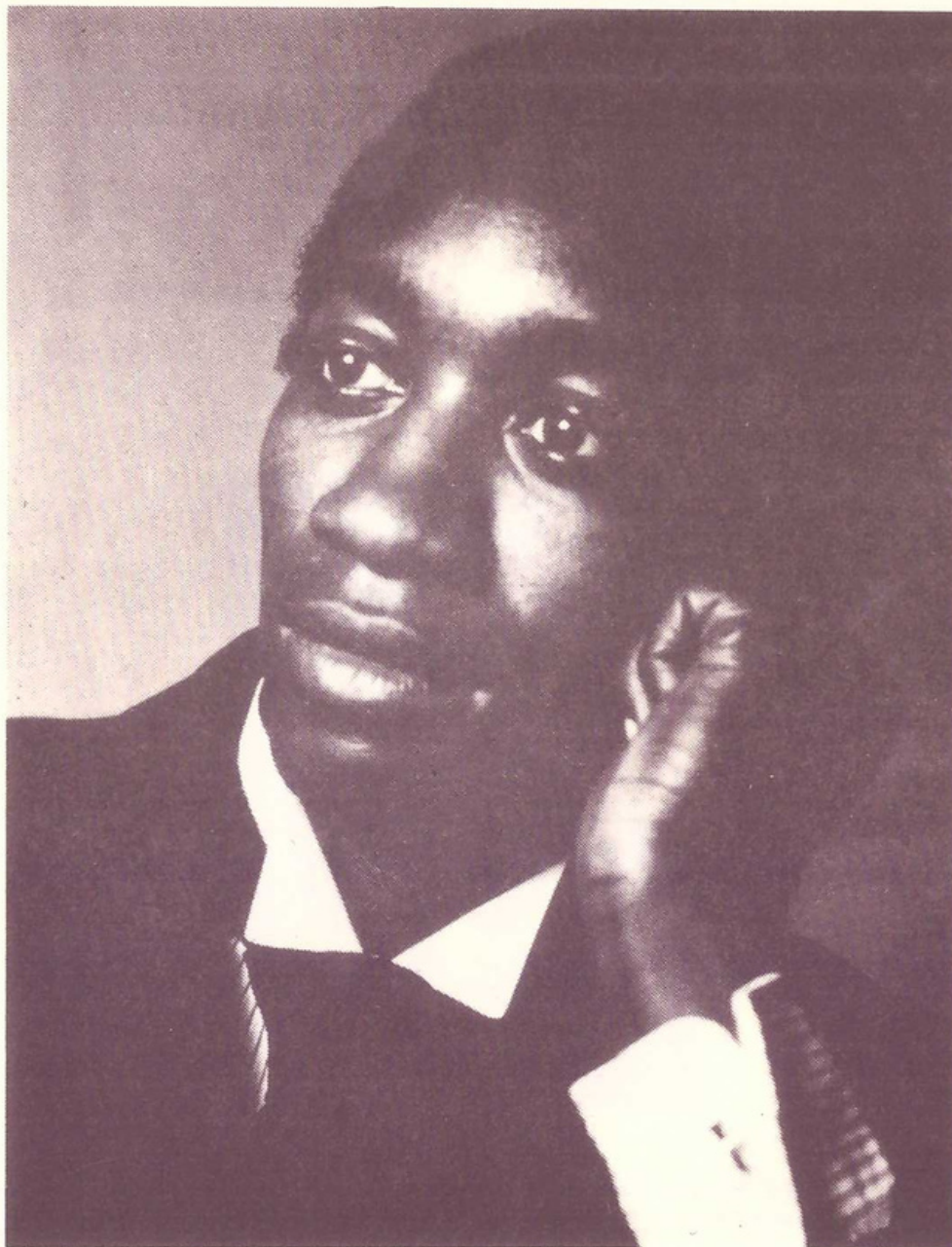


Joseph Mydell
as
Paul Laurence Dunbar



in
LYRICS OF THE HEARTHSIDE
1979 - 1980
BOOKING SEASON

Civil Service LEADER

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A Poet Returns As Joseph Mydell



By HARCOURT TYNES

If you closed your eyes as the words were being spoken, you could easily believe it was the legendary Paul Lawrence Dunbar reciting before you.

