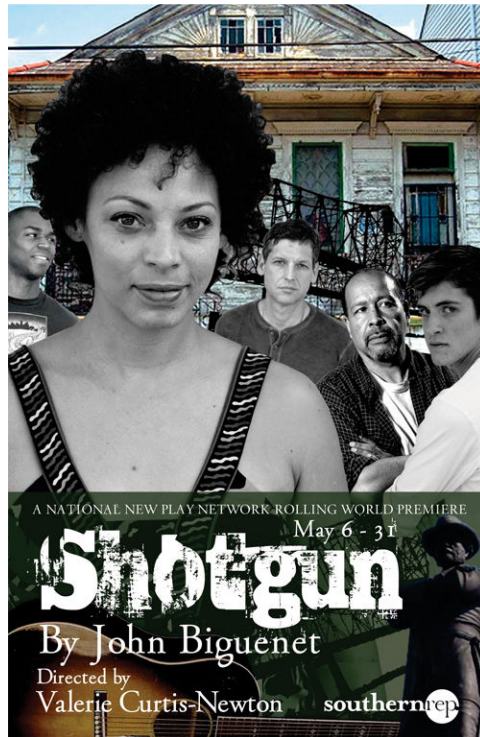


## STUDENT MATINEE STUDY GUIDE



### BENCHMARKS

The study guide and activities will enable you to utilize the following Benchmarks adopted in the 2004 Louisiana Arts Content Standards by the Louisiana Department of Education for grades 9-12.

### AESTHETIC PERCEPTION

- TH-AP-H3 Explain the significance of collaboration and evaluate group dynamics in creating, performing, and observing theatre.
- TH-AP-H4 Compare and contrast multiple possibilities and options available for artistic expression in theatre arts.
- TH-AP-H5 Analyze and explain the impact of theatrical works and dramatic performances on intellect and emotions.
- TH-AP-H6 Examine intuitive reactions and articulate personal attitudes toward theatre and other dramatic works.

### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

- TH-HP-H5 Investigate and assess roles, careers, and career opportunities in theatre arts.

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- TH-CA-H2 Analyze emotional and social dimensions of characterization and explain character transformations and relationships.
- TH-CA-H3 Construct social meaning from dramatic works with reference to theme, purpose, point of view, and current issues.

## ROLES & CAREERS

Use the listings below to discuss the different roles and careers in the theatre industry and how they apply here at Southern Rep on the production of SHOTGUN.



The cast of "Shotgun" in a publicity photo.  
Photo credit: John B. Barrois.

### CAST

Dexter Godchaux.....\*Lance C. Nichols  
 Mattie Godchaux .....\*Donna Duplantier  
 Beau Harlan..... Rus Blackwell  
 Eugene Harlan.....Alex Lemonier  
 Clarence "Willie" Williams .....Kenneth Brown, Jr.

### ARTISTIC STAFF

Playwright .....John Biguenet  
 Director .....§Valerie Curtis-Newton  
 Scenic Design ..... Geoffrey Hall  
 Lighting Design .....Patti West  
 Costume Design..... Kelly James-Penot  
 Sound Design ..... Eric Shim  
 Props Master.....\*Sarah Z. Singleton  
 Production Stage Manager.....\*Sarah Z. Singleton  
 Assistant Director .....Katie Alyge Lucky-Heard  
 Assistance Stage Manager .....Lauren Guillot  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Assistance Stage Manager.....Caitlin Manning  
 Run Crew & Props Assist. Intern..... Ashley Heitzman

\* Member Actors' Equity Association

§ Member Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

(Both are unions created to protect the interests of their many members.)

