Command Performance

Please join THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE in Supporting the LINKS WESTERN AREA CONFERENCE FUNDRAISER

By PEARL CLEAGE

at the

WESTIN OAKS HOTEL
5011 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX 77056

JUNE 20, 2013
Reception - 6:45 pm | Curtain - 7:30 pm

Proceeds will be donated to The Links Inc. Historically Black Colleges and Universities Initiative
For more information, contact The Ensemble Theatre Box Office at 713.520.0055
$75.00 Ticket Price
PLAYBILL

Command Performance
LINKS WESTERN AREA CONFERENCE FUNDRAISER

The Links, Incorporated
Linked in Friendship. Connected in Service.

The Nacirema Society

By PEARL CLEAGE
Produced by THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

WESTIN OAKS HOTEL
JUNE 20, 2013
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Dear Links and Theatre Patrons:

On behalf of The Western Area Executive Council, The Houston Cluster, and myself, please allow me to welcome you to the 41st Western Area Conference and the production of the Nacirema Society.

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation, established in 1946. Our membership consists of 12,000 professional women of color in 276 chapters located in 41 states who are committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry.

We have over 800 talented women in attendance at this conference from the greater Houston area, throughout Texas, and the wonderful states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington.

The Links, Incorporated is a huge supporter of the Arts and Education!

Tonight, we hope you will enjoy a glittering evening of amusement and friendship as we strive to entertain you through this live performance of the critically-acclaimed stage play, the Nacirema Society. Profits from the play will provide financial support for our National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Initiative.

The goal of our National HBCU Initiative is to implement and support efforts that align with President Obama’s plan to increase the retention and graduation rates of students attending college by the year 2020.

We are truly going to Reach for the Stars!

SEIZE THE MOMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE CHAIN of FRIENDSHIP AND SERVICE!

Constance M. Smith
Western Area Director
THE WESTERN AREA LINKS

present

THE NACIREMA SOCIETY

PRODUCED BY THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

TIME: DECEMBER, 1964 PLACE: MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

CAST

In Alphabetical Order

Catherine Adams Green ................................................................. Joyce Anastasia
Marie Dunbar ..................................................................................... Andrea Boronell
Bobby Green ....................................................................................... Derrick Brent II
Gracie Dunbar .................................................................................... Candice D’Meza
Lillie Campbell Jackson ................................................................. Florence Garvey
Jessie Roberts ................................................................................... Angel Henson Smith
Janet Logan ........................................................................................ Rita Hughes
Grace Dubose Dunbar ..................................................................... Detria Ward
Alpha Campbell Jackson ................................................................. Bebe Wilson

PRODUCTION STAFF

Playwright ................................................................. Pearl Cleage
Director ............................................................... Eileen J. Morris
Scenic Designer ......................................................... James V. Thomas
Costume Designer .................................................. Macy Perrone
Lighting Designer ..................................................... Eric Marsh
Sound Designer ......................................................... Adrian Washington
Hair/Makeup Designer ........................................ Roenia Thompson
Property Designer ..................................................... Tina Montgomery
Stage Manager .......................................................... Broderick “BrodJ” Jones
Asst. Stage Manager .......................................................... kendrick “Kay” Brown
Sound Operator ............................................................. Jo Anne Davis-Jones
Backstage Crew ........................................................................ Amy Cole
Pearl Cleage is an Atlanta based writer whose work has won commercial acceptance and critical praise in several genres. An award winning playwright *Flyin’ West* was the most produced new play in the country in 1994, Pearl is also a best selling author whose first novel, *What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*, was an Oprah Book Club pick and spent nine weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Her subsequent novels have been consistent best sellers and perennial book club favorites. *I Wish I Had A Red Dress*, her second novel, won multiple book club awards in 2001. *Some Things I Never Thought I’d Do*, was a *Good Morning America!* book club pick in 2003, and *Babylon Sisters* made the *ESSENCE Magazine* best seller list in 2005. Her most recent novel, *Baby Brother’s Blues*, was the first pick of the new *ESSENCE Book Club* and an NAACP Image Award winner for fiction in 2007. In the March 2007 issue of *ESSENCE*, Pearl had two books on the best seller list, *Baby Brother’s Blues* and *We Speak Your Names*, a poetic celebration commissioned by Oprah Winfrey and co-authored with her husband, writer Zaron W. Burnett, Jr. The poem was also an NAACP Image Award nominee in 2007. Pearl was a popular columnist with *The Atlanta Tribune* for ten years and has contributed as a freelance writer to *ESSENCE*, *Ms.*, *Rap Pages*, *VIBE* and *Ebony*. Her recent play, *A Song for Coretta*, played to sold out audiences during its Atlanta premiere in February of 2007 and will be produced at Atlanta’s *Seven Stages Theatre* in February of 2008 in preparation for a national tour.

