Stepping Out On Faith

Welcome to this inaugural issue of the Three Lions Stage Newsletter. I hope you will find some of the articles and information contained here useful as much as they are interesting and exciting about what we are trying to do to improve the state of American Theater in the United States. And it is my sincere hope that after you have had some time to familiarize yourself with our mission and activities that you might choose to support us and make us one of your preferred charities.

Building on years of a burgeoning film, television and stage career, I decided in 2003 that it was time to start looking at what types of roles I wanted to take on and what projects I wanted to be associated with as an artist. The state of Broadway Theater then as it does now, seemed abysmal to me at best as Producers did not seem to be creating the types of work that called for Latinos or other ethnic minority groups. And if they did, we were mostly a sprinkle in the chorus and hardly ever seen in a lead or supporting role, unless of course it was a show that was minority driven like Once On This Island, Smokey Joe’s Café, Five Guys Named Moe, The Lion King, Bombay Dreams, and more recently Oprah’s The Color Purple to name a few. Latinos have fared far worse with rarely presented staged works on Broadway. In 1957 the world was introduced to West Side Story. Thematically the show focused on forbidden love and highlighted the real life plight of the Puerto Rican migration experience who were settling in New York and struggling for acceptance. The Broadway cast was largely made up of Whites playing Latinos. Chita Rivera, the most famous Broadway Latina Star who’s still working today, starred as Anita. Rita Moreno would play the role in 1961 film version garnering her an Oscar. Only three other Latinos were part of the Broadway cast between 1957 and 1960. When producers finally did get Story cont’ on page 2

Roaring Reading Series

Three Lions Stage raised the bar when on March 26, 27, and 28 of this year, they made themselves known to the world by launching its now revered Roaring Reading Series. The program is designed to work with emerging minority playwrights in the development of new works. Playwrights have an opportunity to work with some of the best theater Actors and Directors in New York over the course of several weeks and see their works presented, some for the very first time before a live audience. The Series is an exciting opportunity to see new works in development as they are presented with minimal staging using scripts in hand.

More than 300 hundred theatergoers attended the 3 night splash at the intimate Repertorio Espanol theater space where playwrights Rene Solivan, Los Angeles; Nancy Nevarez, Brooklyn; and Larry Hamilton, Philadelphia; had an opportunity to present their work amid stellar Broadway talent. Each night guests engaged in Q&A discussions and were treated to a fabulous VIP Reception afterwards. A new brand of theater has finally arrived and they are truly elevating American Theater to new heights. Roar on Lions!
New Board Members Added

Ronald Riddick, Esq. and Tony C. Yang are the latest corporate Lions to join the Board of Directors at Three Lions Stage. Ronald Riddick comes to board as the former Director and Associate General Counsel of UBS Financial Services, Inc. Ron earned his J.D. from Howard University and is very active in community services through various charities.

Tony C. Yang is a Financial Consultant with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. where he specializes in financial planning for retirement, retirement plan distribution, tax management strategies, investments, small businesses, protection planning/family security and estate planning strategies. Tony holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Chicago and is a firm believer in giving back to the community. He is excited about the mission and work of Three Lions Stage.

Salvador Agron, played by Latin Stars Marc Anthony and Ruben Blades as the younger and older Agron respectively. As the story goes, Agron murdered a teenager not affiliated with a gang in a rumble and became the youngest person ever sentenced to die in the electric chair. This makes for great musical theater? Here we are, waiting and hoping to make our mark as a culture for the first time on a Broadway stage hoping to kick open the doors of opportunity and its under the ill-guise of a real life murder? No thank you Mr. Simon!

Thamfully we were validated in 2003 with Nilo Cruz’ Pulitzer Prize Winning Play Anna In The Tropics which ran on Broadway for 113 performances. Latinos for the most part have found some margin of success working on stages in smaller houses Off-Broadway where producers tend to be more avant-garde and non-traditional in their casting. Worthy of mention here is Miriam Colon-Valle who in 1967 pioneered the establishment of the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater and began to change the way people looked at Puerto Ricans and Latinos. Suddenly there was another source from which theatergoers could get their entertainment.

