

Entertainment

Cultural Odyssey Brings New Performances to Theatre Festival

The 1993 National Black Theatre Festival will showcase eight exciting productions that will blend music, dance, drama and experimental theatre during festival week, Aug. 2-7. Cultural Odyssey, a California-based production company, has combed the country to find unique talent to present their programs in the "New Performances in Black Theatre Series" that will grace the stage of SECCA. Idris Ackamoor of Cultural Odyssey serves as the curator of this event that promises to be an exciting addition to the 1993 National Black Theatre Festival.

This innovative addition to the theatrical landscape of the festival showcases eight different performances that will run from 10 to 15 minutes each. The program is kicked off on Aug. 3 with a cabaret/variety show entitled "Potpourri Noir: A Cabaret Evening."

The production of Aug. 4 blends the acting of Ntozake Shange with the music of Idris Ackamoor in their production of "The Love Spate Demands," which explores the battle of love and passion against the evils of drug addiction, AIDS, child abuse and racism. This performance is followed by "The Circle Unbroken is a Hard Bop," which is performed by Stephanie Alston, Sekou Sundiata and Craig Harris. This heart-wrenching story deals with an exiled dancer and her poet brother as they try to overcome disillusionment.

Keith Antar Mason and the Hitite Empire take the stage on Aug. 5 in their vibrant production of "Shango Walk through Fire."



"Tribes" and "The Hitite Empire" are two productions in the "New Performances in Black Theatre Series" to be held during the 1993 National Black Theatre Festival, Aug. 2-7.

Laurie Carlos and Robbie McCauley in "Persimmon Peel," appear in the Aug. 6 performance, an analysis of patriotism through the eyes of some African Americans. The audience is then taken into the world of African culture and roots when Judith Alexa Jackson electrifies the stage in "Tribes."

A series of autobiographical works on Aug. 7 examine the world as seen through the eyes of

Rhodesa Jones in her production of "The Blue Stories: Black Erotica about Letting Go." The evening explodes with rhythmic excitement afterward when tap dancer Idris Ackamoor and tap dancer/comedian Wayne Doba team up in "Shoehorn."

This "New Performance in Black Theatre Series" is a groundbreaking event for the National Black Theatre Festival. Cultural Odyssey hopes to make this series

an important aspect of the festival.

Cultural Odyssey annually premieres at least two original works. The company stages its work throughout the country and around the world. Idris Ackamoor says that Cultural Odyssey "utilizes theatre to enhance self-esteem of incarcerated women and at-risk African-American youth. Our organization produces music, dance and theatre rooted in the African-American tradition."

1960s Harmony Still Cool in "Do Wop Love"

The sweet vocal harmonies of a cappella groups and street corner symphonies will alight the stage with "Do Wop Love" on Aug. 6-7 at 3 and 8 p.m.

The three-piece band and an

energetic vocal group perform more than a dozen songs from the 1950s and 1960s.

"Do Wop Love" is long on tempting ballads like "I Only Have Eyes for You," and it pierces the

heart when the lights go down and the group sings "It's Just a Matter of Time."

This musical shows the heart and feet a good time as it recognizes the music that has set today's

trends. The show is presented by the National Black Theatre Company of New York.

"Do Wop Love" will provide a good time for the audience as they follow Darren Frazier, Kirk Robinson, Kevin Smith and Cornelius Bates, with Nicole Bridgewater as their fantasy woman.

The show stitches together many popular songs with a fine thread of tight harmony.



Do Wop Love (l. to r.): Kevin L. Smith, Kirk Robinson, Cornelius Bates, Darren Frazier; (center): Nicole Bridgewater

Townsend Amasses Superstars in Movie

Groundbreaking filmmaker Robert Townsend ("Hollywood Shuffle," "The Five Heartbeats") wrote, directed and stars in this adventure comedy. Hit by a magical emerald meteor, inner-city school teacher Jefferson Reed (Townsend) suddenly finds himself endowed with super powers. Now hailed as "The Meteor Man" — notwithstanding his fear of heights, which for a time limits his flying altitude to only four feet off the ground — the once timid school teacher is forced to become a real hero. With the encouragement of his parents, his friends — and even his dog — Jeff finds that his greatest power is helping his neighbors to help themselves and soon learns that true courage doesn't come from a costume with a cape.

The star-studded supporting cast includes such favorites as Bill Cosby, James Earl Jones, Robert



(l. to r.) Robert Guillaume (seated), James Earl Jones, Marla Gibbs, Marilyn Coleman and Robert Townsend star in "The Meteor Man."

Guillaume and Marla Gibbs. With a major soundtrack tie-in from Motown, "The Meteor Man" also features several of today's hottest recording artists in acting roles, including Luther Vandross and rap

stars Another Bad Creation, Big Daddy Kane, Biz Markie, Cypress Hill and Naughty by Nature.

The exciting visual effects were developed by George Lucas' pre-eminent special effects company.

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