

The Classical Theatre of Harlem Presents

EMANCIPATION

A New Play by Ty Jones

Directed by Christopher McElroen

Performances Begin on April 10th

At The Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center

at the historic Audubon Ballroom

3940 Broadway (between 165th and 166th Street)

March 16, 2008

The OBIE, Drama Desk and Lortel Award-winning Classical Theatre of Harlem (CTH) will present the final show of their 2007/2008 season: *EMANCIPATION*, a new play by longtime company member and OBIE Award-winner Ty Jones. Performances will be at The Shabazz Center at the historic Audubon Ballroom, located at 3940 Broadway, between 165th and 166th Street. Performances will begin on Thursday, April 10th. Opening night is scheduled for Thursday, April 17th and the show will run through Saturday, May 3rd. Press is invited beginning on Saturday, April 12th.

About The Play

On August 21, 1831, Nat Turner led a slave rebellion that became a watershed event in America's long and troubled history of slavery and racial conflict. *EMANCIPATION* is a thoughtful, powerful, and visceral examination of this pivotal moment in American society. Developed in the Classical Theatre of Harlem's 2007 Future Classics program, *EMANCIPATION* is written by OBIE Award-winning actor and writer Ty Jones. Mr. Jones recently starred in Brian De Palma's controversial film "Redacted"; additional film credits include "The International" with Clive Owen and Naomi Watts, and "Heaven's Fall" with Timothy Hutton and Anthony Mackie. Television credits include all three versions of "Law & Order", "Rescue Me" and "The Jury." His numerous theater credits include his OBIE Award-winning performance in CTH's production of *THE BLACKS: A CLOWN SHOW*, and appearances on Broadway in *HENRY IV* with Kevin Kline and *JULIUS CEASAR* with Denzel Washington.

Ty Jones will appear in *EMANCIPATION*, joining a cast that includes Sean Patrick Reilly, Stephen Conrad Moore, Happy Anderson, Jenny Bennett, Gisela Chipe, Michael E. Cummings, James Jorsling, Jason Podplesky, Angela D. Polite, Wayne Pyle, James Singletary and Lelund Durond Thompson.

CTH co-founder Christopher McElroen will direct. Mr. McElroen staged the production of *WAITING FOR GODOT* for CTH that was also performed in New Orleans, and also directed the multiple OBIE Award-winning production of *THE BLACKS*. The design team will be Troy Hourie (sets), Aaron Black (lighting), Aaron Rhyne (projections), and Kimberly Glennon (costumes).

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About The Shabazz Center at the historic Audubon Ballroom

The show will be performed at the Audubon Ballroom, where Malcolm X gave many of his famous speeches, and also where he was assassinated on February 21, 1965. Built in 1912, it has been used as a vaudeville house, a movie theater and a meeting hall. When Malcolm X founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) after leaving the Nation of Islam in 1964, he used the space for the group's weekly meetings. The Audubon Ballroom now houses The Malcolm X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, after an extensive renovation by the NYC Economic Development Corporation. CTH is proud to be presenting *EMANCIPATION* at this historic venue.

The Shabazz Center is a 501 c(3) that honors the lives and legacies of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz by promoting human and civil rights through knowledge of the history and culture of the African Diaspora; education and self-empowerment; family values; and facilitating racial and religious reconciliation. Speaking about the production, Dowoti Désir, Executive Director of The Shabazz Center, said, " El Hajj Malik -- Malcolm X -- is connected to Nat Turner by a tradition of liberation and resistance found in the African Diaspora. 'By any means necessary' is a reflection on the arguments, paths, and techniques employed by Black folk to free themselves. That struggle continues. In recognition of how our pasts spill into the shared present, our organizations are working together to tell this important American story."

About The Classical Theatre of Harlem

Since being co-founded in 1999 by Alfred Preisser and Christopher McElroen, the Classical Theatre of Harlem has staged thirty-four productions, which have included numerous works by Shakespeare, Melvin Van Peebles' *AIN'T SUPPOSED TO DIE A NATURAL DEATH* and Jean Genet's seminal political drama, *THE BLACKS: A CLOWN SHOW*. The Classical Theatre of Harlem is dedicated to producing theatre that truly reflects the diversity of ideas and racial tapestry of New York City. Their long list of awards includes 5 OBIE Awards, 2 Lucille Lortel Awards, a Drama Desk Award and the Edwin Booth Award for Artistic Excellence, among many others. Their most recent work includes Langston Hughes' *BLACK NATIVITY* presented by the New 42nd Street and a site specific production of Samuel Beckett's *WAITING FOR GODOT* staged outdoors in the Lower Ninth Ward and Gentilly neighborhoods of New Orleans.

EMANCIPATION will begin performances on Thursday, April 10th with the opening scheduled for Thursday, April 17th and will run through Saturday, May 3rd. The schedule will be Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30PM and Sundays at 3PM. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased by calling Smarttix at (212) 868-4444 or by ordering online at www.smarttix.com. For more information about The Classical Theatre of Harlem, visit their web site at www.classicaltheatreofharlem.org.

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At The Shabazz Center, 3940 Broadway between 165th and 166th Streets

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