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URBAN BUSH WOMEN

in

BONES AND ASH: A Gilda Story

(World Premiere)

Friday, September 15, 1995 – 8:00 p.m.

Based on the novel *The Gilda Stories* by Jewelle Gomez

Conceived, Directed, and Choreographed by Jawole Willa Jo Zollar

in collaboration with

Playwright: Jewelle Gomez

Composer, Lyricist and Musical Director: Toshi Reagon

Co-Director and Acting Coach: Steven Kent

Set and Production Design: Douglas D. Smith

Lighting Design: Kristabelle Munson

Costume Design: Stefani Mar

Sound Score: Michael Keck

Performers: Gacirah Diagne*, Maia Claire Garrison*, Christine L. King*,
Emerald Trinket Monsod, Treva Yvonne Offutt*, Beverley Prentice*, Kwame
Azalius Ross, Carl Hancock Rux, Deborah Thomas, Valerie Winborne*,
and Christalyn Wright*

*Member of Urban Bush Women

BONES AND ASH: A Gilda Story was originally co-commissioned by Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (Becket, MA) and the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN). Other commissioners include The Center for Performing Arts at Pennsylvania State University; On the Boards (Seattle, WA); Hancher Auditorium (Iowa City, IA); and Northrop Auditorium (Minneapolis) with support from the Northwest Area Foundation; the Arizona Board of Regents on behalf of the University of Arizona, Office of Cultural Affairs (Tucson, AZ); the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University (Columbus, OH); and the Center for the Arts at Yerba Buena (San Francisco, CA). Residency support was provided by the Colorado (Boulder) and Bates (Lewiston, ME) Dance Festivals and by Yellow Springs Institute (Chester, PA). Developmental work was supported by the Ford Foundation, Miami-Dade Community College, Diverseworks (Houston, TX) and the Contemporary Arts Center (New Orleans, LA).

Act I

1850 New Orleans

<i>Girl</i>	Christine L. King
<i>Irissas</i>	Gacirah Diagne, Beverley Prentice, Christalyn Wright
<i>Gilda</i>	Deborah Thomas
<i>Bird</i>	Emerald Trinkit Monsod
<i>Theodora</i>	Treva Yvonne Offutt
<i>Fox</i>	Kwame Azalius Ross

INTERMISSION

Act II

1890 New Orleans and 1955 Boston

<i>Girl</i>	Christine L. King
<i>Irissas</i>	Gacirah Diagne, Beverley Prentice, Christalyn Wright
<i>Savannah</i>	Valerie Winborne
<i>Skip</i>	Carl Hancock Rux
<i>Toya</i>	Maia Claire Garrison
<i>Fox</i>	Kwame Azalius Ross
<i>Theodora</i>	Treva Yvonne Offutt

Some cast members double as characters in bordello, on the road, and in the beauty parlor

Character Descriptions

The Irissas: from "iris" meaning rainbow. In the vampire community they are the oldest, the teachers, guiding their family.

Gilda: born in Brazil several hundred years before this story. In this life she is the madam of Woodard's, a bordello in New Orleans. She is the partner and lover of Bird.

Bird: born in the Phillipines. She was brought to the U.S. with her mother when she was young, and was left with the Lakota tribe after her mothers death

GildaGirl: escaped (at the age of 12) from slavery in Mississippi when her mother died. Taken in and educated by Gilda and Bird at Woodard's.

Theodora: two years older than GildaGirl. She is a free Black whose fair skinned mother used to work in the bordello. She now works as a domestic servant and lives at Woodard's.

Fox: an ex-slave who appears to be in his 20's but is closer to 100.

Savannah: originally from the South, in her mid-30's. A hairdresser at Gilda Nite Styles.

Skip: musician, a couple of years younger than Savannah.

Toya: Young prostitute originally from New Orleans. She came north to make money.

Major support for *BONES AND ASH: A Gilda Story* has been received from the AT&T Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation's Multi-Arts Production Fund. Supplemental funding was provided by the Jerome Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts' Artists Projects (through UBW), Partnerships in Presenting and Commissioning (through Jacob's Pillow), and Opera-Musical Theater (Development and Phase I through the Walker Art Center). Urban Bush Women has received additional support from the American Festival Project's New Works Fund, ASTRAEA National Lesbian Action Foundation, Dance/USA's American Dance Touring Initiative, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the New York State Council on the Arts, and The Sister Fund.

Urban Bush Women would like to give special thanks to Wallace Chappell and the staff at The University of Iowa Hancher Auditorium, Gayle Morgan, Suzanne Sato, Sam Miller, the Black Quarterly Review, Elizabeth Sobol, Nancy Gambuzza, Julia Power, Josy Koumans, Barbara Wing, Lisa Mackie, Cindy Gehrig and Sara Burstein, John Killacky, Kimberly Otis, Joel Snyder, Susan Farr, and Nancy K. Beresno.

