



**BLACK
ENSEMBLE
THEATER**

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For Immediate Release

**DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND,
BLACK ENSEMBLE THEATER EXTENDS
DON'T SHED A TEAR (THE STORY OF BILLIE HOLIDAY)
NOW THROUGH FEBRUARY 11, 2007**

December 14, 2006 - Due to the overwhelming success of Black Ensemble Theater's World Premiere of *Don't Shed A Tear (The Story of Billie Holiday)*, Black Ensemble Founder and Executive Director Jackie Taylor proudly announces that the show has officially been extended through February 11, 2007.

Don't Shed A Tear (The Story of Billie Holiday), written, directed and produced by Ms. Taylor, chronicles the traumatic life of jazz legend, Billie Holiday. They called her "Lady Day" and she attained legendary status as the most influential female singer in Jazz history. This new musical details the traumatic life of this great singer, but also highlights her strengths and attributes as a phenomenal and enduring human being.

Said Ms. Taylor, "If you're going to be true to the life of Billie Holiday, then you must include profanity. It was a part of her being, from a very young child and continued as a natural way of talking all through her life. It was how she expressed herself and there is no getting around it. I think Black Ensemble audiences may be a bit surprised by what they see and hear on our stage, but it will be authentic."

Vikki Stokes stars as Billie Holiday and brings to life some of her greatest music, including "God Bless The Child," "Strange Fruit" and "Good Morning Heartache." Other cast members include **Rashada Dawan, Toi Overton, Reggie Glover, Jon Pierce, Shayla Jarvis, Jessica Moore, Lawrence R. Thompson** and **Sati Word**. The band includes Musical Director Jimmy Tillman (drums), Herb Walker (guitar), Anderson Edwards (bass), Derrick Bounds (piano), Paul Howard (trumpet), Hank Ford (saxophone), Rubin Cooper, Jr. (bass trombone) and Bill McFarland (trombone). Thomas Washington serves as Musical Arranger.

The design team includes Carl Ulaszek (scenic design), Denise Karczewski (lighting design), Jackie Taylor and Evelyn Danner (costume design), and Ron White (sound design). Technical director and stage manager is Razor Griffith.

The performance schedule for *Don't Shed A Tear (The Story of Billie Holiday)* is Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees at 3 p.m. through February 11, 2007. Performances take place at the Black Ensemble Theater, 4520 N. Beacon.

Tickets, priced at \$40, are available by calling the Black Ensemble Theater Box Office at 773-769-4451 or Ticketmaster at 312-902-1500, or visiting www.ticketmaster.com. Discounts are available for students, seniors and groups.

The Black Ensemble Theater Company was founded in 1976 by Jackie Taylor, who has written and directed more than 100 productions for the company. In addition to its mainstage productions, the Black Ensemble Theater Company produces 'Plays with a Purpose,' a series of original youth-oriented musicals, designed to teach students positive life lessons and values, as well as several community-based programs that use theater arts to enrich the lives of countless students and families. The mission of the Black Ensemble Theater Company is threefold: to utilize theater to help eradicate racism; to perpetuate the history of the African American people; and to use theater to serve disenfranchised communities. For more information on the Black Ensemble Theater Company or any of its productions, please visit www.BlackEnsembleTheater.org or call 773-769-4451.

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