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*Dramatic Publishing*

*Chasing  
George Washington:  
A White House Adventure*



*By Karen Zacarias  
with the young playwrights of  
Young Playwrights' Theater  
Music by  
Deborah Wicks La Puma*

“The phrase ‘if these walls could talk’ is often heard. In the case of *Chasing George Washington*, they do — and they have a compelling story to tell.”

—*The Washington Post*

## *Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure*

*Musical. By Karen Zacarias with the young playwrights of Young Playwrights’ Theater. Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma. Cast: 7m., 8w. (3m., 3w. with doubling). Extras as desired.* Field trips are fun, especially when your destination is 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue! In this charming and exciting musical, Dee, José and Annie accidentally knock George Washington out of his portrait and into real life—turning their White House tour into an unexpected adventure. As they try to get the nation’s first president back into his painting, the threesome encounters Jacqueline Kennedy; Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd; Dolley Madison; and other famous White House residents. Together, they learn that the White House isn’t just a historic building—it’s also a home. Commissioned by the Kennedy Center and the White House Historical Association. “The dude on the dollar bill leaps to life in Karen Zacarias’ entertaining ... *Chasing George Washington*. The production also features a spry score by Deborah Wicks La Puma that ably mixes hip-hop, disco, ballads and traditional show music.” (*The Washington Times*) *Unit set. Music excerpts available online. Optional accompaniment CD available. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Code: CP4.*

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# **Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure**

Book and lyrics by

**KAREN ZACARÍAS** with  
the young playwrights of Young Playwrights' Theater

Music by

**DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA**



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Music by DEBORAH WICKS LA PUMA

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**(CHASING GEORGE WASHINGTON:  
A WHITE HOUSE ADVENTURE)**

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and educating the process of this play:

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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing  
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and

Young Playwrights' Theater of Washington, D.C.

Young Playwrights' Theater gives voice to a new generation through the art of playwriting. A nationally recognized leader in arts education, Young Playwrights' Theater strives to make the arts, and specifically theatre, a core part of every student's education. For more information go to [www.yptdc.org](http://www.yptdc.org).

*Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure* was commissioned and produced by the White House Historical Association and the Kennedy Center, Family Theater, March 8–16, 2008.

Director .....John Vreeke  
Music Director ..... Christopher Youstra  
Choreographer.....Ilona Kessel  
Scenic Designer ..... Daniel Conway  
Costume Designer..... Debra Kim Sivigny  
Lighting Designer ..... Martha Mountain  
Sound Designer .....Matthew Nielson  
Properties Artisan..... Dreama J. Greaves  
Production Stage Manager..... Colleen Martin  
Assistant Stage Manager.....Elisabeth A. Purkey  
Assistant Costume Designer .....Diana Khoury  
Casting Director .....Michelle Kozlak  
Executive Producer .....Darrell M. Ayers  
Producing Director.....Kim Peter Kovac

Cast:

José.....Billy Bustamante  
Dee ..... Felicia Curry  
Woman ..... Gia Mora  
Man .....Thomas Adrian Simpson  
Annie..... Jenna Sokolowski  
George Washington.....Harry A. Winter



# Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure

## CHARACTERS

*(Cast: 3m., 3w., with doubling.)*

ANNIE: a Polish immigrant girl. Also plays SUSAN FORD.

DEE: an African-American girl. Also plays CAROLINE KENNEDY.

JOSÉ: a Latino boy. Also plays TAD LINCOLN.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: first President of the United States.

MAN: plays GUARD, PRESIDENT LINCOLN, PRESIDENT FORD (offstage) and PRESIDENT VAN BUREN.

WOMAN: plays MS. LETTER, JACKIE KENNEDY, MARY TODD LINCOLN and DOLLEY MADISON.

## SETTING

The White House, past and present.

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# Chasing George Washington: A White House Adventure

AT RISE: *House lights are up. Regular preshow hubbub as audience waits for show to start. MS. LETTER comes through audience, shouting at them as she approaches the stage.*

MS. LETTER. All right everyone! Attention please! Eyes on me! (That includes you and you!) Thank you. Before we begin on this most exciting adventure, we need to go over some rules. Be aware of the exits. No food or drink. Do not chew gum or unwrap loud candy wrappers. Out of courtesy to the performers and other patrons turn off all cell phones, pagers and signal watches. Finally, we would like to remind you that the taking of photographs and the use of recording devices is strictly prohibited . . . by law. Great. Thank you. What a wonderful day to be in Washington, D.C.! It's a crisp 45 degrees, the air quality is code green, and the terror alert level is code orange. I am Ms. Letter and it is my pleasure to welcome and congratulate you for being selected to come here and represent your state and school. Yes, you are the "Children of Today" learning the history of yesterday for the future of tomorrow! (*Banner.*) And you should be so excited. Because today—is the day that you will walk through the halls of one of the most important houses in the world. POP QUIZ! What is the street address of this most important house?

