



October 5, 2015

Wagner College Theatre readies Lin-Manuel Miranda's '21 Chump Street' & 'Dutchman'

Wagner College Theatre kicks off its 2015/16 Stage One season with the Obie-winning play, "Dutchman," by LeRoi Jones, and the musical short, "21 Chump Street," by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Directed by WCT's Head of Voice, David McDonald (WCT's "Romeo and Juliet"), this double bill runs Oct. 6-11 in Stage One. "21 Chump Street" features choreography by Maggie Marino '07 and music direction by Kanyi Creppy '18.

A conversation on the subway turns vicious as "Dutchman" 's two passengers — Lula, a white woman, and Clay, a young black man — flirt with race and rage. First performed in 1964, the Obie-winning drama by LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) maintains an incendiary power, hurtling through corridors of anger hidden deep below American decorum.

"Dutchman" features theatre performance majors Victoria Puza (Lula) and Jason Rath (Clay) with Christian Alvarez, Zachary Berteletti, Jeanine Bruen, Kanyi Creppy, Gabi Gross, Rachael Houser, Darnell Xavier Kenney, Kristi Long, Chris Rucci and Maria Salerno.

Founder of the Black Arts Movement, Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones) was a prolific poet, dramatist and critic. His work probes — often explosively — conventional understandings of American identity. Known for his insistent, vigorous energy, Baraka took long-held taboos as the starting point for a new method of art making. As artistic director of the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School in Harlem, Baraka urged black artists to establish their own publications, playhouses and aesthetic paradigms. Born in 1934, Baraka influenced multiple generations of artists around the world. He died in 2014.

From the creator of the Broadway hits "Hamilton" and "In The Heights," Tony Award-winning composer Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote a short "mini-musical" for a radio podcast titled "This American Life." Based on a news article about a high school boy falling in love with a transfer student who turned out to be an undercover cop investigating the school for drugs, "21 Chump Street" is shorter than a one-act show, with the score clocking in at under 15 minutes in length.

"21 Chump Street" features Kanyi Creppy (narrator), Darnell Xavier Kenney (Justin), Jeanine Bruen/Kristi Long/Gabi Gross (Naomi), Maria Salerno/Rachael Houser (Cousin 1), Zach Berteletti/Chris Rucci (Cousin 2) and Christian Alvarez (Cousin 3).

The production design team includes students: Pam Pangaro (sets), Martha Bromelmeir's Stage Costuming Class (costumes), Ellen Schmoyer (lights) and Matt Hervilly (sound). Emma McElwee is production stage manager, and Jazmine Minner and Acacia Raffie are assistant stage managers.

Performances of "Dutchman" and "21 Chump Street" are Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., with matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets, call (718) 390-3259 or email boxoffice@wagner.edu. Wagner College Theatre Box Office hours are Monday through Friday, 12 to 4 p.m. Single tickets are on sale now for \$10. Wagner College students attend free with current ID.