

Formerly incarcerated women get their say in Medea Project

Venue:

SECCA

Schedule:

Aug. 8 at 8 p.m.

Price:

\$ 35

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

"The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women" features ex-inmates and actresses from the San Francisco area. Rhodessa Jones will direct members of the Medea Project, which is a not-to-be-missed performance.

In San Francisco the Medea Project collaborates with professional artists to engage incarcerated women and ex-inmates in the process of developing and staging theatrical productions in order to empower them to gain control of their lives.

For more than 10 years The Medea Project's professional artists have worked with female inmates of the County Jail, and with ex-inmates now living in the community, to develop and stage theatrical productions at major San Francisco venues. The productions tell the real-life experiences of the incarcerated women performing on the stage. For the festival, the Medea Project performance will include professional actresses from the San Francisco community as well as ex-inmates performing excerpts from their past and current critically acclaimed productions.



The women of the "The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women."

Photo courtesy of Cultural Odyssey

Cultural Odyssey presents 'Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women'

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of Cultural Odyssey, Rhodessa Jones and Idris Ackamoor will remount the celebrated, award-winning "Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women" featuring Jones with musical accompaniment by Ackamoor. The performance was a "sold-out" hit at the 1991 National Black Theater Festival.

"Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women" is a series of monologues based on the lives and times of real women who are behind bars. The performance utilizes theater, movement and song to anchor words born out of the silence that is so particular to women who are waiting: women waiting for bail, for mail, for the latest word concerning their children, money from their men, the next visits from their sisters and mothers, or for advice from their lawyers.

The theatrics are based on the question: "Is there a way to retrieve the lives of our sisters and their families?" There are children literally lost between the cracks of our society.

Venue:

SECCA

Schedule:

Aug. 6 at 8 p.m.

Price:

\$35

'Potpourri Noir' offers smorgasbord of plays

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

"Potpourri Noir" is a sneak peek of several Cultural Odyssey plays that will be performed throughout this year's National Black Theatre Festival. Hosted by Rhodessa Jones and Idris Ackamoor, "Potpourri Noir" will offer excerpts from "Big Butt Girls," "Hard-Headed Women," "The OG and the B-Boy," "Thieves in the Temple: The Reclaiming of Hip-Hop," "The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women," and "They Speak Through Us."

The San Francisco-based Cultural Odyssey strives to stretch the aesthetic boundaries of American art by creating, producing and presenting original performance works that reflect the experiences of contemporary Americans and that are firmly rooted in African-American music, dance and theatrical traditions. To implement this mission, Cultural Odyssey locally premieres original jazz and theatrical productions, presents the Cultural Odyssey Performance Festival, and conducts national and international tours. It also operates a series of community-based programs serving inner-city youths, female inmates

and ex-inmates.

Ackamoor will curate Cultural Odyssey's New Performance in Black Theater Series at the 2003 National Black Theatre Festival from Aug. 5-9. All performances will take place at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA). All show times are at 8 p.m. Look for details about Cultural Odyssey plays throughout this guide.

Venue:

SECCA

Schedule:

Aug. 5 at 8 p.m.

Price:

\$35



A scene from "The OG and the B-Boy."

Photo courtesy of Cultural Odyssey