Central celebrates African-American history
Tyson Miller of Yakima recently graduated with academic distinction, earning four degrees in four years at Central: bachelor of science degrees in biology, chemistry, physics, and a bachelor of arts in mathematics. "Chemistry was my first love, and I wanted to get a B.S. in chemistry and a B.S. in biology," said Miller. "Then I decided I wanted to go into clinical toxicology, with medical school in the future. It turned out, for some reason, I ended up applying to, advanced mathematics was needed. I had to have four quarters of calculus for the chemistry degree anyway, so I added on the mathematics." Miller looked up what he needed for a physics degree and I found out by my upper division mathematics and chemistry credits. The same credits are also needed for the chemistry degree. So, I only needed electromagnetism, modern physics and a lab series to get the degree in physics, too."

To attain Miller's degrees, he took up to 18 credits per quarter (12 credits are considered full-time enrollment at Central).

Studio East, the prime take-out dining location on Central's campus, has an exciting new look. The dining room has been completely remodeled and awaits new and returning students for fall quarter 1995.

In an effort to make the dining experience friendlier, the decor has been renovated to include comfortable booths, higher tables with a bar and a lounge area for dessert. The atmosphere is warm and inviting, seating is comfortable, and diners are surrounded by additional under lighting and posters on the wall.

FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE RAINBOW ISN'T ENUF

In honor of Black History Month, the CWU Theater Arts Department staged the production of *For Colored Girls who have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow isn't Enuf*. It is the first black drama at CWU.

Written by award-winning playwright, educator and novelist Ntozake Shange, the play depicts the emotional and physical struggles of seven black women as they try to find themselves in a trying world. Guest Director, Denise M. Thimes, the first woman to direct at CWU, feels the play is a "celebration of sistah addresses every issue in every aspect in a woman's life."

Originally written as a series of poems, Shange transformed the powerful poetry into a "choreopoem" with music and dance. The play first opened in 1974 and has since become a classic of black theater. The performance was well received by both students and the community, and the production received critical acclaim for its powerful performances and thought-provoking themes.

The play was performed in the Studio East dining room on Central's campus and was free to all. The performance was a hit, with audiences cheering and applauding at the end. The audience was diverse, and the play resonated with everyone in some way. The play's message of love, hope, and resilience continued to resonate long after the final curtain.
Special Thanks
John Drinkwater; Keith Champagne;
Ron Himes and Black Repertory Theatre of St. Louis;
Dr. Bobby Cummings; Jane Rider;
Farrell Merit Scholarship Fund; and
CWU Black Student Union

Theatre Arts Department
Leslee Caud ................................ Sales Director
Betty E. Evans (emeritus) ...................... Playwriting, Literature
R. Dutch Fritz ................................ Design, Technology,
       McConnell Stage Manager
Suzie Gulezian ................................ Department Secretary
Dude Hatten ................................ Intro., Appreciation
James Hawkins ................................. Youth Drama, Children's Theatre
Ellen Hess ...................................... Costume Shop Manager
Tan Huaixiang ................................ Costume Design, Make-up
Brenda Hubbard ............................... Acting, Directing, Voice, Literature
Richard Leineweaver (emeritus) ............ Acting, Directing
Harris Smith ................................. Acting, Voice, Movement
Milo Smith (emeritus) ......................... History, Literature
Wesley Van Tassel ............................ Chair, Acting, Management, Directing
Mark C. Zetterberg ......................... Design, Technology, History

Don't Miss
I Can't Keep Running In Place  (Senior Directing Project)
Theatre Arts senior Jasmine Grevstad directs this
insightful musical comedy by Barbara Schottenfeld in which six
women attend a series of assertiveness training sessions. March
9, 10 and 11 -- 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre

CWU Theatre Arts
In Cooperation With
Student Affairs/Diversity
and ASCWU-Student Activities
Presents

February 16, 17, 18 -- 8 p.m.
February 19 -- 2 p.m.
February 23, 24, 25 -- 8 p.m.
TOWER THEATRE
1995
for colored girls who have considered suicide
when the rainbow is enuf
by Ntozake Shange

CAST
Lady in Red         LaChandra Carter
Lady in Orange     Debra Applin
Lady in Yellow     Paulette Jonville
Lady in Brown      Nickola Wilson
Lady in Green      Dominica Myers
Lady in Blue       Bobby Cummings
Lady in Purple     LaChandra Carter

Direct by Denise M. Thimes

All praises due Allah for this celebration -- celebration of sisterhood! I count it as
and a blessing to be the first black woman to direct the first black drama here at Central,
a 110 year span.

Let me be the first to inform you that “for colored girls...” is not just a play for or
women of color, but it is a play celebrating all women. I personally feel that the pains and
shame and guilt, and the mental, physical, and emotional abuse suffered by the
in this play are the realities of our mothers, grandmothers, sisters and aunts. Thus these
realities in our families and communities have no color! This play touches and addresses
issue in every aspect in a woman’s life that directly or indirectly affects her. And I
and Central and this community for taking a chance and allowing our voices to be heard. I
Allah for the playwright — Obie Award Winner Ntozake Shange for sharing her hopes,
hopes and experiences with us thru poem.

I want to especially thank Dr. Bobby Cummings, Keith Champagne, and John
water for their untiring efforts and voice to get this play done. Thank you to my student
at Dominica Myers, the efforts of the Black Student Union, and to a wonderful cast of
acted and special women whom I’ve come to know and admire, put together before I got
the incredible Brenda Hubbard. Thank you to a fine production staff for your skills and
love. Special thanks also to a very special friend — Milton X and to my real sister Kelle and
sisters for allowing me to come and share my gift with you, while they tend to our new gift
Jabril. Last, and certainly not least, thank you to this fine community and the entire
Theatre Arts Department headed by Dr. Wesley Van Tassel. Peace!

-- Denise Thimes

Production Staff
Producer                     Brenda Hubbard
Production Coordinator      Dominica Myers
Scenic Design                Nathan Stusher
Costume Design               Heidi Muehlbauer
Sound Design                 Colleen Smet
Lighting Design              R. Dutch Fritz
Technical Director           Nathan Stusher
Properties Chief             Tom McNelly
Stage Manager                Colleen Smet

Production Crews
Production Assistant         Amy Jaime
Costume Shop Supervisor      Ellen Hess
Master Electrician           Robert Sherman
Sound Engineer               Nathan Stusher
Sound Operator               Nathan Stusher
Light Board Operator         Aaron Stein
Scene Shop Carpenters         Phil Smith, Scott Majcher,
                             Jason Montgomery, Nathan Mirro, David Crimean, Aaron Stein, Nathan Stusher
Scene Shop Assistants        Mandy Bailey, Brandy Black,
                             Troy Gibson, Lori Johnson, Kay Miles, Seth Mullinax, Nathan Stusher, Son Tissell,
                             Kerri Van Auken, Tom McNelly, Molly Clarke
Costume Shop Staff            Erin Perona, Wendy Sparks,
                             Barbara Stetler, Brenda Croner, Kanae Okenyama, Mystina Perry
Costume Shop Assistants      Jasmine Groesend, Kimberly Edwards
Wardrobe Chief               Dina Franz, Tara Remmer, Mary Ellen Muschman
Dresser                      Heidi Muehlbauer
Makeup                       Katie White
Publicity Staff              Heidi Muehlbauer
                           Karen Everett, Torina Smith
House Manager                Colleen Smet, Danny Thomas, Athena McElrath, Jason Schiessl
                           Stephanie Tofly
CWU arts department is making history with African-American play

In honor of Black History month, Central Washington University theater arts department is making history with "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf," the first theater production in the institution's 104-year history with an all African-American cast and director.

The six-member cast for the CWU presentation of "For Colored Girls..." includes Debra Appling, Edmonds; LaChanda Carter, Kennewick; Professor Bobby Cummings, Ellensburg; Paulette Jonville, Tacoma; Dominica Myers, Seattle; and Nickola Wilson, Bothell.

CWU students will also have the opportunity to lend their design talents to the production.

Set designer is Nathan Shuster, Tacoma. Heidi Muelbauer, Enumclaw, serves as costume designer. The positions of stage manager and sound designer fall to CWU sophomore Colleen Smet, Wenatchee.
CWU THEATRE ARTS
Produced in Cooperation with Student Affairs/Diversity & ASCWU—Student Activities
A play by Ntozake Shange
Directed by Guest Artist
Denise Thimes
FOR COLORED GIRLS... is a collection of vivid narrative pieces performed by young African-American women. The play captures their feelings and goes beyond that to achieve its own kind of universality.
FEB. 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 1998
8:00 p.m.
Tower Theatre
Matinee Feb. 19, 2 p.m.
TICKETS: (509) 963-1774
Tower Box Office
General $6; Students & Seniors $4
Thursdays' 1/2 price
MC/VISA; Group Rates Avail.

2 x 4
2/6

West/Leisl —
Please let me know of any changes ASAP — thanks
Jan 925/414
Biography

Ntozake Shange is the author of For Colored Girls... Spell #7, and A Photograph: Lovers In Motion, the poetry volumes, Nappy Edges, A Daughter’s Geography, Ridin’ the Moon in Texas, and From Okra to Greens. In addition to her novel, Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo, Ms. Shange has adapted Betsey Brown-The Novel to a play, Betsey Brown: A Rhytymn & Blues Musical with Emily Mann and Kakida Carroll which opened at the McCarter Theater in the Spring of 1991. She Heard Eric Dolphy In Their Eyes will be presented by the Creation for Liberation Theater in London during the Winter Season. Ms. Shange’s work, The Love Space Demands: A Continuing Saga is part of the Crossroads Theater Genesis Project this year. Both “I Live in Music” and “Beneath the Necessity of Talking” performed with Ms. Shange’s band, Syllable (John Purcell- reeds, Jean-Paul Bourelly- guitars) are available on audio-cassette from the American Audio-Prose Library. Syllable appearing live with Ms. Shange is available on video-cassette from The San Francisco Poetry Center. Ms. Shange has worked and performed with innumerable artists including Dianne McIntyre Sounds- In Motion, Raymond Sawyer’s Afro-Asian Dance Company, Ed Mock’s West Coast Dance Works, and The Stanze Peterson Dance Company, as well as musicians David Murray, Fred Hopkins, Oliver Lake, Henry Threadgill, Billy Bang and the late Steve McCall.

Ms. Shange is the recipient of two Obies; one for her adaption of Brecht’s Mother Courage. She is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Chubb Fellow, a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts for Playwriting, and the MacDowell Colony. Among her many awards Ms. Shange has received the Medal of Excellence from Columbia University, The Los Angeles Times Book Review Prize for Poetry, two Audelco Awards, The Houston International Festival Prize for Literature, and a New York State Arts Council Grant for Poetry.

Ms. Shange is a committed educator, offering courses in the literature of people of color, feminist aesthetics, and writing and performance art, as the Mellon Distinguished Professor of Literature at Rice University, Artist-in-Residence at Villanova, and Writer-in-Residence at the Maryland Institute, College of Art, in Baltimore. Ms. Shange earned degrees in American Studies from Barnard College, B.A., and the University of Southern California, M.A.. She holds an Honorary Doctorate in the Humanities from the University of Missouri at St. Louis and Haverford College. Ms. Shange is on the Board of Directors Advisors of Yellow Silk, The New York Feminist Art Institute, Heresies Magazine, and Sangoma, An African-American Women’s Theater Collective. Ms. Shange is a member of the Dramatist’s Guild, Poets and Writers, PEN, and the Writer’s Guild of America.