So I had a choice to make: either stay in and remain frustrated, leave the business all together or step up, create and change it yourself. I chose the latter, and in 2005, I stepped out on faith and founded Three Lions Stage, Inc., a 501(c)3 Tax Exempt Not-For-Profit Organization, as reason for all of the examples I’ve just cited.

As a professional artist of color, as a Latino, I’m old Puerto Rican gang member Tito Puente immortalized "Tito Puente" in the 2001 original Off-Broadway hit, “La Lupe: My Life, My Destiny” Produced by PRTT
Gods And Thieves by Rene Solivan

Synopsis: Inspired by a true scandal, Gods and Thieves is a piercing story of three desperate souls pursuing the American Dream at any cost. The story examines the effects of greed and deception on a life long friendship between Jul, a genius living in poverty, and his childhood friend, Robin, a highly successful college basketball coach. Robin’s team is close to gaining national recognition. However, when Aaron, her star player, is about to be removed from the team due to poor grades, Robin offers Jul financial rewards to do Aaron’s course work. So begins an explosive journey that ponders such troubling verities as ruthless ambition, academic integrity and resentment in its most virulent form as it explores the clash between friendship and business: two worlds which are combined and then torn apart by play’s end.

Rene Solivan is a Recipient of the 2005 MetLife National Playwriting Award; the 2002 Playwriting Fellow at the Mark Taper Forum, and received their Emerging Artist Commission for his play Miss Lebron. There he trained with award-winning playwrights Charles L. Mee, Maria Irene Fornes, and Luis Alfaro. He was nominated by Seattle Repertory Theatre for the 2004 Mentor Project at the award-winning Cherry Lane Theatre, NYC. Other plays include: Soledad, CA (Camelot Theatre); Maskaray (Ventura Court Theatre); Madre starring General Hospital’s Eileen Dietz had its’ world premiere at Theatre/ Theater, L.A. hailed as “…an absorbing, compelling tour-de-force by the L.A. Times. Rene’s training: includes The American Academy of Dramatic Arts, NYC and he has appeared on stage, film and television. Rene Solivan, A TLS Emerging Playwright.

Wild Out Sunday by Nancy Nevarez

Synopsis: Wild Out Sunday explores images of generational manhood and the relationships found therein, set amidst the cultural backdrop and pressures of modern day urban society. The play is an in-depth look at how alcoholism, machismoism, and fragmented familial relationships can lead 4 Latino youths to take part in the sexual attacks on women. Based on actual events.

Nancy Nevarez is a Member of the Dramatist Guild, and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater’s Professional Playwrights Unit. She is an Award recipient of the Nuestras Voces Playwrights Competition for Puerto Rico, I Will Always Love You (Repertorio Espanol); re-titled and in development as Wild Out Sunday (Three Lions Stage). She is also the recipient, of the National Endowment for the Arts/ TCG and Mabou Mines playwrights’ residency program. Other plays: Blind Alley: A Trilogy, Capias, and Three Stories from El Barrio. Nancy Nevarez, A TLS Emerging Playwright.

Skylar’s Story by Larry Hamilton

Synopsis: Skylar Montgomery, a former child star is making his way in the Big Apple. Following a bad break-up and months of recovery leads Skylar on yet another first date resulting in more than he’s bargained for. Enter his three zany best friends, and a heap of quirky lovable characters and you have the makings for an evening of sure laughter. Skylar’s Story is a contemporary exploration of love, friendship, relationships, and the pursuit of happiness and the challenges found therein within the straight and gay community.

