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HOWARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
KICKS OFF ITS THEATRICAL SEASON WITH GEORGE C. WOLFE’S WITTY SHOW
SPUNK

WASHINGTON, DC---- Howard University’s Department of Theatre Arts will begin its 2014-2015 Theatre and Dance season, TOP OF THE HEAP with George C. Wolfe’s adaptation of Zora Neale Hurston’s Three Tales – SPUNK. This sensuous and witty show has a great cast of student performers bringing its rich mixture of storytelling, dance, and the blues to life. SPUNK is directed by Howard University Department of Theatre Arts Alumna, Denise J. Hart with Musical Direction by Department of Music Alumna, Kayla V. Waters and will be performed in the Environmental Theatre Space Wednesday – Friday, October 8 – 10, Saturday, October 11 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm, and Sunday, October 12 at 3:00pm and 7:00pm.

“I git to the git with some pain n’ some spit n’ some spunk.” The earthy language of Zora Neale Hurston (Their Eyes Were Watching God) is animated through music in the key of Blues in these three tales of love, revenge, and redemption – Sweat, Story in Harlem Slang, and The Gilded Six Bits – featuring musical narration composed by blues artist Chic Street Man. SPUNK breathes new life into these remarkable short stories from the Harlem Renaissance. The first story, Sweat, tells the story of a young washerwoman who is abused and betrayed by her estranged husband, and the ultimate triumph over him. The middle story, Story In Harlem Slang, is told in 1940s Harlemese. It is the tale of two street pimps trying to out-hustle each other and win the favor of - and a meal from - a domestic on her pay-day afternoon off. The third tale, The Gilded Six Bits, is a bitter-sweet story of an adoring husband's betrayal by his loving but innocent wife. The various tales are woven together with narration by Blues Speak Woman and Guitar Man.

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GEORGE C. WOLFE directed *Caroline, or Change* (nominated for six 2004 Tony nominations, including Best Musical and Best Direction) and directed and co-wrote *The Wild Party* (nominated for seven 2000 Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Book). He won the Tony Award for his direction of *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* and the Tony Award for his direction of *Bring In ‘Da Noise, Bring In ‘Da Funk*. His other credits on Broadway include *Topdog/Underdog, Elaine Stritch at Liberty, On The Town, The Tempest, Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992, Angels in America: Perestroika*, and *Jelly’s Last Jam* (of which he is also the author). For the Public Theater, where Mr. Wolfe served as Producer from 1993 to 2004, he has directed *Macbeth, Blade to the Heat, The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and *SPUNK*. Mr. Wolfe also directed *Amistad* at Chicago's Lyric Opera and is the author of *The Colored Museum*. In addition to Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics' Circle, DramaLogue and Obie awards, Mr. Wolfe's awards and distinctions include Actors' Equity Association Paul Robeson Award; the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers' Calloway Award, the Bessie Award, the George Oppenheimer/Newsday Award and the Lambda Liberty Award. He was named "a living landmark" by the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and also was honored as a "Library Lion" by the New York Public Library.

PROFESSOR DENISE J. HART is the coordinator of the Playwriting minor in the Department of Theatre Arts. She's an award winning playwright, director and actress. Her production of *Day of Absence* was the recipient of the Outstanding Ensemble award at the 2008 Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Her acting credits include performances on Washington, DC metro area stages with the Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Source Theatre Festival, H Street Playhouse, Arena Stage and African Continuum Theatre Company. Professor Hart has also appeared on the HBO television drama series *The Wire* in the recurring role of the beloved character Miss Anna. She has written several screenplays and stage plays and is the 2007 recipient of honorable mention in the Eugene O’Neill National Playwrights competition and the Lark Play Festival competition as well as the recipient of several awards from the Writer’s Digest Festival in past years. She is the founder and artistic director of The Children's Theatre Workshop, a performing arts camp for young people that remains a staple for training youth in the Washington, DC area. Professor Hart received her BFA in acting from Howard University and her MFA in playwriting from Sarah Lawrence College. As an entrepreneur coach and public speaker trainer she's helped hundreds of people transform their life and business. She originally hails from Omaha, Nebraska and her son Julian remains her inspiration to live an authentic and empowered life.

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Tickets may be purchased at the Ira Aldridge Theater Box Office or by calling (202) 806-7700. Additional information about *SPUNK* can be obtained by calling (202) 806-7050.

**SPUNK INFORMATION**

**WHERE:** Howard University, Environmental Theatre Space  
**DATES:** Wednesday – Friday, October 8 – 10 at 7:30pm, Saturday, October 11 at 2:30 & 7:30pm, and Sunday, October 12, 2014 at 3:00 & 7:00pm.  
**DIRECTOR:** Denise J. Hart  
**MUSICAL DIRECTOR:** Kayla V. Waters  
**DESIGNERS:** Set Designer, Michael Stepowany; Light Designer, George Epting; Costume Designer, Celestine Ranney-Howes; Sound Designer, TW Starnes; Props Artisan; Greg Jackson; Stage Managers, Paige Reynolds and Naira Nyabingi

**HOWARD UNIVERSITY, ENVIRONMENTAL THEATRE SPACE INFORMATION**

**PERFORMANCE AND TICKET PRICES:** $17.00 General Admission; $10.00 Faculty/Staff/Senior Citizens/Alumni/Military; $7.00 Students (with valid ID)  
**GROUPS:** Discount rates are available for Groups of 10 or more, contact Denise Saunders Thompson at (202) 806-7050.  
**ACCESSIBILITY:** Accessible seating available by reservation  
**LOCATION:** 2455 6th Street, NW (located next door to Cramton Auditorium on Howard University’s campus)  
**INFORMATION:** Tickets (202) 806-7700; Department of Theatre Arts (202) 806-7050; Fax (202) 806-9193  
**WEBSITE:** [www.coas.howard.edu/theatrearts](http://www.coas.howard.edu/theatrearts)  
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