Ms. Shange’s column appears regularly in Philadelphia’s REAL NEWS; articles and poetry may be found in Uncut Funk, Callaloo, Muleteeth, and Essence.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Leslie Curll, Wes Van Tassel
FROM: B.A.
DATE: 12/6/94
RE: Colored Girls P.R. - Denise Thimes - Director

I think we have the opportunity for several stories surrounding this show.

1) 1st week of Quarter - Announcing her as a Guest Artist on Campus - In Community
2) Publicizing her solo performance at First Pres. Church
   Time date T.B.A.
3) Interview with Ntozake Shange via telephone Set up with

4) Black History Month stories for T.V. Interviews,
   Invite Yakima T.V. stations for news coverage.
   Trova Hutchins expressed interest several years
   ago in *Master Harold*

5) Review of Show

6) Special campus paper interviews with
   Cast and Director

Please note enclosed material on Shange & Thimes,
let me know how I can help.
As the daughter of radio legend Lou “Fatha” Thimes, perhaps Denise Thimes was destined to hit a note with her first cry in this world. Not unlike her brother “The Real J.R.” of Soul 63, Denise has worked to become a legend in her own time.

A singer and actress, Thimes calls herself a messenger who uses the language of music. She also considers herself a diva by her own definition, as “one who has accomplished what she wants by getting through all the ‘crap’ along the way by saying ‘yes’ when others insist on saying ‘no’ and always, always keeping God first.”

In St. Louis today, Thimes enjoys quite a following. Most organizations would agree that “Denise Thimes” on the entertainment bill will surely bring a crowd. But she shares her success with many, many people who have paved the way for her.

“Fatha” and Mildred Thimes’ stem guidance, direction and undying support were always foremost in raining their children. Denise considers herself a “chip off the old block” because she understands the pitfalls of life and has always showed determination in everyday life. Her grandmother, “Big Mom” Mary DeWalt, also made her impact on Denise stressing that God must remain first.

Armed with confidence, family support and a strong desire to sing, Thimes attended New Sunny Mount Baptist Church, where the church pianist, Bertha Smith, detected her singing potential, and Earlene Stiles nurtured it when she became a member of the Young Adult Choir. At Cupples Elementary School, Thimes got special attention from Marion Evans who first sparked her interest in the theater. Many years later at St. Louis Community College at Meramec, Frances Gillette furthered the lessons and helped shape the singing style that would become Denise’s alone.

In 1980 Thimes moved to Atlanta to attend Spelman College. It was there that she would realize many of her dreams. First declaring music as her major, she would later switch to theater.

Under the direction of the late Linda Green, chairperson of Spelman’s Theatre Department, Thimes nurtured her talent and love for the stage. Talent, it seems, was all around her. Lamar Alford (from the original production of Godspell) was the Dramaturg-in-Residence at Morehouse College. He produced several “broadway-level” productions with Spike Lee as the stage manager. Thimes’ first production was during Lee’s senior year.

“I later had the opportunity to work with Spike Lee doing background music in School Daze. By that time I knew he had quite a future ahead of him. He was a calm and peaceful director.”

While in school or during acting stints in Atlanta, Thimes found herself very busy working her career or looking for opportunities. She got the opportunity to work with Tom Jones, the artistic director of Jomandi Theatre, in a production of Showgirls with Ja’Net Dubois (Good Times) as lead. Thimes would later play the lead role in
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom for Jomandi as well. While working with the Just Us Theatre Company, Thimes secured a part in the company's production of PO. This successful production toured (Sicily, Palermo) Italy for three weeks.

Always active, Denise won first place in a Coors Talent Contest while back home in St. Louis returning from Italy. Later, while on an extended vacation back in Atlanta, her singing exposure increased with engagements at The Point and Walter Mitty's Jazz Club.

As most artists would agree, "gigs never last long enough, so I went to work as a recruiter for Morris Brown College, got fired and came back home," Thimes remembered.

An interesting call came some time later that the producers of The Cosby Show were looking for extras for the "Hillman College" episode at Spelman College.

"I was excited and I wanted in," Thimes explained. "When I got there, they had everyone they needed but I didn't care. I went to my friend Jo-Moore Stewart who was acting as the liaison between the Cosby producers and Spelman. She told me to just sit right next to her. So...when the camera pans across the crowd in that episode, there I am, right next to the Huxtables."

Later she was chosen as a consultant for a day by the producers of A Different World. "As you know Hillman is Spelman, Thimes continued, "and all the four years I was at Spelman I was an RA. I told them about the wonderful times and the tragic times of college life."

St. Louis is no stranger to Denise Thimes, despite her long list of Atlanta credits. Many know of her performances with the St. Louis Black Repertory Company in Mahalia's Song and her work with the St. Louis Imaginary Theatre, the touring arm of of the Rep Theatre, where she earned her Equity card. She presently works as a theatre artist with the Unity Theatre Ensemble, the Resident Theatre Company at the Katherine Dunham Center for the Performing Arts, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. It was with the Unity Theatre Ensemble that Artistic Director, Ralph Greene, encouraged her to try her hand at directing what turned out to be a very highly acclaimed production of Ntozake Shange's For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf.

Never letting go of her singing career, Thimes has worked with and garnered the support of Prah Williams, Mae Wheeler, The Bosman Twins, Prince Wells and Chad Evans. She has performed in many night clubs including Gene Lynn's, Hannigans, Moose Lounge, Two Black Cats [and currently at The Grand Avenue Bistro] with pianist Joseph Diamond.

Considered one of the most distinctive vocalists in St. Louis, Thimes describes herself as a "stylist singer" who doesn't want to be restricted to any one musical form. "I love all forms of music," she added.

What is the quality about Denise Thimes that compels everyone to make such colorful, lyrical descriptions about her voice? Maybe she has a special something, a vocal trademark that comes with the "Thimes."

Reprinted by permission from Take Five, October 1992
"Denise Thimes - DIVA TIME" by Chuck Offutt
ADDENDUM TO THE BIO.

RECENTLY TOURED GERMANY, SWEDEN, AND NORWAY WITH THE GOLDEN GOSPEL SINGERS.

- NO LONGER STAFF ASSISTANT AT THE SIUE-KATHERINED DUNHAM CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, INSTEAD I WORK AS A CONSULTANT.
- AM RECENTLY ENJOYING MY NEW ROLE—MOTHER TO 7-MONTH OLD JABRIIL.
CWU MAKES BLACK HISTORY IN FEBRUARY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For PUBLICATION Feb. 3, 1995
Contact: Leslee Caul, 963-1339

While Americans reflect on Black History this February, the CWU Theatre Arts Department is making history with “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf,” the first theatre production in the college’s 104 year history with an all African-American cast and director.

“For Colored Girls . . .,” a choreopoem by Ntozake Shange, is being produced in cooperation with the Office of Minority Affairs and the Black Student Union, and is currently in rehearsal under the direction of Guest Artist Denise Thimes. Ms. Thimes, a resident of St. Louis, MO, is a member of the Actor’s Equity Association and the Screen Actor’s Guild, as well as an accomplished jazz singer. During her stay in Ellensburg Ms. Thimes is presenting a series of jazz workshops for students. She is also scheduled to share her vocal talents at Ellensburg’s First Presbyterian Church on (date).

Playwright Shange combines music, dance and storytelling in a unique style of drama that gives insight to the voice of African-American women in our society. The fire and feeling of Shange’s work has captivated audiences since the Broadway and international success of “For Colored Girls . . .” which went on to become a best-selling book and then won critical acclaim in a television version of PBS. Besides her success as a playwright, Shange is also an accomplished novelist, poet and performer. Her numerous awards include two Obies, the Medal of Excellence from Columbia University, The Los Angeles Times Book Review Prize for Poetry, two Audelco Awards, The Houston International Festival Prize for Literature and a New York State Arts Council Grant for Poetry. Additionally she is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Chubb Fellow, and a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts for Playwriting.

The six-members cast includes: Debra Applin, (Edmonds); LaChandra Carter (Kennewick); CWU Professor Bobby Cummings (Ellensburg); Paulette Jonville (Tacoma); Dominica Myers (Seattle); and Nickola Wilson, (Bothell).

CWU students will also have the opportunity to lend their design talents to the production. Set Designer is Nathan Shuster, (Tacoma). Heidi Muelbauer, (Enumclaw) serves as Costume Designer. The positions of Stage Manager and Sound Designer fall to CWU sophomore Colleen Smet, (Wenatchee).

Because of the realistic language in this play it is recommended for those 17 and older. “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf” runs Feb. 16-18 and 23-25 at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. There is also a special matinee Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets are currently on sale in the Tower Box Office, located in McConnell on the CWU campus. Tickets may be purchased with VISA or MasterCard by phoning 963-1774. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 90 minutes prior to each performance.

XXX
Course Description or Outline: Attend the Black Theatre Network's National Conference to explore potential of guest speakers for Production of Colored Girls. Serve as assistant director and production coordinator for guest director Michelle Blackman, recruiting African-American women to act in production and students to work backstage. Execute all promotions and P.R. throughout area and to include Black History Month activities. Assist in the overall coordination of the production.
May 12, 1994

Professor Catherine Sands, Chair
Farrell Merit Scholarship Committee
Central Washington University
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Greetings and thank you for the opportunity to apply for the Farrell Merit Scholarship. The project which I would like to present to you is that of Project Coordinator and Assistant Director for the Theater Arts/Black Student Union/Student Activities production of For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf, a poetic drama by Ntozake Shange.

“For Colored Girls...”, a choreopoem, tells the stories of seven African-American women, using storytelling, character interaction, music, and dance. This powerful piece will be a new and exciting learning experience for the Theatre Department, the students on campus, and for members of local communities because not only will it give them a look at a unique style of drama, but it will also give them a new insight into the voice of the African-American woman in society. The young women in the Black Student Union have shown wonderful enthusiasm and interest in the show since I first proposed the idea of doing the show on a small scale in honor of Black History Month. Now that the Theatre Department and Student Activities have given us the opportunity and support to do the show on a grander scale, we see it as a source of pride that we will be the first group to do an African-American drama on Central’s campus.

We have chosen Michelle Blackmon, a very accomplished and reputable professional director, choreographer, and actor, as the director for our show. A graduate of Howard and American Universities, Ms. Blackmon has directed over a dozen plays and musicals similar to “For Colored Girls...” and has acted and danced in dozens more. We are very excited to have Ms. Blackmon’s experience and expertise as a professional director and we hope that she can serve as a mentor to the young people involved in the production.

My part in this production will be to serve as Project Coordinator and Assistant Director, a challenging role that will consist of many duties and prove to be absolutely imperative to the success of the production as a source of entertainment, cultural enrichment,
and educational value. The first of my duties will be to attend the Black Theatre Network’s National Conference in Chicago where I will be able to make important contacts for guest speakers, discuss the impact of African-American drama with professional actors and directors, and possibly meet Ntozake Shange and discuss “For Colored Girls...” with her. Overall, the conference will provide me with valuable information, confidence, and experience to fulfill the leadership position which I will be undertaking in the months ahead.

