



Kim Wayans in "A Handsome Woman Retreats."

Lil' Magic Productions Photos

A Handsome Woman Retreats

As a member of America's First Family of Comedy, Kim Wayans can make an audience roll in the aisles with laughter with little effort. But her critically-acclaimed one-woman show, "A Handsome Woman Retreats" is no laughing matter - well, at least not all of it.

Wayans opens herself up in the production, taking audiences to places that most celebrities kept hidden.

"One will have had to live a little to get it," she told the Los Angeles Wave in the fall of 2007 as the show was set to make its premiere. "It's a comedic, spiritual journey. It's a very personal journey. I'm not taking on a role, or a character in this show - it's me, about my life, what I've been through... stuff family doesn't even know I've been through ... but they'll know now."

Wayans' pain, insecurities and even her struggles with faith lay bare for audiences to see. But even when the issues are serious and unpleasant - such as Wayans' displeasure with the lack of roles offered to black actresses that don't have a certain look - the actress finds a way to subtly inject her trademark humor.

"A Handsome Woman Retreats" begins with Wayans at a 10-day silent meditation retreat which she decides to attend to combat her panic attacks. Her doctor had recommended "prozac, zantax, anthrax - somethin' with an 'ax' in it" to cure the attacks, but Wayans took the advice of her yoga instructor instead and heads off to the retreat. There, she flashes-back over her life and to the moments that shaped her, such as growing up as a Jehovah's Witness in the projects of New York

City; the backhanded compliment from a relative (who called her handsome instead of pretty); and unsuccessful attempts to make her nose smaller by pinching it with a clothes pin.

Excellent word of mouth has allowed Wayans to take the show, which is produced by her Lil' Magic Productions, across the country, including to her hometown where she performed at the 2008 SoloNOVA Arts Festival.

Kim Wayans is best known for performing alongside her brothers Damon, Shawn, Keenen and Marlon on television programs like the groundbreaking "In Living Color," and movies like "Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in The Hood," "A Low Down Dirty Shame" and "Dance Flick." She also had a memorable role in the 2002 film "Juwanna Man." She moved behind the camera - adding the titles writer, director and producer to her resume - with the sitcom "My Wife and Kids," which starred her brother Damon.

A graduate of Wesleyan University, Wayans released her first two children's books last year. The books, based on a mixed-race girl named "Amy Hodgepodge," (www.amyhodgepodge.com) are co-authored by Kim's husband, Kevin Knotts. The mixed race couple say that they were inspired to write the books by their nieces and nephews, many of whom are of mixed race.

Wayans is also working to bring the musical "Hello, My Friend" to the stage. It's the story of three middle-school friends on the brink of womanhood.

Aug. 6 at 8 p.m.
Aug. 7 at 3 & 8 p.m.
at the Summit
School

Ticket Price: \$40

