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**The Theatre School Showcase of Contemporary Plays & Classics Presents:**  
**Shepsu Aakhu's KOSI DASA**  
*A Multicultural Coming-of-Age Story Told Through Movement & Dance*

The Theatre School at DePaul University's Showcase Series of Contemporary Plays and Classics presents *KOSI DASA*, written and directed by Shepsu Aakhu. This universal tale of community opens Friday, May 16 and runs through Sunday, May 25, 2008, at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre. Performances are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 PM and Sundays at 2 PM. Previews are on May 14<sup>th</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.

The lives of young couple No Eyes and Diata are changed forever as each must accept sacrifice in the name of community, family and spiritual beliefs. A coming-of-age story told through African storytelling, African and Indian dance, and Brazilian and Asian combat styles, *KOSI DASA* examines the values and cultures that bind a community and the divine implications therein.

Tickets are \$15. Subscriptions and group rates (15 or more people) are available at (312)-922-0999. Seniors (over 60), DePaul employees and alumni, and college students receive a discount (with ID). Previews are FREE for any college student (with ID). Tickets are available by calling the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre is located at 60 E. Balbo Drive at Michigan, Chicago. Discount parking is available with coupons from the Box Office, and the theatre is accessible via CTA busses (3-King Drive, 29-State Street, 146-Michigan/Museums and others), and CTA El stops (Red, Blue, Brown, Green, Orange, Purple and Pink).

**SHEPSU AAKHU** (Playwright & Director) received his B.S. and M.S. in Kinesiology from the University of Illinois Urbana. He is currently Executive Producer for the Ma'at Production Association of Afrikan Centered Theatre (MPAACT). Shepsu has developed several critically acclaimed works in MPAACT's Playwright's Laboratory, among them: *Relevant Hearsay*, *SOST*, *Kiwi Black*, *Kosi Dasa*, *Fascia*, *The Glow of Reflected Light*, *The Abesha Conspiracy*, *Beneath A Dark Sky*, *Piece-Meal Clan* and *Otherworld Lovers*. He was awarded the prestigious Artistic Fellowship in Scriptworks by the Illinois Arts Council (2004), and is the recipient of the 16th annual Theodore Ward Prize for Playwriting for *Kiwi Black*. He is a five time nominee for best Original Stageplay (Aldridge Award) by the Black Theater Alliance Awards of Chicago. He received the Ira Aldridge Award in 1999 for *The Abesha Conspiracy*. He has also received a nomination for best new work by the Joseph Jefferson Awards committee (*Kiwi Black*). Shepsu's *Sofily Blue* was featured in the Goodman Theatre's New Stages

Series (2004). *Kiwi Black* is available in the anthology *Seven Black Plays*, edited by Chuck Smith (Northwestern University Press 2004). Shepsu Aakhu is part of the Red Clay (Formerly Poh'ro) ensemble, which has twice been recognized for its work by the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee for Original Music (*Kosi Dasa* and *Kiwi Black*). Additionally Red Clay was honored with the Scott Joplin Award for Best Song (*Kiwi Black* 2003). Shepsu Aakhu has served as MPAACT's staff photographer for the last nine years. A solo exhibition of his works was hosted by I.C . Stars of Chicago in the fall of 2005.

The cast of ***KOSI DASA*** features **Christopher Chmelik** (The Keeper), **Wardell Julius Clark** (Diata/Shadow Hunter), **Lauren Malara** (The Teller), **David Monagas** (Adalo Warrior/Dancer), **Christina Nieves** (No Eyes/Milktree), **Samantha Ivey Perry** (Kosi Woman/Dancer), **Derek Peru** (Papacacia), **Hudsen Cy Schuchart** (Adalo Warrior/Dancer), **Christa Shearey** (Kosi Woman/Dancer), **M. Ryan Smith** (Ashen), **Arthur Luis Soria** (Adalo Warrior/Dancer), **Jamila Turner** (Kosi Woman/Dancer) and **Mary Williamson** (Jemma) with **Danjuma Gaskin** and **Sunny G. Sampson** (live drummers).

The staff includes **Shepsu Aakhu** (Director), **Christine Binder** (Lighting Design), **Linda Buchanan** (Scenic Design), **Rachel Marris & Kelly Hires-Green** (Dramaturg), **Whitney McBride** (Costume Design), **Ray Nardelli** (Sound Design) and **Christina Kay Pretsch** (Stage Manager).

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** A **post-show discussion** with the cast and members of the staff will be held on **Sunday, May 18**, and **Thursday, May 22**. The performance on **Sunday, May 25** (2 PM) will be interpreted in **American Sign Language**. TYY call (773) 325-7975. On **DePaul Night, May 21**, tickets are \$3 for all students and \$6 for DePaul alumni and employees with valid ID. For details, photos, or more information visit <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu> or call (773) 325-7819.

The Theatre School at DePaul University, founded as the Goodman School of Drama in 1925, educates, trains and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined and culturally diverse. The school and its students strive for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to its mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary and original plays that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination. The school seeks to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of the university community, the city and the profession.