

The Color of Courage

A Two-Man Theatrical Experience
By Mitchell G. Capel



Approximately 180,000 African Americans, comprising 163 units served in the Union Army during the American Civil War. In general, it was believed that "black men" lacked the ability to fight, and fight well. However, those ideas were quickly dispelled by the gallantry and bravery that African American soldiers displayed in every battle in which they participated. Mitchell Capel and Sonny Kelly are "a force to be reckoned with" as they bring to life a fraction of the untold stories of the hundreds of thousands of unsung heroes...heroes whose glory and honor have remained unspoken for entirely too long. With its powerfully poetic embodiment of these rare stories, framed by a multi-media presentation, this experience leaves audiences breathlessly enlightened and encouraged. This work brings to life an array of these African American soldiers, their stories and their struggles.



Scheduled Performances (2016 – 2018)



The Arts Council of Fayetteville, NC, Redeemed Christian Church, Fayetteville, NC
Tryon Palace, New Bern, NC, Fayetteville Tech. Comm. College Auditorium
UNC Chapel Hill, Sonja Haynes Stone Center, Phoenix Academy High School,
Chapel Hill, NC, Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church, Greensboro, NC, Sunrise
Theater in Southern Pines, NC, Nat'l Association of Black Storytellers Conference,
UNC Chapel Hill, Sonja Haynes Stone Center, Foo Festival (African American
Heritage Society) of Pensacola, FL, St. Andrews University Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day Celebration.

This project is a recipient of the UNC Chapel Hill *Performing Arts Special Activities Fund* grant and the *Fayetteville Technical Community College Foundation* grant. Presentations are modular and highly flexible. They can be produced on main stages and in smaller venues. To book a performance in your community visit www.sonnykelly.com or call (210)793-5241.

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THE CAST



Mitch Capel (also known as "Gran'daddyJunebug") is an award winning storyteller, writer, actor and poet from Southern Pines, NC. He has been described by major publications as "word magician", a "national treasure" and "unexpectedly powerful". Seven years after attending A&T State University and Howard University, Mitch began his career as a storyteller in 1985 specializing in the works of Paul Laurence Dunbar. He now has over 33 hours of stories stored to memory with over 90% of them in rhyme. Mitch is co-founder of The African-American Storytellers Retreat and has performed both nationally and internationally at thousands of venues including the Kennedy Center, The International Folk Festival, The Inauguration of President Barack Obama and (for the past 27 years) at The National Black Storytelling Festival. Visit www.gjbug.com for more.



Sonny Kelly is a professional performer, storyteller, motivator, speaker, and scholar. Currently pursuing a PhD in Communication at UNC Chapel Hill, Sonny is a graduate of St. Mary's University (MA, Communication Studies, '08) and Stanford University (BA, International Relations, '98). Sonny has been a professional actor on stage and television for over 25 years. He has served our nation as a U.S. Air Force officer, and his community as a non-profit organization program director, a youth worker and church minister. Sonny has worked with the United Way of Cumberland County, schools and non-profits across the nation, Beasley Broadcasting, the North Carolina Juvenile Services Association, the National Association of Black Storytellers and the Black Storytellers' Alliance to share his love for others through storytelling. He is the author and star of a one-man show called *The Talk*, about finding family, success, and love in a racialized America. Visit www.sonnykelly.com for more.

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What *The Color of Courage* offers audiences:

- Depth of inquiry, that links un(der)told history with our contemporary questions on race and representation in the US.
- Combines parallel and intersecting passion and talents of elder (national storytelling treasure!) Mitch "Gran'daddy Junebug" Capel and vibrant younger actor Sonny Kelly, for an overwhelmingly connected presence.
- Profound emotional and physical resonance as a live performance piece, based in research and critical ethnography that is mindfully, respectfully, and artfully done.
- Exposure to classic 19th century and contemporary poetry and narratives by Paul Laurence Dunbar, William Cullen Bryant, Raymond Garfield Dandridge, Thomas Campbell, Dr. Rex Ellis, and others.
- Expand our notion of *freedom fighters* and the pursuit of a living history, through embodied memory, for the sake of social justice.
- Reverent reflection on U.S. history and military service, with special attention paid to abiding issues that affect military members and veterans today like PTSD and re-integration into society.