Fall Quarter 1994 will find me meeting with Ms. Blackmon in Seattle and with potential actors (as well as all African-American women on campus) here at Central. Any information that needs to be relayed between the two parties will be done through me. Potential actors may gain assistance with audition pieces for the show through me if necessary. I will make all of the arrangements for Ms. Blackmon’s housing, meals, and childcare accommodations at this time so that they will be secured for the rehearsal period in the winter. Arrangements for special presentations of portions of the play will be made available to professors and regional schools for educational purposes.

Rehearsals for the show begin in the Winter Quarter of 1995 when I will begin assistant directing. My first concern will be that Ms. Blackmon feel comfortable with her accommodations and that she becomes familiar with the town, campus, faculty members and students. Next I will begin recruiting and training backstage and technical crews. I will also be in charge of all publicity such as flyers, posters, newspaper articles and interviews, and a Black History Month/”For Colored Girls...” display in the SUB display case. I will oversee the making of the show’s program which will contain an educational supplement promoting Black History Month. When Ms. Blackmon’s five weeks are over, I will provide leadership and guidance for the cast and crew in her absence. A thorough written account of all of my undertakings involving the production will be submitted to the Farrell Merit Scholarship Committee along with a videotape of the show.

My advisor for this project will be Assistant Professor Brenda Hubbard. Ms. Hubbard has been my director, acting coach, and academic advisor this year and I feel very secure knowing that she will be monitoring my activities as well as giving me wonderful advice on how to accomplish such a large task in an orderly and sufficient manner.

It is possible that “For Colored Girls...” could become a continuing project, touring in the Spring of 1995 and then possibly becoming a special quarterly show for Theater 101 classes for the
1995-96 school year and the years to come. A videotape (with the permission of author, Ntozake Shange) can be stored and used for educational purposes from year to year.

As the only African-American Theatre Arts major at Central, I am excited beyond belief at the prospect of working on a project that touches on both my major area of study and cultural heritage. I hope that you will consider my proposal for its significance to my educational needs and for its significance to the cultural enrichment of the students on this campus.

Cordially Yours,

[Signature]

Dominica A. Myers
Kamola Hall
501 E. 8th #319
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7623
For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide
When the Rainbow is Enuf

Project Coordinator/
Assistant Director:
Dominica Myers

Project Timetable

Summer Quarter 1994

* Make contacts with potential guest speakers, including author of “For Colored Girls...”, Ntozake Shange.
* Make notes of all workshops and events attended.

Fall Quarter 1994

* Invite all African-American women on campus to attend an informational meeting about “For Colored Girls...” and discuss the issues contained in it.
* Inform potential actors of audition dates.
* Assist inexperienced actors with preparing their audition pieces.
* Meet with Director Michelle Blackmon to discuss audition and production preparations.
* Act as a contact person, relaying information between actors and director.
* Continue and conclude the search for potential guest speakers.
* Make arrangements for Ms. Blackmon’s meals and housing for the five weeks that she will be staying with us.
* Search for a suitable childcare worker for the rehearsal period.
* Talk with professors from various departments and schedule presentations by the cast and director for select classes.
* Perform any miscellaneous tasks that may be requested by Ms. Blackmon or by Producer Brenda Hubbard.

Winter 1995

* Recruit and train backstage and technical crews for the show.
* Recruit ushers to work the shows.
* Arrange pre and post show events and discussions.
* Arrange to have a portion of the show performed in the SUB with a discussion following.
* Coordinate BSU members to create a display in the SUB display case promoting both the show and Black History Month.
* Write press releases, compose an ad for news publication, and arrange any interviews with the actors or director for campus or local newspapers.
* Oversee the making of the program, including an educational supplement to go with it.
* Oversee the making and distribution of promotional flyers and posters.
* Provide Ms. Blackmon with a proper tour of Ellensburg, the campus, and the theatre facilities.
* See that Ms. Blackmon is given proper accommodations for housing, meals, and childcare during her stay.
* Acquaint Ms. Blackmon with students and faculty members.
* Serve as Assistant Director to Ms. Blackmon during and after the rehearsal period.
* Provide leadership to the actors and crew during times when the director is absent (i.e. when Ms. Blackmon's contracted five weeks are up.)
* Make a videotaped recording of the performance of the show.
* Make arrangements for the video tape to be preserved for future educational use.
* Perform any miscellaneous tasks that may be requested by Ms. Blackmon or by Producer Brenda Hubbard.
Dominica Myers
Production Assistant:
“For Colored Girls...”

Project Summary as of December 9, 1994

The Black Theatre Network Conference in Chicago

I wasn’t quite sure what to expect when I arrived at the Bismark Hotel in downtown Chicago last July 23rd for this conference, but I sure was in for quite a treat. The first thing that I noticed right away as the different conferees walked into the lobby for registration was that I was one of the youngest people attending the conference. Most of the people attending the conference were university professors and of the few students who were there, most of them were graduate students from large universities such as Yale, UCLA, and University of Pittsburgh. I felt very out of place and “little” seeing the calibre of people that I would be spending the next five days with, but I knew that I couldn’t just sit around in a corner and be shy the whole time, so I did what Brenda Hubbard (my professor) had told me to do when we met before I left. I sat down next to a couple of older looking women who looked like they knew what they were doing there and said hello. From there things felt a little better because I had someone to talk to. They let me know what to expect from the conference and reassured me that I would eventually meet everyone and be having lots of fun...and they were right!

The conference officially opened with the “Libation,” which was the opening ceremony. Two drummers and three dancers came down the aisle wearing West African clothing and dancing and singing out their thanks to our African ancestors. Reverence to our African ancestry, roots, and heritage was quite prominent among the conferees throughout the five days and I noticed that many of the women around me, including myself, wore braids or natural, unprocessed hairstyles and both men and women wore African-type clothing, jewelry and sandals. The overall feeling of African and African-American pride was something I had not felt free to feel in a long time (since going to a conservative, predominantly white school like Central), and this feeling made me even more excited about doing “For Colored Girls....”

After a long opening general session and installation service in which the officers of the BTN did a lot of talking and official business, we were all invited to a Fireside Chat with Vinette Carroll, the conference Honoree for Directing. Ms. Carroll was a very sweet, eccentric old woman of about eighty-plus years of age who wore a flat top and batman sneakers. She was greatly respected as THE elder of the conference and I realized why when I read her accomplishments listed in her bio in the conference program. She is the founder and Artistic Director of both the Urban Arts Theatre in
We then broke up into small groups where we met with group facilitators to discuss the two speakers and what we had gotten out of the conference thus far. The Women in Theatre Program (WTP), a group made up of mostly white women, had been having their conference jointly with the BTN since the day before and had joined us for this portion of the conference, and the group that I was with ended up being made up of mostly women from that conference, so I think most of the discussion that we had with that group was mostly about WTP concerns. For example, one of the women in the group said that she had been at our conference and felt such wonderful black pride coming from us and she wished she could have that same kind of pride in her own race, but that it was wrong to be proud of being white and that there was nothing to be proud of as far as being white goes. I’ve heard this statement before many times when leading panel discussions on racism here at Central and I’m pretty sure it will come up again with discussions about “For Colored Girls...” and my feeling on the matter was, and still is, this: white is not a culture, but a title made up centuries ago by “whites” for the purpose of privilege. For centuries, European immigrants have been cashing in their specific European cultural heritages for the privilege of being called a “white” American in a racist society. However, now that racism is no longer beneficial to them and the different ethnic minority groups are allowed to have and display cultural pride, whites are slightly jealous and think their missing out on something when really they are the ones who are reaping the benefits of centuries of the oppression of racial minorities. They should be happy! They didn’t much like hearing that and students here at Central don’t like hearing it either, but they can’t say it’s not true.

Anyway, we had some good conversation about race and gender as it relates to theatre, but we didn’t exactly solve. We reconvened with the rest of the group and each of the group leaders sort of announced to everyone what their respective groups discussed and that was that.

After a quick lunch, we came back to watch the six performances being put on by various groups. The performance space was tiny and totally inappropriate for theatre. It was just a small conference with a stage space that was maybe six by five feet and was only raised maybe six inches. Most of us could barely see, let alone hear each of the performers and it was really crowded and uncomfortable. But nonetheless, they performed. Debra Wicks did an excerpt from The Unbroken Heart by Karim Alrawi, a bio-drama based on the first 40 years of the life of blues singer Ethel Waters. Shannon Jackson and Katana Hall each did one woman shows that they had written themselves about themselves while Lisa Duncan & Company and Jackie Taylor & Ensemble did ensemble pieces. The one that I paid closest attention to was Elizabeth Alexander’s Diva Studies. Diva Studies was a reading of one of her unfinished pieces by four
women in a similar style to that of “For Colored Girls....” The piece was written as poetry with each woman having a distinct character, but with much interaction between the four of them. For the first time, after just reading “For Colored Girls...”, I actually had an idea of what it was going to sound and feel like when done out loud!

Following the performances and dinner was a “Talkback or Backtalk” session where we discussed the performances, but it turned out to be more than just critiquing. Shannon Jackson’s performance of White Noise, was a one woman show about the first BTN conference Shannon went to two years earlier when she won the Young Scholars Competition and what it was like to be white at that conference. Shange’s sister Ifa brought up the question of why there weren’t more black students writing about black theatre to win that competition (this year’s winner had also been white) and that started up a bit of a racial tension between the BTN and WTP members I think because later on when BTN President Lundeana Thomas was commenting on the part in Katana Hall’s Livin’ Womon, Breathing Black when these boys in her childhood had cut off her braids to see if they would explode (she was referring to this part as a racial misconception), one of the WTP conferences said to her, “Ya know, we have been going to your workshops and learning about your issues, but I don’t feel like you guys know anything about ours!” That pretty much set off an argument and it wasn’t very pretty (I personally thought that this was a funny thing for her to say to another woman—that she doesn’t know anything about women’s issues!) But the best part about this part of the workshop was when Shange stepped in and gave her little two cents worth about how we all had issues and that none were any more or less important. She just took complete command of the situation and everything seemed to be momentarily solved right then and there. I just loved how she talked with this attitude of “C’mom, people. Get real,” and everyone respected her as if she were an elder, even though she looked so young (early 40’s). The more I saw of her, the more I admired her.

The next morning I had yet another workshop to go to, and this one turned out to be probably the most important one I would attend. It was called “Black Productions on Predominantly White Campuses,” which was exactly what we would be doing here at Central. The first speaker was so boring that I don’t remember a word he said, but the second two were very helpful. The first, Dr. Renee Simmons, had done a production of “Born In the R.S.A.” (Republic of South Africa) at one of the State Universities of New York. The production was 50/50 black and white and she described how tough it was with the students who had never done theatre (most of them being black) because they were not used to the time committment nor the rule of being on time and ready to work at call time. She also described how they would sit separately from each other according to race
at the beginning of the rehearsal period, but by the end of it, they had grown so close to each other that the white students had problems doing violent scenes against the blacks. The sad thing about Dr. Simmons' story, though, was that that was the first black or racially mixed cast to ever be seen on that campus and because she, the only person who supported doing another one, was leaving, there probably won't be another one done there for a long time. The next speaker, Dr. Lundeana Thomas, talked about the production of "The Wiz" that she directed at Bowling Green State University with a racially mixed cast. Since the show was originally supposed to be done with an all black cast, Dr. Thomas decided to make some changes to the script to accommodate her white actors. For example, her wicked witch of the west became the wicked witch of the south (a southern belle!) and her tin man (a white actor underneath so much make-up that no one knew what race he was) was looking for his soul because Dr. Thomas felt that the heart of black people is found in their soul. After the presentations, I asked the speakers what they thought would be the best method of audition for inexperienced black actors and they said that doing a general talent show type audition worked for their respective shows because anything too structured, such as the usual one minute memorized monologue, might be too intimidating. They agreed that just allowing students to show what they do best would make them feel most comfortable and positive about the experience.

