

Oba William King

Traditional Folk Artist • Storyteller

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Resident Teaching Artist, touring storyteller, keynote speaker, author, and workshop presenter. Incorporates poetry, drumming, movement, drama, songs, and music into interactive performances for all ages and cultures. Many of my performances have workshop components that I adapt to serve the age or population of the participants.

Fellowship Award Recipient • Traditional Folk Arts Master • Texas
Commission on the Arts Roster Artist • National Association of Black Storytellers - Webinar Technical Director/Education Committee • Tejas Storytellers Association - Youth Programs Coordinator • Minneapolis Black Storytellers Association • Bishop Arts Theatre, Dallas and Jr. Players, Dallas – Teaching Artist/Performer • Feature Storyteller - International Storytelling Center–Artist in Residence Jonesborough, TN. Feature Teaching Artist - Sun Foundation Arts and Science Center Washburn, Il. Cultural arts program director per contract at Boys and Girls Club; Taylor, Texas.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Honorable discharge from the US Army, I attended College in Santa Barbara, CA, in Speech Communications and Language Arts (A.A.). During college, I performed with the local community theatre for two seasons. I was recruited to attend The Western Stage Theatre Conservatory to study Theatre Production, Technical Theatre Sound, Lights, Makeup, Stage Combat, and Theatre Directing. Upon completing The Western Stage training, I moved to Chicago, Illinois, where I began my career in Theatre Arts. I continued studying the craft with Masters in the art form, i.e., Oscar Brown Jr., Okoro Harold Johnson, and Kelan Phil Cohran. I received a Fellowship in Traditional Folk Art from the Illinois Arts Council. I continued to practice and develop my skillset by forming JUSTUSarts Educational Entertainment. JUSTUSarts is an ensemble

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of artists, including poets, actors, vocalists, dancers, comedians, magicians, and storytellers. During eight years of development, marketing, and production, I managed and directed the school and library touring program, creating interactive educational performances for middle and high school audiences. I developed funding support through grants and donations through Urban Gateways, Mid West Arts Alliance, The Illinois ROAD Scholars program, The Illinois Arts Council, and a community of arts supporters. As opportunities to create and present cultural arts grew, I developed a community arts program with the help and direction of Tom Tresser, a manager with the local brick and mortar development company “Peoples Housing.”

In exchange for rehearsal space, JUSTUSarts, my team, and I produced an all-ages after-school program, a monthly newsletter, “The Word, written by students with community artist Sarah Beaudry as a lead mentor. We continued to grow with more participants and additional opportunities, and I initiated our city wide open mic activity called “The Saturday Show.” Students would develop their “act” during the after-school program (in our space) and present to family, friends, and community members during the performance showcase. The weekly goal and primary carrot for good behavior and positive contributions to our mission was to be elevated as a presenter to family, friends, and community members during the performance showcase. *Rogers Park. Howard Street Theatre, Chicago. We Made A Difference.

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

I moved from Chicago, Illinois, to DFW, Texas, in November 2017 to develop outreach and community programs at the local libraries. In the summer of 2018, in collaboration with the City of Forest Hill’s administration, I wrote a proposal to the American Library Association to develop a Summer Reading program for school-age youth and their families. The American Library Association recognized the program as a positive, productive engagement model. I’ve published two stories and two for young readers and designed literary arts activities for family audiences. I am a roster artist in traditional folk arts and storytelling programs as a Texas Commission on the touring artist. I have Forest Hill, Texas, resident for seven years, presenting the art of storytelling for schools, libraries, museums, youth, and senior centers. I market

my services via social media formats, my website, www.obawilliamking.com, and by word of mouth. It is an honor to do the work of a storyteller.

RECENT TEACHING ARTIST AND TOURING EXPERIENCE

November 2021 - February 2022 Storytelling presentations in Midland, TX. • Waukegan, IL. • Beloit, WI • Cambridge, Mass. • Chicago, IL. • Bolingbrook, IL. • Oakland, CA. • North Chicago, IL. and other virtual Programs at preschool, grade school, library and community venues. In December 2021, I was selected as one of 10 writers assigned to create theatrical content regarding “How To Be An Racist”; I wrote a one-act play titled “Water Fountain-1957”. The project premiered with 15 local actors portraying the characters in the ten-story program. I have developed a National Poetry Month- “Poetic Showcase” 2 April. I’ve been invited to create a traditional storytelling presentation Featuring Local DFW Poets at the Mansfield - Farr Best Theatre on Main Street. I was honored to receive an invitation to present The Traditional Art of Storytelling at The Kimball Arts Museum in April Ft Worth, TX. If I were selected to be a Teaching Artist for the Hadley Alternative Metro Opportunity School, I could adapt my schedule so that my primary focus will be utilizing learned skills and life experience to engage the students and develop opportunities to create positive outcomes of assigned goals.

OBA KING BRIEF BIO 2024

An Interactive Storyteller, Oba William King is an Award-Winning Writer, Drummer, and English Language Arts Performer. Before COVID-19 he toured nationally. Despite COVID-19, Oba continues to present live professional productions, i.e. “Storytelling Time”, “A Poetic Kwanzaa,” “A King’s Dream,” R.E.A.D. as well as “Firefly & Little Star” for young readers and virtual school or library programs.

Oba's collection of storytelling productions and interactive activities are designed to engage the various ages and cultures of each client’s community. Oba presents "Spinning A Yarn" for seasoned adults as a social distance "live" performance workshop, designed to collect and share stories of our elders.

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Oba William King's rhythmic drumming and traditional American and African Folktales are available for oral translation into the regional languages of the listening audience. Since 2010, he's known as a favorite presenter at venues in multiple parts of the country. Including The Center for International Storytelling, The National Association of Black Storytellers, and The George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, to name a few. Mr. Oba is using his honorable reputation of sharing the Art of Storytelling, Poetry, and Spoken Word, as though they were sacred gifts to re-engage our communities and awaken the artistic skill sets of young and old alike.

Best Regards
Oba William King

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