

Aldis Hodge: The ‘Underground’ / ‘Hidden Figures’ Interview

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Aldis Hodge is perhaps best known for his role as Alec Hardison on the TNT series “Leverage,” which nabbed a People’s Choice Award in 2013, in addition to his role as MC Ren in “Straight Outta Compton.” Furthermore, he starred in the Amazon pilot The After and enjoyed a recurring role on the AMC Revolutionary War drama “Turn: Washington’s Spies.”

Aldis appeared opposite Alexander Skarsgard and Ellen Page in the eco-terrorism thriller “The East.” And he appeared in “A Good Day to Die Hard,” the latest installment of the “Die Hard” franchise.

Aldis and his brother Edwin were cast on “Sesame Street” at a young age. Later, they joined the Tony-winning revival of “Showboat” on Broadway.

During that period, he parlayed his success on stage into a movie career, debuting in Die Hard with a Vengeance. Aldis’ television roles



Aldis Hodge

include the critically-acclaimed series Friday Night Lights, The Walking Dead, Bones, and CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.

Here, he talks about playing Levi Jackson in the Oscar-nominated Hidden Figures and about reprising the role of Noah on the television series Underground about the Underground Railroad which just started its second season on the WGN America network.

KW: Congratulations on the second season of “Underground.” What first interested you in doing the series?

AH: I enjoyed the way the story was written. I was intrigued by the narrative showing people rising up and fighting for their freedom.

KW: What can we expect to see new this season.

AH: I’ll put it like this, brother. Everybody thought it couldn’t get crazier or more dangerous, but it does. Last year, everyone was focused on this idea of freedom and just getting off the plantation without contemplating the harsh reality of what that really

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meant. At the end of the season, we were pretty much split up. Now, you get a pretty introspective view of each character. We’re all dealing with the consequences of what transpired last season in our own way. My character, Noah, was learning what it meant to try to be a leader. This season, he’s learning more about who he is as a man. Right

now, the strength of his love for Rosalee [played by Jurnee Smollett-Bell] is more important to him than freedom, whereas last year was purely about survival.

KW: What’s it like acting opposite Jurnee?

AH: She’s awesome! That’s my road dog right there. Our characters go through so much together this season that we have to depend on each other emotionally as actors. We didn’t share a lot of scenes together because our story focuses on Noah and Rosalee’s

working a real-life icon, Harriet Tubman, into the story?

AH: It’s great that we get to honor Tubman’s legacy through a real-life representation, although we’d already paid tribute to her last season. It’s not really a different approach. The only thing that’s changed is that we have a fantastic actress in Aisha Hinds materializing Tubman. Aisha does a fantastic job of enabling us to explore who Harriet Tubman was.

KW: Congratulations on Hidden Figures’ win

was coming directly from a pool of several hundred thousand actors. Our peers! So, we were very grateful.

KW: Why do you think “Hidden Figures” has made the most money of all the movies nominated for the Best Picture Oscar?

AH: It’s absolutely because of the message. Granted, a big part is that people will go to the theater and enjoy it. But I think the primary reason it’s been so effective is that it represents the antidote to some of the cultural issues we’re still dealing with as a nation. It illustrates what can be accomplished when you look beyond the prejudices and stereotypes and allow equality to win out overall. These women accomplished what they did in spite of segregated bathrooms, and not having equal pay or the right to vote. That made it an inspiring film for both little girls and boys. It’s exactly what America needs right now.

Read the full interview at
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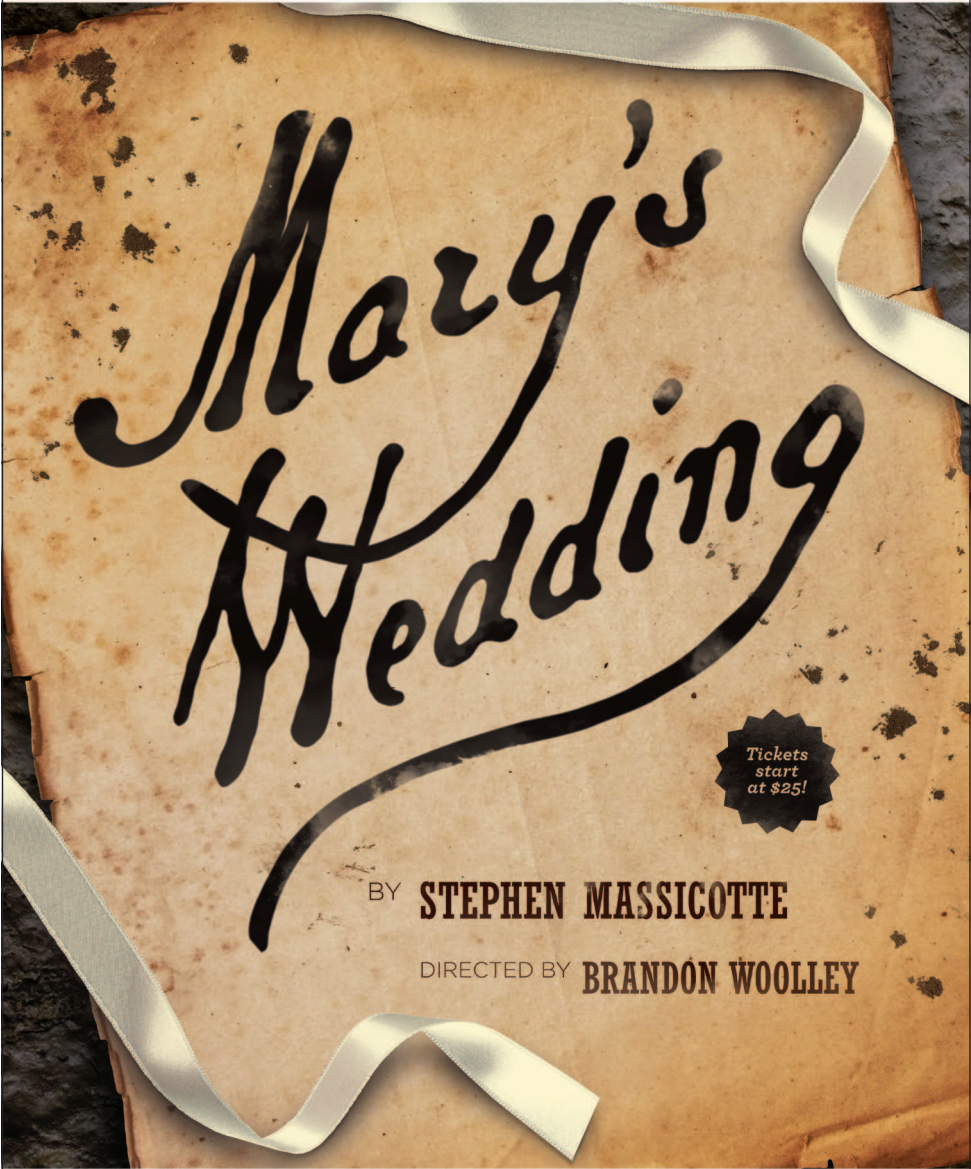
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