

White will bring powerful voice back to NBTF

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Lillias White, or more specifically, her voice, was the talk of the 2001 National Black Theatre Festival. White left crowds begging for more, literally, with "From Brooklyn to Broadway," a show that featured a collection of songs crafted perfectly for White's voice. Those who could not get enough of White two years ago can get their fill during this year's festival.

"Brooklyn to Broadway II" picks up where the other show left off. White will again weave together stories about people and places with a collection of songs, some of which

will be familiar to everyone, while some will be new to the ears of many people.

White has wowed audiences and critics everywhere she has taken the show. The New York Times applauded her for the "unflinching emotional honesty" she displays while on stage, and critic Rex Reed said White "can hold a note longer than Carmen McRae and sounds like a cross-pollination of Sarah Vaughn and Dinah Washington."

With the "From Brooklyn to Broadway" shows, White uses the music to tell the story of how a girl from Brooklyn - White is the daughter of a Jamaican-born father and a South Carolina-born mother - scaled barriers to make it to the stages of the Great White Way. But White not only made it to Broadway, she conquered it. In the industry, White is known as a "triple threat." It is a title she earned by winning the equivalent of the Triple Crown in the theater world: the Tony, the Drama Desk Award and the Outer Critic's Circle trophy. White earned all of those honors by playing Sonja, a worn-out prostitute, in "The Life." White also picked up a People's Choice Award for her work in "The Life."

White's other stage credits include: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," "Dreamgirls," "Barnum," and "Once on This Island." In the original "From Brooklyn to Broadway," one of the most popular segments of the show is a melody White performs made up of songs from all of her Broadway shows.

White's television appearances include "Law & Order," "NYPD Blue," and "Sesame Street," for which she won an Emmy.

She has appeared in films such as "North," "Gloria" and the Jim Carrey hit movie "The Grinch That Stole Christmas."

White's CDs include "From Brooklyn to Broadway" and "Jazz Alley to Shubert Alley."

White's "From Brooklyn to Broadway II" will kick off the 2003 National Black Theatre Festival immediately after the Aug. 4 Opening Night Gala. The shows chosen to kick off the festival usually go on to great success for the rest of the week. In 2001, "The Jackie Wilson Story...My Heart is Crying, Crying," kicked off the festival before breaking box-office records throughout the festival.



Tony Award-winner Lillias White.

Venue:

Stevens Center

Schedule:

Aug. 5-9 at 8 p.m.

Price:

\$35

97.1 QMG Anniversary Show
Smooth R & B Classic Soul

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Friday, September 12 8 PM

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