Pearl’s work occupies a unique niche in contemporary African American fiction. Her characters are as complex and multi-faceted as her readers lives and their balancing of work, love and family (not necessarily in that order!) ring true to those who eagerly await each novel. She balances issues as challenging as AIDS, domestic violence and urban blight, but the distinguishing features of her books are her optimism, her commitment to positive change and transformation, and her unwavering faith in the possibility and power of romantic love. The creation of good, believable, desirable men -- as well as the women who love them! -- is a hallmark of Pearl’s fiction and her readers are quick to mention their fondness for Eddie Jefferson, the dread locked hero of *What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*, Nate Anderson, the weight lifting high school principal in *I Wish I Had A Red Dress*, Burghardt Johnson, the globetrotting journalist in *Babylon Sisters*, or their all time favorite, the mysterious Blue Hamilton, a former R&B singer turned neighborhood godfather, who is at the center of both *Baby Brother’s Blues* and *Some Things I Never Thought I’d Do*, where his character is first introduced. This character, with his amazing blue eyes and remembrance of past lives, not only keeps the peace, but falls deeply in love and isn’t afraid to show it. His relationship with Regina Burns is at the heart of both books and has made him one of Pearl’s most popular characters. Pearl’s most recent work, *What I Learned in Paris*, will appear at Alliance Theatre this fall.

Pearl is married to Zaron W. Burnett, Jr., with whom she frequently collaborates. She has one daughter, Deignan, and two grandchildren, Chloe and Michael.
Eileen J. Morris is a director, actress and educator. She worked closely with the founder of The Ensemble Theatre, George W. Hawkins, from 1982 until his death in 1990. As artistic director, she has produced over 78 productions, which include four world premieres and 57 regional premieres. In 2007, The Ensemble Theatre was named Best Theatre by the Houston Press and 2007 Best Showcase for African American Actors by the Ultimate Section of the Houston Chronicle. The Ensemble Theatre also presented two out of the 10 best plays named by the Houston Chronicle as the Best of Houston Theatre 2008.

A few of her Ensemble Theatre directing credits include Race, Broke-ology The Nacirema Society, King Hedley II, Cuttin’ Up, Lotto: Experience the Dream, Jitney, The Waiting Room, Stick Fly (named one of the top 2010 plays – Houston Chronicle), American Menu (2010 Giorgie Award winner for Best Ensemble and named one of the top 2010 plays - Houston Chronicle), Seven Guitars (Named one of the top 2009 plays - Houston Chronicle) The Man Who Saved New Orleans, Radio Golf, Ashes to Africa, Christmas is Comin’ Uptown, Sty of the Blind Pig (Giorgie Award winner for Best Production in 2008) and Blue.

Her strong Pittsburgh ties are directing at New Horizon Theatre; most recently Hi Hat Hattie, I Gotcha: The Joe Tex Story (winner of the 2010 African American Council on the Arts Award) and Pittsburgh Playwright’s Theatre-most recently Radio Golf, King Hedley II, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, Fences, and at Kuntu Repertory Theatre directing Liftin’ and Flyin’ West to name a few.

Her artistic journey with the Alley Theatre includes directing their touring production of I Barbara Jordan and performing in Joe Turner’s Come and Gone, A Christmas Carol and understudying several productions. She was featured in the Women In Theatre Magazine (December Issue). She was a 2011 conversationalist with Table Talk through the University of Houston’s 2011 Women’s Studies Department, honored at the National Black Theatre Festival with the 2011 Larry Leon Hamlin Producer Award, and recently awarded with the 2012 Missouri City Chapter of Links Inc. Our Choice Award.

