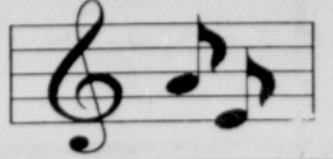




ENTERTAINMENT



Mississippi Masala

by Bill Barber



Newcomer Sarita Choudhury and Academy Award winner Denzel Washington star in Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala*, a hot, spicy romance presented by the Samuel Goldwyn Company

Denzel Washington is the kind of man every mother hopes her daughter will bring home some day. He graduated from Fordham, in Bronx, N.Y. He won the Academy Award for his Portrayal of Trip in "Glory." Washington played Malcolm X in the off-Broadway production of "When the Chickens Come Home to Roost." He will soon be seen in Spike Lee's "Malcolm X." In real life, he is already married to actress/singer Pauletta Pearson. They have four children.

In *Mississippi Masala*, he plays the role of Demetrius, a confident, self-made man and owner of a carpet-cleaning company. He is a proud African-American man who has never lived in Africa.

A chance traffic accident introduces

him to Mina, (Sarita Choudhury) a beautiful young woman whose family fled Uganda in 1972, under the rule of Idi Amin. The flashback scenes were shot on location in the lush countryside of Uganda. Their family now lives in one of the dozens of Indian-managed motels that populate the local highways. Mina is a spirited Indian woman who has never lived in India.

Demetrius and Mina. Different races, different cultures, mutual attraction. The least likely of couples to connect.

The title comes from an Indian word. In India a "Masala" is a group of hot and colorful spices, potent enough to set your mouth on fire. "Mississippi Masala" offers up the peppery mix of an African-American man and Indian woman whose

lives collide, literally, on a small town street in Greenwood, Mississippi. They set a once sleepy Southern town aflame. As Demetrius and Mina begin their secret love affair, each is swept into the other's exotic world. They soon find themselves at the center of controversy and scandal.

Mina's parents Jay (Roshan Seth) and his wife Kinnu (Sharmila Tagore) are outraged by the relationship. Mina's parents had hoped that she would marry the nice Indian boy Harry (Ashok Lath) from their inner circle of local friends. Their is still a degree of bitterness toward African-Americans harking back to the memories of being exiled from their beloved Uganda. The cultural traditions and religious values also come into play.

Demetrius isn't doing much better. His carpet-cleaning partner, Tyrone (Charles Dutton - TV's "Roc") is concerned about how the relationship will effect their business. It also causes some interesting interchanges with his father (excellent character-actor Joe Seneca), his brother (Tico Wells) and his former girlfriend and "local girl made good" Alicia (Natalie Oliver). The Indian community is furious, his business suffers, the bank wants to repossess his carpet cleaning van and friends whisper that he has crossed the color line. However, Demetrius stands his ground in his belief that a shade of color is all that separates he and Mina. "Your skin," he explains to Mina's irate father, "is just a few shades lighter than mine."

There is an uneasy frankness about "Mississippi Masala." What emerges is a poignant, emotional and sometimes humorous look at the human situation. A story of exiled hearts in which two communities share their dreams and frailties, then finally come to recognize the sameness in their differences.

Mythmaker



A Solo Performance by African-American Actor/Singer Jacqui Sutton
Written and Directed by Judith Catterall
Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center
5340 N. Interstate
March 20-29, 1992
Fri/Sat 8 p.m.; Sunday 2 p.m.
\$10 General; \$8 Students/Seniors
Sunday Matinees only: \$5 All Tickets
Call 823-2000 for Reservations

Jacqui Sutton to Star as Mythmaker at IFCC

Beginning March 20 and running for two weekends, an exciting new theatre work called *Mythmaker* will be premiering at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. Written and directed by Judith Catterall, *Mythmaker* will feature a tour de force solo performance by African American actor/singer Jacqui Sutton.

Mythmaker is not the first time Catterall and Sutton have joined forces. Last season, Catterall wrote a monologue and commissioned music for Sutton to open a piece called *Inner Landscapes*. Hailed as "moving, dramatic and inventive theater." *Inner*



Landscapes was recently chosen to be presented at the prestigious Northwest New Works Festival in Seattle.

To develop Sutton's character for *Mythmaker*, Catterall drew inspiration from an eclectic resource list which ranged from Joseph Campbell's *Power of Myth to The Old Farmer's Almanac*, from the *Tao Te Ching* and Mayan prophecies to James Gleick's *Chaos*, from Big Bang Theory to Native American legends, Hindu rituals and African American oral histories. She studied the storytelling traditions of both East and West, observing gestural vocabularies as well as verbal styles, finding threads that connect diverse cultures across time and space: intricate imagery painted with sand on opposite sides of the globe by Buddhist monks and Navajo shamans; a rocking gesture appearing in traditional Russian Jewish Passover rituals and in Lakota Sioux welcoming ceremonies; insightful clown figures like American humorist Garrison Keillor and the Nigerian trickster god Eshu. Out of all this diverse material, Catterall weaves a web of witty stories and contemporary com-

mentary delivered by an eccentric and multi-faceted personality portrayed by Sutton.

Ms. Sutton, at ease with both modern and classical theatre, dramatic and comic roles, is perhaps best known in Portland for her critically acclaimed work with Tygre's Heart Shakespearean Company. She has been lauded for her ability to present a "wholly believable" character capable of "sharp emotional turns" and full of "comic by-play." In *Mythmaker*, Catterall also utilizes Jacqui's rich singing voice, developed through several years of performing with the vocal ensemble Jazz Mouth in the Bay Area. Jazz Mouth was an intense and fertile training ground for versatile voices, sending a half dozen of its members on to join Bobby McFerrin's vocal orchestra.

