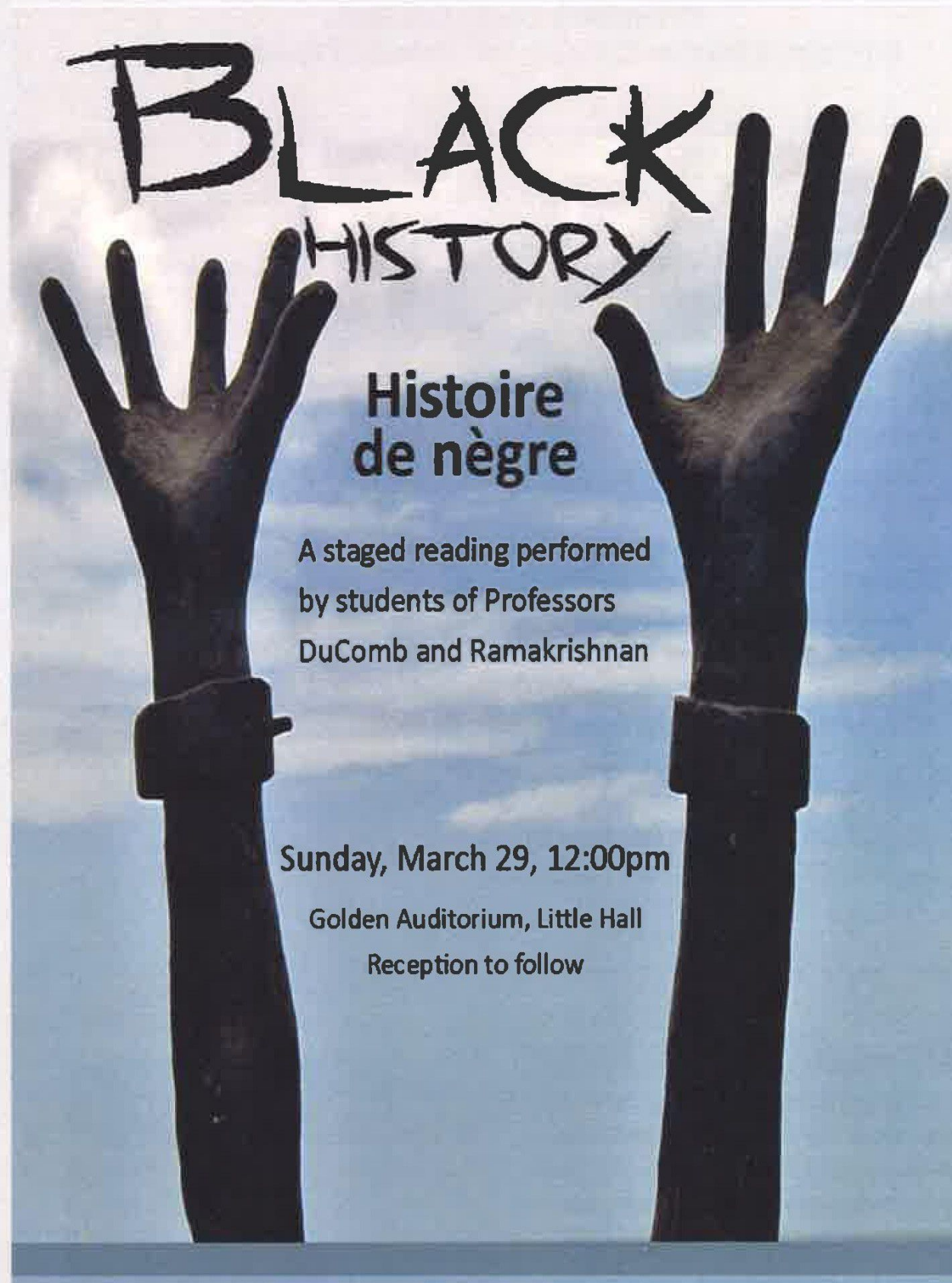


BLACK HISTORY

The background of the poster features two Black hands raised in a gesture of protest or solidarity, set against a bright, cloudy sky. The hands are positioned on either side of the central text, with fingers spread and palms facing forward. The wrists are bound with dark, thick cuffs.

