

# WORD FOR WORD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Word for Word Launches A 2nd Podcast Season Word For Wordcast July-November 2021

July 22 "The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett  
August 26, September 2 "A Pair of Eyeglasses" by Anna Maria Ortese  
October 7 "Home" by George Saunders  
November 4 "Raymond's Run" and  
"Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird" by Toni Cade Bambara  
Available @ [zspace.org/pod](http://zspace.org/pod)

Word for Word, a program of Z space, launches a 2nd Podcast Season running July-November 2021. Word For Wordcast 2021 season of short stories performed with theatricality opens July 22 with "The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett with music composed by Marcus Shelby. This is followed by 2 episodes posting on August 26 & September 2 of Anna Maria Ortese's "A Pair of Eyeglasses" translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein and Jenny McPhee. In the fall Word For Wordcast features "Home" by George Saunders on October 7, concluding the cycle with the November 4 posting of Toni Cade Bambara's "Raymond's Run" and "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird".

The tremendous success of the first season of the WORD for WORDcast with over 5,000 downloads in less than 9 months has led Word for Word, not yet back in their theater, to continue to theatrically tell good stories, now returning with Season 2 posting July through November.

All of the theatricality performed podcasts post at 5pm on launch dates and are available at [zspace.org/pod](http://zspace.org/pod) online for 1 year in most cases. The series features a sound design for the stories that creates a dynamic auditory experience highlighting their powerful psychological imagery.

*"Begun as a response to theater lockdown during the pandemic, our Word for Word Podcast has grown and given us all an opportunity to extend our skills, our artist pool, and our outreach to the world with good stories. We are so grateful to all who have helped us produce these short stories, which speak to our time, and are also timeless."* remarks company co-founder Susan Harloe.

## Word For Wordcast July-November 2021 Season

Podcasts can be found at [www.zspace.org/pod](http://www.zspace.org/pod)

**-The Word for Wordcast of "The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett posts on July 22** is directed by Rami Margron, with music composed by Marcus Shelby and sound design by Elton Bradman. "Rooted in a profound sense of rural place... original and subtle, canny and soulful – full, too, of sublimely sardonic humour." (*The Guardian*) The cast for "The Appropriation of Cultures"

features actors Cassidy Brown\*, Artis Fountaine, Gwen Loeb\*, Safiya Fredericks\* and David Everett Moore\*. (\*AEA)

**-The second story in this season "A Pair of Eyeglasses" by Anna Maria Ortese ( 2 episodes) posts on August 26, September 2,** will be posted in two episodes on August 26, September 2 and is translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein and Jenny McPhee. "A Pair of Eyeglasses" is directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka, sound design by Elton Bradman, with a cast that features actors Sheila Balter\*, Catherine Castellanos\*, Paul Finocchiaro, Jeunée Simon\*, Amy Kossow\*, Brian Rivera\* and Patricia Silver\*. (\*AEA)

**Fall Season Continues with-**

**"Home" by George Saunders posts October 7**

**"Raymond's Run" and "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird" by Toni Cade Bambara posts November 4**

## **Word For Wordcast July-November 2021 Season Production Background**

### **"The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett**

**Posts July 22**

A young musician plays with other jazz men in a bar, and is heckled to "play Dixie", to which he responds with a heartfelt rendition. This leads him to appropriate the confederate flag as a Black-power symbol. "Don't take it down, just take it," he declares. "Rooted in a profound sense of rural place... original and subtle, canny and soulful – full, too, of sublimely sardonic humour." (*The Guardian*)

**Percival Everett** (Author) (b. 1956) is Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Southern California and the author of nearly thirty books, including *Erasure* and *I Am Not Sidney Poitier*. He is recipient of many awards, among them the Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the Dos Passos Prize, the PEN Center USA Award for Fiction, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His most recent novel, *Telephone*, was a finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Literature.

"The Appropriation of Cultures" is a response to the confederate flag: "Since telling the South Carolina State Legislature in 1989 that I couldn't continue my address because of the presence of such a conspicuous sign of exclusion [the confederate flag], I have not really considered South Carolina." This is a wickedly subversive story, about symbols and their meaning. "The Appropriation of Cultures" was written in 1996, and published in Everett's 2004 story collection, *Damned If I Do*, by Graywolf Press.

**Rami Margron** (Director) is an actor, dancer, choreographer and occasional director based in Brooklyn. They spent a lot of their pre-pandemic time acting in plays in various American cities, most recently playing the title character in *Hurricane Diane* at The Old Globe Theatre in San Diego. You can also catch them on episodes of *F.B.I.*, *High Maintenance*, *Bull*, *For Life*, *New Amsterdam* and *Ray Donovan*. Rami is also a co-creator an experimental film based on the Brothers Karamazov, which is in post-production.