This performance is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts; Arts Midwest members and friends in partnership with Dance on Tour, a National Endowment for the Arts program; and the Iowa Arts Council.

Urban Bush Women

URBAN BUSH WOMEN was established in 1984 by Artistic Director Jawole Willa Jo Zollar. Using contemporary idioms and inter-disciplinary forms, the company has created numerous dance/theater works rooted in the folklore and spiritual traditions of African-Americans. Through movement, live music, and a cappella vocalizations based on field hollers and chants, Urban Bush Women explores the struggle, growth, transformation, and survival of the human spirit and creates a powerful sense of community on stage that speaks to a broad audience. The company has performed in New York City at a number of venues ranging from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe to the 1991 Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival. In addition, they have toured extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Urban Bush Women was awarded the 1994 Capezio Award in May 1994. Urban Bush Women also seeks to foster cross-cultural exchange through educational seminars and workshops as well as developmental residencies.

JAWOLE WILLA JO ZOLLAR (JAA-WO-LAY) (*Artistic Director*) was born and raised in Kansas City, MO and was steeped from childhood in both the sacred and secular aspects of popular Black culture. She began her dance training with Joseph Stevenson, a student of the legendary Katherine Dunham. She received a BA in dance from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and an MFA in dance from Florida State University where she subsequently taught. In 1980, she emigrated to New York City to study with Dianne McIntyre at Sounds in Motion. Zollar has toured internationally and her work with Urban Bush Women has earned her five Dance Company grants from the NEA and a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts. *Shelter*, created by



Ms. Zollar in 1987, has been set on the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, premiering in November 1992. She received a 1992 New York Dance & Performance (a/k/a BESSIE) award for her collective work from *River Songs* through *Praise House*. In 1993, she was selected outstanding alumna to receive the Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Ms. Zollar was a 1993-94 *Worlds of Thought Resident Scholar* at Mankato State University.

GACIRAH DIAGNE was born in Dakar, Senegal where she began her training. She then moved to Paris, France and finished her academic studies. In New York, she attended the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Broadway Dance Center, Fareta Dance School, and City College for

a BFA in dance. She's worked with several choreographers such as Rod Rodgers, Phyllis Rose, Valerie Adefokun, and Marlies Yearby. She'd like to thank her mother, her family, and Valerie Adefokun for their love and support.

MAIA CLAIRE GARRISON began her performance career as an acrobat with the Big Apple Circus. Her family then moved to Rome, Italy where she studied contemporary dance with her mother Roberta, also a choreographer. She then studied at Sarah Lawrence College with teachers such as Pat Catterson, Viola Farber, and Phyllis Lamhut. Later she became intrigued with West African dance forms and studied intensively with Yousouf Koumbassa and Djoniba Mouflet. She has also presented her own work in Dance Theater Workshop's

Kuumba, in California's "Black Choreographers Moving", and in "Rooted in Our Bones" curated by Donald Byrd. Most recently she has brought together a group of dancers to form M'zawa Danz, which also performs with Junior "Gabu" Wedderburn's Ancient Vibrations. Maia dances in memory of her father Jimmy Garrison, John Coltrane's bassist.

CHRISTINE L. KING joined the company in 1989. She is originally from Michigan and has been performing in New York City for over ten years with a number of artists including Claire Porter, Trinket Monsod, Kaleidoscope Dancers, Amy Sue Rosen, and Black Pearl Dance Company. She has studied with Sara Sugihara, William Adair, Nancy Hutchins, and many other artists to whom she gives many thanks for their encouragement and love. She holds a BA in dance, has studied singing with Diane Barclay, Artie Sheppard and others; and enjoys exploring many types of vocal utilizations. Ms. King is also an occasional vocalist with Ancient Vibrations.

EMERALD TRINKET MONSOD has created original roles and performed in the work of Anne Bogart, Laurie Carlos, Ping Chong, Blondell Cummings, Richard Elovich, Fred Holland, Ishmael Houston-Jones, John Jesurun, Meredith Monk, Amy Sue Rosen and Theodora Skipitares. She first worked with Jawole Zollar in Valeria Vasilevsky's production, *Song of Lawino*. She performed with Calok Hook Dance Theater in Europe and New York. She currently also appears in Ping Chong's *Undesirable Elements* (New York) and will tour *Deshima* (US/Japan) in October 1995 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II.