### Production Staff

Technical Director .....Philip Cramer  
 Master Electrician .....Austin Riotte  
 Set Carpenters ..... Andrew Larimer & Austin Riotte  
 Scenic Painter..... Max Bernardi  
 Technical Intern.....Isaac Trapolin

### SOUTHERN REP STAFF

Artistic Director .....Aimée Hayes  
 Managing Director & Artistic Associate. Julie Hamberg  
 Literary Manager ..... Brian Sands  
 Arts Education Director/PSM.....Sarah Z. Singleton  
 Management Associate..... Marisa Morton  
 Graphic Designer ..... Colleen Gowland  
 Photographer .....John Barrois  
 Web Designer ..... Daniel Olmstead  
 of Pursued by Bear



The director, Valerie Curtis-Newton, and the playwright John Biguenet in their headshots, a type of image often used for publicity.

## RACE IN SOCIETY TODAY

Discuss race as it relates to the community of New Orleans, the storm and the play.

### Nagin Apologizes For 'Chocolate' City Comments



NEW ORLEANS, Louisiana (CNN) -- Mayor Ray Nagin on Tuesday apologized for urging residents to rebuild a "chocolate New Orleans" and saying, "You can't have New Orleans no other way."

"I'm really sorry that some people took that the way they did, and that was not my intention," the mayor said. "I say everybody's welcome." Nagin added that he never should have used the term "chocolate."

Across the Hurricane Katrina-ravaged city, many voiced their displeasure with the mayor's Monday remarks at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day speech. One Web site even began peddling T-shirts showing Nagin with a top hat along with the caption "Willy Nagin and the Chocolate Factory."

Resident Alex Gerhold called Nagin's remarks "stupid" and "pitiful." "He used the wrong dairy product to describe us. We're more Neapolitan, not chocolate," Gerhold said. "It doesn't do the city any kind of justice." Aisha Johnson said she didn't think the mayor's comments were necessarily inflammatory, just out of line. "He should have chosen his words more carefully," she said. But some residents, like Ann McKendrick, were angered. "You can't reunite a city if your comments are going to divide a city," McKendrick said.

Nagin's remarks fall into a line of inappropriate statements the mayor has made, said civil rights attorney Tracie Washington. She said she is "done trying to figure out what our mayor is going to say off the cuff on any given day." "It was an unfortunate goofball statement for him to make," Washington said. "All it has really done is make the city look just a little bit more ridiculous."

The mayor, who is up for reelection this year, publicly apologized for his remarks at the beginning of a Bring New Orleans Back Commission meeting. He said he was trying only to encourage many of the city's displaced poor population to return. In an interview with CNN, Nagin said he was addressing an "unspoken thing about who's coming back, who should come back, what type of city we are going to have in the future."

Before Katrina hit on August 29, the city was 67 percent African-American. "It was designed to talk to the African-American community for the most part, not only for here but throughout the country -- and to make sure that they understood

that they were welcomed in this city," he said.

On Monday, Nagin said God wanted New Orleans to be predominantly black and said he didn't care what the predominantly white Uptown section of the city had to say about it. "I don't care what people are saying Uptown or wherever they are. This city will be chocolate at the end of the day," he said. "This city will be a majority African-American city. It's the way God wants it to be."

After the statement, he insisted he wasn't being divisive. "How do you make chocolate? You take dark chocolate, you mix it with white milk, and it becomes a delicious drink. That is the chocolate I am talking about," he said. "New Orleans was a chocolate city before Katrina. It is going to be a chocolate city after. How is that divisive? It is white and black working together, coming together and making something special."

Nagin, first elected in 2002, was supposed to come up for reelection next month. However, state officials postponed the city election until April because of the disruptions caused by Katrina.

**“SHOTGUN” FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT:****What Have I Learned?**

**by John Biguenet**  
*The New York Times*,  
 August 28, 2006

A year ago this morning, my wife, son and I squeezed into our Volkswagen Beetle along with my son's two cats (to which I am allergic) and fled New Orleans and the approaching Hurricane Katrina. Our odyssey to my brother's house in Dallas and then on to my daughter's place near New York City before returning home five weeks later covered 3,500 miles.

As we approached New Orleans on I-10 on the October night we returned, we knew that waiting for us was a devastated city, which, for the most part, had no electricity, natural gas, drinkable water, functioning sewer system, garbage collection or mail delivery. As we reached the city limits, armed soldiers turned us away, enforcing an 8 p.m. curfew.

