

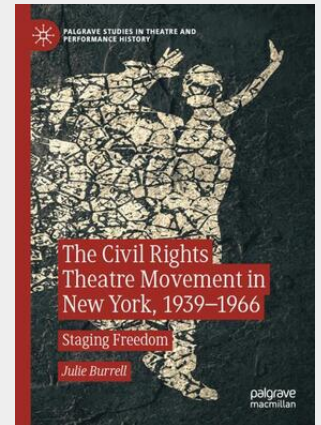
Burrell

## The Civil Rights Theatre Movement in New York, 1939-1966

Staging Freedom

This book argues that African American theatre in the twentieth century represented a cultural front of the civil rights movement. Highlighting the frequently ignored decades of the 1940s and 1950s, Burrell documents a radical cohort of theatre artists who became critical players in the fight for civil rights both onstage and offstage, between the Popular Front and the Black Arts Movement periods. The Civil Rights Theatre Movement recovers knowledge of little-known groups like the Negro Playwrights Company and reconsiders Broadway hits including Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, showing how theatre artists staged radically innovative performances that protested Jim Crow and U.S. imperialism amidst a repressive Cold War atmosphere. By conceiving of class and gender as intertwining aspects of racism, this book reveals how civil rights theatre artists challenged audiences to reimagine the fundamental character of American democracy.

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