PRESS RELEASE

The Ira Aldridge Theater and Environmental Theatre Space

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DATE: August 11, 2014

The Department of Theatre Arts Announces its 2014-15 Season

SPUNK
NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES
DANCE SHOWCASE
HOWARD PLAYERS PRODUCTION
ANYTHING GOES
ANNUAL DANCE CONCERT

A COMPELLING AND PROVOCATIVE THEATRE AND DANCE SEASON FILLED WITH STORYTELLING, MUSIC, AND ELECTRIFYING CHOREOGRAPHY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Enter into the exciting world of The Ira Aldridge Theater and Environmental Theatre Space 2014-2015 theatrical and dance season. The full, six-production lineup continues the Department of Theatre Arts ongoing commitment to the highest quality of theatre and dance arts, and thrilling performances. Three tales about men and women coping with each other, a prison block where inmates quarrel and struggle to survive, a young lovesick broker who stows away on an ocean-liner to win the heart of his love, dance styles ranging from traditional to contemporary, the season is sure to deliver amusement, inspiration, and a plethora of emotion.

The Department of Theatre Arts’ 2014-15 season is branded TOP OF THE HEAP. This season, we will look at the individual who will pay any cost to be at the top of society. To be a winner. But some learn that winning is not always equitable. Some pay less and get more, some pay more and get no more, and some pay with more than dollars. The season begins with SPUNK, “tales of survival told in the key of blues” that are based on three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, written by George C. Wolfe. Continuing with NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES, Tennessee Williams’ play focuses on a group of inmates who go on a hunger strike in attempt to better their situation, and our ANNUAL DANCE SHOWCASE, highlights the choreography of our current Dance students. Our Spring 2014 Semester productions will include a student produced work by THE HOWARD PLAYERS, along with our annual spring Musical ANYTHING GOES, where the passengers on this luxury cruise include an evangelist turned nightclub singer, a gangster disguised as a minister, hopeless romantics and stowaways written by Cole Porter. And the season concludes with our ANNUAL SPRING DANCE CONCERT showcasing an array of dance styles from Modern, Ballet, Jazz, Hip-Hop, and African featuring original works by Senior Majors, Faculty, and Guest Artists.

– MORE –
The 2014-2015 Theatre and Dance Season:

A Lot of Pain, Blood, Sweat and Tears!

SPUNK
by George C. Wolfe
directed by Denise J. Hart
October 8 – 12, 2014
In the Environmental Theatre Space
— ...smart, stylish, infectious and satisfying... —MPR News

“I git to the git with some pain n’ some spit n’ some spunk.” The lush, earthy language of Zora Neale Hurston (Their Eyes Were Watching God) is animated through music in the key of the blues in these three short tales of love, revenge, survival, and redemption - "Sweat", "Story in Harlem Slang", and “The Gilded Six Bits.” Adapted by George C. Wolfe (The Colored Museum) and featuring musical narration composed by blues artist Chic Street Man, Spunk breathes new life into these three remarkable short stories from the Harlem Renaissance.

This prison play is powerful theatre!

NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES
by Tennessee Williams
directed by Eric Ruffin
November 5 – 9, 2014
In the Ira Aldridge Theater
— ...intellectually stimulating as it is viscerally gripping." —NY Times

A group of inmates go on a hunger strike in attempt to better their situation against the inhumane prison conditions. We meet, the corrupt and immoral prison warden, Boss Whalen, the heroine, Eva, willing to sacrifice her honor for the man she loves, the stoic anti-hero barely containing his emotions in a cage of intellect, enduring his incarceration, Jim, and the hardened convict, Butch, using his status in the prison hierarchy to promote a personal agenda of revenge. Williams gained inspiration for the play after reading newspaper accounts of inmates who suffocated in a steam room in a Pennsylvania prison.

The Dance Students Don’t Hold Anything Back!

DANCE SHOWCASE
November 21 – 22, 2014
In the Theatre Arts Dance Studio
— “A special evening of student works!” —DC Metro Theater Arts

The dance showcase will feature student choreography encompassing a variety of powerful and diverse dance styles from student performers with a wide range of experience and skill level. Genres featured include African, modern, tap, hip-hop, jazz, and contemporary lyrical.
The Next Generation of Players!