**Marcus Shelby** (Composer) is a composer, bassist, bandleader, and educator who currently lives in San Francisco, California. His work focuses on the history, present, and future of African American lives social movements and music education. In 1990, Marcus Shelby received the Charles Mingus Scholarship to attend Cal Arts and study composition with James Newton and bass with Charlie Haden. Currently, Shelby is the Artistic Director of Healdsburg Jazz, an artist in residence with the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, and a past resident artist with the San Francisco Jazz Festival and the Healdsburg Jazz Festival. For more info, see [marcusshelby.com](http://marcusshelby.com)

**Elton Bradman** (Sound Designer) Composer/sound designer credits include audio dramas (Aurora Theater's *The Bluest Eye*), student productions (ACT's *The House of Yes*), Zoom theater (Actors Theaters' *Romeo & Juliet: Louisville 2020*), podcasts (Z Space/Word for Word's *Retablos*), filmed theater (San Francisco

Playhouse's *Hieroglyph*), hybrid visual/audio (New Conservatory Theater Company's *Interlude*), and outdoor performances (Oakland Theater Project's *The Waste Land*). He is currently teaching a sound design course for Western Washington University and co-writing a musical for Bay Area Children's Theater and the Rose Theater in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Cast: (\*AEA)**

**Cassidy Brown\*** was last seen with W4W in *Lucia Berlin: Stories*. He has worked all over the Bay Area and beyond at Berkeley Rep, Center Rep, Marin Shakes, Golden Thread, Theatre Works, Pacific Rep, Capital Stage, and SF Shakes, where he appeared in last summer's ground breaking virtual version of *King Lear*. He also co-hosts a spiritual comedy podcast called *All the Answers* and is hoping to return to his other love of improv comedy when we are allowed to share air with other humans again.

**Artis Fountaine** is considered to be one of the OG's in BayArea theater, having been a performer on and off for more than 35 years. He takes great pleasure in working with Word for Word again. Artis was involved last year in WORD'S Coronavirus Radio Broadcast productions at KALW of "The Blues I'm Playing", a short story by Langston Hughes and the broadcast of "The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett. With his newfound joy of podcasting and voice over work, Artis hopes to be On again.

**Safiya Fredericks\*** was most recently seen onstage and virtually in the streaming production of *Hieroglyph* at SF Playhouse. She was a 2019 company member of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and has also worked at ACT, Yale Rep, Berkeley Rep, and Cal Shakes where she was the recipient of the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for Best Featured Actress for her work in *Black Odyssey*. You can also see her in the films *Bitter Melon*, *Sorry to Bother You*, and the upcoming *I'm Charlie Walker*.

**Gwen Loeb\*** is an award-winning actress who has been featured in theaters across the Bay Area. Some of her recent productions include: Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Livermore Shakespeare Festival; Brenda in *Can You Hear Me Baby* with Prospect Theatre in New York; the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Audrey/Le Beau in *As You Like It*, at SF Shakespeare Festival; Pauline in *A Bright New Boise*, and Babette in *The Arsonists* at Aurora Theatre Company. She is delighted to have this chance to work with Word for Word.

**David Everett Moore\*** has performed with many Bay Area theaters, including Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Crowded Fire Theater, Marin Shakespeare Company, African-American Shakespeare Company, Perspective Theater Company, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, and San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Regional credits include work with Capital Stage Company, Colorado Shakespeare Festival and Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. Favorite roles include Addison in *Safe House* for Aurora Theatre Company, BJJ in *An Octoroon* for Capital Stage Company, and Black Man in *We Are Proud to Present* for Just Theater. David is a Resident Artist of the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and a proud graduate of UC Berkeley, where he earned his BA in Theater and Performance Studies.