TREVA YVONNE OFFUTT, a native Clevelander, is a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, with a concentration in illustration/animation, and continues to incorporate visual components within her career. She has collaborated visually and vocally with different companies including Ancient Vibrations. She would like to thank many people for their support: above all her family, especially the most wonderful parents in the world William and Teacola and her great big brother Brian; art critic Szymon Bojko for his eternal youth and cabaret soul; animator Amy Kravitz for her faith and vision; the people of Karamu and Jacob's Pillow for their patience and spirit; and to the memory of artist/guru Mahler Ryder for his focus and strength.

BEVERLEY PRENTICE was born and raised in Wales, UK. She graduated from the Laban Centre (London) in 1987. She was a member of Laban's Transitions Dance Company from 1986-87, touring Britain and Europe. Since arriving in New York in 1989, Prentice has danced with Laura Schandelmeier, Reggie Wilson, Leslie Yancey, Valerie Adefokun, Janine Williams and Co., and Marlies Yearby's Movin' Spirits Dance Company. She has had her own work presented by the Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, Prowess DanceArts Center, and Dance Theater Workshop's Kuumba '91, curated by Janine Williams. Beverley would like to thank Valerie Adefokun, Christina Lightfoot, and Marlies Yearby for their constant love, support, and encouragement.

KWAME AZALIUS ROSS has worked with Africa One Dance Theater and has studied several African and diaspora dance forms. He has choreographed works for Children of Dahomey, Sylvia Del Villard Dance Company, Ballet Hispanico, and S.D.R. Films.

CARL HANCOCK RUX is a writer and performance poet. He has performed his own work throughout the U.S., Europe,

and West Africa (most recently at the 1994 Berlin Jazz Festival) and has written and/or performed his poetry both nationally and internationally with (and without) several dance companies including Movin' Spirits Dance Theatre, Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, Jubilation! Dance Company, Roberta Garrison & Co., and others, at venues including the American Festival of Theatre and Dance (Creteil, France), Lincoln Center, The National Institute for the Arts (Abidjan, Ivory Coast), and the American Dance Festival. Rux is a recipient of the 1994/95 Fresh Poet Grant and was included in the New York Times "30 Artists Under 30" select critics list.

DEBORAH THOMAS has been with the Urban Bush Women in various capacities since May 1990, and is thrilled about her return to a full-time performance schedule with *Bones and Ash*. Ms. Thomas is also a PhD candidate in anthropology at New York University, and has conducted research in Brazil, Jamaica, and Harlem.

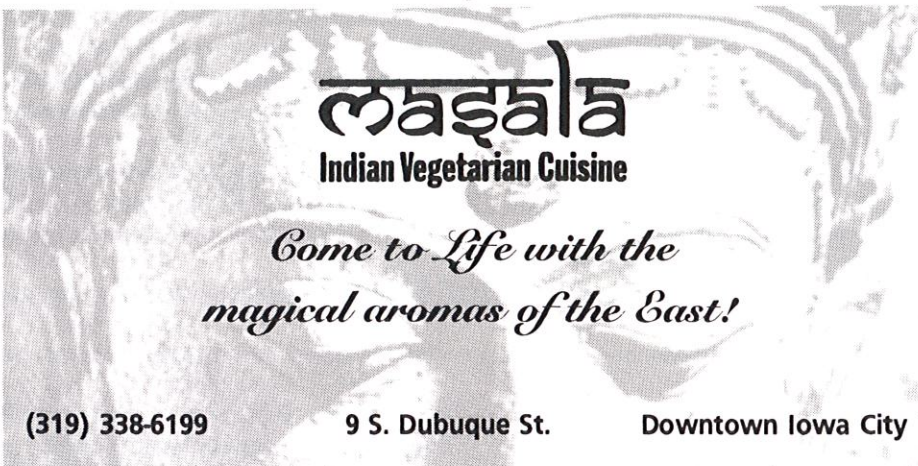
VALERIE WINBORNE is a native of Virginia where she lived until moving north to attend graduate school in New York. During and after completion of her MA in dance/movement therapy, Valerie danced



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with many choreographers, including Ron Brown, Johanna Boyce, David Rousseve, and Janine Williams while also creating her own work. She continues her research in movement therapy, conducting workshops and seminars. Valerie gives thanks to those who have taught her along the way especially Marlies Yearby and her mentor Eija Celli. To dance with Urban Bush Women is a dream come true and she thanks her family, especially Wayne, and her friends for their unconditional support.