My next workshop was with Barbara Ann Teer, founder of the National Black Theatre of Harlem. Ms. Teer talked on self-empowerment and on getting in touch with ourselves spiritually. She showed us how to make a shrine to ourselves with a picture of ourselves and the elements of fire (a candle), water, earth (flowers), and air. She suggested daily meditation in front of our shrines to release tension and stress and also for daily affirmation. We then each had to get up and tell about a time when we felt powerful and fearless. I got up first and told about the time I auditioned for Grease here at Central and how good it felt to sing so loud that people out in the streets could hear (or so it felt), not realizing that Ms. Teer would expect to hear an example of that voice. I granted her wish and sang a little bit from that audition and it felt good to do that. Others got up and told some pretty amazing stories about times they needed to use their strength and I think we all sort of bonded momentarily. I really liked this session because it helped me remember to slow down and stay in tune with myself. After the nice, easy-going session with Ms. Teer, I wasn't quite ready for the rude awakening of the actor's workshop, which was facilitated by Joan W. Lewis and Clinton Turner Davis, two hard-nose directors who had worked with the best in the business. This workshop didn't teach me much that my acting coaches here at Central hadn't already touched on. They talked about the basics of what it takes to make it as an
actor such as talent, nurturing, training, contacts, experience, a definable personality, freedom from entanglements (children, marriage, etc.), and being at the right place at the right time for your “big breaks.” I had heard all of these things, but they made a point of letting us know that it is not easy and they told us the types of things they, the directors, expected us to know, such as several different dance methods (Suzuki and Graham were examples that Mr. Davis gave), how to read and understand music, fencing, Shakespeare, and anything else that made us marketable. We had about an hour to talk and work with Mr. Davis and Ms. Lewis before we had acting auditions in front of everyone at the conference, including a critique panel. I didn’t have a prepared piece (which will never happen again at theatre conference), so I was allowed to use one of the scripts they offered for cold readings. I chose to “Rose” from Fences because this was the only piece with a female monologue that I was familiar with. I was very nervous reading in front of the people in that audience because many of them had worked on at least one Broadway production in their lifetime and I was ready to be picked apart pretty badly. Luckily, the critique panel liked my reading. They said they liked my voice and the honesty that I put into the character. I guess this reading came in handy for me because I chose to try to approach Ms. Shange about our production once again and she first responded positively to me about my reading and then agreed to answer my question. I had been thinking about what to ask her all conference long and finally decided to ask her how she felt we should go about doing the show when most of our players would be inexperienced in the theatre. Her response was that we didn’t need any experience at all to do her show and that she didn’t write it for experienced actors. She said that her advice would be not make any of the parts concrete because we should be able to change them around if needed. For the first couple of rehearsals we should all read together and be around each other as much as possible because there is a lot of touching in the show and we would have to feel comfortable enough to touch and hug each other. I was very flattered when she told me that normally she hates talking about “For Colored Girls...”, but that she was okay talking about it with me. That just made it even cooler.

The directors for the director’s workshop chose their actors and I was not chosen for anything, but I worked with the director who was doing the scene from Fences as his stage manager because he had thought about tacking on the Rose monologue to the end of his scene, but I talked him out of that one (because it had no correlation with the scene between the father and son characters that he was using), so I just agreed to do his stage management. The next day we worked on that scene the whole morning instead of going to workshops, which was okay with me because after four days of it I was pretty tired (and still jet lagged!) In the late afternoon the scenes were presented and Ms. Shange was giving critiques on each of
them, along with the other scheduled critique panelists. I loved hearing her 
style of critique because it was very honest, to the point, and “in your 
face.” She had a way of getting to the point of what the directors could 
have improved on without being rude or hurtful, but she certainly didn’t 
mince words when she found something she didn’t like about one of the 
scenes. I think seeing her in this type of setting really helped me see her 
attitude and character and in the long run this whole experience of meeting 
her will help me get in tune with the characters in “For Colored Girls...” 

enough to help other people understand them. Another comment that 
really struck me was made by Woodie King, Jr. who was one of the 
panelist for the directing critiques. He said that many of these plays have 
been produced many times and he used the example of “For Colored 
Girls...”, saying that it had been done thousands of times all over the world 
sometimes using different colors, sometimes using more than seven actors, 
sometimes with less. “Find a way of doing it differently,” he said, “We’ve 
seen these plays done many times over and over. Put a new twist on the 
story. Until that point I hadn’t really understood how monumental her 
work was nor how many times it had been shown. I also hadn’t thought 
about how versatile and different the show could be and so it made me 
excited to think of what the director might do with the show.

The scenes were pretty much the last of the activities for the 
conference. I tried to get as many business cards and addresses as possible 
before people took off and I tried to finally get some rest after a long, 
enventful conference and before a long, uneventful flight back to Seattle.

Fall Quarter 1994

This quarter got off to a bit of a rough start for me because I was 
cast in a large musical that rehearsed four hours a night daily and then 
three days later I immediately came down with a screaming case of 
bronchitis, which lasted five weeks. Auditions for “For Colored Girls...” 
were scheduled for October 17th, which was about two and a half months 
earlier than I had thought they would be, so I had to get on the ball right 
away.

The first thing that needed to be done was to get the Black Student 
Union (BSU) up and on its feet, so I got together with LaChandra Carter, 
who was serving as president until her official election, and we planned a 
meeting. Only a few people showed up to that first meeting, so we decided 
to do what we usually had to do with the club to get people coming--we had 
a pizza feed at Frazzini’s. Luckily, this worked. Several people came and 
I was able to announce the date and time of the “For Colored Girls...” 
audition. Officers were elected, which included myself as treasurer and
Ms. Carter as President and the club seemed pretty secure from this point on, which I felt was important because if there ceased to be a BSU, then it would be a bit of an embarrassment to the production and also to myself for letting it happen. Ms. Carter and the rest of the club were kind enough to schedule BSU meetings around my busy rehearsal schedule and so I was able to announce auditions at each meeting and field any questions that anyone might have. I also set a date for an informational meeting about the audition and about the rehearsal process and whatever else anyone wanted to know about the show for October 14th at 4pm. From there I drew up a flyer announcing the auditions and posted them all around campus. I would also hand them out to people as I saw them walking down the mall or at work (I work in the Special Services building and many students of color come in there on a regular basis) and I would give them my little spiel about the show and how we had a professional director lined up and that auditions would be a breeze. I also called everyone who had been interested in the show last year and it was pretty frustrating because a lot of people either didn’t come back to school here or had new commitments like sports or jobs that would be keeping them from auditioning. I requested a list of the names and school addresses of all the black women on campus from the Student Affairs Office who put in the request with the Registrar who didn’t get the list back to us until the weekend before auditions and the list had home addresses on it—not school addresses. But we were able to get their campus phone numbers and so I called everyone listed with the help of my good friend Ms. Carter.

My informational meeting didn’t turn out very well because people that had told me they were coming didn’t show up and then there were some people that I knew couldn’t come but were still going to audition that didn’t come, so basically when I got there only two people sat there in the room and one of them was Professor Hubbard. She was pretty angry with me because I hadn’t put an ad in the paper like she had asked me to and also that she had taken time out of her schedule to come down there and I only had one person for her to talk to. After she left three more people showed up, but it wasn’t enough and I was still very worried that no one would be showing up for auditions.

When the night of auditions came, I was very surprised to have a room full of women who were just as jittery as I was, but they seemed relaxed around each other and ready to have fun with the audition. One of the problems with the audition was that three people didn’t want to have to use any cuss words in the audition nor in the show and two of them had even gone through the entire script screening the language to see if there any characters who didn’t cuss at all, of which there were none. They agreed to audition anyway, but changed the words in the readings for the auditions and wrote down their concerns for the director to decide upon.
A total of eleven women auditioned for parts in the show and there were only seven parts available, so I was glad to have brought in more people than parts as opposed to the other way around, which would have made less choices for the director. The auditions were held in McConnell auditorium in front of the students and directors who were there for the One-Act plays and Independence, but we auditioned as a group and were videotaped for our director, Michelle Blackmon, who was in Seattle giving birth. We started off with a reading of the Lady in Red’s monologue entitled Beau Willie Brown and then we moved into Room 117 for the song and movement part of the audition. For the singing, some of us chose to sing by ourselves and some sang in small groups. Everyone was very nervous about this part of the audition, in fact, probably moreso than the reading in a large auditorium. The dance part was a piece of cake. Prof. Hubbard gave us a simple dance combination and we only had to perform it in groups of three instead of by ourselves. There was a lot of joking around and laughing and it really was the funnest audition I had ever experienced in my life. I think we all really bonded and that made the show sound even more exciting.

We were supposed to find out who was cast a week after the audition, but our director ended up getting offered a longer lasting, better paying job with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, so we were left hanging for a few days. Ms. Blackmon had already made her decision on the cast and so instead of making us wait any longer, Prof. Hubbard made the decision to post the cast list, which goes as follows:

Lady in Red: LaChandra Carter
Lady in Orange: Debra Applin
Lady in Yellow: Paulette Jonville
Lady in Green: Dominica Myers
Lady in Blue: Bobby Cummings
Lady in Purple: Lois Gray
Lady in Brown: Nickola Wilson

Since we lost our director, Prof. Hubbard began a search for another director and found Denise Thymes, a multi-talented performer and director who works out of St.Louis. I have not yet met Ms. Thymes, but from what I understand, she has a different sort of concept for the show than Ms. Blackmon’s and she may even change parts around in the show, which makes me very excited.

Three of us from the cast, Dr. Cummings, Ms. Carter, and I visited Prof. Christine Sutphin’s English 105 class, who has been studying “For Colored Girls....” We each did readings from the script and held discussion afterward. I read the beginning poem “dark phrases,” Ms.
CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY AT CWU
For Immediate Release on "What's Happening"
CONTACT: Leslee Caul, 963-1339

Celebrate Black History Month with the CWU Theatre Arts Department presentation of
"for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf," by Ntozake Shange,
Feb. 16-18 and 23-25 at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. There is also a special matinee Feb. 19 at
2 p.m. Tickets are currently on sale in the Tower Box Office. For more information call (509) 963-
1774.

XXX
CWU MAKES BLACK HISTORY IN FEBRUARY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For PUBLICATION Feb. 3, 1995
Contact: Leslee Caul, 963-1339

While Americans reflect on Black History this February, the CWU Theatre Arts Department is making history with “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf,” the first theatre production in the college’s 104 year history with an all African-American cast and director.

