

Adam: The Story of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

Double-Billed!



Timothy Simonson as Adam Clayton Powell Jr.

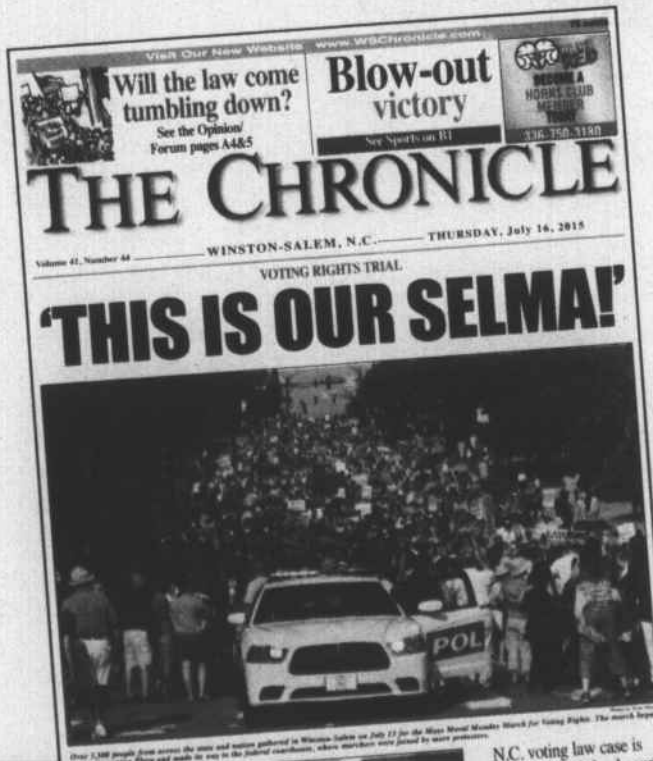
Timothy Simonson has made a name for himself by playing some of history's luminaries on stage. He was W.E.B. DuBois in "Dr. Du Bois and Miss Ovington;" black cowboy Nat Love in "Deadwood Dick Legend of the West;" and the trailblazing lawmaker in "Adam: The Story of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.," which will have an encore run at the NBTF this year after bowling audiences over two years ago.

Presented by New York's National Black Touring Circuit, "Adam" is written by Peter DeAnda, who is also an acclaimed actor, director and producer. His other playwriting titles include "They Were Doin' a Jig but Mr. Bones Didn't Feel Like Dancin'" and "Ladies in Waiting." Actress Ajene D. Washington takes on directing duties.

Simonson has been playing Powell for decades. In the 1980s, he received the best dramatic actor AUDELCO award for the title role in "The Trial of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr." Known as a captivating actor with the ability to pull his audiences in through his performances, Simonson has many titles on his long acting resume, including the National Black Theater's "Ghost Stories of the Blacksmith, Black Codes From The Underground," the Billie Holiday Theatre's "Women in the Pit, Blues for a Gospel" and "Equus" at the 127th Street Rep. As Powell, Simonson takes audiences from Harlem's influential Abyssinian Baptist Church, where Powell served as pastor, to the halls of Congress to Bimini, the chain of Bahamian islands where Powell lived out his last years.

Powell's name and story are still unknown to many. The charismatic New Yorker broke through huge barriers when he walked through the doors of the U.S. Capitol in 1945, becoming the state's first elected black member of Congress. By the 1960s, Powell was one of the nation's most powerful leaders, helping Presidents Kennedy and Johnson push through landmark pieces of legislation as the chair of the Education and Labor Committee. But Powell had his challenges. Born to mixed-race parents, Powell's blackness was questioned by his critics, and his spending of public money and frequent trips away from Harlem and Washington led to a controversy that would be his political demise. Powell lost his reelection bid in the Democratic primary in 1970 to Charles Rangel, who is still serving in Congress today. ■

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