She is the only female in the country that has directed eight of the August Wilson Ten Play Cycle.
ABOUT THE CAST

In alphabetical order

Joyce Anastasia (Catherine Adams Green) was last seen at The Ensemble Theatre in The Nacirema Society. Other Ensemble appearances include the “Saint turned Wanna-Be Sinner” in the comedy, The Dance on Widow’s Row directed by Wayne DeHart. Prior to that, she appeared in The Old Settler, Buses, Over 40, Langston Hughes’ Black Nativity, and Waiting to be Invited. Houston audiences have been delighted for years with her dramatic and comedic performances. She has performed on Under the Stars in Stages Repertory Theatre in To Kill a Mockingbird, Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery and I Am Annie Mae.

Andrea Boronell (Marie Dunbar) arrived in Houston after attending California State University in Sacramento where she earned a BA in Drama. While there Andrea performed in a variety of productions including Sacramento Theatre Company’s The Tempest, A Christmas Carol, Little Shop Of Horrors, Music Circus, Hello Dolly and Cabin In The Sky. Since moving to Houston, Andrea has worked with The Houston Family Art Center in Crowns and The Ensemble in The Man Who Saved New Orleans, Christmas with Great Aunt and Constant Star.

Derrick Brent (Bobby Green) discovered his love for acting, creation and artistic expression in “the only place that Mama let him”... the church. He later went on to graduate with his B.A. in Theatre Arts from Prairie View A&M University. Derrick has been blessed to experience the stage in several theatre productions around the U.S. His Ensemble roles include The Nacirema Society, Lotto: Experience the Dream as well as The Ensemble Theatre Touring Education Company. A few other roles he has been seen in are Miles Gloriosus in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Dead Man Walking with the Houston Grand Opera, Pastor Tim Osbourne in The Women of Strong Hope with Emerge Theatre Group, and as Progress Man in Peaches with Progress Theatre Company. Being an actor is the greatest gift of service given him from the inside out.

Candice D’Meza (Gracie Dunbar) a native of Southern California, Candice relocated from Los Angeles to Houston in 2010. She was last seen in The Ensemble Theatre’s Sanctified as “Monique”. Some of her other roles include “Girl With A Date” in Blues In The Night, “Sarah” in the HITS Theatre production of the Broadway musical Ragtime for audiences at Miller Outdoor Theater. Candice has been featured in American Theatre Magazine and on Houston Public Radio, Fox 26, and Houston PBS. Candice received a Master of Public Administration in 2010.
Florence Garvey (Lillie Campbell Jackson) was last seen as at The Ensemble as “Lillie Campbell Jackson” in The Nacirema Society, “Sadie” in Gee’s Bend, and “Cheryl Washington” in Stick Fly (one of The Houston Chronicle’s “Top Plays of 2010”). Her other theatre credits include “Lavern Barnstairs” in Main Street Theatre’s My Wonderful by Alan Auckburn. She’s also remembered for her role as “Hester La Negrita” in Suzi Lori Park’s In The Blood with Back Porch Players, which she was named Best Actress for the 2012 Houston Theatre Awards by the Houston Press. She was a company member of the Galli Fairytale Theater in New York City starring in shows such as The Frog Prince and Rumpelstiltskin. She was also in Chekhov’s Happy Hour as Wonder Woman. Other roles include “Lady in Blue” in for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf, “Laveer Swann” in A Long Time Since Yesterday, “Claire Dowie” in her one-woman show entitled Why is John Lennon Wearing a Skirt. She hopes to continue to change the world through the Arts!

Angel Henson Smith (Jessie Roberts) was born and raised in Beaumont, TX. Moving to Houston after graduating high school to pursue her acting career, she studied theatre and communications at the University of Houston. Currently represented by Page Parkes Talent, Angel has made various movie and television appearances and done several regional and national commercials including Western Union, Chevrolet, Lipton Tea, Academy, and Casa Ole. Angel made her theatre debut in The Nacirema Society.

