

The Sty of the Blind Pig

Playwright Phillip Hayes Dean's "The Sty of the Blind Pig" took the theater world by storm in the early 1970s. Time magazine named it one of the 10 best plays of 1971, calling it "eloquent, powerful, moving and beautiful...a consecrated act of theater." That same year, it won Drama Desk and Hull-Warriner awards.

The decades since have not diminished the impact of the powerful play, which centered around a mother and daughter living on Chicago's Southside in the 1950s. Playhouses and theater groups around the nation and world have staged the show, including the Ensemble Theatre in Houston. The Ensemble drew big crowds and grand reviews for its 2008 production of "The Sty of the Blind Pig." The company is now bringing the show to the 2009 NBTF.

Dean's classic play is about Alberta, an unmarried woman and in her thirties, and her old-school, religious mother, Weedy, with whom she shares a small apartment. They are visited often by Weedy's brother, Uncle Doc, an unlucky gambler with a lifestyle his sister disapproves of. When a blind stranger comes knocking on the women's door, it ultimately leads to a great change in the relationship between mother and daughter.

The Ensemble Theatre's Artistic Director Eileen J. Morris directs the production.

"Phillip Hayes Dean's play, 'The Sty of the Blind Pig,' is about families; it's about a mother and daughter caught up in the exactness of

their world fighting to explore a difference; it's about the energy of the universe changing and placing someone in a particular time and place; the everyday realities of life -- the world view, connecting feelings,

their attitudes, our stories and how we accept the diversity of those everyday factors," she said. "Flavored with enriching Negro spirituals, "Sty" is the story of how change can affect us in so many different ways."

Deborah Oliver Artis plays Weedy. The stage veteran performed at the 2007 National Black Theatre Festival in the Ensemble's production of "Waiting to Be Invited." Wayne DeHart, a noted stage director, plays Uncle Doc. Timothy Jackson plays "Blind Jordan" and



Ensemble Theatre Photo

Timothy Eric and Cheray Dawn Josiah.

Cheray Dawn Josiah plays "Alberta." Both actors are longtime players with the Ensemble Theatre.

- The Chronicle



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