

Michigan State University Department of Theatre Presents

Palmer Park

Written by Joanna McClelland Glass

Directed by Chaya Gordon-Bland

MSU Department of Theatre presents the American premiere of Joanna McClelland Glass' *Palmer Park*, directed by Chaya Gordon-Bland, at the Auditorium Arena Theatre on the MSU Campus in East Lansing from October 27th through November 1st, 2009.

In 1967 there were race riots in 59 cities in the United States, the worst of which were in the Detroit civil rebellion, or the 12th Street Riot. The aftershocks of the now infamous race riots are still glaringly present in the physical, economical and cultural terrain of Detroit. Some 40 years later the motor city still struggles to heal and recover-- a struggle that is further hindered by today's uncertain economic climate. Glass' play, *Palmer Park*, takes place in the middle-class neighborhood of Palmer Park in Detroit immediately following the race riots, and tells the story of five couples of diverse backgrounds who banded together to fight for racial integration in their neighborhood and public school from 1967-1971. By examining the struggles, triumphs, and profound questions encountered during this historically volatile time, the play sheds light upon important issues of today. With charm, wit, humor and heart, *Palmer Park* confronts its audience with questions about race, class, and community that have no easy answers, but that contemporary society, and in particular residents of Michigan, can not afford to ignore.

Common Script Project

Palmer Park is being produced as part of a special initiative amongst the Big Ten Universities known as the "Common Script Project". In what is the first-ever collaborative effort amongst theatre departments in the Big Ten, each of the universities will produce Glass' play, *Palmer Park*, this season. MSU's production will be the first to launch; resources from this production will be shared with other universities and the entire project will be documented for showing on the Big Ten Network.

Glass to visit MSU

The playwright, Joanna McClelland Glass, will be visiting MSU on October 28th. Ms. Glass will deliver a talk entitled "The Failure of Integration" on October 28th at 5:10pm in the RCAH Auditorium in Snyder-Phillips Hall, and will participate in a panel discussion following the October 28th performance along with director Chaya Gordon-Bland, dramaturge Kristen Roberts, Department of History Professors

Richard Thomas and Pero Dagbovie, and student actor Ron Hilliard. Ms. Glass' visit is being co-sponsored by the Department of Theatre, the Jewish Studies Program, the Department of History, the Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media, the Department of English and the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities.

There will be a pre-show discussion with the director and members of the design team at 1:15pm on Sunday November 1st in the Auditorium Arena Theatre before the final matinee performance.

Performance dates and times are:

Tuesday October 27, 2009 7:30p.m.
Wednesday October 28, 2009 7:30p.m.
Friday October 30, 2009 8:00p.m.
Saturday October 31, 2009 3:00p.m. and 8:00pm
Sunday November 1, 2009 2:00p.m.

Tickets are \$8 and are available at the door one hour before the performance.

Photo attached:

Photo #1: Claudia Dibbs, Piaget Ventus, Brandon Piper, Wes Haskell

Photo credit: Mike Jenkins, Communications Director, Michigan State University

To arrange press seats, schedule interviews, or request additional information please contact Chaya Gordon-Bland, gordon91@msu.edu (517) 353-9197

For Immediate Release: MSU Department of Theatre presents the American premiere of *Palmer Park*, by Joanna McClelland Glass.