CHRISTALYN WRIGHT is a native of Atlanta, GA. She received her BFA in dance at SUNY Purchase where she was also a member of the Purchase Dance Corps. Christalyn has performed with Jane Comfort & Company, Marlies Yearby's Movin' Spirits Dance Theater, Evelyn Velez-Aguayo, Niles Ford and James Adlesic, Sandra Burton, Patricia Hoffbauer, Carol Mezzakappa, Valerie Adefokun, the Historias Company, the Kevin Wynn Collection, and Prowess Dance Arts Collective. Christalyn has presented works at P.S. 122, Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, and the Puffin Room. She has also taught and choreographed on children at Brooklyn College and P.S. 96 in East Harlem. Christalyn would also like to

thank her family and friends for their love and support.

JEWELLE GOMEZ (Writer) is a critic, fiction writer, and poet. A long-time cultural worker, she was on the staff of "Say Brother" (WGBH-TV Boston), one of the first weekly Black programs on public television. She is the author of the award-winning novel, *The Gilda Stories*, and a collection of personal political essays, *Forty-Three Septembers*. She is on the advisory board of the Human Sexuality Archives at Cornell University and the board of directors of the Open Meadows Foundation. She was a founding member of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). Her new collection of poetry is called *Oral Tradition*.

STEVE KENT (Dramaturg and Acting Coach) was founder and director of the Provisional Theatres in Los Angeles. He has collaborated on and directed productions at the New York Shakespeare Festival, the Manhattan Theater Club, the Mark Taper Forum, the Los Angeles Theater Center, Illusion Theatre, 7 Stages, the Guggenheim Museum, and Highways Performance Space. He adapted with and directed Joseph Chaikin in Samuel

Beckett's *Texts* and twice collaborated with Deena Metzger. He is resident director of the Junebug Theater Project and works with A Travelling Jewish Theatre, Roadside Theater, and Artists Confronting AIDS.

STEFANI MAR (Costume Designer) is an artist who has worked in different media including performance, sculpture, and installation and has created public pieces which have been displayed in New York City parks. She has been the recipient of NYSCA Sponsored Project grants for artist-initiated projects. Ms. Mar is pleased to be working on her third project with UBW and welcomes the challenges of *Bones & Ash*.

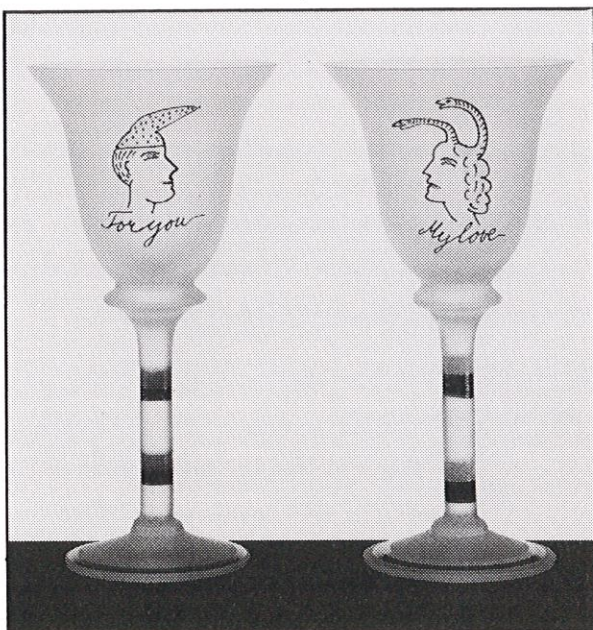
KRISTABELLE MUNSON (Lighting Designer) is from Manila, the Philippines. Ms. Munson has created lighting for dance, theater, television, opera, and video in the Americas and Europe. Recent projects include performances at Thread Waxing Space by Blueman Group, Fode Kouyate, John Lurie, Jennifer Muller/The Works at The Joyce Theater, and Ron Brown and Evidence's *Combat Review*. She is a graduate of SUNY Purchase.

TOSHI REAGON (Composer, Lyricist, and Musical Director) is a nationally known singer/songwriter based in New York City. She performs both as a solo artist, accompanying herself on guitar, and leading her high-intensity rock band. Toshi is known for making a marriage of African American traditional music styles and the '60's and '70's rock 'n' roll she grew up listening to. She has produced a number of albums, including Casselberry-Dupree's *Hot Corn in the Fire* (1994 Lady Slipper) and *Sweet Honey in the Rock's Still on the Journey and I Got Shoes* (Earthbeat Record). She also produced her latest recording, *The Rejected Stone* (Promomma LPs, 1994).

DOUGLAS D. SMITH (Set and Projection Designer) works in many media, including scenic design, lighting design, and projections. He was resident designer for the Los Angeles Theater Center where he designed Tony Kushner's adaptation of *The Illusion*, for which he received two Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards. He has designed in such venues as the Coconut Grove Playhouse (FL), Highways Performance Space (Los Angeles), Old Globe Theater (San Diego), and the National Black Theater Festival (North Carolina).

