

PRESS RELEASE

The Studio Theatre

THE STUDIO THEATRE. THE STUDIO 2NDSTAGE. THE STUDIO THEATRE ACTING CONSERVATORY. 1501 FOURTEENTH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20005. WASHINGTON DC

TELEPHONE 202.232.7267. BOX OFFICE 202.332.3300. FAX 202.588.5262. WEB STUDIOTHEATRE.ORG. EMAIL STUDIO@STUDIOTHEATRE.ORG

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Liane Jacobs

Director of Communications

(202) 232-7267 ext. 360

liane@studiotheatre.org

DATE: December 7, 2009

THE STUDIO THEATRE PRESENTS A DAZZLING ENSEMBLE IN TARELL ALVIN MCCRANEY'S *IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER!*

“Experience the excited wonder that comes from witnessing something rare in the theater: a new, authentically original vision.”

– *The New York Times*

Sexy and Steamy!

In the Red and Brown Water

by Tarell Alvin McCraney

directed by Serge Seiden

opening January 6 in the Milton Theatre

Tarell Alvin McCraney returns to the world of his 2008 Studio Theatre hit play *The Brothers Size* with *In the Red and Brown Water*. An epic story from the Louisiana projects, this coming-of-age tale follows a young female runner of great promise and the devastating choices she is forced to make. With his newest play, McCraney creates a world driven by intense music and enflamed passions.

McCraney's unique voice creates a distinctive style of theatrical storytelling. The characters speak with the rhythms of poetry, although their language is recognizably modern. McCraney matches the cadences of their language with the beats of the drum and bursts of song. And he grounds all this in a powerful story of a young woman trapped by circumstance, forced to choose between passion and responsibility. A stunning cast of performers will seamlessly bring together contemporary African American culture, ancient mythology and various styles of music for *In the Red and Brown Water*.

Raushanah Simmons makes her inaugural performance in Washington as the spirited but conflicted Oya. Ms. Simmons comes from New York City, where she recently played Viola in *Twelfth Night* and Ariel in *The Tempest* at the Pulse Ensemble Theatre. Favorite roles include Prospero in *The Tempest*; Sally Ann in *Last Call on Bourbon Street* and Officer Geraldine Lewis in *Anchors* at the Living Image Arts on Theatre Row; Madame Stutfield in *A Woman of No Importance* with the Women's Center Stage Culture Project and Soldier in *Mother Courage* at the New York Shakespeare Festival. Film and television credits include *Sex and the City*, *Law and Order: SVU* and *See You In September*.

Returning to The Studio Theatre after her recent performance as Mame in *Radio Golf* is **Deidra LaWan Starnes**, playing Aunt Elegua. Ms. Starnes has also acted in the Studio's productions of *The Old Settler* and *Seven Guitars*. She has performed in theatres all over DC, including Olney Theatre Center, Rep Stage, Imagination Stage, Synetic Theater and the Folger Theatre, and is particularly active with the African Continuum Theatre. She has received three Helen Hayes Award nominations, and last year, received the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Actress for her performance in *Intimate Apparel* with the African Continuum Theatre.

Denise Diggs takes the stage as Mama Moja, Oya's ailing mother. In addition to teaching Acting and Voice at The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory, Ms. Diggs is a veteran performer on the Studio stages. She has appeared in *365 Days*, *Trudy Blue*, *The Old Settler* and *Spell #7*; and *Nightmares and Pillow Tales* and *Galileo Project* with Studio 2ndStage. Ms. Diggs has also worked in local theatres such as Olney Theatre Center, Arena Stage, Round House Theatre and CenterStage.

— MORE —

Oya's steadfast suitor Ogun will be played by **Jahi Kears**, returning to The Studio Theatre after his starring role as Monster in the Studio 2ndStage's recent production of *Fucking A*. He was also seen in the Studio's lauded production of *Top Dog/Underdog*, which was also produced at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis, and *Slam!* Mr. Kears's other credits include *Godspell*, *Dreamgirls* and *A Raisin in the Sun* at the Tri Cities Theatre and *Souls Possessed* at The Alliance Theatre.

Yaegel Welch returns to The Studio Theatre as the attractive but unfaithful Shango. Mr. Welch previously appeared on the Studio stages in Athol Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!* He received a M.F.A. at the Shakespeare Theatre Academy for Classical acting at George Washington University. He appeared in *Revenger's Tragedy* with Red Bull Theatre; *My Children! My Africa!* at Wilma Theatre; *Fences* at Arkansas Repertory Theatre and a reading of *Fences* with Ruben Santiago-Hudson at the Shubert Theatre.

Playing the mischievous trickster Elegba is **Mark Hairston**. Mr. Hairston last appeared at The Studio Theatre as Crowther in *The History Boys* and as Thami in *My Children! My Africa!* Other area credits include staged readings at Arena Stage and The Kennedy Center. He has also appeared as Xerxes in *The Persians* at People's Light and Theatre Company and as Jackie Robinson in *Play To Win* at Theatreworks USA.

