



Friday, February 1, 2002

'Bee-luther-hatchee' opens at MBT Feb. 13

Cultural appropriation - the matter of who really has the right to tell the story of someone's life - is explored when the exciting, multi-layered mystery "Bee-luther-hatchee" opens Wednesday, Feb. 13, at 8 p.m. at **Meadow Brook Theatre (MBT)**. The award-winning drama runs through Sunday, March 10, at Michigan's largest professional theatre company, based at Oakland University.

"Bee-luther-hatchee" tells the story of Shelita Burns, an Ivy League graduate and rising star in the world of book publishing. The young editor bursts into the limelight with her first non-fiction book, "Bee-luther-hatchee," an evocative memoir that tells the story of a remarkable and elderly African-American woman named Libby Price. The truth behind the memoirs and its mysterious author is revealed as the puzzle, and Burns' career, unravel.

The play's title comes from the American South of a century ago. "Juba to Jive: A Dictionary of African-American Slang" defines "bee-luther-hatchee" as a noun that signifies "a far-away damnable place, the next station after the stop for hell."

Audiences and critics raved about the 2001 "Bee-luther-hatchee" production at Chicago's Northlight Theatre, directed by Debra Wicks, Meadow Brook Theatre interim artistic director and director of the 2002 MBT production. The Chicago Tribune reported that Wicks' Chicago production was "virtually flawless, unerring in physical detail and emotional truth."

Wicks has worked nationally and internationally for more than 25 years as an actress, teacher and director. She has directed several productions at **Meadow Brook Theatre**, including the 2001 production of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and the 2000 production of Arthur Miller's "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan." MBT audiences also may remember her world premiere production of "A Gift of Glory."

Other directing credits of Wicks include "The Piano Lesson," "The Miracle Worker," "Having Our Say," "Master Class" and "Lost in Yonkers."

Bringing their talents to **Meadow Brook Theatre** for the first time are actors Jacqueline Jones of Chicago, Monica Palmer of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Katherine Mester of Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

Jones' vitae includes numerous television and film credits as well as performances for the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and Shaw Chicago. Palmer is a Wayne State University graduate who holds a Master of Fine Arts from Cornell University. Mester has worked her way from the Cranbrook Performing Arts stage to theaters in New York. Actors returning to the MBT stage are John Biedenbach, who recently appeared in "Murder on the Nile," and Christopher Howe from "Dancing at Lughnasa."

"Bee-luther-hatchee" premiered in 1998 at InterAct Theatre in Philadelphia and is written by InterAct's resident playwright, Thomas Gibbons. The work received a Stavis Award and has been optioned for film by actor Danny Glover. **Meadow Brook Theatre** is presenting the play in conjunction with African-American History Month.

Tickets for the production are on sale at the **Meadow Brook Theatre** Box Office or by calling (248) 377-3300. Box office hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

New this season are "Couples Nights" discounts on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings, which offer couples a special buy one ticket, get a second ticket at half price, deal. Group tickets are available by calling (248) 370-3316. Middle- and high-school teachers also may call the group sales office for discount tickets to the school-time matinee on Thursday, Feb. 28, at 11a.m.

SUMMARY

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