*(Ticktock ... DEE runs onstage wearing a very coordinated little outfit, maybe talking on a cell phone, right up behind MS. LETTER.)*

DEE. 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C.!

MS. LETTER. That's right! And what is your name?

DEE. I'm Diana ... from the cool town of Hotlanta, Georgia ... But my friends (*Points to the phone.*) and you, and of course the president can call me Dee-Dee. Or Dee ... (*Laughs into the phone.*)

MS. LETTER. Great, Diana. And what did I say about cell phones?

DEE. Oh, that rule is for me too?

MS. LETTER. Yes!

DEE. Sorry. (*To the phone.*) OK, I'll hit you back. The president and his big house are waiting. (*Hangs up and puts the phone in her matching purse.*) See? Phone and purse and pendant match. This is a special occasion.

MS. LETTER. Thank you! And can anyone tell me what this house at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. is called?

(*JOSÉ struts in.*)

JOSÉ. I think it's the (*Does a cool/freaky move.*) White House, huh!

MS. LETTER. That's very ... expressive.

DEE. Who are you?

JOSÉ. Listen up, OK, and look this way, 'cause I am José from L.A. (*More moves.*) And today, we are going to play, and see the White House, oh-heyyyyy!

DEE. Are you weird?

JOSÉ. No, I'm José!

MS. LETTER. And does anyone know who had the White House built?

DEE (*excitedly raising her hand*). Oh! Oh! You can also call me Dimples, Lady Dee or Diamond.

MS. LETTER. "Children of Today": Who ordered the White House built?

*(Enter ANNIE. She is holding a spiral book and has a Polish accent.)*

ANNIE. The president, General George Washington, picked design ... but died before its completion. He is only president who not live in White House. *(Beat.)* I read this in book. I write it in my notebook.

MS. LETTER. Very good. And you are?

DEE & JOSÉ. Yeah, who are you?

ANNIE. I am Anita Alicia Kalinowska. Or Annie. I am coming from Kansas City.

DEE. We're not in Kansas anymore.

JOSÉ. Dude, you are NOT really from Kansas!

ANNIE. You right! I not from Kansas ... because my Kansas City is in Missouri.

MS. LETTER. On to the White House!

### **(#1. “White House Field Trip”)**

DEE. The fancy home of the president!

ANNIE. A historical museum!

JOSÉ. An excuse to miss school!

THE WHITE HOUSE!

DEE.

THE WHITE HOUSE!

ANNIE.

THE WHITE HOUSE!

MS. LETTER.

THE WHITE HOUSE!

ALL.

THE WHITE HOUSE!

THE WHITE HOUSE!

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
NOTHING'S MORE EXCITING THAN THIS  
WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!

MS. LETTER.

OH SO EDUCATIONAL, YET FUN!

KIDS.

FUN FUN FUN ...

ALL.

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!

MS. LETTER.

ALL THIS MORNING I'VE BEEN SINGING

KIDS.

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!  
PINCH ME, AM I DREAMING? IT'S SO  
FUN FUN FUN ...

ALL.

CURRICULUM ENRICHING AND STILL FUN!

KIDS.

FUN FUN FUN ...

ANNIE.

I'VE BEEN READING EV'RY BOOK I CAN!

DEE.

I'VE BEEN PLANNING WHAT I WANT TO WEAR!

JOSÉ.

I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT MISSING MATH!

ALL.

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!  
A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE, OUR  
WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!  
WE'D LIKE TO THANK THE PTA  
AND THE GOOD OL' USA,  
FOR MAKING THIS  
WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
YES! OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
POSSIBLE TODAY!

KIDS.

FUN FUN FUN ...

DEE. Will we get to look in the president's closets?

MS. LETTER. No.

ANNIE. Can we read the books in library?

MS. LETTER. No.

JOSÉ. Will we get to see top-secret documents?

MS. LETTER. No!

KIDS. Then what?

MS. LETTER (*with unbridled enthusiasm*).

LOTS OF FURNITURE!  
ANTIQUE FURNITURE!

KIDS. Furniture?

MS. LETTER.

AND THE PORTRAITS OF PRESIDENTS GALORE!

JOSÉ. Oh, no.

MS. LETTER.

AND THE DISHES,

KIDS.

DISHES?

MS. LETTER.

THE CHINA DISHES!

KIDS.

DISHES.

JOSÉ.

DUDE, THIS SOUNDS LIKE A MONUMENTAL BORE!

MS. LETTER.

AMERICAN EMPIRE TABLES  
AND THE CHANDELIERS OF GLASS,  
EARLY BOUVIER CABINETS,

DEE.

*ARE THERE REALLY?*

ANNIE.