**“A Pair of Eyeglasses” by Anna Maria Ortese**

**Posts August 26, September 2 ( 2 episodes)**

(translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein and Jenny McPhee)

In Anna Maria Ortese's story **“A Pair of Eyeglasses”** young Eugenia, born with severe myopia, is promised an expensive pair of eyeglasses. She imagines the shimmering beauty she will see, but with her newfound eyesight becomes aware of class distinction in her poor neighborhood in Naples. Filled with a rich Neapolitan street life and vibrant community. "A Pair of Eyeglasses" is considered a classic of 20th century Italian literature."It is a gaze that has no equal in Italian literature." (*Los Angeles Review of Books*) "A Pair of Eyeglasses" is directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka, sound design by Elton Bradman with a cast that features actors Sheila Balter\*, Catherine Castellanos\*, Paul Finocchiaro, Jeunée Simon\*, Amy Kossow\*, Brian Rivera\* and Patricia Silver\*. (\*AEA)

**Anna Maria Ortese** (Author) was an Italian author of novels, short stories, poetry, and travel writing. Born in Rome, she grew up between southern Italy and Tripoli, with her formal education ending at age thirteen. Ortese's stories, novels, and journalism received many of the most distinguished Italian literary awards, including the Strega and the Fiuggi. She lived for many years in Naples following the Second World War, where "A Pair of Eyeglasses" is set. *Neapolitan Chronicles*, which contains "A Pair of Eyeglasses" is considered a classic of 20th century Italian literature.

"It is a gaze that has no equal in Italian literature." (*Los Angeles Review of Books*)

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**Rotimi Agbabiaka** (director) is an actor, writer, director, and teacher who uses humor, glamor, and drama to upset the status quo. Previously, Rotimi appeared in Word for Word's *Holiday High Jinx* and is a member of the Core Company. Most recently, Rotimi originated the role of Salima in *House of Joy* (California Shakespeare Theatre) and Cellphone in *If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka* (Playwrights Horizons, NYC). Other acting credits include *Black Rider* (Shotgun Players), *Bootycandy* (Brava Theater, Theatre Bay Area award), *runboyrun* (*Magic Theatre*), and several shows with the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe. Rotimi penned the solo shows *Homeless*, *Type/Caste* (Theatre Bay Area award), and *MANIFESTO; the musical*, *Seeing Red*; and dazzles nightlife stages (as alter ego Miss Cleo Patois). [www.rotimionline.com](http://www.rotimionline.com)

**Elton Bradman** (Sound Designer) composer/sound designer credits include audio dramas (Aurora Theater's *The Bluest Eye*), student productions (ACT's *The House of Yes*), Zoom theater (Actors Theaters' *Romeo & Juliet: Louisville 2020*), podcasts (Z Space/Word for Word's *Retablos*), filmed theater (San Francisco Playhouse's *Hieroglyph*), hybrid visual/audio (New Conservatory Theater Company's *Interlude*), and outdoor performances (Oakland Theater Project's *The Waste Land*). He is currently teaching a sound design course for Western Washington University and co-writing a musical for Bay Area Children's Theater and the Rose Theater in Omaha, Nebraska.

## "Home" by George Saunders

### Posts October 7

"Home" by George Saunders first published in *The New Yorker*, June 13 & 20, 2011.

The story of a vet, returning from the war only to discover family trouble at home.

Of "Home", George Saunders says, "*If you send four hundred thousand people into a shitstorm, don't expect everybody to come back smelling like roses. Some of them are going to come back damaged. To show ourselves to be an honorable culture, we have to step up and deal with them with all the generosity and love we can summon, or shame on us.*"

Performed with permission of the author

**George Saunders (author)** George Saunders studied under Tobias Wolff in the graduate program in creative writing at Syracuse University. His work includes the short-story collections *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* (a finalist for the 1996 PEN/Hemingway Award), "*Pastoralia*," *In Persuasion Nation* (a finalist for the Story Prize), *Tenth of December* (a finalist for the National Book Award and recipient of the Folio Prize), *Congratulations, By the Way: Some Thoughts on Kindness*, and *Lincoln in the Bardo: A Novel* (winner of the Man Booker Prize). Saunders has won prizes for his best-selling children's book, *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip*, and for a book of essays entitled *The Braindead Megaphone*, and he has been featured in the "O. Henry Prize Stories," "Best American Short Stories," "Best American Nonrequired Reading," "Best American Travel Writing," and "Year's Best Science Fiction and Fantasy" anthologies. Named by *The New Yorker* one of the best American writers under the age of forty in 1999, Saunders has received fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

**Sheila Balter** (director) A Core Company Member of Word for Word, she last directed *Retablos* by Octavio Solis. Prior to that, she directed short works by Damon Runyon, Joseph Mitchell, and E.B. White. Other directing with the company includes stories by Tobias Wolff, Daniel Handler, George Saunders, Andrew Sean

Greer, Sandra Cisneros and Woody Allen. She has directed for other companies including Encore Theatre, Brava, and California Shakespeare Theater. Sheila is also a Bay Area actress, teacher, and coach.