“For Colored Girls . . .,” a choreopoem by Ntozake Shange, is being produced in cooperation with Student Affairs/Diversity and ASCWU-Student Activities, and is currently in rehearsal under the direction of Guest Artist Denise Thimes. Ms. Thimes, a resident of St. Louis, MO, is a member of the Actor’s Equity Association and the Screen Actor’s Guild, as well as an accomplished jazz singer. During her stay in Ellensburg Ms. Thimes is presenting a series of jazz workshops for students.

Playwright Shange combines music, dance and storytelling in a unique style of drama that gives insight to the voice of African-American women in our society. The fire and feeling of Shange’s work has captivated audiences since the Broadway and international success of “For Colored Girls . . . “ which went on to become a best-selling book and then won critical acclaim in a television version of PBS. Besides her success as a playwright, Shange is also an accomplished novelist, poet and performer. Her numerous awards include two Obies, the Medal of Excellence from Columbia University, The Los Angeles Times Book Review Prize for Poetry, two Audelco Awards, The Houston International Festival Prize for Literature and a New York State Arts Council Grant for Poetry. Additionally she is a Guggenheim Fellow, a Chubb Fellow, and a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Arts for Playwriting.

The six-member cast includes: Debra Applin, (Edmonds); LaChandra Carter (Keningwick); CWU Professor Bobby Cummings (Ellensburg); Paulette Jonville (Tacoma); Dominica Myers (Seattle); and Nickola Wilson, (Bothell).

CWU students will also have the opportunity to lend their design talents to the production. Set Designer is Nathan Sluster, (Tacoma). Heidi Muelbauer, (Enumclaw) serves as Costume Designer. The positions of Stage Manager and Sound Designer fall to CWU sophomore Colleen Smet, (Wenatchee).

Because of the realistic language in this play it is recommended for those 17 and older. “For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf” runs Feb. 16-18 and 23-25 at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. There is also a special matinee Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets are currently on sale in the Tower Box Office, located in McConnell on the CWU campus. Tickets may be purchased with VISA or MasterCard by phoning 963-1774. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 90 minutes prior to each performance.

XXX
HISTORY IN THE MAKING

For the first time in CWU’s 104 year history a play about, directed by, and starring African-American women

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf

A Choreopoem by Ntozake Shange

Directed by Guest Artist Denise M. Thimes

February 16, 17, 18 -- 8 p.m.
February 19 -- 2 p.m.
February 23, 24, 25 -- 8 p.m.
TOWER THEATRE

$6 general admission
$4 students and seniors

Thursdays and Matinee ½ Price
For ticket information call 963-1774
JAZZY ST. LOUIS SINGER CHANGES "THIMES"
For Immediate Release
Contact: Leslee Caul, 963-1339

Her resume reads "Time for Thimes," and in the case of the CWU Theatre Arts Department the phrase is right on track. Never in the 104 year history of CWU has an African-American woman directed an all-female African-American cast in a theatre production. But the times are changing, appropriately under the direction of Guest Artist Denise Thimes (the "h" is silent).

Thimes, a native of St. Louis, is currently in rehearsal with the six-member cast that will make their debut in "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf," on February 16 in the Tower Theatre.

Thimes is no stranger to the stage, nor to this particular show. Besides starring as "The Lady in Purple" in three productions, she has also directed the show before coming to CWU. However, Thimes has no less affection for the play after having spent so much time directing and performing it. "I don't think I'll ever get tired of doing this play," she says. "The one thing I'm certain I'll never tire of is the audience response -- it's one with a lot of feedback."

Thimes owes the success of the play, as well as her own admiration of the piece, to a variety of factors. "It's a combination of the language, circumstances, emotions and experiences of all these women," says Thimes.

The wealth of experience Thimes has with the play is a sharp contrast to many of the women who comprise the cast. "It has been challenging because many of the women have never done stage work before," she says. "It's also a good thing, though, because they are so much more open to direction. But they are all willing to do it right and make it work."

While Thimes certainly has an impressive acting resume, it is her work as a jazz singer that has brought her critical acclaim and resulted in her worldwide travels. Her most recent touring experience was with the Golden Gospel Singers on a tour that included most of Germany, Sweden and Norway. While Thimes admits that it was a great opportunity, it turned into a bit of a personal nightmare. "I found out I was pregnant with my son (7-month-old Jabril) while I was there," she said. "I had the 'foreign flu' and morning sickness. Some how I still managed to keep some peace about myself."

For Thimes the job offer at CWU was a mixed blessing. While she was thrilled to have the opportunity to direct this play again and in this setting, she had to leave her son behind. "My sisters, Kelle and Patrice, and my mom are taking care of him, but it's been really hard to be away from him," she says.

Thimes began her college career as a music major at Spelman College in Atlanta, but soon shifted her focus to musical theatre. Spelman, as some may remember, served as the mythical Hillman College on the "Cosby" show. Once again the old theatre adage "It's who you know," proved true for Thimes. The "Cosby" show was in Atlanta filming the "Hillman College" episode which would later provide the background for the spin-off series "A Different World," and was looking for extras. "They were paying the extras $100 and I already had mine spent," says Thimes. "Well, when I got there I was non-Equity and low man on the totem pole, so I didn't get cast. My Godmother, Jo-Moore Stewart, was the public relations liaison at Spelman and she said to me 'just sit right there.' I looked up and the New York people were bringing in the Huxtable family right in front of me. I didn't get paid, but I sure got seen. Every time they panned the family, there
I was sitting in the background. I even got a close-up."

While in Atlanta Thimes also had the opportunity to sing on a movie soundtrack for one of Moorehouse College’s famed alumni, Spike Lee. “I had worked with Spike in college. I had graduated, but he was senior,” she says. “He remembered that I could sing. I was working as a recruiter at Morris Brown College and I would go to rehearsal during my lunch hour. After about six weeks of this we laid the track for ‘School Daze.’”

In recent years it is the audiences of St. Louis that Thimes has been wowing, both on stage and in the local cabarets. She has appeared with such notable companies as Unity Theatre Ensemble; Imaginary Theatre Company; St. Louis Black Repertory Company; Jomandi Theatre Company; and Just Us Theatre Company.

While she has certainly appeared with notable companies, she sees her role here as an important one also. “Doing this production says a lot for CWU,” says Thimes.

Besides her on-going role as new mother, Thimes hopes to be returning to new career opportunities as well when she finishes her job here. “There is a possibility that I may be working as music director for KPLR-TV 11 in St. Louis,” she says. “They have what they call Teen-11 kids who perform at functions. I interviewed for the job right before I came and I’m keeping my fingers crossed.”

KPLR would do well to heed the advice: Time for Thimes.

XXX
Wednesday, February 1
12:00 Noon, SUB Lair
Part I: IMAGES & REALITIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN (Videotape)
Part II: IMAGES & REALITIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN (Videotape)

For generations, Black women have been the strength and backbone of American society. Despite a constant barrage of negative images and false stereotypes, they've continued to persevere and prevail. This video shows how generations of women have found resources from each other and within themselves to redefine their roles in society and change their vision for the future.

Women's Resource Center Co-Hosts Queen Latifah, Dr. Deborah Prutton-Stith, Hallie Berry, Julienne Malveaux, Susan L. Taylor. Special appearances by Dr. Maya Angelou and Esther Rolle. Co-sponsored by Student Affairs-Diversity and Women's Resource Center.

Thursday, February 2
7:30 p.m., McConnell Auditorium
EDWARD OLMS
Edward James Olms, best known as Lt. Castillo on Miami Vice and as Jaime Escalante from Stand and Deliver, recently acted and made his directorial debut in American Me, a story that takes a stark look at the life of a Hispanic American family in East Los Angeles. He has been referred to as America's most visible spokesman for the Hispanic community and his humanitarian work is approached with the same dedication and discipline as his acting. He will be addressing the campus and community on multiculturalism issues. Co-sponsored by MECHA, Minority Coalition, Samuelson Union, DAPPER, RHC, University Bookstore, Residence Living, Diversity Programs, Women's Resource Center and ASCWU.

A CENTURY OF WOMEN (Video Series) Every generation has a story to tell. This landmark program, tells the story of women in the 20th century - how they lived, loved, worked, played and, most importantly, changed the course of American history. Using diaries, letters and personal memoirs, A CENTURY OF WOMEN brings women of the past to life again with never-before-seen archival film, photographs and interviews that retrace the extraordinary events that changed women's lives. This unusual and entertaining storytelling is facilitated by an original drama woven throughout the show via a fictional family. As members of this fictional family, portrayed by Academy Award winning actresses, talk about their own lives, we move into the factual stories of women from the past whose stories are told by outstanding actresses, including Sally Field, Meryl Streep, Jessica Lange, Glenn Close and Cleoey Tyson. Jane Fonda provides the program's overall narration. This Videoseries has been made possible through the generous donation of Dr. Jan Rizzuti.

Tuesday, February 7
12:00 Noon, SUB 207
Part I: WORK AND FAMILY (47 minutes)

The video deals with the struggle of woman trying to have it all - work, marriage and motherhood. The balancing act of labor and love is not an invention of the 90's. For many women, in the early years of the century, it was a matter of life or death. From the Founders of the PTA to the early union leaders and First Ladies, this program details stories of women as wives, mothers and workers. Betty Friedan and Pat Schroeder are among the contributors offering their insight in this definitive program about women and their role in shaping America.

Tuesday, February 14
12:00 Noon, SUB Lair
Part I: IMAGE AND POPULAR CULTURE (47 minutes)

This video explores the changing concepts of 'ideal beauty' and how women see themselves. From the silver screen to television, through music, dance and art the changing image of women is an important and entertaining part of the 20th century. Roseanne Arnold, Carol Burnett, Twyla Tharp, Chris Evert, Linda Bloodworth Thomson and Maya Angelou are among the contributors offering their insight in this definitive program about women and their role in shaping America.

Tuesday, February 21
3-5 p.m., SUB Lair
Dave Swartout-Stefan, Executive Director, Outreach to Rural Youth
CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP: "Squashing people like the bugs that they are."

Dave Swartout-Stefan earned his Masters Degree in Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Mediation from the University of Hawaii-Manoa. He is currently the Executive Director of Outreach to Rural Youth-Washington, where he uses his conflict resolution skills to bring together coalitions, public/private agencies, and communities of people on issues of social justice. This two-hour interactive workshop will explore the dynamics of conflict resolution. In The Constructive Use of Conflict, participants will learn how to listen to themselves while listening to others, respond to others in a non-adversary, way, and empower themselves and others to use the language of conflict as a communication tool to resolve disagreement.

Tuesday, March 7
12:00 Noon, SUB Lair
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY STUDENT PANEL
To commemorate International Women's Day, students and faculty will present personal perspectives on women's status and roles in their native countries. Co-sponsored by the Office of International Programs and the Women's Resource Center.

