

TCT Presents

Regina Taylor's

Crowns

Hats are like people: Sometimes they reveal, and sometimes they conceal. There is a hat for every occasion – flirting, churchgoing, funerals, baptisms – and every hat has a story. Yolanda is a girl from Brooklyn who comes to stay with her South Carolina grandmother after her brother is killed. She doesn't understand where she's been, nor where she's going. The women around her – through and with and by their hats – their crowns – help Yolanda begin to understand who she is and what she is. She begins to heal, and to understand.

Regina Taylor's *Crowns* is at once poignant and humorous, exploring the African-American cultural history and identity as expressed in the wearing of hats. The characters tell stories which explain the etiquette of hats, their history, their social functioning. The tradition of wearing hats is traced back to African rituals and slavery and forward through the New Testament to current fashion.

In coming to understand the stories, Yolanda comes to understand who she is, and why she can no longer see herself apart from the women of the story. More traditional

than Yolanda, older than she, they have the same-but-different fierce independence in their own identities, expressed in their hats.

Also filled with powerful and moving gospel songs like "The Hem of His Garment," "His Eye is on the Sparrow" and "Mary Don't You Weep," TCT will stage *Crowns* October 1-3, 2009. TCT veteran director Lynn Nelson says, "We have assembled possibly the strongest cast I've seen in years. They are welcome newcomers to the Lyric stage and their presence will be truly unforgettable. You will not avoid being powerfully moved by richness of the traditions and the music highlighted in this show."

The incredible cast is headed up with Zell Long playing the role of Mother Shaw. The teenaged Yolanda is played by Rachel Macklin. Neighbors and fellow church members are Mabel, played by Debra Harper; Velma, played by Nicole Cherry; Wanda, played by Symone Carr; Jeannette, played by Kathryn Johnson; and The Man, played by Lee Humphrey. Assistant Director is Tonya Smith, a familiar face to TCT audiences. Production assistant is Carolyn Evans. Music Director is



Sheryl (Shay) Zinn. Allison Griswold is coordinating the choreography. Rounding out the talented production staff are Bronwyn Teague designing lights and sound with Marianna Coffey creating her usual set magic.

Reserve your seat today before the show is sold out! Call the TCT office at 662-844-1935. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for youth and students. The story is both powerful and humorous. The music serves as a glorious counterpoint to the story. Don't miss this extraordinary season opener!

October 1-3, 2009

7:30 p.m.

October 3, 2009

2:00 p.m.

**This production of
*Crowns***

is sponsored by





Notes from the President

It's that time again—it's the start of a new season at TCT! Our fortieth!

Imagine the number of individuals who have been touched by TCT in the last forty years. From the audience members who attended all those productions to the numerous, actors, singers, dancers, directors, choreographers, musicians, painters, electricians, carpenters, lighting and sound technicians, seamstresses, designers and back stage crew members. And that's not all! Groups of people have read and suggested plays, individuals and businesses have donated costumes, props and set pieces and others have participated as board members, Krewe members, box office personnel, newsletter fold-

ers, graphic designers, and fundraisers. And of course, the lifeblood of the theatre is season ticket holders and individual and corporate donors. It takes a lot of volunteer effort to produce the entertainment enjoyed at TCT.

Some of those volunteers are already in production for *Crowns*, the season opener. Auditions have taken place for the second show of the season, *Dearly Beloved*. And preliminary work on the remainder of the season, *Rabbit Hole*, *Catfish Moon* and *All Shook Up*, is also underway.

Shakerag, the new improv group, held its first public performance in the Lyric last month. If you missed it, never fear! They will offer other performances throughout the year, both in the

community and at the Lyric; one more way that TCT is working with volunteers.

Be a part of the rich history of community theatre in Tupelo by plugging into the Lyric. Become a volunteer or enjoy the show from the comfort of your seat—or both. It's never too late. You can still become a season ticket holder, renew your tickets from last year or finally take the plunge and audition or volunteer backstage. There is something for everyone at TCT. You won't want to miss this special

anniversary year!

See you at the Lyric!

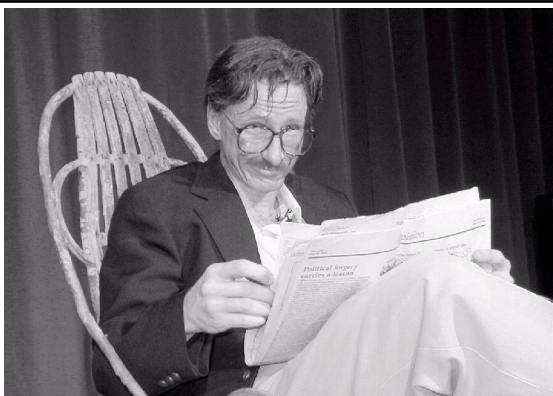


-Suzye Sheffield,
President

See One-Man Lewis Grizzard Show

The University of Mississippi-Tupelo and Tupelo Community Theatre are partnering to present the one man stage show *Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words* on Thursday, October 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Lewis Grizzard died young, and he left behind millions of friends he'd never met. The best-selling author of 18 books and countless newspaper columns was mourned across the country, but especially in his beloved South. Five years after Lewis passed away at age 47, his widow Dedra and manager Steve Enoch selected actor Bill Oberst Jr. to portray him in a one-man stage show. More than 600 sold-out performances later, the show is still going strong and Bill's loving recreation of the man who coined the phrase "American by birth; and Southern by the grace of God" regularly receives



Bill Oberst as Lewis Grizzard

standing ovations and glowing reviews.