Skylar’s Story is Larry Hamilton’s first play as a playwright. He has numerous acting credits. Among them: Off-Broadway: Captain Louie (Little Shubert), You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown (Charlie-Lucille Lortel Theater) Tours/Regional: The Mystery of King Tut (Tut-TheaterWorks/USA), Jesus Christ Superstar (European Tour), Weird Romance (Joe Hopkins, Jekyll and Hyde (Newsboy), Dreamgirls, Carousel, Sweet Charity, and Smokey Joe’s Cafe. He holds a BFA from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and is currently working on a Solo Concert/Cabaret for 2007. Larry Hamilton, A TLS Emerging Playwright.
"Theater is no exception, nor is it impervious to this observable fact that artists of color are vastly absent from professional theatrical stages across America in stark contrast to their white counterparts..."

my experience has shown me that something is terribly lacking in American Theater. That something or someone’s got to give in order for others to have, and that maybe that someone has to be me.

To better understand the plight of the minority artist in mainstream theater one can look at the film industry where similar parallels can be drawn. Over the last one hundred years you will find that no other culture has possibly been more deconstructed, de-Latinized, vilified and mostly misrepresented on and off the screen than Latinos. This due in large part to the vastly crippling images and misnomers often attributed to Latinos courtesy of big Hollywood Studios and mainstream media. Though most film and television viewers watch from fictional points of reference, the media has a funny way of skewing those views into truths and realities--while burning them into our collective social consciousness. Unfortunately, for many in our society art does not always imitate life, but rather life tends to imitate art. Sadly, this manipulation comes at a price having adverse effects on our society, personal and professional relationships; often resulting in the elevation of one group while repressing the other.

Theater is no exception to this, nor is it impervious to the observable fact that artists of color are vastly absent from professional theatrical stages across America in stark contrast to their white counterparts. This is not due to a lack of talent or availability as some would have us believe, but from a mass perception that producers, key players and decision makers who are mostly white, mostly powerful, and mostly connected, are driven either by box office or art. In either case they are seemingly unwilling to think outside of the box in their casting and hiring practices. African-Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Latinos and other ethnic minority groups have historically struggled to make inroads in these areas. While there have been some improvements, change has been slow industry wide.

My vision for Three Lions Stage is to be a theater company whose creative focus is non-traditional casting driven by multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion, rather than "exclusion". My vision is to create theater that not only entertains, but inspires and transcends people to greatness, to be better than themselves in service to humanity.

Eddie Marrero, Founder
emarrero@threelionsstage.com
The Inaugural Players and Stage Directors of the 2007 Three Lions Stage Roaring Reading Series

Simone DePaolo
Dan Berkey
Charles Browning
Jorge C. Perez, Dir.

Manny Alfaro
Ivan Goris
Eddie Marrero, Dir.
John Rafael Peralta

Miebaka Yohannes
Orlando Rios
Arian Blanco, Dir.
Joselyn Mirabal, Stage Mgr.

Larry Hamilton
Cornelius Jones, Jr.
Quinn M. Bass
James Webb
Richard E. Waits

Brian Kuchta
Joel Karie
Marci Reid
Shannon Michael Wamser
Bobbi Owens
Staged Reading Photographs: Gods And Thieves

Charles Browning and Dan Berkey

Actors Charles Browning with TLS Board Member Reggie Van Lee

Simone DePaolo and Dan Berkey

NEWSLETTER
The Cast of Wild Out Sunday, Sitting L-R John Rafael Peralta, Miebakka Yohannes, Manny Alfaro, Standing: Ivan Goris, and Orlando Rios

Quinn Bass greets arriving guests.

L-R Eddie Marrero, Tom Connolly, Nancy Nevarez, and Hector Soto

Joselyn Mirabal, Stage Manager

Larry Hamilton, Jamaal Wilson, and Quinn M. Bass

Actors Ivan Goris and Eddie Marrero
“As a young person in Indiana, I dreamed of working in New York City as an actor with new innovative and inventive companies.”

Nancy Nevarez with Actor/Producer Eddie Marrero for ‘Wild Out Sunday’ VIP Reception

My experience working with Three Lions Stage has been highly collaborative, professional and inspiring. At every turn of this staged reading, the producer and director were extremely respectful of my work as a playwright, and when changes were made they were made with my consent following a professional dialogue about the work. Also a lot of thought and creativity was put into this staged reading making it a very successful event. The word to describe this staged reading is electricity—there was so much electricity coming from the stage and the audience was receiving all of this energy that when the reading concluded there was this outburst of applause, and this speaks to the work that Three Lion Stage is seeking to do: to give artists of color the opportunity to have their work produced, to tell their stories and have artists that represent those stories be the actors, and the lighting technicians, and the set designers, etc. And what this staged reading indicted is that audiences are ready and willing to go see their stories be told. Now, that’s inspirational.

