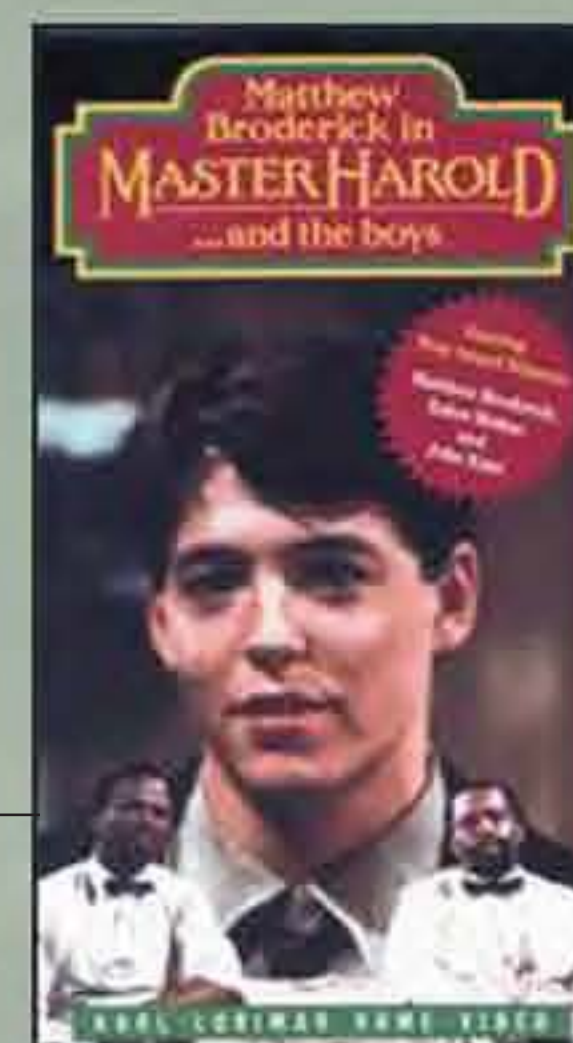
After initially being banned in South Africa, 'Master Harold' premiered with a South African cast in March 1983 in Johannesburg.

"Athol Fugard's confessional drama about a white adolescent's initiation in the uses of racial power has come home to South Africa, and it left its multiracial audience ... visibly shaken and stunned. ... Many, blacks and whites, were crying."

— Joseph Lelyveld, *The New York Times*

In 1984, a televised version of 'Master Harold' was created. Zakes Mokae recreated the role of Sam. John Kani, Fugard's longtime collaborator, played Willie, and Matthew Broderick was Hally.

Movie poster for 1985 telefilm. (www.imdb.com)



'Master Harold' has been staged many times throughout the world. It was last revived on Broadway in 2003. It starred Danny Glover, this time as Sam. Michael Boatman played Willie, and Christopher Denham was Hally.



Christopher Denham (left) and Danny Glover in Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of 'Master Harold' ... and the Boys, 2003. (Photo by Joan Marcus)

In 2005, Steppenwolf Theatre Co. produced the play as part of its Steppenwolf for Young Adults program. Cedric Young played Sam, Kenn E. Head was Willie and Nick Ferrin was Hally.

Cedric Young (from left), Nick Ferrin and Kenn E. Head in 'Master Harold' ... and the Boys for Steppenwolf for Young Adults, 2005. (Photo by Michael Brosilow)



A film version of 'Master Harold,' adapted for the screen by Nicky Rebelo, recently finished filming. It stars Ving Rhames (*Pulp Fiction*, *Mission Impossible I-III*) as Sam, Patrick Mofokeng (*Invictus*) as Willie and Freddie Highmore (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Finding Neverland*) as Hally. The film is being directed by Emmy Award-winning director Lonny Price, who played Hally in the original Broadway production. The film is due to come out in early 2010.

Movie poster for 2010 feature film. (www.acshowbiz.com)

