

Thursday, January 31, 2013

For immediate release

For more information:

Alan Berks. 612.787.3622

berksa@pillsburyhousetheatre.org

www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org



Hi-resolution photos are available on request.

Box Office: 612.825.0459

Pillsbury House Theatre invites audiences to a performance experience, featuring Sonja Parks, that mixes theatre with an aesthetic steeped in improvisational jazz, April 11-21.

Set on a juking boat, with blueswomen, queers, deviants, and Seers, *River See* by Sharon Bridgforth uses Black American rural southern tradition and an aesthetic steeped in jazz as the base for bringing people together to witness and create. *River See* is the prayer before the Great Migration. This production features Sonja Parks and includes some of the Twin Cities most exciting multi-disciplinary performers: Aimee Bryant, Mankwe Ndosì, Leah Nelson, Kenna Cottman, and Truth Maze. Creator Sharon Bridgforth also appears onstage as she choreographs the words, sounds, movement, and singing live in front of the audience.

River See explores blues stories as living arrangements of jazz. The text serves as the score and structure for the improvisational process that births the performance. Through this process, occurring during the event between performers and audience, we become responsible to one another in the art of creating a piece about Love.

This Pillsbury House Theatre production is the recipient of a MAP Fund award (supported by the Doris Duke and Andrew Mellon Foundations). *River See* is also part of the National New Play Network Creation Fund and will be seen in different forms throughout the year locations and theatres as diverse as The Living Arts of Tulsa in Oklahoma and Theatre Offensive in Boston, Massachusetts.

Ticket Information

April 13-21

Previews: April 11 & 12.

Wednesday thru Saturday performances at 7:30 pm

Sunday performances at 3 pm

All tickets are Pay-What-You-Can. Pick your own price for every performance, every night.

Free child care available on select dates, TBA.

For more information and tickets call 825-0459 or visit pillsburyhousetheatre.org

About Sharon Bridgforth

Sharon Bridgforth, is a resident playwright at New Dramatists. Her current work in-progress, *River See* has received a 2012 MAP Fund Award and a 2012 National Performance Network Creation Fund Award. Her piece, *blood pudding*, was produced in the 2010 New York SummerStage Festival. Bridgforth is the 2010 – 2012 Visiting Multicultural Faculty member at The Theatre School at DePaul University. Bridgforth is the author of *love conjure/blues* and the Lambda Literary Award-winning *the bull-jean stories*, RedBone Press. Bridgforth is author of *Silk Mantras: Activating The Divine Design For Your Life*, she is co-editor of *Experiments in a Jazz Aesthetic: Art, Activism, Academia, and the Austin Project*, University of Texas Press.

About Sonja Parks

Sonja's Pillsbury House credits include: Sonia in *Broke-ology*, her Ivey Award winning performance in *No Child. . .*, Vera in *Bulrushes*, Woman One in *Home*, Yvonne in *The Story* and Bessie/Daddy Velvet in *Bel Canto*. Other Twin Cities credits include Penumbra Theatre, Ten Thousand Things, Park Square Theatre, and the Children's Theatre Company. She has extensive episodic television credits as well as many national commercial and film credits. Sonja has worked at The National Black Theatre, The Dance Theatre of Harlem, and The Public Theatre in New York, is a 2005 McKnight Artist Fellow, and was chosen as one of "Seven Actors You Must Travel and See" by American Theatre Magazine.

About Pillsbury House Theatre

From the Mainstage series to Chicago Avenue Project to Naked Stages to the Hennepin County Home School Project, Pillsbury House Theatre brings audiences closer—to the edge, to the actors, to affordable, adventurous theatre, to fellow audience members, and to a strong community. Inspiring choice, change, and connection through raw, intimate drama.

Pillsbury House Theatre is proud to be a professional theatre unlike any other. An integral part of Pillsbury United Communities, one of the largest human services organizations in the state, Pillsbury House Theatre demonstrates that the highest quality art is an integral part of all healthy communities, winning awards for theatre across the metro while also inspiring choice, change, and connection as part of our social service mission in South Minneapolis.

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