Rita Hughes (Janet Logan) is new to The Ensemble Family but no stranger to theatre. Her work over the past two years includes: Ntozake Shanges’ for colored girls who considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf (performed at The SilverHouse Theatre), Ernest J. Gaines’ A Lesson Before Dying and Thornton Wilder’s Our Town (at the Houston Family Art Center). Other notable works include Behind Closed Doors and God’s Trombone (performed at The Encore Theatre under the direction of founder Harold Haynes) as well as Gospel Stage Plays including Overdose (with J.A. Smith Productions), Choose Ye This Day and Precious Jewels (with Acting Bad Productions) and Love Never Fails (with Remnant Evangetainment). Being a Breast Cancer Survivor has given Rita a new outlook on life which drives her passion to pursue her lifelong dream as a performing artist.

Detria Marie Ward (Grace Dubose Dunbar) is a native Houstonian and B.F.A. theatre graduate of Texas Southern University. She is a member of St. Luke Evangelist Episcopal Church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. After 15 years of dedicated service with KTSU’s 90.9FM, Detria accepted the request to be general manager of Matthew Knowles, CEO of Music World Entertainment Management (and home of Beyonce’ and Destiny’s Child) where she remained until 2004. She was associate producer of the musical touring stage play, Will a Real Man Please Stand Up starring Johnny Gill, Sean Lavert, Michelle Williams and Malik Yoba.
Detria was last seen on The Ensemble stage in *The Nacirema Society*. She was a two-time 2012 Finalist for Best Actress for her role in *Lotto: Experience the Dream* and Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Cuttin’ Up*. She was a member of the cast of the 2011 TSU Honors performance at the Wortham Center. Detria directed *The Amen Corner* this past November at her alma mater, Texas Southern University. As an actress, Detria’s stage performances include *Cuttin’ Up, Lotto: Experience the Dream, The Waiting Room, Gee’s Bend, American Menu, Constant Star, Blue, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf, Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery, East Texas Hot Links, Day Trips, Brown Silk* and *Magenta Sunsets*. She is the proud four-time recipient of the prestigious Giorgee Award; recently for Best Ensemble for *American Menu*. She is the Host of Bace Productions’, *Dancin’ in the Streets... Motown and More Revue*. Always excited to be on the stage, she gives credit for all her talents to God!

Bebe Wilson (*Alpha Campbell Jackson*) has been active throughout the Houston theatre community since moving from her native home of Louisiana. Bebe recent performances at The Ensemble Theatre have be *The Nacirema Society, King Hedley II* for her role of Ruby, which won her the 2011-2012 Giorgee Award for Best Leading Actress. This marks Bebe’s 32nd season with The Ensemble where a few of her credits include *Cindrella, Seven Guitars, The Waiting Room, Livin’ Fat, The Man Who Saved New Orleans, One Monkey Don’t Stop No Show, Joe Turner’s Come & Gone, Day Trip, Checkmates, Dance on Widow’s Row, Bourbon at the Border, Indigo Blues, Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery, Blues for an Alabama Sky and Home and Spunk* to name a few. She has performed at the Jewish Community Center in the White Rose Production of *Oh My God*. She has also performed at AD Players in *Little Foxes*. Bebe’s directorial credits include *Hi Hat-Hattie, The Second Princess, Crowns, Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery, Bourbon at the Border, Christmas Miracle, Grey Panthers, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and many others. Bebe received a Giorgee Award for Best Supporting Actress for *Seven Guitars* and was nominated by the *Houston Chronicle* as Best Actress for *Gem of the Ocean*. She dedicates this performance to her wonderful husband for his love and understanding.

**ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE**

The Ensemble Theatre was founded in 1976 by the late George Hawkins to preserve African American artistic expression and to enlighten, entertain, and enrich a diverse community. Thirty-six years later, the theatre has evolved from a small touring company to one of Houston's finest historical cultural institutions. The Ensemble is one of a few professional theatres in the region dedicated to the production of works portraying the African American experience. The oldest and largest professional African American theatre in the Southwest, it holds the distinction of being one of the nation's largest African American theatres owning and operating its facility and producing in-house. Board President Emeritus Audrey Lawson led the capital campaign for The Ensemble's $4.5 million building renovations that concluded in 1997. The Ensemble Theatre has fulfilled and surpassed the vision of its founder and continues to expand and create innovative programs to bring African American theatre to myriad audiences.
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The Links, Incorporated supports National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) efforts to:

- Partner with other national organizations
- Host HBCU college fairs and other events in each geographic region
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