



Fresh Visions Youth Theatre Company

BRUCE ROBINSON
Founder/Executive Artistic Director

"...Where a Powerful Product Meets a Powerful Purpose..."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FRESHVISIONS YOUTH THEATRE'S ADULT SERIES PRESENTS
SUZAN-LORI PARKS' SEARING AND POWERFUL DRAMA OF...**

***TWO BLACK MEN... TWO BROTHERS
CLAWING AGAINST EACH OTHER...
AND AGAINST A WORLD MEANT TO DESTROY THEM
WHO WINS?... WHO LOSES?...***

"TOPDOG/UNDERDOG"

FreshVisions Youth Theatre's Adult Series presents "Topdog/Underdog" by Suzan-Lori Parks. Three weekends: Friday Aug. 13th, 20th & 27st @ 8:00; Sat. Aug. 14th, 21st & 28th @ 8:00; and Sun. Aug. 15th, 22nd (special fundraiser show & supper performance) and 29th @ 4:00. Ticket price is \$15; except for the August 22nd fundraiser, for which tickets are \$25. Performances are at the Germantown Theatre Center, 4821 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19144. This show contains very strong language and is suggested for ages 16 and over. For further information call: 267-226-7135 or 267-684-8243.

"Topdog/Underdog" is a gripping story of a bitter, brutal reality and desperate dreams. It is the story of a deep brother-bond and an equally deep brother-hatred. It is the story of two brothers, Lincoln and Booth - - given those names as a joke by the father who abandoned them. Deserted by both their father and mother since they were teenagers, they've had only each other. Both trapped together in bleak and dismal circumstances, they struggle for survival and dignity: two powerless black men who struggle for power against each other; against the world; and within their own souls.

Lincoln and Booth live together in a small squalid room in a dilapidated boarding house. Lincoln, the older brother, is the reformed hustler and master three card monte player, trying to live his life a better way. Booth, the younger brother, is the thug-in-waiting, who seeks to displace his brother as the smooth skilled hustler and king of the three card monte con game. Within this room the demons of

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4821 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144
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poverty, violence, despair, and the clinging to worthless illusion that plagues so many black men in this society are played out in microcosm. It is in this room where desperate hopes hold sway. It is in this room where a series of stories, games, competitions and illusions escalates inexorably to a tragic conclusion.

In “**Topdog/Underdog**,” we watch in rapt fascination, as the personal and joint history of these two brothers is stunningly unpeeled layer by layer, drawing us in ever deeper. Danger and safety, brutal competition and loving support and connection go hand-in hand. The con card game of three card monte serves as the central metaphor for the piece. Who’s up? Who’s down? Who wins? Who loses? Can you win against life if only you can master the game?

“**Topdog/Underdog**” is a stunningly evocative piece filled with two vivid and compelling characters who represent all of the black men whom this world has implacably and without mercy beaten down; and yet who still cry out for their worth and claw for their escape. Lincoln and Booth are two multi-faceted and superbly drawn characters who resonate with deep humanity and who will continually surprise the observer.

“**Topdog/Underdog**” is directed by **Thom Wilkins** who has helmed some of FreshVisions most acclaimed and artistically accomplished adult series productions, including: “The Wait,” “Do Lord Remember Me,” and last year’s “Ceremonies in Dark Old Men.” It features the dazzling acting talent of FreshVisions’ artistic associate **Damien J. Wallace** who plays “Lincoln,” paired with FreshVisions’ alumni professional performer **Quran Williams** playing “Booth,” who thrilled audiences with his portrayal of Nat Turner in “Do Lord Remember Me.”

This production will burn with a timeless passion that will sear its audience with its power and poignancy, its truths and its tears. “**Topdog/Underdog**” is the must –see theatre event for the summer!