The two-act show features all of Lewis' best-loved stories and jokes, as well as some funny and touching selections from his books and columns. It's a lot of laughs and a few tears. But mostly, it's a chance for old friends to see each other again. All that's missing is the front porch.

Premium seats for the performance at the Lyric Theatre are \$50 each for first five rows. This includes an after party meet and greet with Bill Oberst, Jr., as well as food and drinks. All other reserved seats are \$25 each. Call the TCT office today at 844-1935 to reserve your seat. For more information about the production, visit www.lewisgrizzard.com.

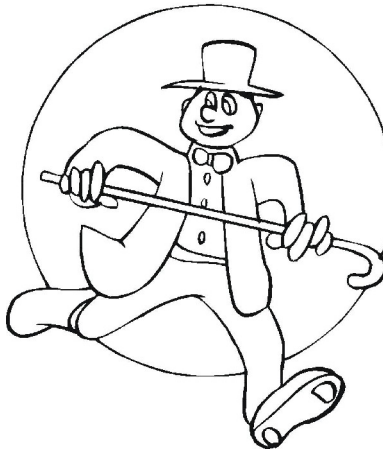


Remember - It's NEVER too late to purchase season tickets. Call the TCT office at 662-844-1935 today to get yours!

West of Shake Rag Debuts

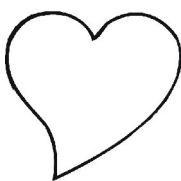
West of Shake Rag's debut performance offered high energy short form improv to a nearly packed house at the Lyric Theatre on Saturday, August 29th. The 11-member group starring Kristyn Armour, Kenny Cook, Chris Counts, Casey Pernell, Joshua Green, Joseph Guyton, Marley Maharrey, Glenn Payne, Daniel Lee and co-founders Caroline Upthegrove and Carlton Wall performed a 90 minute show which received a standing ovation. The group could not have asked for a better audience and looks forward to performing another show in the Lyric soon.

West of Shake Rag was formed in March of this



year and juried auditions were held in June. The cast comes from all over northeast Mississippi and brings a wide variety of backgrounds and experience to the group. The name *West of Shake Rag* was chosen because the group practices at the Lyric Theatre which is only one block west of the historic Shake Rag neighborhood where Elvis was born. The name is a nod to the hard working individuals from that neighborhood, Elvis, and the creative energy of Tupelo. For more information about improv or questions regarding booking a performance, call the Lyric office at 662-844-1935.

Thanks to the Weston Reed Foundation, TCT now has a new AED (Automated External Defibrillator) machine. TCT volunteers will be trained how to use it as well as in basic CPR. We hope the AED will never need to be used, but theatre goers and volunteers alike can rest in the assurance that the AED is there and that someone will know how to use it.



Educational Opportunity at the Lyric

Last year's joint education project between TCT and the Junior Auxiliary of Tupelo was a tremendous success. Thanks to a grant from the Rock River Foundation, we were able to present *I Didn't Think* by Julie Cordingley to more than fifteen schools in north Mississippi at no charge. The play deals with bullying



and conflict resolution and will be offered again this year to area fifth graders at the Lyric Theatre on October 6, 7, 13, and 14, with performances at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

A study guide will be provided to teachers. The show is also available for touring to other schools and grades on October 21 and 22. If you are interested in bringing a group to the theater or having the touring group come to your school, please contact the TCT office at 662-844-1935.

TCT PERSONNEL

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Arts Commission



Auditions for Rabbit Hole

Auditions for the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *Rabbit Hole* will be held on Sunday, October 4, at 2:00 p.m. and Monday, October 5, at 7:00 p.m. This production is slated to be TCT's entry in the Mississippi Theatre Association festival on January 14-16, 2010 and will open for our home audience January 28-30, 2010.



No advance preparation is needed. Because this is a competition piece, remember that the rehearsal schedule will be rigorous. Please keep this in mind when auditioning.

Rabbit Hole is a study of the lives of a husband and wife, Becca and Howie, as they cope with the death of their only child. Attempts to lift their spirits are

made by Becca's mother and sister – while each deal with their own problems. The lives of the couple are further complicated by when Jason, the driver in the automobile accident that claimed their child, seeks closure. Mark your calendar to attend this riveting production – or better yet, come to the Lyric and audition!

The following parts are available:

- Becca - 30-45
- Izzy - early 30s (Becca's Sister)
- Howie - 30-45 (Becca's Husband)
- Nat - 55-60 (Becca and Izzy's Mother)
- Jason - 17-25