Nancy Nevarez
Playwright
‘Wild Out Sunday’

“My sister truly enjoyed the experience. I can’t even imagine what a full on production of this play would be like. I’m so excited! I think I have an idea of what an artist must feel when they see their work come to fruition. I totally enjoyed the Q&A. I felt like I was on that show, Inside the Actor’s Studio. I could have gone on with my questions. Anyway, Thanks again.”

—Elizabeth Carrion, Audience Participant

“I want to thank you guys for your professionalism, and great support...Eddie Thank you for giving us all a voice and letting us prove to the world that we have what it takes, you have truly inspired me to keep pushing and never giving up. Arian you are the man. It was an honor to work with you. You are a gifted Director. Working on “Wild out Sunday” was an experience that I will never forget. I’ve done a lot of productions but i must say that this was the best production I’ve been in. That’s saying a lot considering that it was just a staged reading.”

—Ivan Goris, Actor

“It was a great opportunity to work with Three Lions Stage. They afforded me the experience of working in the most wonderful collaboration setting which is the Theatre. The ability to do their inaugural project was a dream come true. As a young person in Indiana, I dreamed of working in New York City as an actor with new innovative and inventive companies. Three Lions Stage has manifested my dream and initiated my process of achieving my goals since my graduating from an arts graduate program. I feel like I have made a great networking connection and future friends with my involvement with Three Lions Stage. I thank you and hope to bring more press your way through my work with you and beyond.”

—Charles Browning, Actor

“Overall my experience was first rate: top-notch performers, considerate scheduling, clear channels of communication. All of this made the experience wonderful and rewarding. I wish I had constructive criticism to offer. All I can say is keep doing what you’ve started and I’ll always be happy to tell my friends or take a gig.”

—Shannon Michael Wamser, Actor
Your financial support is urgently needed at this critical stage to support our operations, theatrical and cultural programming. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution today. Your support will help us strive toward becoming a preeminent theatrical institution for artists of color.

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**Please Donate to Three Lions Stage**

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Fair Enough or Crazy?

Neil LaBute

This was one of those moments where I just had to act. This first inaugural issue of the TLS Newsletter was just put to bed when a colleague emailed me this outrageous article that appeared very recently—May 6, 2007 in the Los Angeles Times. The writer’s views in my opinion are so flawed that it was at times shocking to the senses to read it. For me it proves yet again why a company like Three Lions Stage must not only exist, but must thrive and flourish. I’ve included it here for your consideration and thoughts.

Eddie Marrero, Founder
Three Lions Stage, Inc.

The following is a Reprint of that article By Neil LaBute as published in the Los Angeles Times on May 6, 2007. The article is followed by reader responses.

Playwrights On Writing

Casting for the stage should be color-blind

When great actors are denied great roles because of their skin color, there’s a problem. Even if they are white.

By Neil LaBute, Special to The Los Angeles Times, May 6, 2007

There’s a wonderful old theater story about Laurence Olivier in the 1960s — he was playing in "Othello" and receiving generally glowing notices opposite Frank Findlay and a young actress by the name of Maggie Smith. One night, however, as he stormed through the jealous general’s odyssey, Olivier seemed to be on fire (not literally, of course, because that would be painful, and, while certainly an interesting if too literal take on the Moor’s passionate histrionics, pretty "out there" as an interpretation of Shakespeare, even for the ‘60s).

Backstage he was approached by his colleagues, who found him, rather than overjoyed by his brilliant portrayal, staring mournfully (as only Olivier could supposedly do) into his dressing room mirror. One meekly said to him, "You were magnificent tonight, Larry," to which he moodily answered, "I know." Another of his costars continued on, brave enough to ask, "Then what's the matter?" Olivier turned to them and wearily said, "I don't know how I did it."

