

Hillary Clinton and Monica Lewinsky come face to face

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The play "Hillary and Monica" asks what if the current New York senator and former first lady had met the college intern who had a sexual relationship with her husband? The play answers that question in a way that is both enthralling and entertaining.

Writer/director Yvette Heyliger will take theatergoers through the fictionalized meeting between the two women, which opens a Pandora's box of sorts that allows the infusion of a wide range of topics, from sex to politics.

The play centers around Hillary Clinton and Lewinsky casually meeting one day in the White House. Other characters in the play include Bill Clinton and Betty Currie, Clinton's loyal assistant who was grilled by Ken Starr after the scandal broke.

Heyliger — who is also an actress who portrayed Phylicia Rashad's sister on "The Cosby Show" — is no stranger to the National Black Theater Festival. In 2001, she and her twin sister, Yvonne Farrow, brought the play

"Autobiography of a Homegirl" to the festival. "Hillary and Monica" and "Autobiography of a Homegirl" sprang from Twinbiz, a company the twins started to write, direct and produce original projects for the stage, television and the big screen. Most Twinbiz productions focus on the struggles of women.

Yvonne Farrow will do a reading of her television pilot, "Color Me Justice" during the festival. Farrow also will screen her recently televised short film, "Movements."

Venue: Sawtooth Center

Schedule: Aug. 5 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Aug. 6 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Price: \$35 (includes performance of "Aunt Rudele's Family Reunion")



Tanisha Brady Christie, left, and Lisa Biggs conceived and perform in "Memory is a Body of Water." Photos by Christopher O. Banks

'Memory' blends dance, acting

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Medusa Speaks: An Artists' Collective is continuing its first national theatrical tour with the production of "Memory Is a Body of Water," a dynamic theater/dance work conceived and performed by Lisa Biggs and Tanisha Brady Christie. They will bring the production to the 2003 National Black Theatre Festival for several performances.

Set in contemporary Washington, D.C., "Memory Is a Body of Water" follows Kim, a grief-stricken African-American graffiti artist who journeys through time to



Venue:

Adam's Mark East Tower,
Forsyth Ballroom

Schedule:

Aug. 5 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Aug. 6 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Aug. 7 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Price:

\$35

uncover the complex reasons why her brother was killed. The guidance of her family, ancestors from the past, and a chance meeting with the person responsible for his death ultimately launch Kim on the path to freedom and healing for herself and her community.

"Memory" was featured as part of the renowned New York Hip Hop Theatre Festival earlier this year and at the 2002 New York International Fringe Festival.

Founded in 1999, Medusa Speaks is a six-woman, multi-disciplinary artists' collective that brings together professional artists, activists, students, educators and individuals to create art and promote positive social



Lisa Biggs in "Memory Is a Body of Water."

change. Ensemble members Lisa Biggs and Tanisha Brady Christie are both critically acclaimed actresses, writers, and directors, and former members of the Living Stage Theatre Company.

Opening Night Gala sells out

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

National Black Theatre Festival officials are already celebrating a great success and the 14th anniversary festival doesn't start until Aug. 4. Officials announced recently that tickets to the swank opening night gala had sold out. It is the earliest sell-out for the gala, which will be held at the Benton Convention Center, in the festival's history.



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Gala tickets were \$200 and included dinner and a performance of "From Brooklyn to Broadway II," a musical trip down memory lane with Tony-winning talent Lillias White. The gala also will feature an awards ceremony that will pay tribute to some of the giants of stage, screen and television. Scheduled to be on hand

Aug. 4 to receive accolades is Diahann Carroll, who will receive the Sidney Poitier Lifelong Achievement Award for her decades of work. Producer Philip Rose also will receive that honor. "Jeffersons" star Sherman Hemsley and Ben Vereen are among those who will get Living Legend Awards during the gala.

Although gala seats are no longer available, there is still space left for White's performance, which will be held at 9 p.m. (immediately after the gala) at the Stevens Center.

Tickets for the performance, which will be attended by a star-studded crowd, including many of the gala honorees, are \$75 per person. A ticket stub from the performance also will allow people entrance into a celebrity reception that will be held after the performance at the Adam's Mark Hotel.

Tickets to the Aug. 4 performance of "From Brooklyn to Broadway II" cannot be purchased online. To order tickets, call 723-7907.