HOWARD PLAYERS PRODUCTION
February 11 – 15, 2015
In the Environmental Theatre Space
The oldest student drama organization at Howard University is back again on campus to present another stellar production that is sure to win the respect and admiration of the world!

Toe-tappin', old-school-dancin', sing-song-sangin’!

ANYTHING GOES
by Cole Porter
directed by Raymond Caldwell
musical direction by TBD
choreography by TBD
March 4 – 7, 11 – 14, 2015
In the Ira Aldridge Theater
— “a daffy, shipshape romp...”—Variety
The S.S. American, sailing from New York to England, carries an unusual group of passengers. Included amongst them are a gangster (Moonface Martin), a wealthy debutante and her mother (Hope and Evangeline Harcourt), a nightclub singer (Reno Sweeny), and a wealthy New York businessman and his stowaway assistant (Elisha Witney and Billy Crocker). It turns out that Hope is Billy's long-lost love. Unfortunately, she is now engaged to a wealthy Englishman, Lord Evelyn Oakleigh. After a series of comedic happenings, Billy manages to win back Hope. Meanwhile, Billy's friend, Reno, manages to seduce and win Lord Evelyn. All this happens while Moonface Martin attempts to escape the law and Hope's mother strives to maintain her social status.

Celebrating the many Voices and Faces of Dance!

ANNUAL SPRING DANCE CONCERT
April 10 - 11, 2015
In the Ira Aldridge Theater
— “The students had stamina, precision and stage presence...their sophistication allowed the artist to expand his choreography and let his ideas flow!” —The Washington Post
The dance concert features a dynamic and diverse program of dance works by nationally renowned guest artists and Howard University faculty members. The spring dance concert is the yearlong culmination and final presentation of the Howard students learned performance skills of dance. The concert combines all of the theoretical classroom instruction, studio techniques, rehearsal, and performance skills into one setting for performance. The program features a wide range of choreographers and dance styles to include Modern, Jazz, Ballet, Hip Hop, African as well as other techniques.
THE IRA ALDRIDGE THEATER INFORMATION:
“The premier performance space for students at Howard University.” — The Washington Post
The Ira Aldridge Theater is a famous theater located within Howard University. Named after the great African American actor, Ira Aldridge, the theater helps promote and train actors and other artists. With excellent facilities and a calm and relaxed atmosphere, both locals and tourists regularly frequent the theater. It’s comfortable and equipped with lighting, sound, and staging systems.

Ira Frederick Aldridge developed a love of the theater at a young age. Aldridge spent his life dealing with racism, but he did not let it interfere with his acting. In his late teens, he went to England and appeared in plays all over the country. Aldridge then traveled to Russia and became one of the highest paid actors in the world. He played Shakespeare’s Romeo and became a notable Hamlet. The founders of the Department of Theatre Arts chose to call it the Ira Aldridge Theater in hopes of inspiring young African American actors. The beautiful Ira Aldridge Theater is a stage where many prominent artists started such as Debbie Allen and Phylicia Rashad, Anthony Anderson, Taraji P. Henson, Isaiah Washington, Josephine Baker, Charles Brown, Richard Wesley, Robert Crawford, Karen White and many others worked on the stage with professional artist, directors, and playwrights such as Tim Bond, Charles Davis, James W. Butcher, Owen Dodson and Ted Shine. “Like Aldridge our students and faculty are extremely passionate.”

The Department of Theatre Arts is committed to the training of knowledgeable theatre and dance artists, theorists, historians, and teachers in the theatre and dance arts. The Department is dedicated to the principle of developing the highest quality of theatre and dance art, and to the serious investigation and perpetuation of the experiences and aesthetics of Black theatre and dance.

GENERAL INFORMATION:
Location: 2455 6th Street, NW (next to Cramton Auditorium, on Howard University’s campus).
Contact Information: Tickets: 202/806-7700 | Fax: 202/806-9193 | Administration: 202/806-7050
Tickets: $7.00 student w/valid ID, $10.00 Faculty/Staff/Alumni/Senior Citizens; $20.00/$17.00 Gen Admission
Groups: Discount rates are available for Groups of 10 or more, contact Denise Saunders Thompson at 202/806-7050.
Web site: www.coas.howard.edu/theatrearts
E-mail: ddsaunders@howard.edu

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