Even with open eyes, the figure of the tall, slender black man dressed in a cutaway formal suit, uttering words and using gestures made famous by the turn-of-the-century poet, vividly brought back stories told long ago about one of America's earliest and most famous black-dialect poets.

The performer was Joseph Mydell, a former city teacher and Board of Education tester, who travels about town putting on similar shows to small audiences. Mr. Mydell, a Pace University drama professor, hopes to make a television appearance soon, doing, of course, his favorite thing—poems by Dunbar.

About 70 people were on hand at Harlem's Studio Museum, 2033 Fifth Ave., last week to hear and watch Mr. Mydell recite and

act out "When Malinda Sings," "The News," "The Philosophy," "The Departure," and other bits of poetry and prose the Ohio-born Dunbar wrote. Mr. Mydell carried out the impersonation even further. He grew his hair longer and pushed it back to take on Dunbar's physical appearance. The look-alike situation, plus the delivery and words had the audience gasping, foot-tapping and applauding. After the performance, he said he made himself up by copying a photograph of Dunbar, who died in 1906 at age 34.

Born in Savannah, Ga., the 31-year-old Mr. Mydell was graduated from New York University. He has a master's in fine arts from NYU and is working on a doctorate there.

He switched to teaching college students after a brief stint as a social studies teacher at a Bronx junior high school.

"I didn't like it," he said of his junior high teaching experience. "I preferred older students."

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JOSEPH MYDELL
in
"LYRICS OF THE HEARTHIDE"
by Paul Laurence Dunbar

PROGRAM

Act I.....Lyrics of Lowly Life

Act II.....Lyrics of the Hearthside

ACT ONE

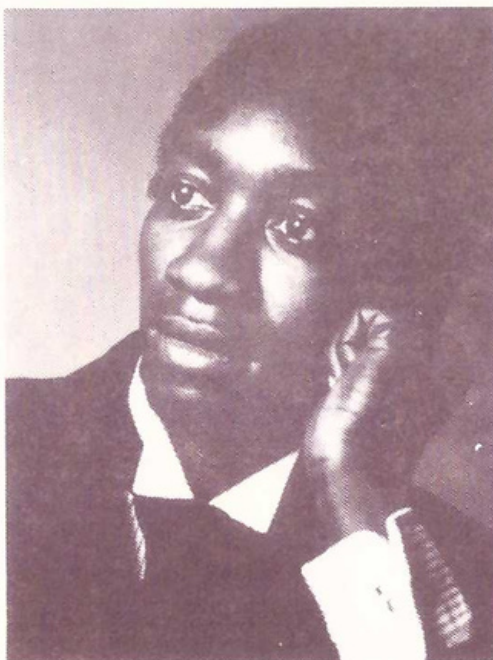
LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE
(Dunbar the Performer)

Philosophy
The South
Plantation Life
The North
The War
The Fourth of July

ACT TWO

LYRICS OF THE HEARTHIDE
(Dunbar the Man)

Mother
Travels
Alice Ruth Moore
Travels
William Dean Howells
Marriage
Travels
Separation
Back Home



Joseph Mydell as Paul Laurence Dunbar in "Lyrics of the Hearthside" puts the poems, prose and songs of Dunbar together in an evening of highly dramatic impersonation: Dunbar alive! Dunbar on stage! Dunbar performing his own works as he did so often throughout this country and England. After careful research Mr. Mydell has brought together Mr. Dunbar's works including letters that are not only brilliantly entertaining but reveal the human, often angry and proud soul of Paul Laurence Dunbar.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in 1872 in Dayton, Ohio. He became the foremost black writer of the 19th century. His writings included four volumes of poems, four novels and various prose works and lyrics to many popular songs. William Dean Howells who assisted in the publishing of Dunbar's first book of poems said, "Dunbar was the only man of pure African blood and of American civilization to feel the Negro life aesthetically and express it lyrically."

Full Program: 1 hour 35 minutes.

Fee: Full Concert Performance \$1,000* (all inclusive)
* Add \$200 west of Mississippi