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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for A Raisin in the Sun with insert essay 'Sweet Lorraine'

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[[image: Black and White Photo of Lorraine Hansberry]]

Lorraine Hansberry
PHOTO COURTESY OF LORRAINE HANSBERRY LITERARY
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Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) is the author of the plays *A Raisin in the Sun*; *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, produced on Broadway shortly before her death in 1964; and *Les Blancs*, which premiered posthumously on Broadway in 1970. When *A Raisin in the Sun* premiered in 1959, it was the first play by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway. Later that season, Miss Hansberry also became the youngest American playwright, the fifth woman, and the first African-American to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award when *A Raisin in the Sun* was named Best Play. In 1961, the film version won a special award at the Cannes Film Festival, and Hansberry was nominated to a Writers Guild Award for her screenplay. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, an autobiographical portrait in her own words, adapted by her former husband and literary executor Robert Nemiroff, was the longest running Off-Broadway play of 1969. The author of many articles and essays on literary criticism, racism, sexism, homophobia, world peace, and other social and political issues, her published writings also include *The Drinking Gourd*, *What Use Are Flowers?*, and *The Movement*, a long essay written as text for a photojournalistic treatment of the Civil Rights Movement.

The recording heard before the performance is a radio conversation between Lorraine Hansberry and Studs Terkel at broadcast on Terkel's program "Almanac." The program, recorded in 1959, appears here courtesy of the Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

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[[image: Pictures of Playbills for advertisement]]

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