The next morning, finally allowed to return to our hometown, we crossed an ashen lawn that crunched under our feet from the salt that evaporation had left behind, forced open our front door, and discovered what a house looks (and smells) like after sitting for two or three weeks sweltering in four feet of water. We've been trying to repair our house and our lives ever since.

On October 30, two months after defective levees had collapsed all across New Orleans, flooding 80 percent of the city and killing more than 1,300 people, I wrote a column for the Times entitled "What Have We Learned?" Today, I'm thinking about a slightly different question: What have I learned? After the most

extraordinary year of my life, what do I know that I didn't know a year ago.

There are obvious lessons, of course. I am much less attached to my possessions, those we salvaged from the house and the few new things we have bought. They don't matter, it turns out, as much as I had thought they did — even the rare books, the family photos and the mementos of our kids' childhoods. Others in New Orleans lost so much more than we did, we feel lucky in comparison.

I learned it's very difficult to predict who will flourish in a crisis and who will wither. And I am still surprised at which details in a landscape of devastation will unhinge the courage of someone who, up to that moment, has met the most appalling challenges with calm determination. On the other hand, I'm almost shocked at how much loss most people can not only survive but even joke about.

I also know now there's no point in saving fine wine for some special occasion. It's obvious to me, with an insistence I can't seem to shake, that nothing lasts — not bottles of wine, not houses, not even cities.

I suppose I could have learned those lessons in other ways. But there is something I don't think I could ever have understood without witnessing firsthand the events of the last year. I now recognize how much leadership matters.

Before watching what has happened to New Orleans, I don't think I fully believed it actually made a difference who ran an institution. I imagined that institutions were larger than individuals and had their own momentum. A business, I naively thought, could survive the idiot son who had inherited the company from his

father. Experienced managers and dedicated workers could keep the factory humming, no matter who was in charge.

I was wrong.

The absence of leadership at every level of government has doomed New Orleans to paralysis. As the president of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana said last week in releasing a report on the region, coauthored by his group and the Rockefeller Institute of Government, "New Orleans has no plan at the moment, and the excruciatingly slow pace of the recovery bears witness to that. What seems to make the difference is the ability of local officials to take clear, decisive steps to get the planning process under way. . ."

The report itself is even more direct: "In the end, Katrina and Rita produced two disasters. The first was the immediate crisis created when the hurricanes made landfall. The second was the difficulty various levels of government had in working together to respond to the crisis. This was — and remains — the more dangerous of the two . . ."

Without effective local and national leaders, who will make the case that the nation as a whole — rather than only New Orleanians — should bear the enormous cost of rebuilding the city? Who will provide a vision of a new New Orleans that can still funnel half of the country's oil and gas to American consumers while maintaining its unique culture? Who will pose the difficult questions that must be answered if New Orleans is to have a sustainable future?

Without real leaders, I've learned this past year, the answer to all those questions is no one.

## SHOTGUN . INTELLECTUAL & EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

- Was this a successful production to you? Why or why not?
- What thoughts did this production provoke in you?
- Relating to themes in the play, have any of your options been changed as a result of experiencing SHOTGUN?
- What emotions did you experience while watching this production and what was successful in achieving that effect on you?



## SHOTGUN . THE STORY & CHARACTERS

- Were any elements of the production unclear to you?
- Discuss the characters of the play in terms of what they want and what challenges they face:
  - Beau Eugene's father
  - Eugene the high school student
  - Mattie the landlord
  - Dex Mattie's father
  - Willie the friend
- What characters experienced change throughout the play?
- What character relationships were altered during the play?
- If you were cast in this play, how would your interpretation of the role be different?
- What character do you most identify?



## SHOTGUN . DESIGN

- Discuss how elements of each design area were successful and/or unsuccessful and what you would have done differently if given the chance:
  - Scenic
  - Props
  - Costumes
  - Lights
  - Sound



## SHOTGUN: PROCESS

- Discuss the importance of collaboration in theatre and how it applies to the acting and design processes of SHOTGUN.

