

**“A true patriot is a lover of his country who rebukes and does not excuse its sins.”**

**--Frederick Douglass**

The idea for *A Tale of Two Americas* was born out of the love of country. I thank my lucky stars (and stripes) that I'm an American, but I have recently been considering that my experiences are just that: *my* experiences. I recognize that there are Americans among us who were not born into the same privileges as me simply by virtue of being from this country.

I love America. I really do. I love the opportunities it has afforded me and the sense of possibility and potential that being an American inherently ingrained in me as a child. I love apple pie and the Fourth of July and the NFL and the Statue of Liberty. But as orator, statesman, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass reminds us, it is the ability of someone who truly loves their country to see its flaws and to long for them to be fixed.

The decision to begin compiling the script for this show came in the summer of 2020. On the heels of the death of George Floyd and a newly widespread consciousness of racial injustice in America, I found myself trying to make sense of the two disparate versions of America that seem to exist. One that represents a pluralistic nation that finds unity in its diversity and fights for freedom and ideals and democracy, and one where years of slavery and Jim Crow laws have allowed for systemic racism and oppression of the other.

To create the script, we built a collage of words from the voices of this country: songs, poetry, historical speeches, monologues. They are about America, told by Americans. They tell stories of America's greatest triumphs, of Americans coming together in times of adversity, but they also remind us of moments of pain, inequity, and cruelty.

Parts of this piece may be difficult to watch. You may agree or disagree with certain points. Some things may cause you to think or feel or reconsider. *A Tale of Two Americas* highlights two different visions of our country, and they are not mutually exclusive. It is easy to turn away or disengage with material that makes us uncomfortable or doesn't quite fit in with our worldview, but I encourage you to watch with an open mind and open heart. Thank you.

Camille Pozderac, Co-Director

More information on the pieces in *A Tale of Two Americas*

1. Quilt of a Country by Anna Quindlan (2002)

The Ensemble

2. MLK/RFK (1963/1968)

Josh Allen and Rachel Styslinger

3. Two Quarterbacks based on an article by Tom Ziller (2016)

Isabella Richards-Turner, Brandon Brooks, Scott Russell, and Noelle Robinson

4. The Star-Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key (1814)

Noelle Robinson

5. If I Had a Country, I Should Be a Patriot by Frederick Douglass (1847)

Nina Omatsola

6. Dear Jackie, A letter from Lt. Commander John J. Shea, USN, USS Wasp, to his son (1942)

Scott Russell

7. Sympathy by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1899)

Josh Allen and Nina Omatsola

8. The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus (1883)

Sophia Bordenick

9. Let America Be America Again (excerpt) by Langston Hughes (1936)

Sophia Bordenick, Valeria Morales, Rachel Styslinger

10. Great, Strong, Free, and True by Amos Russel Wells (c. 1918)

Yvonne Harrison

11. 9/11 Remarks by George W. Bush (2001)

Isabella Richards-Turner and Julia Purdy

12. Indelible Substance, an interview with Josie Morales from Twilight Los Angeles by Anna Deavere Smith (1992)

Valeria Morales

13. Colossians 3:12-14

The Ensemble

14. America the Beautiful by Katharine Lee Bates (1895), performed by Ray Charles (1976)

Yvonne Harrison