One of six brothers and sisters, Jacqui was raised in Rochester, New York. At Syracuse University, she studied architecture, computer sciences and Spanish literature. When not onstage in some capacity, she can be found at work on her novel about magic and loss called *Where the Dragon Decides*.

TAKE A "MAGIC CARPET RIDE!"
-Mike Clark, USA TODAY & Jack Mathews, NEWSDAY

"AN EROTIC, FUNNY ROMANCE!"
A POWERFULLY AFFECTING FILM.
-Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"SMASHINGLY SENSUAL!"
-David Ansen, NEWSWEEK

"TWO THUMBS UP!"
-SISKEL & EBERT

DENZEL WASHINGTON
ROSHAN SETH SARITA CHOUDHURY
MISSISSIPPI MASALA
A FILM BY MIRA NAIR - The Director of "Salaam Bombay!"

THE SAMUEL GOLDWYN COMPANY and SCS FILMS PRESENT
A MIRABAI FILMS PRODUCTION A PRODUCTION BY MOVIEWORKS and BLACK RIVER PRODUCTION DENZEL WASHINGTON ROSHAN SETH SARITA CHOUDHURY
CHARLES S. DUTTON and JOE SENECA "MISSISSIPPI MASALA" DIRECTED BY MIRA NAIR PRODUCED BY MIRA NAIR
WRITTEN BY MITCH EPSTEIN PRODUCED BY MITCH EPSTEIN AND CHARLIE ROBERTS
EDITED BY MIRA NAIR
COSTUME DESIGNER: MIRA NAIR
MUSIC BY MIRA NAIR
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MIRA NAIR, CHARLIE ROBERTS, MIRA NAIR
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MIRA NAIR, CHARLIE ROBERTS, MIRA NAIR
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MIRA NAIR, CHARLIE ROBERTS, MIRA NAIR

STARTS FRIDAY MARCH 6th
1510 NE MULTNOMAH
LLOYD CINEMAS
TIGARD CINEMAS
BROADWAY METROPLEX

ROSELAND THEATRE
URBAN ENTERTAINMENT COALITION PRESENTS
Portland's APOLLO Night
COME BE THE JUDGE OF THE BEST UP & COMING LOCAL TALENT
SAT. MARCH 28
ALL AGES ROSELAND 57 ADVANCE
8 NW 6TH
FAST DIXIE Fred Meyer
TICKETS ALSO AT HOUSE OF SOUND • STUDIO 14 • ONE STOP RECORDS

20 Years Great Shows
ICE CUBE
AND THE LENCH MOB
WITH
GETO BOYS' SCARFACE
DEL THA FUNKY HOMO SAPIEN
"MISTADO BALNA"
WC & THE MAAD CIRCLE
FRIDAY MAR. 13 8PM
\$19.50 RESERVED
CIVIC AUDITORIUM
PRODUCED BY URBAN ENTERTAINMENT COALITION, GLD & DEBO PRODUCTIONS
"The Best Seats in the House."
FAST DIXIE Fred Meyer
MULTICENTER IN EUGENE 687-5000
CALL 224-TIXX FOR INFO

Calypso Singer "Chalkdust" at PSU

Mas Fever, a locally produced video of the Trinidad Carnival, follows the presentation. The public welcome; admission is free.

Chalkdust (also known as Hollis Urban Liverpool) is a "Calypso King" whose performances have won many awards; and he is an academic lecturing all over the world. He is a recording artist, as well as an author of books and articles on Calypso and Carnival, the Mardi Gras of Trinidad. As a Calypsonian, Chalkdust's poetry deals with social, economic and political issues. He packs a humorous punch into many of his songs, yet the message is obvious even through the laughter of such ditties as "No Toilet in Town" and the "Doc Have Goat Mouth."

Chalkdust's presentation at Portland State University is sponsored by PSU's Black Studies Department and The Homowa Foundation, with assistance from The Oregon Council for the Humanities and Portland Public Schools.

For more information contact Susan Addy at 288-3025 or Candice Goucher at 725-3472.

The Mighty Chalkdust, renowned Calypso singer from Trinidad, will present a free lecture/demonstration at Portland State University Wednesday, March 11, at 1:30 p.m. in room 338 Smith Center. He will discuss "Rituals and Rebellion," and explore the role of the political in Caribbean society and Calypso as a form of social protest. A reception and a showing of

Black Women's Gathering Tenth Annual Celebration
Volunteers are needed to help plan The Tenth Annual Celebration of Portland's Black Women's Gathering scheduled for May 8-9, 1992.
The Gathering is a time of celebration for all African and African American Women throughout Portland and surrounding areas. A gala time of networking, entertainment, cultural enrichment and sisterhood is being planned.
African American Women wishing to assist on one of the committees should contact Deborah Marshall 236-9687 or Lucinda Tate 283-3477 (MSG.)

MUSIC MILLENNIUM
32ND & E BURNSIDE 231-8926
23RD & NW JOHNSON 248-0163

For Best Results Advertise in the Observer

KMHD FM89.1
...All Jazz, All the Time.
The Full Spectrum of Jazz...
...7 Days a Week, 365 Days a Year.
Mainstream, BeBop, blues, Fusion, New Age.
...If It's Jazz, It's On KMHD!