Even if that story isn’t true, I want it to be because it’s not just a terrific tale about one of the great stage actors of the 20th century, but also a perfect example of the actor’s alchemy in general. How do they do it? I don’t know exactly — and I’m around them all the time.

The focus of my thoughts here, however, is not about the way in which actors go about crafting their work but about the opportunities they have to do that work. If Olivier was alive today, young and vibrant and working in the theater, we might never have that story to tell for one simple reason: In these troubled times, the man would never be allowed to put on blackface and play that role. Hell, he wouldn’t be allowed to perform it if he went out in a strawberry-blond wig and clown makeup.

Now this probably won’t stop somebody from having the bright idea of casting Beyoncé in the role, but Liev Schreiber — as fine a Shakespearean actor as this country has at the moment — will never have a shot at the part. For most white actors today, roles of color — from the classics to some of the sensational writing that is currently being done for the theater — are not even an option for them, and I’m not sure why.

For a time this idea was given the name "color-blind" casting, but the only thing it seemed to be blind to was the fact that it wasn’t a two-way street; it was obviously designed to provide opportunity for minorities rather than put the best person in a role, regardless of color.

I suppose this is the notion of equal opportunity rearing its fearsome head again — and if it is, can we stop using the word "equal" in that phrase?

Or is it something far deeper and much simpler: What are people going to think of us for even suggesting such a thing?

Maybe.

I understand about slavery and all that, but that was a generally unpleasant time in our national history and it’s firmly in the past. No one but a few folks who own "The Dukes of Hazzard: The Complete First Season" continue to think that slavery brought this country anything but shame and heartache. So we
me at the Grove — and move on. Anyone whose ancestors were slaughtered by the U.S. Cavalry or spent time in a wartime internment camp may line up directly behind.

This is a nation of great promise and stunning achievement, yet our road to freedom is paved with blood and ambition; but, hey, enough about Hollywood.

Today we should embrace the idea of a collective history and speed off into the future holding hands, enjoying and understanding the wonderful variety of our various cultures and head toward the glowing sun of a better tomorrow. And while we're doing this, why not acknowledge the achievements of several of our greatest playwrights — people like Lorraine Hansberry, David Henry Hwang, José Rivera, August Wilson, etc. — by allowing anybody who wants to play the parts they've written the opportunity to do so?

Don't forget, these actors still have to find a theater company brave (or crazy) enough to cast them. But if that happens — if someone does allow me to mount my all-white version of "A Raisin in the Sun" — then please let us proceed. I promise you, we'll be doing it not to be provocative but because it's a terrific American play. Don't picket outside the theater or send letters to the editor — if you have to, though, do that first rather than start up another annoying blog — or ask CBS to take away my radio show. (I actually don't have one, so relax, you can continue sleeping in the mornings.)

Just think about it for a moment, though: Why do we barely bat an eye at an all-black version of "Long Day's Journey Into Night" or when Denzel Washington wants to play the title role in "Richard III" (did they really think this is what was meant by the "black prince")? or Brutus in "Julius Caesar"? Mind you, I'm not complaining — great work has come from these brave and adventurous ideas — but why shouldn't it cut both ways? Isn't it simple prejudice to suggest that we should think otherwise?

Color is going to remain the great dividing line as long as we allow it to be. That's a simple fact. Religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality — all have fallen under the heavy wheel of progress, and thank heavens for that (although I'd rather not get into the "God" issue right now), but race remains the most feared stumbling block in the theater (and in society at large). That, and: Will this play sell tickets?

Now, I suppose if Brad Pitt (a big star and a hugely underrated actor) suggested that he was interested in the role of Walter in "A Raisin in the Sun" — I'm coming to you first, Brad, when I raise the money — then I can believe wily producers would begin hustling the idea quickly around the Great White Way (which is not a racial thing but fits very nicely into my theme).

