Award-Winning Play to Premiere at the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center

One of the '50 Playwrights to Watch' will debut fact-based drama

(Seattle, WA, January 2, 2009) - Local playwright La’Chris Jordan will debut the premiere of her play PINEY RIDGE at the Seattle Parks and Recreation’s Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center (LHPAC) from March 20 thru April 5, 2009. PINEY RIDGE, winner of the 2007 Eight Tens @ Eight Festival in Santa Cruz, California, is a gripping story of racial tension in 1910 Virginia. Isiah Anderson, Jr., a well-known comedian and director, will direct the full-length play. A special discussion with the cast and director will follow various shows.

Partly based on real-life events, PINEY RIDGE centers on a race riot in the neighboring town of Thaxton, Virginia, which has many of the black and white residents of Piney Ridge on edge, and when a white girl from a neighboring sharecropping farm is attacked, all of the communities' worst fears and racial tensions come bubbling to the surface. PINEY RIDGE was a finalist in the 2007 ActOberFest in Los Angeles, CA, and the 2007 E-Merging Playwriting Competition in New York.

PINEY RIDGE is partly funded by a 2008 artist grant from the City of Seattle Mayor’s Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs.
WHO & WHAT: Alala Productions, in association with the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, will present PINEY RIDGE by La’Chris Jordan. Alala Productions is an independent theatre production company founded by La’Chris Jordan in 2005.

WHEN: March 20-April 5, 2009. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. / Showtime: 7:30 p.m. Performances of the play are Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays with one Thursday performance on April 2. Sunday matinees are at 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, 104 17th Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98144.

HOW: Tickets will be available starting January 1, 2009, via website: www.brownpapertickets.com. Reservations can be made by calling (206) 245-6792. Tickets are $7 for seniors/military/TPS members, $15 for tickets purchased in advance, and $18 at the door. Students under 18 get in for free.

CAST: Tina Austin, Sterling Beard, Tami Brockway Joyce, Robyn Coffin, Rick DuPree, Mel Ellis, Jr., Joseph P. McCarthy, and Chernese Robertson.

CREW:
Isiah Anderson, Jr. – Director
Claudia Baker – Production/PR Assistant
La’Chris Jordan – Producer/Playwright
Carol Kinn – Box Office Manager
Robin Reddeman – Costume Assistant
Scot Runyan – Set Designer
Jenna Schmidt – Stage Manager
Mark Smith – Lighting Designer

For more information:

www.freewebs.com/piney-ridge
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About Piney Ridge
(written by La’Chris Jordan)

_Piney Ridge_ came to me as a gift. I say, "gift," because there is no other way to describe how this play came to be. It was a lazy Sunday afternoon in 2006 and I was lying in my bed reading an anthology of plays when an image of a young black man suddenly came to me. The image was so startling that I nearly dropped the book. I tried to ignore him but he wouldn't go away. His image was so vivid that I got goose bumps. Deep in my soul I knew this young man was trying to communicate to me. After much time, I finally put the book down and closed my eyes, allowing all the energy from his past to flow through me. That young man had a name - Junior - and so, too, did his mother (Bessie) and his sister (Sarah). Soon, I was writing a play, and before I knew it, I had an ending.

_Piney Ridge_ originally started off as a ten-minute play -- a play that was subsequently performed at various playwriting festivals around the country. When I saw how the piece affected audiences after they saw it, I decided to expand it. What came out of this new play was an interweaving of Junior's story against the backdrop of an actual race riot that occurred in the small town of Thaxton, Virginia in 1907. _Piney Ridge_, in its full-length form, will be staged in front of a Seattle audience for the first time. It will run for three weekends and hopefully bring greater understanding and awareness to a very sensitive and important historical issue and how this issue impacted communities and families.

About the Playwright

La’Chris Jordan is a playwright and actress whose plays have been produced throughout the country including New York and Los Angeles. Her first play, _Sadie’s Kitchen_, was an Artist Trust grant recipient, a Washington State grant awarded to individual artists for artistic excellence. Some of her other plays include _The Beauty of Closure, Impressions, Haram (“Forbidden”)_ (Seattle Dramatists’ Festival of New Plays), _Backseat Girls, Something More Than This_ (Manhattan Repertory Theatre), and _The Source_ (Ashland New Ten-Minute Play Festival and semi-finalist in the 2007 Movie Script Contest in Los Angeles). A journalism graduate of the University of Washington, La’Chris was named as one of the “50 Playwrights to Watch” by the Dramatists Guild. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild and the International Centre for Women Playwrights.

About the Director

Isiah Anderson, Jr. has directed Langston Hughes Performing Art Center's summer musicals for the last fifteen years, creating original urban theatrical hits such as _Grease, Soul of Beauty and the Beast, The Wiz, Peter Pan, Uncle Willy's Chocolate Factory_ and _Cinderella_ at the Seattle Repertory Theatre. In addition to directing, Anderson is also an actor and well-known national comedian. He has appeared several times on Black Entertainment Television's (BET) _Comic View_ and has been a featured performer on Russell Simmons’ Def Comedy Jam Tour.
The Cast of Piney Ridge

Tina Austin ("Bessie")

Rick DuPree ("Sam")

Robyn Coffin ("Lilly")

Mel Ellis ("Junior")

Sterling Beard ("L'il Timothy")

Joseph P. McCarthy ("Sykes")

Tami Brockway Joyce ("Laura")

Chernese Robertson ("Sarah")
Piney Ridge Honors & Awards

- Awarded 2008 smART Grant, Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs
- Honorable Mention, 2008 Writer's Digest Annual Competition (TV pilot)
- Winner, 2008 Eight Tens @ Eight Festival, Santa Cruz, California
- Finalist, 2008 E-merging Playwrights Competition, New York, NY
- Finalist, 2007 ActOberfest, Los Angeles, CA
- Finalist, 2007 In Preparation Play Festival, Seattle, WA
- Performed at the 2007 Mahogany Project Premiere Theatre Festival, Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, Seattle, WA

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Piney Ridge

By La'Chris Jordan

Directed by Isiah Anderson, Jr.

March 20 – April 5, 2009
Thursday - Saturday: 7:30pm
Sundays: 3:00pm
Tickets: $7 - $18
Students under 18: FREE

Two families divided by race but bound by a lie...

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center
104 17th Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98144

To reserve tickets: (206) 245-4792
To purchase tickets: www.brownpapertickets.com

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Finalist, 2007 ActOberfest, Los Angeles, CA
Finalist, 2007 In Preparation Play Festival, Seattle, WA
Finalist, 2007 E-merging Playwrights Competition, NY