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Information about Urban Bush Women's activities may be obtained from:

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show•case \sho-ka's n :
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San Francisco Ballet
In a League of Its Own



The San Francisco Ballet has become the quintessential American dance company. Founded in 1933, it is America's oldest professional ballet company. The artistic director, Helgi Tomasson, was one of George Balanchine's stars at the New York City Ballet. Schooled in Balanchine's neoclassical style, which has always stressed technical virtuosity, purity of style, and unerring musicality, the San Francisco Ballet has long been on the cutting-edge of new ballet choreography, commissioning work from the most exciting ranks of contemporary choreographers.

In performances—on October 24 and 25—the company will show off its classical spirit, its American vitality, and virtuosity to live music performed by the Cedar Rapids Symphony.

If the company sounds a bit like The Joffrey Ballet, the connections in some cases are even closer. Hancher audiences will recognize Ashley Wheeler as a Principal Dancer and perhaps more will spot Tina LeBlanc who was first in Iowa City with The Joffrey II when she was 16 accompanied by a high school tutor. Over the years, Iowans have seen her as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker* and many other times in works by Robert Joffrey, Gerald Arpino, and the other contemporary choreographers whose work is danced by The Joffrey.

Helgi Tomasson came to San Francisco in 1985 and in the years since, has taken the company to the very pinnacle of success. Anna Kisselgoff, writing in the New York Times, wrote, "The rebirth of the San Francisco Ballet under Helgi Tomasson's leadership is one of the spectacular success stories of the arts in America. He has accomplished the unprecedented: He has pulled a so-called regional company into the national ranks, and he has done so by honing the dancers into a classical style of astonishing verve and purity."

Successful as a choreographer in his own right—and Hancher audiences will see several examples of his work—he has shown an openness to the work of a broad range of contemporary choreographers who have enriched the company's repertoire and challenged the skills and expressive potential of the dancers.

While at this writing the casting for the Hancher performances has not been set, we do know quite a bit about the two

programs the company will present, and typical for this company, the programs are eclectic, exciting, and they are designed to show off the range and depth of the company's repertoire.

The October 24 program begins with *Con Brio*, a lyrical work that combines the elegance of ballet's romantic era with the bravura of the '90s. It was choreographed by Helgi Tomasson to music by Riccardo Drigo.

Sonata, also choreographed by Mr. Tomasson, is tinged with great poignancy. Created for a principal couple and an ensemble of five dancers, the ballet is a reflection of loss and yearning, portrayed with inventive movement that is inspired by the beautiful melodies of Rachmaninov's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. In its premiere performances in March 1995 in San Francisco, it was danced by the company's hottest new partnership—longtime company member Elizabeth Loscavio and Yuri Possokhov, the company's boyishly passionate new principal who comes from the Bolshoi by way of the Royal Danish Ballet.

The evening will end with *Lambarena* by Val Caniparoli, a joyous celebration of dance set to selections from an unusual score that combines traditional African music with the melodies of Johann Sebastian Bach.

The dance takes its name from a hospital founded in Africa by Albert Schweitzer, who apparently is heard playing some Bach in one cut on the CD recording of the music (the music for this piece will be taped). African rhythms and airs have been interwoven with extended passages from various Bach compositions, creating a cohesive new work that is imaginative and underscores the idea of music as a universal language.

Caniparoli then developed a movement vocabulary that is comfortably suited to both African and European music. "It would have been obvious to do classical steps with the Bach, and ethnic movement with the African. But the score is a marriage of these two kinds of music, and I wanted the choreography to be the same thing. I wanted to show that you can do either kind of movement to both kinds of music," Caniparoli explained.

Caniparoli worked within his own dance language, but layered that with movement from authentic African dance. "It's very much a ballet, and it's my own vocabulary," he says, "but it's influenced by African movement. I didn't want to go

overboard in this direction, because some of the dancers don't have the ethnic background and training. But they're smart dancers and they can pick up the flavor of that style."

From the outset, Caniparoli wanted that style to be as accurate as possible, so he sought assistance from experts. He hired African dancers, teachers, and choreographers as consultants. What they have done, essentially, is take a step or shape that Caniparoli has choreographed and, with his encouragement, given it more of an African flavor.

The ballet takes its cue from the brilliant kente cloth of the costumes which also inspire the colors of the framing scrim. The dancing is seductively easy on the eye as its music is on the heart, a consummate demonstration in music and dance of cool against African hot.

The October 25 program begins at the company's modern roots—George Balanchine's *Stravinsky Violin Concerto*. It was one of the major works to emerge from New York City Ballet's 1972 Stravinsky Festival which was organized as a tribute to the composer who had died the previous year.