Surprisingly, it's easy to forget that so much in the arts today is driven by pure, unadulterated economics — so much so that even a radical idea like this, one that would normally make Al Sharpton quiver with indignant rage, might seem palatable to him if he could raise enough money to get in on the ground floor of a Pitt performance on Broadway.

'Call me crazy'

Maybe this is a just silly idea — maybe "West Side Story" was a fluke and people really should play only characters that fit their looks and color and where they were born. I'm sure when the musical gets a decent revival in New York or London — and this needs to happen, people, it's the one musical score of genius this country has produced — then there will be a major uproar if anyone other than a Latina actress is cast as Maria.

Fair enough. Or is it? Shouldn't the best person for the part be considered, no matter what amount of makeup they have to wear or accent they need to conquer? If a major talent like, say, Kevin Spacey (who has continued to return to the stage throughout his career) decides he'd like to take a shot at playing Othello rather than Iago — but let's be serious for a moment, can you imagine how good that guy would be as Iago? — then let's let him do it. He's running the Old Vic, after all, taking on the headache of steering a major arts institution in London during the prime of his career. So if he has a hankering to wear coal dust smeared on his face every night in search of a greater truth, who are we to tell him no?

Even if you argue the point about the dust — I mean, we don't want to offend anybody who ever had a family member who spent his life working in a coal mine — why shouldn't Mr. Spacey march out on stage each night and put his arrogant trust (Othello's, not Spacey's) in Iago, begin to suspect his wife of an affair and finally kill Desdemona and himself in a fit of rage. And as far as I'm concerned, Desdemona can be any color she pleases.

Call me crazy or mad or just plain racist (I've already been called everything else). You can even call me "nappy-headed" if you'd like — just take a look at my picture sometime. It's true. But honestly, let's not waste any more valuable time in our lives fussing about something that doesn't really matter. If an Englishman puts on an Irish accent and can fool us successfully, then let him do it without our worrying about Cromwell and Belfast and the entire history of Ireland. If some white actress out there has her heart set on playing Madame Butterfly and she's got the vocal chops (I'm already sorry I used the word "chops"), then shut up and let the girl sing.

This is not an argument about opportunity or imbalance; all I'm asking is that you let the theater, that last bastion of illusion — a place of magic and hope and imagination — remain exactly that. The stuff that dreams are made of.

* Labute's works include the plays "Bash," "The Distance From Here," "The Mercy Seat" and "This Is How It Goes." Films include "In the Company of Men" and "The Shape of Things."
I too wish for a day when our stages could be truly colorblind. Maybe that'll be commonplace in American theater in our lifetimes, and maybe then American theater truly could be called American theater. But for now, I'd have to say that the "caste system" in American theater is still very firmly in place, and white actors are most definitely not on the bottom.

KEN NARASAKI
Venice, CA

Every play is different
WHAT Neil LaBute overlooks are two critical questions: What is the nature of the play? and What is the relationship of the play to our time and place?

Consider Denzel Washington in "Julius Caesar," as opposed to Laurence Olivier in "Othello." The former needs no special makeup. Why? Because the play is not about race; in the non-naturalistic setting of Shakespeare, the skin tone of an actor is irrelevant, except in very rare cases. In "Othello," the lead actor must be visibly, and probably racially, different from the rest of the cast. Is it possible to cast against racial type? Sure: Give a white Othello a black Desdemona, Iago, etc. Our relationship to Shakespeare, and Shakespeare's to his source material, is such that specific races are not the issue. Racial difference is.

As to contemporary plays, however, such as the works of August Wilson, their specific relationship to our time and place does call for greater attention to racial specifics of casting. These plays are about experiences specific to a racial group, and those experiences are still in evidence in our society. A greater naturalism is called for, and, more importantly perhaps, a specific relationship to the characters' experiences on the part of the actors. Shakespeare and his time are shaping influences on all of us, and so all actors have a place from which to tell their truths within his framework. Wilson's influence on us is still in flux. For the time being, some of us can speak from within his framework, some of us must still listen. That will likely change.

I think the point is that colorblind casting is not a one-size-fits-all matter. Every play worthy of production has its own demands that must be respected, and those demands are not only intrinsic to the work but always also embedded in the relationship of the work to its performers and audiences.

