Perri Gaffney performs.

Perri Tales Production Photo

The Resurrection of Alice

It's not unusual for the work of novelists to be adapted to films or stage productions. It's rare, though, when a novelist transforms one of her own books into a play in which she stars. That's what Perri Gaffney has done with "The Resurrection of Alice."

Based on a true story, Gaffney's critically-acclaimed book centers around a 15-year-old South Carolina girl whose dreams of going to college and becoming a professional take a detour after her parents arrange for her to marry a much older man of means. The story is set in 1948, when black Southern families often arranged such unions, thinking that they would give their children better opportunities. But as Gaffney's novel shows, the young women who are pushed into these marriages often become emotionally-crippled and broken.

On the stage, these emotions are conveyed powerfully in the one-woman show by Gaffney, who is also a talented actress with a reputation for delivering flawless performances.

"Perri Gaffney is riveting as Shelita..." said broadway-world.com after her performance in "Bee-Luther-Hatchee." A reviewer wrote, "Perri Gaffney gives a well thoughtout, detailed performance," after her 2007 performance in "To Kill A Mockingbird" at Virginia State University. And after her most recent role, Iyaloja in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's "Death and the King's Horseman," coloradodrama.com proclaimed that "Gaffney is haunting."

Television viewers may know Gaffney's face from "As The World Turns," "Law & Order" and "Law & Order: Special Victims." Her other writing credits include "How To Manage Artists In Pop Music," a textbook she co-authored with Mitch Weiss; and numerous articles that have appeared in publications like "Black Masks," "African Eye" and the "Charlotte Observer."

– The Chronicle

**Aug. 7 at 8 p.m.
Aug. 8 at 3 & 8 p.m.
at Reynolds Black Box**

Ticket Price: $37

INCLUDES BOTH SHOWS

The Shaneequa Chronicles

"The Shaneequa Chronicles" has been a hit ever since it first hit the stage nearly a decade ago.

The brainchild of extraordinary actress Stephanie Berry, who also stars in the one-woman show, "Shaneequa" is subtitled "The Making of a Black Woman." The play chronicles growing up female, black and poor in Harlem in the late 20th century. Along the journey there's discussion of love, sex, drugs, politics and classic music from the '60s and beyond.

Audiences who have seen the show have experienced emotions that run the gamut. There is lots of laughter, reflection and even tears. Berry won both Obie and AUDELCO awards for her performance in the show, which is produced by her Blackberry Productions.

Berry is perhaps best known for her critically acclaimed role as Principal Janice Wallace in the 2000 film "Finding Forrester," which starred Rob Brown and Oscar winners Sean Connery and Anna Paquin. Berry has had roles in films like "No Reservations," "Girls Town" and HBO's "Everyday People." Her television credits include "Law & Order:Criminal Intent," Third Watch" and "New York Undercover." On the stage, Berry has shined in productions like August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean" and "Fences" and Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder's "Gee's Bend."

University of Houston Photo

Actress Stephanie Berry starring in "Katrina; The Bridge."

Last year, Berry starred in the "Katrina: The Bridge," a production by the University of Houston School of Theatre and Dance based on the deadly hurricane. The project was close to Berry's heart. She traveled to the Gulf Coast after Katrina left a trail of tears and devastation to help residents in anyway she could as a volunteer at Houston's Astrodome.

Harlem-based Blackberry Productions Theater Company brings professional theater, featuring noted performers, to schools, churches, shelters, hospitals, senior citizens facilities, block parties and prisons. A major mission of Blackberry Productions is to create original theater that gives voice to the voiceless and brings professional theater to the community.

– The Chronicle