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DALLAS THEATER CENTER
Presents
The World Premiere of
The Trinity River Plays
by Regina Taylor
A Co-Production with Goodman Theatre

Directed by Ethan McSweeney

Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre • AT&T Performing Arts Center • 2400 Flora Street
Previews: Nov. 5-11 • **Opening Night: Friday, Nov. 12, 8 p.m.** • **Full Run:** Nov. 5-Dec. 5
Tickets: 214-880-0202 or www.dallastheatercenter.org

DALLAS (October 29, 2010) – Dallas Theater Center and Goodman Theatre proudly present the world premiere of *The Trinity River Plays*, written by Oak Cliff native Regina Taylor, directed by Ethan McSweeney.

“Dallas Theater Center is thrilled to partner with Goodman Theatre to bring to life this very special and intensely personal body of work. After the phenomenal success of Regina’s last production at DTC, *Crowns*, we could not be more excited to host the world premiere of a playwright who considers Oak Cliff and the Dallas community her home,” says DTC artistic director Kevin Moriarty. “We are also very excited to welcome Ethan McSweeney to Dallas. His ability to create an environment that is nurtured and focused will work wonders for the development of this play.”

The Trinity River Plays is comprised of three separate plays – *Jar Fly*, *Rain* and *Ghost(story)* – all set in Oak Cliff. Taylor’s plays follow Iris Spears’ journey from teenage innocence to the sometimes harsh realities of adulthood. In *Jarfly*, a young Iris struggles with the absence of her mother, Rose, who has left home for the summer to support Iris’ dreams of attending college to study writing. With Rose gone, Iris learns that not even some of her closest relatives are worthy of her trust, including self-destructive cousin Jasmine. Seventeen years later, Iris returns home after journalistic success to receive comfort after a failed marriage in *Rain*. Her homecoming proves more confounding than consoling when her mother makes a shocking announcement and Iris is forced to deal with long hidden family secrets. In *Ghost(story)*, Iris is surprised by a visit from her estranged husband, Frank. Before the reason for his visit can be explored, Iris must confront and embrace the specters of her past that continue to haunt her present.

“We strongly believe we have a mission to celebrate timeless plays in the most exciting and accessible way possible, but also that we should be a part of creating new works that are going to have an impact on people’s lives for many years to come,” says Moriarty. “We firmly believe that Regina has written a series of plays that is going to have that kind of impact.”

The title of the trilogy is not only a direct reference to the setting of the plays. Writer Regina Taylor purposely selected the Trinity River because of the different connotations it has for different people all over the city of Dallas.

“The thing about the Trinity River is that it’s a life source and these plays are about life and how we live our lives,” says Taylor. “*The Trinity River Plays* is about relationships, community and where you’re from.”

Having the opportunity to develop and direct a play in the city in which it is set has its share of benefits and challenges.

“It has been a great privilege to actually rehearse this premiere in the city where it is set,” says McSweeney. “Among other things, we have a visceral understanding of the geography of the place, of how the Trinity River is a historical dividing line in Dallas and how it functions as a metaphor in this play. Being in Dallas forces us to be specific – when we talk about Baylor or SMU or the Adolphus Hotel, we know that these are not abstractions here, these are actual places that people in this audience have a personal history with.”

Creating the physical and visual elements of the production are Todd Rosenthal, scenic design; Karen Perry, costume design; Tyler Micoeau, lighting design and Steven Cahill for sound and design composition with Daryl Waters for additional composition.

“We’ve assembled a team of artists who cross pollinate these two theaters,” says McSweeney. “Todd has a long history at the Goodman, for example, and Tyler has been a big part of Kevin’s tenure in Dallas. With the Wyly’s flexible performance space, we’ll be able to set up the Wyly’s Potter Rose Performance Hall in a proscenium configuration that will very closely resemble the Goodman.”

Leading the ensemble cast is Karen Aldridge as Iris Spears. *The Trinity River Plays* is her Dallas Theater Center debut. Also making Dallas Theater Center debuts are Christiana Clark as Jasmine, Penny Johnson Jerald as Iris’ mother Rose, and Jacqueline Williams as Daisy. The cast is also joined by Samuel Ray Gates as Jack and Jefferson A. Russell as Ray Earl and Frank.

“We spent a long time carefully casting this group of actors from all points across the country – Chicago, New York, Minneapolis, Baltimore, Los Angeles – and I know we’ve put together a truly stellar ensemble,” says McSweeney. “Most of the characters in this story start out in 1978 and then age 17 years between acts, which creates a particular acting challenge. Fortunately, this group is more than up to that task.”

Biographies for all actors and members of the production team are available at www.dallastheatercenter.org.

All performances of *The Trinity River Plays* will be held in the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre at the AT&T Performing Arts Center, located at 2400 Flora St., where it runs Nov. 5-Dec. 5. Preview performances are Nov. 5-11. Opening night is **Friday, Nov. 12, at 8 p.m.** Performance times are Tuesday through Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m.; and select Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Ticket prices are \$15-\$85 and are available by calling the box office at 214-880-0202 or by visiting www.dallastheatercenter.org. The Pay What You Can performance of *The Trinity River Plays* will be Friday, Nov. 5 at 8 p.m. Tickets will be available at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre Box office at 6 p.m. Pay What You Can allows patrons to purchase ANY seat in the house for ANY amount they choose. For as little as a penny, theatergoers can see world-class live theater at Dallas Theater Center.

ABOUT DALLAS THEATER CENTER:

One of the leading regional theaters in the country, Dallas Theater Center (DTC) performs to an audience of more than 90,000 North Texas residents annually. DTC is a resident company of the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents its mainstage season at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre. DTC also presents productions at Kalita Humphreys Theater, the only freestanding theater designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. DTC engages, entertains and inspires a diverse community by creating experiences that stimulate new ways of thinking and living by consistently producing plays, educational programs and other initiatives that are of the highest quality and reach the broadest possible constituency.

The mission of DTC is to engage, entertain and inspire our diverse community by creating experiences that stimulate new ways of thinking and living. With the leadership of Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and Managing Director Mark Hadley, DTC is committed to consistently producing plays, educational programs and other initiatives that are of the highest quality and reach the broadest possible constituency.

ABOUT GOODMAN THEATRE:

Named the country's Best Regional Theatre by Time Magazine (2003), Goodman Theatre has been internationally recognized for its artists, productions and educational programs since 1925. Artistic Director Robert Falls and Executive Director Roche Schuller's leadership has earned unparalleled artistic distinction and garnered hundreds of awards, including the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre (1992). Chicago's oldest and largest non-for-profit producing theater, the Goodman is celebrating its 10th anniversary in a state-of-the-art two-theater complex in Chicago's downtown theater district, and has experienced unprecedented success over the past 10 years in its new facility, earning more than 90 awards for its productions and producing 25 new-work commissions.

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