MICHAEL LEAVY
Los Angeles, CA
A black actor looking for roles

As a working actor, I am daily subjected to being unable to audition for roles I could otherwise do because their accompanying casting notices indicate characters as common as a mailman, the third customer on the left or the third man on the elevator are white despite the fact that nothing in the script, the situation or anything else denotes race other than the creative team's lack of thought that anyone other than a white actor could or should play the part.

LaBute suggests, as an example of the way things should be in his world, a possible future all-white production of "A Raisin in the Sun." That is ludicrous. "Raisin" is about a black family in Chicago in the '50s and its problems arising from the racial climate of that time. To suggest even laughingly that there should or could ever be an all-white production of this show is just as ridiculous as it would be for me, an African American actor, to be cast as Anne's father in "The Diary of Anne Frank."

Colorblind casting was meant to remedy a situation that continues to occur even when roles need not be race specific. LaBute should know better.

MICHAEL GOODWYN
Santa Clarita, CA

The fight for opportunities

As Neil LaBute said, let the theater be "the stuff that dreams are made of." Blacks in America and other people of color do "have a dream." The dream is that people of color in America get opportunities to get ahead and alleviate the many pervasive social problems they face in growing up in underserved communities and as heirs of displaced, fragmented and impoverished families.

Unfortunately, they know that to achieve the dream they must take action to protect the few opportunities that exist for them, as well as working tirelessly to create new ones. Nothing has been given to people of color without their fighting for it, while people like LaBute cry about reverse discrimination and demand the end of these opportunities immediately.

Furthermore, his casual apology for slavery is quite offensive and plain insensitive. Who is he? Why would it mean anything? Nobody is asking for his apology. What kind of misconceived-racist thoughts made him even consider this? It is not about apologies. It is about horrible disparities in our society where black men are more likely to go to jail than to college and white fourth-graders are three times more likely than blacks to achieve math test proficiency. Does he think that blacks have something in their skin that causes this? I hope he doesn't, or I could, yes, call him a racist.

I would better say that he doesn't seem to have a clue about racial and social problems.

CELIA BRUGMAN
Los Angeles, CA

Equal opportunity would be great

It is not enough for the black or yellow or brown actress to play Hedda, or Juliet, or Nina dozens of times. That only changes the look of the American theater.

LaBute is proposing that white actors appropriate culturally specific texts from actors who may finally have a chance to depict their own cultural heritage. My fear, as an actor who happens to be African American, is that his stance on this sensitive and controversial matter will be dropped as soon as he secures his audience quota. He will move on, casting all-white plays, but we actors of color will continue to struggle to not get typecast roles, while at the same time holding onto the small niche that our playwrights have worked very hard to establish in the public domain.

To change American theater itself, there must be black and brown and yellow Ninas in the American repertory.

BARON KELLY
Orange, CA

We'd like to know what you think.
Write to us at: forum@three lionsstage.com
SEEKING HELP!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Three Lions Stage is seeking volunteers for various activities and special events including PR & Marketing, Hospitality, Ushers, General Assistance and Contributing Writers to the TLS Newsletter. If you have a love for the arts or just want to give back to the community, please contact us. We’ll be glad to have you as part of the family. For Info Call:

212-316-2211 Ofc.

Email:
info@threelionsstage.com

DEVELOPMENT/FUNDRAISING
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Three Lions Stage, Inc. is seeking experienced individuals who can volunteer a few hours a week to assist in compiling grant information, write and assist in developing grant applications, engage in strategic development, planning and, fundraising activities. Experienced preferred. For more information please contact:

Contact:
Eddie Marrero 212-316-2211
eemarrero@threelionsstage.com

BOARD NOMINATIONS

Three Lions Stage is accepting nominations to its Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. Seeking a cross-section of leading professionals and principals within various industry sectors. Ideal candidates should have a strong desire for community service, philanthropy, and affinity for the performing and theatrical arts.

Contact:
Thomas G. Connolly, Esq.
Treasurer
212-972-0592