

# The IUPUI African & African-American Studies Committee

presents:

## NIGHTJOHN



**Featuring Special Guest Film Director Charles Burnett**  
**Thursday, November 20 at 10 a.m.**  
**Madame Walker Theatre Center**

**With the participation of:**

**Crispus Attucks MS, Shortridge MS, Donnan MS #72, Gambold MS #108,  
Harshman MS #101, Stephen Foster MS #67, Forest Manor MS, Center of Inquiry,  
Westlane MS, Key Learning Community, The International School of Indiana**

*Nightjohn* deals with issues of language, literacy, and learning. Set in the South before the Civil War, *Nightjohn* tells the compelling story of a legendary slave who gives up his freedom to teach fellow slaves to read and write, illustrating the power of words. Crucially, the film focuses on the power of education as embodied by a 10-year-old girl, Sarny (Allison Jones), tutored by *Nightjohn* (Carl Lumbly). The film is based on a 1993 novella of the same title by Gary Paulsen, a popular author of juvenile fiction. *Nightjohn* was made for the Disney Channel, which has generously supplied a print for this showing.

### *About Charles Burnett*

A recipient of the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Award, Burnett has collaborated with such well-known actors as Danny Glover, James Earl Jones, Ice Cube, Beau Bridges, Halle Berry, Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. His first film, *Killer of Sheep* (1977), was chosen in 1990 to be among the first fifty films earmarked for preservation by the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. His TV films for young audiences include *Selma Lord Selma* (1999) and *Finding Buck McHenry* (2001). He contributed a two-hour segment, *Warming by the Devil's Fire*, to the 2003 PBS mini-series, *The Blues*. "A strong case can be made," wrote Jonathan Rosenbaum in *The Chicago Reader*, "that Charles Burnett is the most gifted and important black filmmaker this country has ever had."

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