

## UHM Office of Multicultural Student Services

The Office of Multicultural Student Services traces its roots to the formation of Operation Manong. In 1971 a coalition of University of Hawai'i students and faculty, Filipino community members and Immigrant Services Center staff saw a need to assist Filipino immigrant school children. They organized Operation Manong (OM), a project linking university students with immigrant school children. "Manong," an Ilokano term of respect for an older person, had been used in Hawai'i to refer to Filipinos in a derogatory manner. OM founders sought to restore the traditional positive meaning. Hence, university students became "manong" and "manang" to younger children. Since 1976 OM has been funded by the State of Hawai'i through the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Funding over the many years has been provided by the United Presbyterian Church, ACTION, the U.S. Departments of Education and Energy, and the Hawai'i State Departments of Education and Human Services.



From its inception OM serviced many other immigrant children, including Chinese, Korean, Samoan, Vietnamese and Laotian youth. OM also provided outreach to other ethnic groups underrepresented in higher education, including native Hawaiians, African Americans and Hispanic Americans. To reflect this broader scope, in June 2000, Operation Manong became the Office of Multicultural Student Services (OMSS).

In 2004 OMSS initiated a project which would present to the university community and the community-at-large multicultural issues which are often overlooked in Hawaii. Through our own efforts and community collaborations (previous collaborators include the United Nations Association, the Japanese American Citizens League-Hawaii Chapter and the Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii) we hope to awaken and enlighten our communities to issues that continue to challenge us today. Tonight's performance is the first dramatic presentation sponsored by OMSS.

Office of Multicultural Student Services  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
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Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822-2205

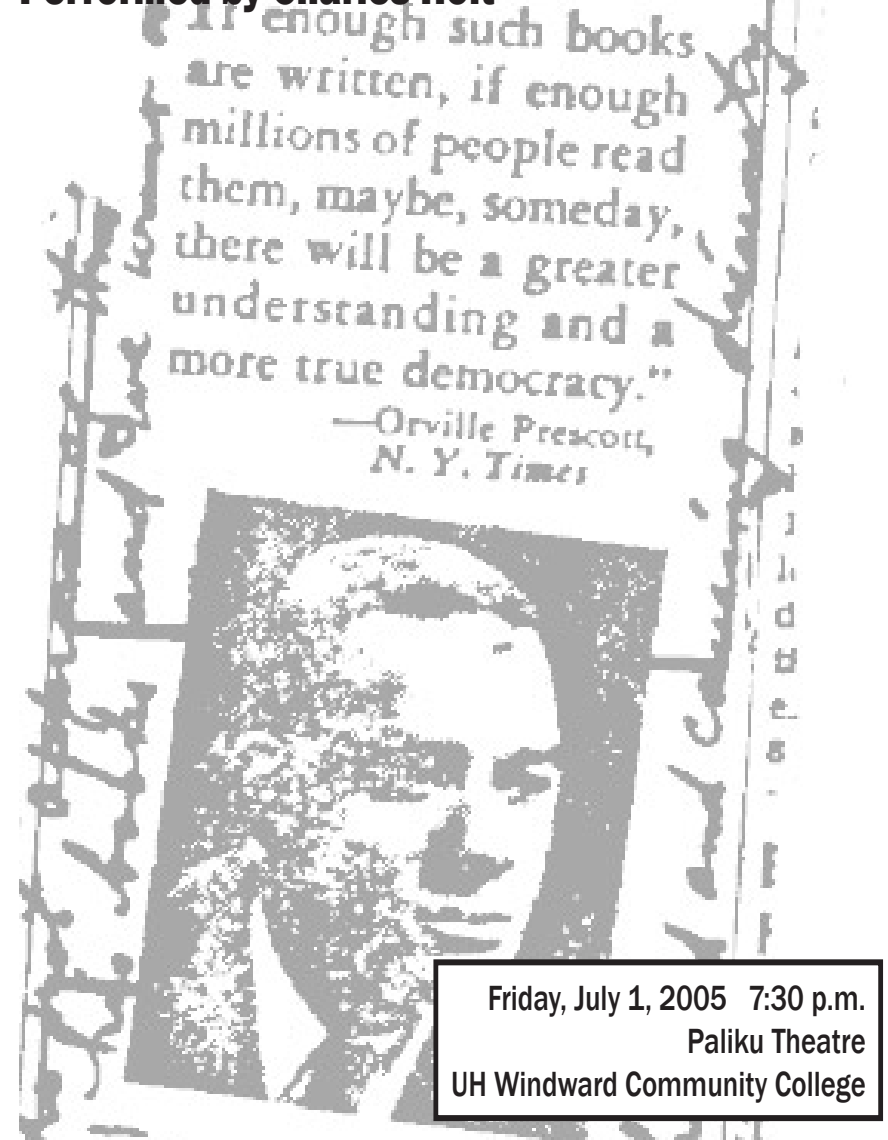
The University of Hawaii is an EEO/AA institution.