The Color of Courage Web Site:

<http://www.sonnykelly.com/#!/the-color-of-courage/omtqw>

The Color of Courage Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/thecolorofcourage/>

The Color of Courage YouTube Trailer:

<https://youtu.be/pz4XBMkV37o>

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RIDER

- 2 Chairs without arms
- 2 Headset microphones
- 1 Large screen (at least 4ft X 4ft) and projector capable of projecting a PowerPoint slide show during the performance
- 1 CD player or Audio Visual system capable of playing CD or digital sound files
- 3 technicians to run lights, slides and sound
- Minimum of 1 hour set-up and break down time
- Stage lighting preferred, but not required

TIMING

Run time: 70 minutes without Q & A. Can be adjusted according to needs.

SPACE

Minimum of 10ft X 6ft playing space, preferably on an elevated stage. Backstage space required for exits and entrances.

COST

\$10,000 + travel and lodging costs for one full performance, followed by an optional additional hour of Discussion and Q & A.

*Additional cost of \$500 per performance + travel and lodging for Technical Director if audio/visual technicians are not provided (audio, visual, and lighting technicians require 3 to 5 hours of rehearsal with the performers)

*Prices for additional performances in the same area and timeframe are negotiable.

**Discounts available for non-profit organizations*

<i>The Color of Courage is currently available for booking!</i>
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Presentations are modular and highly flexible. They can be produced on main stages and in smaller venues. To book a performance visit www.sonnykelly.com or call (210)793-5241.

REVIEWS

"I defy anyone not to be moved by these soldiers, black or white. These two are a FORCE!"

~ Bo Thorp, Founding AD, Cape Fear Regional Theatre

"Phenomenal! I don't think that I have ever been in a better theatrical presentation, ever!!"

~ Duane Reynolds, Executive Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of Coastal Carolina

"A theatrical tour de force for these two amazingly gifted artists...history and artistry intersect for a great evening of theater!"

~ Deborah Mintz, Executive Director, Arts Council of Fayetteville, Cumberland County

"So full of heart and closeness with the texts and the multiple layers of meanings ...Thanks for bringing these important stories alive at this crucial time in history."

~ Patricia Parker, PhD, Chair of the Department of Communication, UNC Chapel Hill

"...the actors held the students rapt as they wove poetry and song together..."

~ Raleigh News & Observer

"A very powerful piece of work!"

~ Professor Phoebe Hall, Fayetteville State University, Performing & Fine Arts

"...WORLD CLASS! Your rendition of the veteran with PTSD was heart wrenching to say the least and the transformation of Mr. Capel into the elderly father was amazing."

~ Loretta Epps, M.D., African American Heritage Society, Pensacola, FL

References:

- Nancy Smith-Watson, Dir., Feast of Crispian Veterans' Theater Festival, Milwaukee, WI
Phone: (414)203-1960; E-Mail: feastofcrispian5@gmail.com
- Rona McLeod Leach, PhD, Professor, St. Andrews University, Laurenburg, NC
Phone: (910)277-5337; E-Mail: leachr@sa.edu
- Angie West-Robinson, Program Dir., African American Heritage Society, Pensacola, FL
Phone: (850)469-1456; E-Mail: aahs990@earthlink.net
- Sharon C. Bryant, African American Outreach Coordinator, Tryon Palace, New Bern, NC
Phone: (252)639-3592; E-Mail: nsbryant@tryonpalace.org
- Dr. John Godbolt, Pastor, Redeemed Christian Church
Phone: (910)323-8889; E-mail: drjlgodbolt@earthlink.net
- Deborah Mintz, Executive Director, Arts Council of Fayetteville, Cumberland County
Phone: (910)323-1776; E-mail: deborahm@theartscouncil.com
- Dr. Patricia Parker, Chair, Department of Communication, UNC Chapel Hill
Phone: (919)962-2311; E-mail: psparker@email.unc.edu
- Dr. Caroliese Frink Reed, National Association of Black Storytellers, Education Chair
Phone: (215)236-1118; E-mail: afamstorytellers@gmail.com
- John Williams, Principal, Phoenix Academy High School, Chapel Hill, NC
Phone: (919)918-2300; E-mail: jawilliams@chccs.k12.nc.us