Violin Concerto is Balanchine at his streamlined best—a stage devoid of scenery, and dancers in practice clothes performing nonstop movement that stretches the classical vocabulary to its limits. Limbs fly in all directions, legs turn in, unfamiliar shapes abound.

Iowans have seen little of Mark Morris who is at the height of his choreographic powers since his company performed at Hancher in 1987. The 1995-96 season offers two opportunities to catch up on his work which combines a flawless musicality with an ambitious sense of the theatrical. In April, Morris along with conductor Christopher Hogwood, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society, and a cast of soloists present a new production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Morris not only serves as choreographer for the production, which will also include his fine company, but as overall artistic director of the entire production.

The San Francisco Ballet performance on October 25 offers us another opportunity. His *Pacific* is a brand new work which was premiered in May 1995. This will be its first performance outside of San Francisco. The work is danced to Lou Harrison's Asian-accented Trio for Violin, Piano and Cello. The nine-member ensemble performs fluid, expansive movements surrounding a central pas de deux.

Come along, come along,
ye masters and men,
Haste ye hither whate'er ye ben,
Or young or old, or high or low,
Ye all must to the dance house go.

The *Dance House*, by British choreographer David Bintley, was inspired by the death of a friend and informed by the preceding poem. Bintley had long wanted to choreograph to Dimitri Shostakovich's Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and String but was uncertain just how to approach the music. "I knew it needed a story, that it couldn't be just

German medieval dance-of-death woodcut, and the 'dance house' it refers to is death. When Nick died, everything became clear. The dance of death came out of the plague in the Middle Ages. Nick was a dancer who died of a plague. I listened to the Shostakovich music again and realized it could support the ballet I wanted to do. The score has a desperation, a tragic element, but it also has humor and irony. When you think about someone who's died, you don't just think about that tragedy, about that final point. You think about his whole life. Nick was a very funny guy, and we shared a

line to start a solo, and as she does so her companions turn towards the audience to reveal a blood red ribbon which bisects the torso, starting at the crotch and rising to below the chin. No matter what they do, these dancers look as if they're in the grip of a permanent choke hold. And the red barre remains on the stage throughout the work as if to hammer home the connection between death and ballet.

The central figure of *The Dance House* is a sinewy, chameleon-like male dancer in a moppy wig and luscious blue paint. Rolling onto the stage like a billowing cloud, he partners and graciously courts an initially intrigued LeBlanc until he envelops her and carries her out, draped lifeless over his back. He then insinuates himself into two contrasting partnerships, one sensual and self-absorbed, the other jocular and young. The languidly sculptural couple lifts and finally drops. The final movement explodes in spitfire brilliance but this couple too collapses, and Bintley leaves us with a final image—a catlike Death silently leaping over the barre into the darkness.

In a review of the work in *Dance Magazine*, Janice Ross noted, "The notion of the dance studio, a place of beauty and a refuge from real life, as a locale invaded by death—in the form of a dancer—is chillingly effective."

Also on the evening's program is Tomasson's *Valses Poeticos*, an intensely romantic pas de deux inspired by the Poetic Waltzes of Spain's Enrique Granados.

The San Francisco Ballet returns to Hancher after an absence of 15 years with two evenings of dance that show off the breadth of its work.

Drawing on its recent roots in the neoclassical style of Balanchine, with new classics by Helgi Tomasson, and works less than a year old by Mark Morris, Val Caniparoli, and David Bintley, these two evenings plunge us right into the creative heart of this company. And, according to Janice Ross in August 1995 *Dance Magazine*, the company is "dancing more gloriously than ever."

Tickets are available at the Hancher Box Office.



dancing," Bintley has said. "There's a wildness of emotional range in this music, and I could never reconcile it. So I left it alone for 15 or 20 years."

In 1993 Nick Millington, a friend and former colleague of Bintley's, died of AIDS. Bintley was both moved and provoked by the loss. "For a long time I'd been taken with the idea of the dance of death and the romantic idea of virtuosity and the diabolic. I also had found the poem many years ago. It was from a

humor of absurdity. That's in the ballet as well. It's a bit like a horror movie: scary, but grimly funny."

Scored for three couples and a corps of women, Bintley recasts the medieval dance of death as a contemporary tale of death stalking the dance studio. *The Dance House* begins innocently enough with a group of women dancers ready for their daily barre—except that the barre is red. In its premiere performances in San Francisco, Tina LeBlanc steps out of the

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Angels

Lifts American Theater to New Heights

Coming Soon

It has been hailed as "the most thrilling American play in years" by Frank Rich in the New York Times, and now it is on its way to Hancher in all its rambunctious, provocative glory. It's *Angels in America*, Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning epic and it lands in Iowa City for two performances of each of its two parts on October 28 and 29.