Thursday, May 9
7:00 p.m., Grupe Center
Tessa Wetz Neighbor Washington Humanities Commission Scholar
HOLDING UP HALF THE SKY: WOMEN IN CHINA TODAY
After an overview of the life of women before and after "Liberation," Ms. Neighbor focuses on the main changes for women that have taken place since Deng Xiaoping instituted his massive reform program more than a decade ago. She discusses the effects of these policies on reproductive activities of the nation's urban and rural women and the re-emergence of some pre-1949 practices, such as concubinage and the sale of women as brides or prostitutes, that have occurred as a result of free market economic forces. Her talk also illustrates how new policies have enriched China's women and how these changes are reflected in the media, theater, and literature. Co-sponsored by the Washington Commission for the Humanities and the Women's Resource Center.

Admission to all of these programs is free and open to the public. If you have any questions, please contact the Women's Resource Center.
CASTING FOR THE PRODUCTION OF COLORED GIRLS:

LADY IN RED       LACHANDRA CARTER
LADY IN GREEN     DOMINICA MEYERS
LADY IN PURPLE    LOIS GRAY
LADY IN BLUE      BOBBY CUMMINGS
LADY IN YELLOW    PAULETTE JONVILLE
LADY IN ORANGE    DEBRA APPLIN
LADY IN BROWN     NICKOLA WILSON

ASSISTANT STAGEMANAGER        PAULETTE HORTON (see Brenda for details)

Thank you to all the very talented women who auditioned !!!!!!!
I hope you will want to be involved in the production in some capacity.

Please initial your name to show that you have read this notice and accept
your responsibility to perform this role.

Of further note- We lost Michelle Blackmon as director because she was
offered a ten month contract with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and
as is typical in the theatre had to take the better paying, longer
employment.  DO NOT WORRY.  WE ARE HARD AT WORK LOOKING FOR A NEW DIRECTOR
AND WILL ANNOUNCE IT SOON. CASTING WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT REGARDLESS OF WHO THE
NEW DIRECTOR IS. Any questions or concerns see me.

Brenda Hubbard, Production Coordinator

Brenda Hubbard
As the daughter of radio legend Lou “Fatha” Thimes, perhaps Denise Thimes was destined to hit a note with her first cry in this world. Not unlike her brother “The Real J.R.” of Soul 63, Denise has worked to become a legend in her own time.

A singer and actress, Thimes calls herself a messenger who uses the language of music. She also considers herself a diva by her own definition, as “one who has accomplished what she wants by getting through all the ‘crap’ along the way by saying ‘yes’ when others insist on saying ‘no’ and always, always keeping God first.”

In St. Louis today, Thimes enjoys quite a following. Most organizations would agree that “Denise Thimes” on the entertainment bill will surely bring a crowd. But she shares her success with many, many people who have paved the way for her.

“Fatha” and Mildred Thimes’ stern guidance, direction and undying support were always foremost in rearing their children. Denise considers herself a “chip off the old block” because she understands the pitfalls of life and has always showed determination in everyday life. Her grandmother, “Big Mom” Mary DeWalt, also made her impact on Denise stressing that God must remain first.

Armed with confidence, family support and a strong desire to sing, Thimes attended New Sunny Mount Baptist Church, where the church pianist, Bertha Smith, detected her singing potential, and Earlene Stiles nurtured it when she became a member of the Young Adult Choir. At Cupples Elementary School, Thimes got special attention from Marion Evans who first sparked her interest in the theater. Many years later at St. Louis Community College at Meramec, Frances Gillette furthered the lessons and helped shape the singing style that would become Denise’s.

In 1980 Thimes moved to Atlanta to attend Spelman College. It was there that she would realize many of her dreams. First declaring music as her major, she would later switch to theater.

Under the direction of the late Linda Green, chairperson of Spelman’s Theatre Department, Thimes nurtured her talent and love for the stage. Talent, it seems, was all around her. Larnar Alford (from the original production of Godspell) was the Dramaturg-in-Residence at Morehouse College. He produced several “broadway-level” productions with Spike Lee as the stage manager. Thimes’ first production was during Lee’s senior year.

“I later had the opportunity to work with Spike Lee doing background music in School Daze. By that time I knew he had quite a future ahead of him. He was a calm and peaceful director.”

While in school or during acting stints in Atlanta, Thimes found herself very busy working her career or looking for opportunities. She got the opportunity to work with Tom Jones, the artistic director of Jomandi Theatre, in a production of Showgirls with Ja’Net Dubois (Good Times) as lead. Thimes would later play the lead role in
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom for Jomandi as well. While working with the Just Us Theatre Company, Thimes secured a part in the company's production of PO. This successful production toured (Sicily, Palermo) Italy for three weeks.

Always active, Denise won first place in a Coors Talent Contest while back home in St. Louis returning from Italy. Later, while on an extended vacation back in Atlanta, her singing exposure increased with engagements at The Point and Walter Mitty's Jazz Club.

As most artists would agree, "gigs never last long enough, so I went to work as a recruiter for Morris Brown College, got fired and came back home," Thimes remembered.

An interesting call came some time later that the producers of The Cosby Show were looking for extras for the "Hillman College" episode at Spelman College.

"I was excited and I wanted in," Thimes explained. "When I got there, they had everyone they needed but I didn't care. I went to my friend Jo-Moore Stewart who was acting as the liaison between the Cosby producers and Spelman. She told me to just sit right next to her. So...when the camera pans across the crowd in that episode, there I am, right next to the Huxtables."

Later she was chosen as a consultant for a day by the producers of A Different World. "As you know Hillman is Spelman, Thimes continued, "and all the four years I was at Spelman I was an RA. I told them about the wonderful times and the tragic times of college life."

St. Louis is no stranger to Denise Thimes, despite her long list of Atlanta credits. Many know of her performances with the St. Louis Black Repertory Company in Mahalia's Song and her work with the St. Louis Imaginary Theatre, the touring arm of the Rep Theatre, where she earned her Equity card. She presently works as a theatre artist with the Unity Theatre Ensemble, the Resident Theatre Company at the Katherine Dunham Center for the Performing Arts, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. It was with the Unity Theatre Ensemble that Artistic Director, Ralph Greene, encouraged her to try her hand at directing what turned out to be a very highly acclaimed production of Ntozake Shange's For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf.

Never letting go of her singing career, Thimes has worked with and garnered the support of Ptah Williams, Mae Wheeler, The Bosman Twins, Prince Wells and Chad Evans. She has performed in many night clubs including Gene Lynn's, Hannigans, Moose Lounge, Two Black Cats (and currently at The Grand Avenue Bistro) with pianist Joseph Diamond.

Considered one of the most distinctive vocalists in St. Louis, Thimes describes herself as a "stylist singer" who doesn't want to be restricted to any one musical form. "I love all forms of music," she added.

What is the quality about Denise Thimes that compels everyone to make such colorful, lyrical descriptions about her voice? Maybe she has a special something, a vocal trademark that comes with the "Thimes."

Reprinted by permission from Take Five, October 1992

"Denise Thimes - DIVA TIME" by Chuck Offutt
REGIONAL THEATER

UNITY THEATRE ENSEMBLE, Katherine Dunham Performing Arts Center, SIUE, East St. Louis, IL
   I GOT THE MUSIC IN ME!
   FOR COLORED GIRLS
   TAMBOURINES TO GLORY
   THE AMEN CORNER
   COTTON CLUB REVUE
   MOTOWN REVUE
   HOME

IMAGINARY THEATRE CO, St. Louis, MO
   LADY BE GOOD (Ella Fitzgerald)
   LITTLE BROTHER LITTLE SISTER
   BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

ST. LOUIS BLACK REPERTORY COMPANY, St. Louis, MO
   BLUES IN THE NIGHT
   PURLIE
   MAHALIA'S SONG

JOMANDI THEATRE CO, Atlanta, GA.
   MA RAINNEY'S BLACK BOTTOM
   THE PROPHET
   SHOW GIRLS

JUST US THEATRE CO, Atlanta, GA.
   BLACK NATIVITY
   PO

FORTY ACRES & A MULE PRODUCTIONS/A Spike Lee Joint
   SCHOOL DAZE
   "Teaching The Faith"

FILM

TOTAL THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

CABARET

ST. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS
   INDUSTRIAL/ST. LOUIS, MO.
   LOS ANGELES, CA
   INDUSTRY HILLS, CA
   BURBANK, CA
   ATLANTA, GA
   ST. LOUIS, MO

TV/COMMERCIAL/TOURS

GOLDEN GOSPEL SINGERS
   W.C. HANDBALL FESTIVAL
   ADOLPH COORS CO.
   BILL COSBY SHOW
   JUST US THEATRE CO. International Tour of PO

EDUCATION & TRAINING

VOICE: Carolyn Irving-Braiford (Latin, German, Italian, 3 yrs)
B.A., Spelman College, Atlanta, GA., Musical Theater
St. Louis Community College at Meramec, Music/Journalism
Webster University, Theater Management

Contact: Cosmic Creations Unltd.
(314) 567-2099
For Colored Girls who have considered suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf
In a galaxy of distinguished black writers, Ntozake Shange stands as one of its brightest stars. America’s most lyrical black voice – playwright, novelist, poet and performer, Ms. Shange is one of our most exciting and important young writers with many diverse talents and visions. The fire and feeling of Ntozake Shange’s work has captivated audiences ever since the Broadway and international success of For Colored Girls, Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf, which became a best-selling book and then won critical acclaim in a television version for PBS. Her play was nominated for Tony, Grammy, Obie, and Emmy awards. Her next work was Three Pieces – three extraordinary plays – Spell #7, A Photograph: Lovers in Motion, and Boggie Woogie Landscapes – in which Shange integrates poetry, dance and music, evoking powerful images of black life in America today in all its exuberance and beauty. Ms. Shange made her debut as a major voice in American fiction with her novel Sassafrass, Cypress and Indigo. Her most recent novel, Betsey Brown has been adapted for the stage and recently enjoyed a successful run at the prestigious McCarter Theater in Princeton, New Jersey. Shange’s poetry books include Nappy Edges, A Daughter’s Geography, and Ridin’ The Moon in Texas. Her newest and most provocative poetry collection is The Love Space Demands: A Continuing Saga. Ntozake Shange has been widely acclaimed as a representative for blacks, for women, and indeed, for all those who are struggling to find their own voice. She is one of the most unique women in America today. To hear Ms. Shange present a dramatic reading is a powerful and moving experience which will not be forgotten.
"COLORED GIRLS" MAKE HISTORY AT CWU
For Immediate Release
CONTACT: Leslee Caul, 963-1339

The Lady: in red, in orange, in yellow, in green, in blue, in purple and in brown. It is this group of characters who will come to life February 16 with the CWU Theatre Arts Department's historic presentation of "for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf." The play, which is being produced in cooperation with Student Affairs/Diversity and ASCWU-Student Activities, marks the first time that an African-American woman has directed an all-female African-American cast in the University's 104 year history.

These seven characters express the anger, disappointment, resentment fear and frustration of growing up African-American and female in America. However, as Guest Artist and Director Denise Thimes points out it is the superb writing skill of author Ntozake Shange that makes the play. "Shange's flow of words, and the fact that she uses poetry to express these emotions, is what keeps this from just sounding like a bunch of angry women," says Thimes. "She writes so tastefully and eloquently."

According to Thimes these women are dealing with a myriad of social and personal issues. "They are primarily dealing with unhealthy relationships," says Thimes. "It is through these relationships that they find themselves dealing with questions of self-esteem, stereotypes, abortion, race and gender. But this isn't just a play for or about women of color, but a play celebrating all women."

