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PHOTO BY JENNY GRAHAM/OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Alton Scales (Armando McClain) is interested in the news in Iris' (Sofia Jean Gomez) sister's letter in a scene from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's production of Lorraine Hansberry's 'The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window,' now playing through July 3.

Lorraine Hansberry's Wisdom

Oregon Shakespeare Festival revives play by African American playwright

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY JUDGE DARLEEN ORTEGA



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In 1959, at the age of 29, Lorraine Hansberry achieved critical success with her play, "A Raisin in the Sun." The play,

which depicted the experience (reflecting Hansberry's own) of a black family buying a home in a white Chicago neighborhood, had a successful Broadway

run and is now considered a classic of American theater.

Five years later, during the final battle with pancreatic cancer which cut her life short at age 34, Hansberry's second play was produced for what turned out to be a much more limited and less successful Broadway run. The reviews at the time were mixed, and suggest that critics and audiences didn't really know

what to make of the play. "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window" has since rarely been produced.

This spring, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has mounted a production of "Sidney Brustein," 50 years after its Broadway debut, which makes a terrific case for Hansberry's wonderfully ambi-

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