Angels in America has triumphed in Los Angeles and London, on Broadway, and during its first year of national touring. True to its reputation as one of the liveliest and most sophisticated arts towns in the country, Iowa City will be the smallest town on the Angels' national tour.

The play is a spirited account of the '80s and the burgeoning AIDS crisis, focusing on themes of sexuality, religion, and ethnicity that converge into a kaleidoscopic view of modern-day America. Subtitled *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, *Angels in America* continually connects the individual characters, most of whom live at the margins of society, with the political and social issues which have ripped this society apart.

"The history of this country has been

determined entirely by the way it has dealt with minorities...being gay or being a woman or being a person of color in this country automatically puts you in a political position...I didn't think enough had been written dramatically to connect issues which confront the gay community on a daily basis with the larger political agenda of the nation. The political concerns of people who've been seen as being on the margin of society are actually the central concerns of society and American history," Kushner has said.

In his eight-actor, 29-character, seven-hour, six-act saga, Kushner serves up an impressive panorama — as fiercely funny as it is profound and defiant — of modern times. It's a hypnotically riveting slice of life and death in the United States in this new, dark age of AIDS.

Angels focuses on two young couples who are coming apart at the seams. One is a pair of Mormon marrieds who have moved to Brooklyn; Joe Pitt is a buttoned-down Republican lawyer easing his way out of the closet into the gay mainstream while his wife, Harper, slowly recedes into her own Valium-induced delusions. The other relationship is between two New York gays; Louis Ironson, a Jewish leftist and legal

clerk, is also in pain-avoidance flight from his AIDS-infected WASP lover, Prior Walter. Breathing fire and smoke all over the central couples is Roy Cohn, the conservative icon and notorious homophobe who refuses to go quietly after he is diagnosed with the "gay disease."

The astonishing image separating the two parts — the one that climaxes "Millenium Approaches" and the one that starts "Perestroika" — is actually the vivid

28. "Perestroika" will be performed at 2 and 8 p.m. on October 29. Although both sections share characters and plot lines, each can stand on its own. Patrons should be aware that the play contains mature themes and sexually explicit scenes. Patrons who purchase tickets at the same time to both parts will receive a special discount. To request a 1995-96 season brochure, stop by or call the Hancher Box Office.

Roy Cohn is also the subject of the film *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* which will be shown October 27 at 4pm in the Becker Communications Studies Building. The film chronicles a performance piece by the late Ron Vawter which examines the lives of these two homosexuals. Cohn was the right-wing homophobic lawyer and backroom politico who figures prominently in *Angels in America*. Smith was an underground filmmaker who flaunted his homosexuality. Jill Godmilow, the filmmaker will introduce her film and answer questions. The event is free and open to the public.



vision that brought the whole cavalcade into focus for Kushner in the first place, coming to him in a dream sometime in the mid-eighties. The first person to die of AIDS that he knew personally had just passed away, and he dreamed the friend had been visited on his death-bed by a beautiful angel, descending from heaven and crashing through the bedroom ceiling to get there. That celestial spectacle gave Kushner the title — *Angels in America*.

Hancher will present two performances of each part of *Angels in America*. "Millenium Approaches" will be performed at 2 and 8 p.m. on October

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Moe Rhythm and Blues



The dimly lit stage is spacious and inviting. Bits and pieces of 1940s furniture adorn the open area. A large radio is set atop a wooden table directly center stage, announcing the musical events to follow. The mood is light and laid back as the strong soulful voice of a radio announcer breaks the silence as well as the prevailing mood.

Thus begins *Five Guys Named Moe*, a hand clappin', toe tappin' musical revue celebrating the career of the late, great composer and band leader of the 40s and 50s Louis Jordan. The consummate entertainer and showman, Jordan's records topped the charts for a whole decade.

As one of Jordan's most popular and influential songs extolls, "Let the Good Times Roll," and they will at Hancher Auditorium on March 12 and 13 when *Five Guys Named Moe* bebops into town.

From the outset of this joyous, irrepressible show, the five zoot-suited characters pull the audience into their world of 1940s jazz and big band swing. It's an ongoing party from beginning to end and the audience is just as much a part of the celebration as the performers on stage. Throughout the show, the five Moes keep the audience laughing and on their toes by pulling several, at random, up on the stage, leading sing-alongs, and even engineering a mass conga line.

The fun begins when the Moes, named for one of Jordan's hit songs, burst across the airwaves and materialize out of the radio in the living room of a lovesick dj named Nomax. In hopes of helping him retain his lady love, the Moes — Big Moe, Four-Eyed Moe, No Moe, Eat Moe, and Little Moe — offer their punchy, streetwise advice and arm chair wit to the forlorn Nomax in a string of Jordan's most

popular and rousing hits. The six singer/dancers, decked out in 1950s attire, hair slick with pomade, are ready to jive poor Nomax back to his senses. And through its 27 songs, a conga-line down the aisles, and rapid-fire choreography, the pace never slackens.