Thimes warns, however, that those looking for a heavy dose of "male bashing" will not find it in this production. "The play may put some men in a bad light," she says. "But these are not necessarily black men. The script does not stress that their mates are all black, in fact some of the women are Hispanic, Puerto Rican and of mixed ethnic origin. I would encourage men of all color to come and see this play."

While the play is in no way anti-male, it does take issue with abusive men. "The issues of abusive relationships, unfortunately, still hold true twenty years after Shange wrote the play," says Thimes. "The O and Nicole story is a prime example."

"My attitude," says Thimes, "is if the shoe fits wear it. All men are not like the men in these women's lives." But for the ones that are Thimes warns: "You know who you are and we're coming to get you."

However these social issues are never tidy and often graphic. Due to the adult nature of some themes and realistic language this play is not recommended for younger audiences. "Each parent must determine if their child is ready for this performance," says Wesley Van Tassel, Theatre Arts Department chair. "We are recommending it for audiences 17 and older." A special matinee of the play will be performed for area high school audiences, however the language will be toned down for these performances.

Perhaps the most endearing part of this play, however, is not the issues these women deal with, but the fact that they can find some peace on the other side. "In spite of all the hurt, pain and

-- MORE--
colored girls/ add 1

disappointments; these women realize that all the things they are asking for -- the things they think they want and need -- can be found.” says Thimes. “The source of all their needs is within.”

The six-members cast includes: Debra Aplin, (Edmonds); LaChandra Carter (Kennewick); CWU Professor Bobby Cummings (Ellensburg); Paulette Jonville (Tacoma); Dominica Myers (Seattle); and Nickola Wilson, (Bothell).

CWU students will also have the opportunity to lend their design talents to the production. Set Designer is Nathan Shuster, (Tacoma). Heidi Muelbauer, (Enumclaw) serves as Costume Designer. The positions of Stage Manager and Sound Designer fall to CWU sophomore Colleen Smet, (Wenatchee).

“For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf” runs Feb. 16-18 and 23-25 at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. There is also a special matinee Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. Tickets are currently on sale in the Tower Box Office, located in McConnell on the CWU campus. Tickets may be purchased with VISA or MasterCard by phoning 963-1774. The Box Office is open Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 90 minutes prior to each performance.

XXX
Lady in Green

Dominica Myers is a Junior theatre arts/performance major from Seattle, WA. Her roles in Central theatre productions have been “Jan” in Grease and an ensemble member in Godspell, as well as Assistant Stage Managing the touring children’s theatre production of Elves and the Shoemaker. She also wrote The Visiting Hours, which was produced last quarter with the one-act play festival for student writers and directors.

Her other activities on campus include serving as current Black Student Union Treasurer, various intermural sports, and participation in Central Theatre Club. She has also spoken on several panels focusing on racism and homophobia. Ms. Myers plans to graduate from Central with a B.A. in Theatre Arts Performance, earn her Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre, and go on to perform in large scale professional musical theatre productions.

Lady in Blue

Dr. Bobby Cummings is a professor of English here at Central Washington University. Originally from Detroit, MI, Dr. Cummings received her B.A. in History from San Francisco State University and earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Michigan.

Aside from her four years at Central, Dr. Cummings has also taught at Loyola University in New Orleans, Clarion University in Pennsylvania, and the State University of New York (SUNY) at Plattsburgh.

Her theatre experience includes working with the Black Southern Theatre of New Orleans and founding the Black Children’s Theatre Workshop in the Detroit Public Schools. Currently, in her spare time, Dr. Cummings enjoys acting, reciting poetry, and telling folktales to elementary school children.

About the Author

For Colored Girls... author Ntozake Shange is a multi-talented, award winning playwright, actor, dancer, director, musician, painter, scholar, educator, philosopher, novelist and poet.

Raised in St. Louis and Trenton, NJ, Ms. Shange received her B.A. in American Studies from Barnard College of Columbia University, graduating with honors and going on to get her M.A. in American Studies at the University of Southern California. She also holds an Honorary Doctorate in the Humanities from the University of Missouri at St. Louis and Haverford College.

Her theatrical works include: For Colored Girls... a photograph lovers in motion, spell #7/geesee jihara quick magic trance manual for technologically stressed third world people, and the love space demands.

She has also written novels, Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo, and Betsey Brown (which has recently been adapted to the stage), and books of poetry, including: Nappy Edges, A Daughter’s Geography, and Ridin’ the Moon in Texas.

Ms. Shange currently teaches courses in the literature of people of color, feminist aesthetics, and writing and performance art as the Mellon Distinguished Professor of Literature at Rice University, Artist-in-Residence at Villanova, and Writer-in-Residence at the Maryland Institute, College of Art, in Baltimore.

About the Play

For colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf began as a series of seven poems written about the realities of life for seven Black women, which Ntozake Shange began writing in the summer of 1974. Ms. Shange read her poems to audiences and soon realized their potential for powerful theatrical performance. However, instead of turning her poetry into “straight” plays, she decided to add the elements of music and dance, and experimented with a variety of ways to stage the piece, calling it a “choreopoem.”

The play opened in 1975 in California and eventually moved to Broadway, where it was immensely popular. For Colored Girls... was only the second play by a black female writer to make it to Broadway, the first being [Lauraine Hansberry] with A Raisin in the Sun. Ms. Shange has received numerous awards for her play, including an Obie, the Outer Critics Award, the Audeleco Award, and the Mademoiselle Award.
About the Director

Denise Thimes is a guest director from St. Louis, MO. Ms. Thimes received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Musical Theatre from Spelman College, a Black women’s college in Atlanta, GA. There she worked with such artists as Lamar Alford of the original cast of Godspell and Spike Lee, director of such movies as School Daze, Do the Right Thing, Malcolm X, and Crooklyn. She later worked with Lee doing background music for School Daze.

Her performance credits in Atlanta theatres include: Black Nativity and Po with the Just Us Theatre Co. and Show Girls, The Prophet, and Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom at Jomandi Theatre Co.

Ms. Thimes has also performed at the St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre Co., the Imaginary Theatre Company (St. Louis Repertory Theatre Co.), and the Unity Theatre Ensemble (Katherine Dunham Performing Arts Center) in numerous stage productions: Home, Lady Be Good, and The Amen Corner among them. It was at the Unity Theatre Ensemble that she was able to direct her first play: a very highly acclaimed production of For Colored Girls...

Ms. Thimes, who is also an accomplished jazz and gospel vocalist, did a tour of Germany, Sweden, and Norway with the Golden Gospel Singers recently and currently works as a consultant to the SIUE-Katherine Dunham Center for the Performing Arts. She is also currently enjoying her new role as mother to 7-month-old Jabril.

About the Cast

Lady in Red

LaChandra Carter is a Leisure Services/Travel and Tourism major from Sylvania, GA. Her interests include acting, dancing, and learning about other cultures. Although not a Theatre Arts major, Ms. Carter has been seen in other Central productions such as The Misanthrope and Into the Starry Night, and most recently portrayed “Grandmama” in the student written one-act The Visiting Hours. Ms. Carter has also been heavily involved in the political scene on campus, serving on the Service and Activities Guidelines Committee, the Ellensburg Hate Crimes Committee, and the President’s Strategic Planning Committee. She has been an LGA in Quigley and Muzzall, a dancer for Phase II, a member of S.T.E.P.S (Students and Staff for the Education and Prevention of Sexual Assault), and is the current president of the Black Student Union. Ms. Carter comments that her loss in the 1993 BOD presidential elections is “the best thing that ever happened to me because the next year I got to work in the Women’s Resource Center and meet so many women who became my mentors.” Ms. Carter will graduate this quarter and go into hotel management with the goal of one day owning her own bed and breakfast.

Lady in Orange

Debra Applin is a sophomore from Edmonds, WA. Ms. Applin first became interested in theatre at Edmonds-Woodway High School, where she did a lot of back stage work on sets and props during her three years in drama. For Colored Girls... is Ms. Applin’s first onstage appearance and she is very excited about it. She hopes to major in English, minor in Theatre Arts, and go on to teach high school level English and drama. She enjoys writing poetry and fiction and would like to write novels about adolescent life, fantasy, and science fiction aside from teaching.

Lady in Yellow

Paulette Jonville is a Sophomore accounting major from Spanaway. She enjoys sports like basketball and volleyball and has been active on many intermural teams. She enjoys acting and recently played the role of “Ceci” in the student written one-act The Visiting Hours. She is currently enjoying her work with For Colored Girls... and says: “The director [Denise Thimes] is great! The biggest thing is that the show has brought all of us [cast members] closer together.” Ms. Jonville has been involved as a member of the Black Student Union and works on staff in the BOD office. After graduating from Central, she hopes to pass the Certified Public Accounting Exam and work as an accountant.

Lady in Brown

Nickola Wilson is a Junior Leisure Services/Travel and Tourism major from Bothell, WA. She has enjoyed her success on Central’s track team, competing in the 100 and 200 meter sprints and the long jump. In her spare time, Ms. Wilson enjoys sitting down with a good book. For Colored Girls... is Ms. Wilson’s first stage appearance and she is excited to be part of Central’s first black production. “It’s fun being able to work with other black girls,” she states, “It feels like family.” Ms. Wilson’s career goals after graduation include becoming a Marketing Director for a major corporation.
Dear Theatre Arts Department,

Your presentation of "Colored Girls" added immeasurably to the celebration of our diversity. It was a much talked about presentation. Jewish all of our students could have experienced it.

Very Truly Yours,

Kathy Waite (for PHI staff)
FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF

A play by Ntozake Shange

Directed by Michelle Blackmon (Miss Blackmon is a professional actress and director living in Seattle.)

FOR COLORED GIRLS... is a collection of vivid narrative pieces performed by young African-American women. The play captures their feelings and goes beyond that to achieve its own kind of universality.

"A triumphant evening...willed with humor...affirmative in the face of despair, and pure theatre." The New York Times

Produced in cooperation with Minority Programs, the Black Student Union and Student Activities.

FEBRUARY 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 1995
8:00 p.m.
Tower Theatre

TEACHERS: A special matinee for school groups is scheduled on Wednesday, February 15 at 10:00 a.m. Recommended for grades 9 and up. Tickets $3. Post-play discussion available if requested.

TICKETS: (509) 963-1774 Tower Box Office
General $6; Students and Seniors $4
Thursdays 1/2 price
MC/VISA Group Rates Available

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
509-963-1766 Wesley Van Tassel, Chair
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
EEO/AA/TITLE IX INSTITUTION TDD 509-963-3323

CWU Theatre Arts
February 8, 1995

Dear Hall Manager,

Celebrate Black History Month with us! For the first time in CWU's 104 year history a play about, directed by, and starring African-American women: for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf. Group rates are available for groups of 20 or more, but must be arranged prior to the day of the show. Reservations can be made at the Tower Box Office 11am to 3pm Tuesday through Friday, or call 963-1774.

Having trouble getting the flyers distributed? I have a six-member staff that would be happy to help distribute these to your residents. We are proud of the work that is going on in the Theatre Arts Department and would like the opportunity to share it with all the students of CWU. If my staff can be of assistance in distributing these flyers to the residents of your dorm, please contact me at 963-1339.

