



Wednesday, June 5, 2002

Wicks named MBT's artistic director

Actor, director and educator Debra Wicks has been named Meadow Brook Theatre's artistic director. She is the first African American woman to be appointed as artistic director for a major American regional theatre company.

Wicks has served as interim artistic director since May 1999 and in other capacities at the theatre since 1997. She recently assumed her responsibilities as MBT's fourth artistic director. She succeeds Geoffrey Sherman (1995-99), Terence Kilburn (1970-94) and John Fernald (1967-70).

"For the past five years Debra Wicks has demonstrated remarkable artistic and administrative leadership. We are delighted to have this opportunity to recognize this and are excited about her vision for the future of Michigan's largest professional theatre company," said Peggy Cooke, Oakland University's director of auxiliary services.

Wicks has worked nationally and internationally for over 20 years as an actress and director in the United States, Canada and Egypt. She served as MBT's associate director and associate artistic director from 1997-1999. She has directed "Godspell," "Bee-luther-hatchee," "A Christmas Carol," "Pump Boys and Dinettes," "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan," "The Lion in Winter," "Chagall's Arabian Nights," "Dangerous Obsession," "Tintypes," "Having Our Say," "The Miracle Worker," "A Gift of Glory," "Lost in Yonkers" and "The Piano Lesson." "A Gift of Glory" and "The Piano Lesson" both won the prestigious Detroit Free Press Theatre Excellence Award for best play.

Other credits include acting and directing for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival where she directed "Awake and Sing," "From the Mississippi Delta" and "Spunk." She also directed "Having Our Say" (Mill Mountain Theatre, Va., and the New American Theatre, Ill.), "The Piano Lesson" (Pioneer Theatre, Utah, Portland Repertory Theatre, Ore., and St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre, Mo.), "Bee-luther-hatchee" (Northlight Theatre, Ill.) and Meadow Brook Theatre's touring productions of "Wilderness" and "Straw Soldiers."

Wicks has taught acting, directing and creative dramatics at the University of Missouri, Iowa State University, Penn State University and Oakland University. She spearheaded the Outreach Program at Meadow Brook Theatre, helping the theatre to serve thousands of middle- and high-school students.

Wicks received a Master of Fine Arts in acting and directing from Lindenwood College and a Bachelor of Arts in speech and theatre from Fontbonne College.

Season tickets are now on sale for **MBT's 2002-2003 season**. Of the shows included in the new season, Wicks will direct "Witness For The Prosecution" by Agatha Christie, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" and "Wait Until Dark" by Frederick Knott.

To purchase tickets, call the box office at (248) 377-3300. For more information, visit the **Meadow Brook Theatre** Web site.

SUMMARY

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