

Focus

Jeanette Henderson



FATAL PROMISES

Novel Touches on Southern Ills

Fatal Promises by African-American author Jeanette Henderson is a fictitious story with real-life overtones that allude to the ills of society in the historical South.

An 18-year-old black male becomes despondent with the lack of opportunities in a small South Georgia town, so he migrates to New York, hoping for a better life. A six-year-old black boy is emotionally wounded when his father abandons his mother with no means of support. He vows always to care for his family, if he ever has one.

A young, rich southern belle becomes intimate with her employee, whom she vows to love forever, but fate intervenes.

Jeanette Henderson was born in Madison County, Fla. She is the 12th of 15 siblings. She is married to Thomas Henderson III, is a mother of five, and is presently employed as a psychiatric nurse.

Where I'm From African dance, American debut

Zimbabwean artist Loveness Wesa will make her American debut with her new dance production "Langivela Khona (Where I Come From)" which is based on stories of young African immigrants and refugees living in Portland.

The performance is Friday, Dec. 3 and Sunday, Dec. 4 at 7:30 p.m. with a Sunday, Dec. 5 matinee at 4 p.m. at the Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center in north Portland. The evening performances are \$10 and the matinee is \$6, with discounts available for seniors and students.

Before moving to the United States from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe two years ago, Wesa was well known in her country as a musician, dancer, actress, choreographer and theater producer. In 1998, Wesa founded the Kgotso African Dance Theatre as a vehicle for bringing works by women artists to Zimbabwe's stage and became her country's first female theatrical producer when she produced her dance play "Brooms."

When the popular Zimbabwean singer and dancer moved to Portland in 2002 and began teaching African dance classes at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, she became aware that many young immigrants were at risk of losing their traditions as they were exposed to Western culture and peer pressure.

"Where I Come From" is activities that I used to do in everyday life... cleaning, farming, harvest-

African dancer Loveness Wesa shares the culture of her native country.



Loveness Wesa

ing, sweeping... I'm looking at the way we used to do things back home and immigrant kids are losing those things. Other kids are asking them where they're coming from and they're shy to talk about it" Wesa said.

Although many refugee kids have suffered in their native, war-torn land, Wesa says there are posi-

itive memories and traditions as well from before the wars began.

With this in mind, she began working with young immigrants from Africa, as well as African Americans, to create her original dance production, "Langivela Khona."

In African dance tradition, she incorporates movements from ev-

eryday life activities into dramatic dance that tells stories and enlivens memories about African life.

In this process of learning African dancing, these young people are sharing the stories from their pasts and journey to Portland and their conflicts and adjustments to living here. The story may also bridge communication and intergenerational

gaps between parents and children by sparking discussion about family life in Africa.

These stories will be told through groundbreaking dance and music, introducing American audiences to Wesa as a choreographer and dance producer.

For reservations, call 503-823-4322.



Audition Notice

PassinArt: A Theater Company is holding open auditions for its upcoming spring production of "Flyin' West" by Pearl Cleage in March 2005. Open auditions are Saturday, Nov. 20 between 10-12 and 12-2pm at Interstate Fire House Cultural Center, 5340 N Interstate, Portland, Oregon. Please come prepared with

two contrasting monologues and be available for 1.5-2 hours. Call back is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 22. The group is seeking African-American and other artists of color (males 20-40 and females 20-60 years of age). If you are interested in auditioning, please call and leave you name and phone number or email address at 503-231-5163 or email passinart@yahoo.com.

Tears of Joy presents: There's a Nightmare in My Closet

The Tears of Joy Theatre presents "There's a Nightmare in My Closet," a play for kids ages four and up, opening this weekend and continuing through Dec. 12.

The puppet theater adaptation of a story by Mercer Mayer is about a little boy who is frightened of the dark and reads stories to his teddy bear underneath the covers of his bed.

As the boy reads, a large shadow

screen illuminates the action as "The Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carol comes to life with animated kitchen utensils. A jazzy rendition of "The Fat Cat" by Jack Kent follows. Each story builds the suspense until the hysterical, heart-stopping conclusion.

Individual tickets are \$12 for children and \$15 for adults, plus service charges. For information call 503-248-0557 or visit www.tojt.com.



Puppeteer Lance Woolen and puppet Mr. Nightmare from Tears of Joy Theatre presents 'There's a Nightmare in My Closet' at the Winningstad Theater, downtown.

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