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Black **H**istory **M**onth

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Blues for an Alabama Sky, by award-winning playwright and novelist Pearl Cleage, plays at PORTLAND CENTER STAGE through Saturday, March 18. Performances will be taking place in the graceful Newark Theater at the Portland Center for Performing Arts, 1111 SW. Broadway at Main. Tickets range from \$10-\$39; box office: 503/274-6588; group sales: 503/274-6598. General information: 503/248-6309 or www.pcs.org. Corporate sponsors for this dynamic production, with issues relevant of Black History Month as well as Women's History Month, are Wells Fargo and Pacificorp Foundation.

Talk Back, a post-performance opportunity to discuss the play with the cast, Tuesday, March 7, Sunday March 12 and Thursdays, March 2, 9 & 16; and Gallery Talk, a backstage view from a member of the company, Wednesday, March 15.

Director Jackie Moscou comments, "Pearl Cleage has created a powerfully emotional story with characters rich in their ideas and passions and complex in their diversity and needs." Set in the summer of 1930, *Blues for an*

Blues for an Alabama Sky Tackles Homosexuality, Abortion and Racism

Alabama Sky resonates with issues – such as homosexuality, abortion and racism – which remain unresolved in the winter of 2000. These issues are played out in the everyday lives of the playwright's fully drawn characters, Guy (Timothy McCuen Piggee), an openly gay costume designer for the Cotton Club; Angel (Cynthia Jones), a free-spirited blues and jazz singer; Delia (Tania Richard), an earnest crusader for birth control; Sam (Eddie Aldridge), a well-respected but high-living obstetrician; and Leland (Adrian Bethea), a well-meaning but ignorant newcomer from back home.

This tight knit group of interdependent friends finds itself in a difficult period of transition as the glory of Harlem Renaissance fades and the cold reality of the Great Depression begins to affect each of them in profound, life-changing ways. People fall in and out of love, jobs are lost and gained, violence and death taint their lives. The action unfolds in real-time meetings, misunderstandings and conflicts among Cleage's complex characters as well as their lively off-stage interactions with the leading lights of the day such as

(Please see 'Alabama' page 8)



Guy (Timothy McCuen Piggee) and Angel (Cynthia Jones) in the 2000 Portland Center Stage production of *Blues for an Alabama Sky*

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