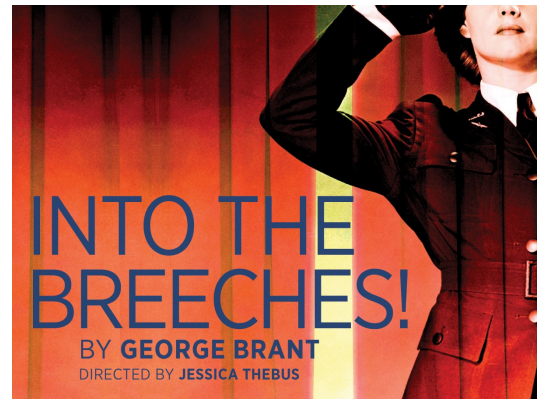


# NORTHLIGHT THEATRE

## Season Access Curriculum Preview

Student Matinee May 23



### Shakespeare & Evanston

The characters in *Into the Breeches* are preparing to perform a combined edit of Shakespeare's Henry IV Part 1, Henry IV Part 2, and Henry V, also known as *The Henriad*. These plays exist in conversation with the characters of *Into the Breeches* as they touch on themes of patriotism, victory, and uplifting community—important messages for those during World War II. Considering this play's specific focus on the importance of the arts in communities, for Northlight's production, playwright George Brant has decided to set the play in our own backyard—Evanston, Illinois. As a result, the play becomes a treasure hunt of references to WWII-era Chicago, including locations at Northwestern University and fun facts like: did you know that the Chicago Roller Skate Company halted roller skate production during the war to produce grenades?

### Women & World War II

American women played important roles during World War II, both at home and in uniform. Not only did they give their sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers to the war effort, they gave their time, energy, and some even gave their lives. As the men fought abroad, women on the Home Front worked in defense plants and volunteered for war related organizations, in addition to managing their households. Public, iconic characters like Rosie the Riveter helped assure that the Allies would have the war materials they needed to defeat the Axis. In *Into the Breeches*, women and community members step up to mount the *Henriad* at the community theatre, a project that was traditionally led by men.



### African American GIs, Racism & WWII

Beginning in 1933, when Adolf Hitler came to power, African-American activists and the black press used white America's condemnation of Nazi racism to expose and indict the abuses of Jim Crow at home. America's entry into the war and the struggle against Nazi Germany allowed civil rights activists to significantly step up their rhetoric. Langston Hughes' 1943 poem, "From Beaumont to Detroit," addressed to America, eloquently expressed that sentiment: "You jim crowed me / Before hitler rose to power- / And you are still jim crowing me- / Right now this very hour." Believing that fighting for American democracy abroad would finally grant African-Americans full citizenship at home, civil rights activists put pressure on the U.S. government to allow African-American soldiers to "fight like men," side by side with white troops.

#### Resource!

[African-American GIs of WWII: Fighting for democracy abroad and at home](#)

To learn more about Northlight's Season Access  
[visit our website](#)

or

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