*WELL ...*

JOSÉ.

*PLEASE DON'T ASK!*

MS. LETTER.

ITALIAN MARBLE MANTELS  
AND BLUE SATIN FRENCH TEXTILES,  
TURKISH SOFAS, ENGLISH CARPETS,  
THEY WILL DRIVE YOU SIMPLY WILD,  
FURNITURE!

KIDS.

FURNITURE?

MS. LETTER.

ANTIQUE FURNITURE!



KIDS.

FURNI-FURNITURE

MS. LETTER.

IN A HOUSE THAT'S A MUSEUM,  
LUCKY US—WE GET TO SEE 'EM  
AND THAT'S WHAT WE WILL DO  
ON OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP  
TODAY!

KIDS.

WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!  
*THIS IS ABOUT FURNITURE?*  
OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,  
MAYBE SOMEHOW IT COULD STILL BE  
FUN FUN FUN ...  
MAYBE, SOMEHOW  
FUN FUN FUN ...

*(GUARD enters and stops them roughly.)*

GUARD. Security—Hold it right there.

THERE'S NO GUM,  
NO FOOD,  
NO DRINKS,  
NO FUSS.  
THERE'S NO CELL,  
NO FLASH,  
*THAT'S YOU!*

KIDS.

*WHO US?*

GUARD.

YOU DON'T TOUCH,  
YOU DON'T SIT,  
YOU DON'T PUSH,

YOU DON'T LEAN,  
 YOU DON'T SCRATCH,  
 YOU DON'T ITCH,  
 LOOK AHEAD,  
 DO NOT DREAM,  
 WATCH THE ROPES,  
 DO NOT STRAY,  
 OR I'LL SLAP YOUR HAND AWAY!  
 MAKE NO JOKES,  
 GOOD OR BAD,  
 OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE  
 YOUR MOM AND DAD  
 AGAIN!

You might arrive in a loud yellow bus, but here, I run a quiet, tight ship. Got it?

KIDS. Uh ... yeah.

GUARD. Yes, sir!

KIDS. Yes, sir!!

GUARD. That's more like it.

YOU'RE ALL CHECKED IN AND CLEARED TO GO!

KIDS.

OH! OH! OH!

MS. LETTER.

FURNITURE!

ANTIQUE

FURNITURE!

KIDS.

OH!  
 WHITE HOUSE FIELD  
 TRIP!

OUR WHITE HOUSE  
 FIELD TRIP!

THIS IS REALLY SOME-  
 THING,  
 IT'S OUR  
 WHITE HOUSE  
 FIELD TRIP!

GUARD.

THERE'S NO  
 GUM,

NO FOOD,  
 NO DRINKS,

NO FUSS!  
 THERE'S NO  
 CELL,  
 NO FLASH,  
 NO SPIT,  
 NO CUSS!

MS. LETTER & GUARD.  
FOLLOW US AND  
DO NOT STRAY.

MS. LETTER.	KIDS.	GUARD.
FURNITURE!	WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP,	YOU!
	OUR WHITE HOUSE FIELD TRIP!	DON'T TOUCH, DON'T PUSH,
ANTIQUE FURNITURE!	THIS IS REALLY SOME- THING, IT'S OUR WHITE HOUSE	DON'T LEAN. YOU DON'T SCRATCH, DON'T ITCH, LOOK
	FIELD TRIP!	STRAIGHT, DON'T DREAM.

MS. LETTER & GUARD.  
WATCH YOUR STEP AND  
COME THIS WAY.

ALL.  
TO THE BIG WHITE HOUSE,  
THE FAMOUS WHITE HOUSE  
OF THE USA!

MS. LETTER. Now that we've made it through with security—  
GUARD. Ma'am, one is never through with security ...

*(MS. LETTER is impressed with GUARD.)*

MS. LETTER. Oh! I feel so guarded. We can tour this national  
treasure. Follow me!

### **(#1a. "Walk Inside")**

*(Music underscore as they walk inside.)*

ANNIE. It says here there six floors in the residence. There  
are 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms!

DEE. I have four bathrooms plus two half-baths.

ANNIE. You do?

JOSÉ. We have two bathrooms, if you count the one in the car wash downstairs.

DEE. Although if you ask me, this is much smaller than the palaces I saw in England or the King's House in Japan.

JOSÉ. Hey, Peaches, Japan has an emperor, not a king.

MS. LETTER. Children, feast your eyes on the egg and dart molding.

DEE (*to JOSÉ*). Are we going to have a problem?

JOSÉ. Does it look like I have a problem? (*Does another funky move.*)

ANNIE. He good mover.

DEE. Looks to me like he eats too much sugar at his house.

JOSÉ. What do you know about my house?

DEE. Nothing.

JOSÉ. That's right, nothing.