For those unfamiliar with Louis Jordan's place in the history of popular music, Jordan's songs form a bridge between the funky blues, boogie-woogie, bebop era and the emergence of rock 'n' roll. With such hits as "Caldonia," "Choo, Choo, Ch' Boogie," "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby," Jordan laid important groundwork for such rockers-to-be as Bill Haley and the Comets, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Elvis.

By the time of his death in 1975 at the age of 66, Jordan had released 57 songs, 55 of which reached the Rhythm and Blues Top 10 and 18 hit Number 1. But while his star faded before his death, at the height of his career he was as beloved as Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller.

Five Guys Named Moe began as a low-budget revue in 1990 at an out-of-the-way theater in London's East End. It was there that mega-producer Cameron Macintosh (*Cats*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Miss Saigon*) saw it, made a deal, and turned it into a full-scale version that is still playing in London's West End.

It opened on Broadway in 1992, winning a Tony Award nomination for best musical. Time Magazine proclaimed the show "An absolutely joyful experience," and USA Today hailed it as "so contagiously good-natured you just don't want to leave."

Tickets for *Five Guys Named Moe* are available at the Hancher Box Office.



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Calendar

Museum of Art Exhibitions

August 19-October 15

Japanese Prints of the Early Twentieth Century

August 19-October 29

Status Symbols: African Textiles and Adornments

August 19-October 22

Robert Rahway Zakanitch: Big Bungalow Suite

August 26-October 15

Japanese Kimonos: A Modern Movement

September 9-October 29

Carrie Mae Weems: Sea Islands Series

Music, Theater, and Dance

Sunday, September 17

A Conversation with Gregory Peck
3 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Wednesday, September 20

University Symphony Orchestra
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Thursday, September 21

Calling Wanda
8 p.m., Theater B, Theatre Building

Friday, September 22

Tommy
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Calling Wanda

8 p.m., Theater B, Theatre Building

Saturday, September 23

Rita Benton Commemoration Concert
11 a.m., Harper Hall, Music Building

Tommy

2 & 8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Calling Wanda

8 p.m., Theater B, Theatre Building

Sunday, September 24

Tommy
2 & 8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

UI Percussion Ensemble

6:30 p.m., Voxman Hall, Music Building

Center for New Music

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Wednesday, September 27

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Thursday, September 28

Glengarry Glen Ross
8 p.m., Theatre B, Theatre Building

Friday, September 29

Ballet West, Peter Pan
8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Glengarry Glen Ross

8 p.m., Theatre B, Theatre Building

Delbert Disselhorst, organ

8 p.m., Clapp Recital Hall

Saturday, September 30

Glengarry Glen Ross
8 p.m., Theatre B, Theatre Building

Ballet West, Peter Pan

8 p.m., Hancher Auditorium

Hancher Auditorium Information

Box Office: Open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Sunday. On nights of performances, the Box Office remains open until 8:30 p.m. If a performance falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Box Office hours are 1:00 to 8:30 p.m. Telephone: 319/335-1160, or toll-free in Iowa 1-800-HANCHER.

Seating Policy: To avoid disrupting the performance, latecomers will be directed to the observation rooms and will be seated during an appropriate break in the performance, at the discretion of the management. If you must leave during a performance and later wish to re-enter the auditorium, an usher will escort you to an observation booth until an intermission or the conclusion of the performance.

Greenroom: The greenroom, located on the river side of the lobby, is the site of discussions preceding many events and is also a convenient place to meet artists following a performance. Ask an usher, or check the lobby sign for availability of performers.

Coughing and Electronic Watches: The auditorium's acoustics amplify the sounds of coughing and other noises. Please turn off your electronic watch alarm. The use of a handkerchief helps to muffle a cough or sneeze, and cough drops are available from the ushers. If coughing persists, you may wish to return to the lobby, where an usher can direct you to one of the soundproof observation rooms.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the auditorium, lobby, or Cafe. If you wish to smoke during intermissions, you may leave the building, but please take your ticket stub to re-enter the building.

Cameras and Tape Recorders: In compliance with copyright laws and contractual arrangements with artists, photographs and recordings may not be made during a performance. Please check your cameras and tape recorders with the house manager or an usher.

Restrooms and Drinking Fountains: Located on either side of the lobby and mezzanine.

For ticketed events, tickets are available from the Hancher Box Office or University Box Office, IMU. Check with the box office for current information on ticket availability.



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