Shannon Dorsey (Shun) last appeared at The Studio Theatre in *Breath, Boom!* She has also performed with Synetic Theatre in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Carmen* at The Kennedy Center. Playing Ogun is **Ricardo Frederick Evans**. Mr. Evans recently played Tom in *Precipice* at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. DC credits include performances at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Imagination Stage and the Shakespeare Theatre Company. **Michael Harris** makes his first Studio appearance as O Li Roon. He recently played Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* at the Limelight Theatre, where he also acted in *I Hate Hamlet* and *Moon Over Buffalo*. **Shaunté Corrina Tabb** (Nia) has made numerous appearances at Toby's Dinner Theatre in productions such as *All Shook Up*, *Dreamgirls* and *Aida*, and recently performed in *Ain't Misbehavin'* at Olney Theatre Center.

Featuring: Raushanah Simmons (Oya)

With: Denise Diggs (Mama Moja/The Woman Who Reminds You), **Shannon Dorsey** (Shun), **Ricardo Evans** (The Egungun), **Mark Hairston** (Elegba), **Michael Harris** (O Li Roon), **Jahi Kears** (Ogun), **Deidra LaWan Starnes** (Aunt Elegua), **Shaunté Corrina Tabb** (Nia) and **Yaegel Welch** (Shango).

Director and Designers: Serge Seiden (Director), **Luciana Stecconi** (Set Designer), **Michael Giannitti** (Lighting Designer), **Reggie Ray** (Costume Designer) and **Eric Shimelonis** (Sound Designer).

IN THE RED AND BROWN WATER INFORMATION

Where: The Milton Theatre

Dates: January 6 – February 14, 2010

Performances: Tuesday-Saturday 8:00pm, Sunday 7:00pm

Matinees: Saturday and Sunday 2:00pm

Select Tuesdays: January 19 and 26, February 2 and 9, 8:00pm

Ticket Prices: \$49-\$63

Press Opening: Sunday, January 10

THE STUDIO THEATRE INFORMATION:

“Most of the best plays I saw last season were either presented Off Broadway or by such regional companies as... Washington's Studio Theatre. That's the new reality of drama in America.”

— *Terry Teachout, Wall Street Journal*

The Studio Theatre is Washington's premiere venue for contemporary theatre, and is **“where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights...a place for innovation,”** according to *Variety*. The Studio Theatre's mission is to produce the best in contemporary theatre. Its restless, innovative spirit makes it a leader both in Washington DC, and in the nation. Artist-founded and artist-driven, The Studio Theatre demands the highest quality production values, bringing audiences provocative writing along with unparalleled artistry in performance, directing and design.

Founded in 1978, The Studio Theatre is led by the driving force of Joy Zinoman, Founding Artistic Director, whose recent work has been called **“riveting,” “beautifully orchestrated” and “inspired”** by *The Washington Post*; along with Keith Alan Baker, Managing Director/Artistic Director, 2ndStage; Serge Seiden, Associate Producing Artistic Director; and Morey B. Epstein, Executive Director of Institutional Development. In 2004, The Studio Theatre

opened a new four-theatre complex, a major landmark that anchors the 14th Street Arts District. The complex was quickly hailed as **“a magnificent theatre space that promises more memorable evenings to come”** (*Washington City Paper*). The Studio 2ndStage creates edgy, explosive, extreme and electrifying productions that complement The Studio Theatre’s season. *The Washington Post* proclaimed that 2ndStage **“has long been a playground for... directors and actors (and, naturally, some of its riskier experiments)”** and that a **“convention-defying approach informs many 2ndStage offerings.”** The Studio Theatre provides opportunities for developing theatre artists as year-long apprentices. The Studio Theatre Acting Conservatory offers rigorous professional theatre training in close partnership with the working artists at The Studio Theatre. Now in its 35th year, it has been called **“the area’s premiere professional training facility for actors and directors”** by *Variety*. The Conservatory has trained over 8,000 actors and directors, now performing on Broadway, Off Broadway and in theatre and film across the country. The theatre is deeply invested in the community and in neighborhood revitalization.

DISCOUNTS

Student, senior citizen (62+) and military discount: \$5.00 off (except Saturday evenings).

Student Rush: \$19 tickets for full-time students are available one-half hour before curtain on a seating available basis (except Saturday evenings).

Student Matinees: January 14 and February 4, 11:00am. the Group Sales Manager at 202-232-7267.

Groups: for parties of 10 or more. Call the Group Sales Manager at 202-232-7267.

Pay What You Can: Saturday, January 9, 2:00pm.

Studio District Night: Wednesday, January 6, 8:00pm. Ticket Price: \$10 for residents of the Studio District, with proof of address.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Accessibility: All performances are fully accessible to accommodate patrons with special needs. FM listening assistive system available. Call for schedule of sign-interpreted performances. Accessible seats available by reservation. Call the Box Office at 202-332-3300 or V/TTY 202-667-8436.

Location: 1501 14th Street, NW (Northeast corner of 14th and P Streets).

Parking: Please call the Box Office for parking information.

Metro Stops: Red Line: Dupont Circle, Orange/Blue Lines: McPherson Square, and Green Line U Street/Cardozo.

Contact Information: Tickets: 202-332-3300 V/TTY: 202-667-8436 Fax: 202-332-1187

Administration: 202-232-7267 Admin. Fax: 202-588-5262

Web site: www.studiotheatre.org E-mail: studio@studiotheatre.org

###