Thank you,
Leslee Cau
Sales Director
Theatre Arts Department
Black History Month

Editor's note: February is Black History Month. Central Washington University student Lachandra Carter asked if we would be interested in the perspectives of two black students at the university. We print them here.

Why celebrate?

1995. It has taken 104 years for Central Washington University to acknowledge that they do have a black population of students and attempt to do something to celebrate their achievements. This year, the first-ever all-black theater production will find its way to the stage.

"For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf" is a play by Ntozake Shange that will be performed in the Tower Theater of McConnell Auditorium February 16-25, 1995. This play chronicles the lives of seven African-American women through stories, music, and dance. This play is only the tip of the iceberg. The month of February has been deemed Black History Month and it is a month-long celebration to boost awareness of the African-American culture and the great many who have made significant contributions to the lives of all Americans.

The biggest drawback to Black History month is just that—It's only a month. There are numerous achievements made by blacks (like Gary A. Morgan who invented the traffic light, or George F. Grant who invented the golf tee) that should be taught in everyday curriculum in schools instead of passed by and left for the individual to find. All you basically learn in school about blacks is that we were slaves and then we were free. There is so much knowledge out there waiting to be tapped in to. At least with Black History Month we can try to see black people as individuals instead of a race.

out history, we have seen that it has not always been advantageous to be an African-American in the United States. Often this still holds true in the present day and age.

I often find myself feeling awkwardness about being the only African-American student in a class. This is my second year attending Central Washington University and every quarter I have at least one class in which I am the only black student. Whenever questions come up in class that deal with racial or ethnic issues, I feel that they are directed towards me and that I somehow hold the responsibility of answering for all African-American people.

Many people in this community would say that Central has an extremely diverse campus. Ask me the same question and I will tell you that it's not. Out of 8,040 students at this university, approximately only 140 (Fall quarter 1994) are of African-American descent. To me, these figures do not constitute a diverse university. The high school I attended consisted of a wider variety of nationalities compared to CWU, and maybe that is why I consider this campus to have so little diversity. Just look at the numbers because they speak for themselves.

Another controversial matter that often arises is the misconception that all black students receive special scholarships and financial aid. I received a scholarship which required that the applicant be a minority. Regardless, you will not be awarded this scholarship based solely on your ethnicity. The applicant must have consistently good grades and be involved in school activities the same as any other scholarship. I am also one of the many black students at Central who does not receive financial aid. It worries me to think that people sometimes look at me and believe I received financial aid just because of my race.

But this is not the whole picture. I believe that this university is making a necessary effort to celebrate the diversity of its students. For instance, the Black Student Association sponsors a monthly event to educate and entertain the student body about African-American culture. This is one way that Central is making an effort to understand the Black Student experience.
Jazzy St. Louis singer directs CWU play

In recent years, it is the audiences of St. Louis that Thimes has been weaving, both on stage and in the local cabarets. She has appeared with such notable companies as Unity Theatre Ensemble, Imaginary Theatre Company, St. Louis Black Repertory Company, Jomandi Theatre Company, and Just Us Theatre Company. Thimes sees her role as a visiting artist at Central as an important one.

"Doing this production says a lot for CWU," she said. Besides her on-going role as new mother, Thimes hopes to return to new career opportunities when she finishes her job here.

"There is a possibility that I may be working in music for KPLR-TV 11 in St. Louis," she said. "They have what they call Teen-11 kids who perform at functions. I interviewed for the job right before I came, and I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

Because of the realistic language in the show she was directing at CWU, Thimes recommends it for those 21 and older. "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf" shows at 8 p.m., Feb. 16-18 and 23-25 in the Tower Theatre. There is a matinee at 2 p.m., Feb. 19.

Admission is $6, $4 for students and seniors. Thursday and matinee shows are half-price. Tickets can be purchased Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 90 minutes prior to each performance at the Tower box office, located in McConnell Hall on the CWU campus. Tickets may be purchased with VISA or MasterCard by phoning 963-1774.
Central plans activities for African-American Awareness

February is African-American Awareness Month and Central Washington University's Black Student Union has coordinated a variety of activities to commemorate it.

Feb. 1: Central's jazz band, under the leadership of Central music professor John Moawad, played at noon in the Samuelson Union Building pit. The band will also play Feb. 7, 17, and 21, same time, same place. Admission is free.

Feb. 1-14: A showcase exhibit highlighting African-American authors, civil rights leaders, athletes, soldiers and others will be on display in the SUB.

Feb. 8: Village Drum and Masquerade will perform ethnic drum music and dancing at noon in the SUB pit. Admission is free.

Feb. 10: A comedy night at 9 p.m. in Club Central will feature comedians Vince Valenzuela, a former Central student, and Darrell Lenox. Admission is $3.

Feb. 14: Members of the cast of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf" will perform excerpts from the play at noon in the SUB pit. Admission is free.

Feb. 16-18: Central's theatre production of Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls ..." can be seen at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. Admission is $6, $4 for students and seniors.

Feb. 16-28: A showcase display about "For Colored Girls ..." will be in the SUB.

Feb. 23: A student panel discussion will be at noon in the SUB pit. Admission is free.

Feb. 23-25: Central's theatre arts department stages its final performances of "For Colored Girls ..." at 8 p.m. in the Tower Theatre. Admission is $6, $4 for students and seniors.

Feb. 28: Linda Taylor, of the Executive Diversity Center, will speak at 1 p.m. in the SUB pit. Her presentation will address the challenges of being an African-American female. Admission is free.
Sing the songs of 'Colored Girls...'

By DEWEY MEE
Contributing Critic

Midway through Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf," (on stage at Central Washington University's Tower Theater) the Lady In Yellow says, "being alive, a woman, and colored is a metaphysical dilemma I haven't conquered yet." The triumph of "Colored Girls..." is that it transforms this dilemma into a thoughtful meditation on, and celebration of, life.

This powerful fusion of drama, song, and dance is brilliantly directed (by guest artist Denise Thimes) and brilliantly performed — by the ensemble of LaChandra Carter, Debra Applin, Paulette Jonville, Nickola Wilson, Dominica Myers, and Dr. Bobby Cummings.

Ntozake Shange began writing this play, based on the lives of several women she knew, in poetry form in 1974. It has the ironic distinction of being only the second play by a black female playwright to be produced on Broadway (the first was Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun").

"Colored Girls..." has moments of great emotional impact, as in this near-cliché line: "I've learned that the only way you can love is to love someone else's blocks in Harlem") but most of the others are joyous and fun. The opening night audience was particularly charmed with Jonville's engaging tale of being the only virgin on prom night, but my personal favorite was Carter's phone conversation with her lousy lover. She told him exactly what he could do with himself and exactly where he could do it!

This situation will be familiar to those who, like myself, have faced cold indifference from a "significant other."

The scene is later repeated, in a way, when all the women recall sorry excuses they've heard from various boyfriends ("I can't even get to the clothes in my closet for all your sorrys," exclaims Carter's character).

By this time, incidentally, the opening night audience was erupting into uncontrollable laughter and applauding with unrestrained enthusiasm. No wonder, then, that by the play's finale, which begins with a heart-wrenching tragedy and ends with a song of jubilation, the audience rose to its feet and gave the acting ensemble a standing ovation.
Colored Girls’ evocative, provocative

By JUDY FULKERSON
Herald-Republican correspondent

These “girls” try not to take nothin’ offen nobody — with the notable exception of unfaithful boyfriends or whiny lovers who “walked off with all my stuff,” or individually.

“Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf,” the current offering at Central Washington University, is a multifaceted peek into the lives of six black women, “colored girls” performing a “choréopoem” by Ntozake Shange.

The drama has no plot, but the stories flow seamlessly, one into the other as told through monologues, dialogues and group voice, music and dance. This is the second time Denise Thames of St. Louis, who traveled to Ellensburg especially for this play, has directed the work. Her talent and know-how make for a compelling and beautifully done production.

“Colored Girls” is a collection of vignettes, some comic and self-mocking, some agonized. All are written with a bite that flicks like a lash. Through the personas of actresses LaChandra Carter (Lady in Red), Debra Applin (Orange), Paulette Jonville (Yellow), Nichola Wilson (Brown), Dominica Myers (Green) and Bobby Cummings (Blue), the trials, tribulations, commentaries, confessions and passions come alive on the stage at the Tower Theatre.

The play acts like a prism, splitting black into a spectrum of colors — each “colored girl” an individual unto herself. Collectively, they form a rainbow of shared experiences: date rape, music, the excuses men give, dance, spirituality, sisterhood. These are women who lend color to the world and who are colored by it.

As a choric poem, “Colored Girls” is both evocative and provocative. The sets and costumes are austere, so as not to detract from the writing and acting. The former consists only of a center pedestal and rear platform spattered painted in neon colors; the latter, brightly hued dresses, all the same style, but a different color for each woman. It wouldn't have mattered if the actresses had donned sacks and stood on a stark black stage. Each was mesmerizing, as she delivered the lines and tales.

“The nature of rape has changed,” declares Carter. We can even have them over for dinner and get raped in our own house — by invitation.

Cummings laments the fact, “I’ve moved to Harlem, and the uni-
sure of the year. Why don’t you find your own things and leave my stuff to me?” Myers demands.

Toward the end of the play, Carter voices a chilling monologue, which builds in intensity to a horrific climax. The actor takes the audience in the palm of her hand, then suddenly clenches her fist at the conclusion of the piece.

She begins by laying out the stormy relationship of Bo Willie Brown and Crystal as seen through the eyes of the Lady in Red.

“Crystal had been his girl since she was 15 and he caught her on the stairs,” Carter explains. The couple has a child together, and Crystal gets pregnant again, an event which merits a beating from Bo Willie.

Later, he presses for marriage, but Crystal refuses. “...I just want to marry you and give you things,” he wheedles.

“What’s gonna give me but a broken jaw?” Crystal shoots back.

“Bo Willie oozed kindness,” narrates Carter.

“I can be a good father,” he coaxes, so Crystal lets him hold the children.

Suddenly, he’s dangling the touts out the window, from several stories up.

“Say it! Bo Willie demands, in a blackmailing ploy to force Crystal to agree to a wedding.

“The baby was screaming... it was the fifth floor...

AND HE DROPPED THEM HOWLS CARTER, AS THE AUDIENCE GASPS, WHITE-KNUCKLING THE CHAIRS.

Amazingly, the play manages to end on a happier note, even though it’s been revealed Carter, the narrator, is actually Crystal.

Starting off tentatively, she suggests a song of discovery, “I found God in myself!” God, like her, is a singer. As the others join Carter in repeating the refrain, it becomes a song of self-affirmation.

“This is for colored girls who have considered suicide but moving to the ends of their rainbow,” one of the actresses says in a conclusion. And though the story seems to be no pot of gold in the future for any of the characters portrayed, some manage to grow little, to get the old hurts off their chests, to learn something about themselves and each other. The story emerges stronger in the empathy their shared experiences and self-knowledge.

Their struggle makes for a fascinating study, and while “Colored Girls” is about black women, there’s a universality which transcends race. The issues are real and relevant, the writing superb, the production flawless in strengths not lost on the small President’s Day holiday audience whose members rose to their feet in a standing ovation.

(Terry Campbell, Entertainer reporter, contributed to this report.)