Histoire de nègre

A staged reading performed
by students of Professors
DuComb and Ramakrishnan

Sunday, March 29, 12:00pm

Golden Auditorium, Little Hall
Reception to follow

Black History (Histoire de nègre)

Created by the theater group of l'Institut martiniquais d'études

Translators: Andrew Daily, Emily Sahakian, and Marie-José Saint-Louis

Dramaturg: Emily Sahakian

Directors: Christian DuComb and Mahadevi Ramakrishnan

Cast (in order of appearance)

Drummer	Jessica Pearce
Mythic Figure	Devon Hoffman and Whitney Robins
Prologue	Caroline Burke
Oppressed 1	Mara Case
Colonist 1	Chimebere Nwaoduh
Colonist 3	Amanda Comai
Colonist 2	Diane Seely
Operator	Nicole Jackson
Navigator	Linh Le
Voice 1	Tanner Holley
Oppressed 2	Alan Kim
Auctioneer	Laine Barrand
Buyer	Richard Sanders
Chorus/Crowd	Jessica Pearce, Julia Benson, Crozier Connor, Tanner Holley, Jessica Jallen
Voice 2	Eleanor Lichter
Demonstrator	Nicholas Harper
Malcolm X	Matthew Kavanagh

Special thanks to the Colgate Arts Council, the Colgate University Theater, the English Department, the Communities and Identities Program, ALST, ROLA, Holcomb's B&B, Curtain Call Catering, Maxine Campbell, Joel Morain, and Jonathan Baillehache at the University of Georgia.



Co-sponsored by the English Department, the Communities and Identities Program, the Africana and Latin American Studies Program and the Department of Romance Languages

Director's Note

The play *Black History* (*Histoire de nègre*) was created by Édouard Glissant and his colleagues at the Institute for Martinican Studies (*l'Institut martiniquais d'études*), a private secondary school that aimed to reorient education on the island of Martinique away from France and toward the history and geography of the Caribbean. In 1971-1972, amateur groups throughout Martinique performed the play for local audiences.

According to the introductory note to the text, *Histoire de nègre* "was conceived to illustrate three moments in black history: slavery, the struggles for liberation, and neo-colonialism and its attempts at brainwashing." The three parts of the play roughly correspond to these three historical moments, but as translator Andrew Daily observes, "each moment is dramatized in multiple temporalities and geographies."

Part 1

In the abridged translation of the script performed today, Part 1 begins with Columbus's "discovery" of Martinique and the subsequent extermination of the indigenous population, followed by a harrowing slave auction in which a middle-aged couple are separated from one another.

Part 2

Opens with the violent repression of a revolt against the French colonists, and then transitions into an extended homage to Malcolm X and other civil rights and black liberation leaders around the world.

Part 3

Shows Martinique's assimilation into France, with reluctant acquiescence tempered by longing for a Martinican national identity.

Throughout the play, this weighty content is leavened by humorous anachronisms and geographical displacements: Columbus charting his location by radar, a slave auction overshadowed by a stock ticker, and twentieth-century Martinicans "thanking" France for exporting winter fashions and alpine skiing to their tropical island. These jokes alternate with poetic ruminations and quotes from other works of literature to form a multilingual, intertextual pastiche. History is neither linear nor continuous in *Histoire de nègre*, but rather constructed from fragments in an effort to create a meaningful present.

To my knowledge, today's reading is the first English-language performance of this remarkable play. Enjoy the show, and stick around for the discussion afterwards as we explore the resonances of re-staging *Histoire de nègre* at Colgate in 2015.

-Christian DuComb

About Martinique

Martinique is an island in the lesser Antilles, an archipelago that marks the eastern boundary of the Caribbean Sea. The island was colonized by French settlers in 1635, seized several times by Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and permanently reclaimed by France in 1815.

France abolished slavery in the Antilles in 1848, and since 1946, Martinique and the neighboring island of Guadeloupe have been "overseas departments" of France, with the same political status as metropolitan departments in Europe. Although most of Martinique's 400,000 people are of African descent, small but significant South Asian, European, Lebanese, and Chinese communities also call the island home.

