



Stamford Center for the Arts

RICH FORUM ~ PALACE THEATRE, 307 & 61 Atlantic St., Stamford CT 06901

Kenneth A. Wesler, Executive Director

STAMFORD CENTER FOR THE ARTS IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT 501 (C) (3) CULTURAL ARTS ORGANIZATION

CONTACT: **RICHARD P. PHENEGER**
Press Representative for this Event
203.358.2305 x330
rpphene@aol.com

For Immediate Release:

Thumbnail of attached JASMINE GUY production photo



other images available – until photos are added to
the press room on website
contact rpheneger@stamfordcenterforthearts.org

Stamford Center for the Arts Celebrates Black History with JASMINE GUY Starring in *RAISIN' CANE: A Theatrical Portrait in Prose, Poetry and Jazz*

To celebrate Black History, Stamford Center for the Arts presents **Jasmine Guy**, the star of stage, screen and television and the **Avery Sharpe Jazz Trio**, in ***Raisin' Cane*** described as *a theatrical portrait in prose, poetry and jazz* at **Rich Forum** on **Friday, February 16** at **8pm**.

Originally conceived, written and produced by **Harry Clark** and Chamber Music PLUS, ***Raisin' Cane*** features an original score by **Avery Sharpe** and special projections showing Harlemites in everyday work situations and in joyful celebratory dance and musical jazz settings designed by **Bill Kersey**.

Directed by **Dan Guerrero**, ***Raisin' Cane***, *A Celebration of African-American Arts and Artists*, is sponsored by **Pitney Bowes, Inc** with additional support from the **Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism**

In the 1920s, the Harlem Renaissance evolved from a pent up explosion of brilliant prose, poetry, politics and music of African-Americans ready to say their piece. Jean Toomer's seminal work *Cane*, the incomparable short novel that started the sparks flying, is given its full due in this musical theater piece. Other words and thoughts of ***Raisin' Cane*** come from the writings of W.E. Dubois, Zora Neale Hurston, the novel "Cane" by Jean Toomer, poems of Weldon Johnson ("O Southland"), Claude McKay ("If We Must Die" & "The Tropics in New York"), Gwendolyn Bennett ("To Usward"), Lanston Hughes ("I, too, Sing America"), Countee Cullen ("Nothing Endures") and many others. These words have been woven into a stage panoramic that scans an extraordinary outpouring of artistic endeavor lasting a decade till the Great Depression brought all to an end.

The combination of theatrical narrative uniquely blended with music, songs and movement is a tour-de-force for an African-American actress to embody the thoughts and emotions of such a powerful and diverse set of thinkers, artists, religious leaders and politicians. ***Raisin' Cane*** has just such an actress and entertainer in **Jasmine Guy**.

Jasmine Guy began her career as a dancer for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Center. She moved to acting and television with a part in the television film "At Mother's Request" and a starring role as co-ed beauty Whitley in the Cosby show "A Different World," which enjoyed a six-season run, and for which she also wrote several episodes. In addition, she made her feature film debut in Spike Lee's politically charged college comedy/musical "School Daze" and co-starred in Eddie Murphy's "Harlem Nights." Additional television credits include such movies as "Runaway," "A Killer Among Us" and "Stompin' at the Savoy." Even after "A Different World," **Guy** was constantly in demand to guest star on such shows as "Melrose Place" and "NYPD Blue." She returned to the stage as a musical theater actress in touring companies of *Grease*, *The Wiz* and more recently in the musical *Chicago* as Velma Kelly, a role she found to be "edgy, gutsy, desperate, funny and a joy to play." She emphasizes, "I found the role a perfect combination of all my performing abilities. Through Velma I could be a real triple threat. My return to the stage has been challenging, fun and rewarding."

Director **Dan Guerrero** has been widely acclaimed as a highly creative producer of diverse programming for network and cable television including PBS, NBC, HBO, Fox, Telemundo and Univision. He has worked with everyone from Quincy Jones and Salma Hayek to Tim Allen and George Lopez.

According to **Clark**, "I would not have attempted the creation of **Raisin' Cane** without my long and proud association with composer and superb jazz bassist **Avery Sharpe**. The end result is a score performed by Avery along with his brother Kevin Sharpe, playing numerous percussion instruments, and jazz violinist great John Blake. At times the score functions as support to the spoken words, at times it interacts with the spoken words, songs and movements, and it also has its moments to shine solely on its own."

February marks the beginning of Black History Month, an annual celebration that has existed since 1926. Much of the credit can go to Harvard Scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who was determined to bring Black History into the mainstream public arena. Negro History Week evolved into Black History Month as it is known today to coincide with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, two men who greatly impacted the black population.

Stamford Center for the Arts celebrates Black History Month and at the same time, recognizes that the contributions of African-Americans throughout our history as a nation, must be recognized and celebrated every month.

Raisin' Cane starring **Jasmine Guy** and featuring **The Avery Sharpe Jazz Trio** will play **Stamford's Rich Forum** on **Friday, February 16** at **8pm**.

Please note: As of January 1, 2007, Stamford Center for the Arts is no longer affiliated with Telecharge. All ticketing is handled directly through SCA's box offices in Stamford.

Tickets, at \$25-\$30-\$45, may be **charged by phone** with major credit cards by calling **SCA Box Office** at **203.325.4466** or safely and securely **ONLINE** at **www.stamfordcenterforthearts.org**

Tickets may be purchased **in person** at the box offices of either the **Palace Theatre** (61 Atlantic Street) or **Rich Forum** (307 Atlantic Street) in downtown Stamford, Connecticut. Both **box offices are open Mondays thru Fridays** from 10am to 6pm and **Saturdays and Sundays** from 12noon to 5pm.

For **Theatre Party/Group discounts** (12 or more) call **203.325.4466**.

Audiences are invited to subscribe to the “**Create Your Own Series**,” which allows one to personally hand-pick favorite Stamford Center for the Arts performances (minimum of three) – while saving money and locking-up the best seats in the house plus free parking and a host of other perks. For more information about the “**Create Your Own Series**” call **203.325.4466** or visit **www.stamfordcenterforthearts.org**

Rich Forum, at 307 Atlantic Street, is conveniently located in downtown Stamford, Connecticut, just a few blocks from I-95 (New England Thruway/Connecticut Turnpike) and the railroad station (Metro North New Haven Line from Grand Central Terminal) and five miles from Long Ridge Road and High Ridge Road exits of the Merritt Parkway.

Rich Forum is wheelchair accessible and equipped with hearing-assisted listening devices. Please let the box office know of any special needs when ordering tickets.

For additional information call **203.325.4466** or visit the SCA website at **www.stamfordcenterforthearts.org**