

## Fried Chicken and Latkes



Rain Pryor onstage in her hit one-woman show.



“Fried Chicken and Latkes,” Rain Pryor’s powerful one-woman show, was among the standout hits of the 2013 National Black Theatre Festival. The buzz it generated is still ringing, so much so that organizers have invited Pryor back this year.

NBTF fans are not the only ones who have fallen head over heels for Pryor’s brutally honest style of comedy. “Fried Chicken and Latkes” has been an Off-Broadway smash for the last 17 years. It is being presented at this year’s festival by NYC’s Dr. Barbara Ann Teer’s National Black Theatre and is being directed by the talented Kamilah Forbes.

In the play, Pryor, the daughter of late African-American comic legend Richard Pryor and former dancer Shelley Bonis (a white Jewish woman), offers a glimpse into the people, experiences and events that have shaped her life by morphing into myriad characters. The show pulls no punches. Racial stereotypes and cultural bias are exposed via her signature wit.

“Politically correct means we don’t actually want to talk about (race), but I think politically correct should be calling a spade a spade – literally, and then let’s discuss why we are calling a spade a spade. Let’s talk about that elephant in the room that is sitting there,” Pryor told *The Chronicle* during the ‘13 NBTF.

Pryor said she created the show because she was tired of Hollywood dictating her career. She made her television debut in 1989 as T.J. on the ABC hit “Head of the Class” and then went on to star as Jackie, the lipstick lesbian drug addict on Showtime’s “Rude Awakening.” Her long list of television credits also include “The Division” and “Chicago Hope.” But Pryor said casting directors have never quite known what to do with her.

“I didn’t look black enough to be black; I wasn’t white enough to be white ... I don’t care that Hollywood says you have to be this. I am going to be who I am. Being who you are works,” she said.

Two years ago, Pryor said she was overjoyed to have had been invited to present at the NBTF, especially since hers is not the typical black experience. Her return engagement is rare, a clear sign that she left audiences wanting more.

“My story is a part of the African-American diaspora, even though I am multi-racial, I think that is a part of who we are,” the actress said.

### Fried Chicken and Latkes

Reese Theatre  
in the Pavilion -  
Embassy Suites

Tues, Aug. 4	8 p.m.
Wed, Aug. 5	3 p.m.
Wed, Aug. 5	8 p.m.
Thurs, Aug. 6	3 p.m.

**\$43**

In between performing and raising her daughter, Lotus Marie, Rain serves as an ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, making speeches at fundraisers across the nation. Her father lived with MS for 30 years before his death in 2005.

“For me, finding a cure is the ultimate feat. It is something I have to do,” she said of her ambassadorship.

Also, Rain’s new documentary, “That Daughter’s Crazy,” is expected to be screened as part of the NBTF Film Fest. ■

Larry Leon Hamlin  
Producer Award

*Nate Jacobs*



Nate Jacobs is founder and artistic director of Sarasota, Fla.’s Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe (WBTT), where the actor, singer, comedian, playwright, composer and director has developed and produced countless hit productions. Jacobs was presenting shows, including comedies, dramas and musicals, at venues throughout the country and world before he founded WBTT in 1999. His “Soul Crooners” shows have been hits in Sarasota, at the National Black Theatre Festival and abroad in countries like Germany and Switzerland.

A longtime mentor to young performers, Jacobs was honored by the NAACP Youth Council of Sarasota County with a 2012 Men of Valor honor. Earlier this year, he was recognized as a “Champion of Diversity” for the arts by the *Biz(941)* and *La Guia* magazines.