**"Raymond's Run" and "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird"**  
**by Toni Cade Bambara Directed by Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe**  
**Posts November 4**

**"Raymond's Run" and "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird" by Toni Cade Bambara** Two stories from Bambara's celebrated collection, *Gorilla, My Love*. A neighborhood track meet and unexpected visitors to a family farm provide upbeat looks at girlhood and community bonds. "Raymond's Run" is a commentary on how girls are encouraged to compete: but our heroine "Squeaky" transforms a community track meet to a growing awareness of her brother and his disabilities, which prevent him not at all from the joys of running. She sees a path to positive community energy and cooperation for all. "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird" shows another young girl, and her family's steady, spirited response when filmmakers unabashedly show up to film the family farm for a food stamp program. With her spirited young narrators, Bambara skewers pretension and presumption. Performed with permission of Karma Bambara Smith.

**Toni Cade Bambara** (1939-1995) (Author) was a writer, documentary filmmaker, teacher, social activist, and feminist. Born and raised in New York as Milona Mirkin Cade, she changed her first name as a child to Toni, and later added the West African Bambara as her last, to honor her origins. She received a BA in Theatre Arts/English from Queens College. She studied mime in Paris, and returned to the US to study and receive a Master's Degree from City College of New York. She was active in the Black Arts Movement, and her work was influenced by the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist Movements of the 1960's. Her books include short story collections *Gorilla, My Love*; *The Salt Eaters*; *The Lesson*; *War of the Walls*, 1970 *My Love*, *The Sea Birds Are Still Alive: Collected Stories*. Her novel, *Those Bones Are Not My Child*, about the discovery and murder of 40 Black children in Atlanta, was published posthumously. She wrote the script for *The Bombing of Osage Avenue*, about the 1985 Philadelphia police assault on MOVE, as well as scripts for other documentaries. *Deep Sightings and Rescue Missions* is a compilation of her work, gathered by Toni Morrison. Bambara edited the anthologies *The Black Woman: An Anthology* and *Tales and Stories for Black Folks*. She died in Philadelphia in 1995.

**Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe** (director) is an accomplished actor, director, writer, working in the Bay Area for almost 40 years. The founding artistic director of the award-winning ensemble Black Artists Contemporary Cultural Experience (BACCE), she has directed and produced 10 critically acclaimed productions for the company. She is a former acting and directing member of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. She has directed at Trinity Rep, Capitol Rep, Southern Rep, Carpetbag Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, WaterTower Theatre, Curious Theater, Sf Playhouse, Magic Theatre, TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, and the Lorraine Hansberry, receiving accolades from Dallas' Rabin Awards and Backstage's Dean Goodman Award for Excellence. Edris has appeared as an actor in productions throughout California, and in Nigeria. She was a core member of Rhodessa Jones' Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women. Her plays, *Adventures of A Black Girl In Search of Academic Clarity and Inclusion* and *There are Women Waiting* are published in the anthologies, *solo/black/woman* and *Black Medea*. . Edris is also a member of Campo Santo, Word for Word, and the National Institute of Directing and Ensemble Creation. She holds an MFA in Theater from the University of Iowa, and is a member of the Goddard College faculty.

**On Word for Word**

Over the last 28 years, Word for Word has performed short stories of over 100 writers, ranging from Alice Munro to Amy Tan, Tobias Wolff, and James Baldwin. Word for Word as a program of Zspace believes in the power of the short story to provide solace, compassion, and insight into our daily lives. A program of Z Space, Word for Word brings works of literature to the stage and now in an audio drama podcast, all performed verbatim by the multiple characters of the story. Word for Word's

mission is to tell great stories with active theatricality, staging performances of classic and contemporary fiction. Instead of adapting a script, we use every word of a text in a dynamic, evocative style that preserves the original beauty of the prose.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

**Word for Word launches a 2nd Podcast Season running July-November 2021**

**Word For Wordcast 2021 Season Of Short Stories Performed With Theatricality**

**-July 22 with "The Appropriation of Cultures" by Percival Everett** directed by Rami Margron with music composed by Marcus Shelby. Sound Design by Elton Bradman

**- August 26 & September 2 of Anna Maria Ortese' "A Pair of Eyeglasses"**

translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein and Jenny McPhee.

Directed by Rotimi Agbabiaka, Sound Design by Elton Bradman

**- October 7 "Home" by George Saunders** Directed by Sheila Balter

**- November 4 Toni Cade Bambara's "Raymond's Run" and "Blues Ain't No Mockin Bird"**

Directed by Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe

**All of the theatricality performed podcasts post at 5pm on launch dates and are available at [zspace.org/pod](https://zspace.org/pod) online for 1 year in most cases**

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