# BLACK BOY

Richard Wright's 1945 Autobiography

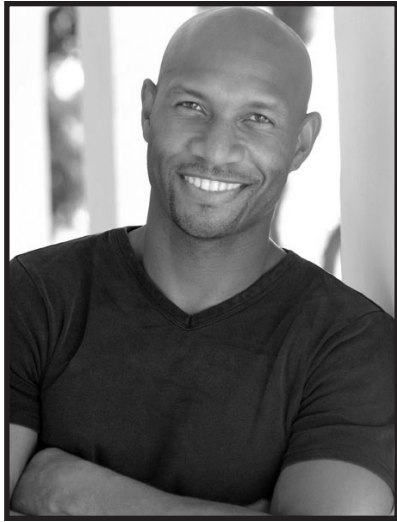
Adapted by Wynn Handman

Performed by Charles Holt



Friday, July 1, 2005 7:30 p.m.  
Paliku Theatre  
UH Windward Community College

A UHM Office of Multicultural Student Services Presentation



## Charles Holt

A native of Nashville, Tennessee, Charles Holt is the youngest of three children. An all-star high school scholar and athlete, Mr. Holt attended college on a football scholarship and dreamed of playing professional football. Despite a valiant effort and intense work habit, however, Mr. Holt's dream did not materialize. Following a brief career with a Fortune 500 company, Mr. Holt took the advice of a friend and enrolled in an acting class at the Alliance Theatre (Atlanta).

After moving to New York Mr. Holt continued to pursue his interests not only in acting but also in singing and dancing. Mr. Holt's stage and screen performances include Disney's *The Lion King* (Broadway), *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Anne B. Real*, *Generation X*, *Autumn in New York*, and *Ed Takes a Trip*. He is currently completing this fourth touring season of his one-man show, *Black Boy* (adapted for stage by Wynn Handman, American Place Theatre). With members of *The Lion King* family, Mr. Holt also created and founded the "Miracle Monday" program for the youth and staff at the Covenant House New York, one of the nation's foremost agencies serving homeless, runaway and at-risk youth.

As a motivational speaker, Mr. Holt creates an environment inspiring others to align themselves with their purpose and to utilize challenges as stepping stones in reaching their goals. Through transformative tools such as perseverance, constructive criticism, apprenticeship, coaching, a positive outlook and a willingness to share, Mr. Holt believes that we all can begin to build and choose a life we love.

## Richard Wright and *Black Boy*

Richard Wright, one of America's greatest writers, is author of *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), *Native Son* (1940), *Black Boy* (1944), *The Outsider* (1953), and *American Hunger* (1977). Born in 1908 on a farm near Roxie, Mississippi, Richard Wright was the first child of Nathan Wright, an illiterate sharecropper, and Ella Wilson Wright, a schoolteacher. His maternal grandmother, Margaret Bolton Wilson, a midwife nurse and a devoted Seventh-day Adventist, was the strict head of the household. Wright's formal schooling was constantly interrupted by family misfortunes. From an early age, however, Wright devoured pulp magazines, dime novels and other discarded books and magazines. After graduating as valedictorian from the ninth grade in 1925, Wright left Mississippi for Memphis, Tennessee, where he educated himself by reading *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The American Mercury* as well as works by Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, H. L. Mencken, Frank Harris and O. Henry.

By 1927 Wright and his favorite aunt (Maggie) moved on to Chicago. It is in Chicago that Wright joined and first participated in the Communist Party. While agreeing with the Party's social reforms, Wright took issue with the Party's line on artists and writers. Although he kept close ties with the Party, Wright broke with the Party in 1943. The FBI, however, continued to monitor his activities throughout his life. In spite of literary success in the United States, Wright eventually lived out his life as an expatriate in Europe, where he believed he could write unimpeded by social and government interference.

Wright began work on his autobiography, initially entitled "Black Confession," following a talk he delivered at Fisk University (Nashville) on racism in April 1943. By the end of the year Wright finished his autobiography, renamed *American Hunger* and composed of two parts: "Southern Nights" (life in the South until 1927) and "The Horror and the Glory" (his continuing story in Chicago into the 1930s). It was soon accepted for publication by the Book-of-the-Month Club with one scene altered (deemed "obscene") and without the second section on his developing political consciousness in Chicago. This latter deletion resulted from pressure from the Communist Party, with which Wright had developed a strained relationship. The autobiography was published in 1945 as *Black Boy*. Wright published selections of the deleted second section in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Mademoiselle* and *Cross Section*. Harper and Row eventually published the entire deletion as *American Hunger* in 1977.

[Text adopted from *Richard Wright: Works* (New York: Library Classics of the United States, 1991)]