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Harlem's **Take Wing And Soar Productions** in association with London's **Hackney Empire Ltd** present **The Hackney Harlem Theatre Company** in **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S MADNESS**, Directed by **Susie McKenna** at The National Black Theatre | Monday, August 17th @ 7PM

East London Theatre Company and Harlem Based Theatre Company collaborate to Create and Launch an International Youth Project

[New York, NY – August 6, 2009] Harlem's **Take Wing And Soar Productions** in association with London's **Hackney Empire Ltd** proudly present **The Hackney Harlem Theatre Company** in **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S MADNESS**, Directed by **Susie McKenna** at the **National Black Theatre**, for one show only on **Monday, August 17th @ 7PM**.

This project is the first stage of an exciting artistic cultural exchange that will take place annually. Every year leading up to 2012, young artists from the UK, USA and beyond will come together to create new theatrical works culminating in an international youth festival at the **Hackney Empire Theatre**.

In Phase One of this arts exposure project, a group of 17 young emerging artists aged 16 to 21, who have all graduated from Hackney Empire's Artist Development Programme, where they have worked alongside top professionals in all genres of the arts, have now formed **The Hackney Harlem Theatre Company**, devoted to creating new works around the classics for young people to both perform and watch. The mission of the theatre company grew out of a collaboration between **Susie McKenna**, who serves as Associate Director of **The Hackney Empire Ltd** and **Debra Ann Byrd**, Producing Artistic Director of **Take Wing And Soar Productions**, a Harlem-based theatre company, whose mission is deeply rooted in performing the classics.

As part of this pioneering cultural exchange, **The Hackney Harlem Theatre Company** will perform its inaugural production of **A Midsummer Night's Madness**, a modern adaptation based on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It's the year 2068, the war for resources is over and Hackney is about to celebrate the marriage of their hero. We meet the invisibles as they play havoc with the lives of the mortals around them. Come and see this young ensemble of actors and musicians as they present their version of this classic tale through music, dance and drama.

A Midsummer Night's Madness is co-produced by Producing Artistic Director **Debra Ann Byrd** & Director **Susie McKenna**, with **CoCo Jackson** as the Youth Producer. Special Event hosts and Take Wing And Soar Advisory Council Members are **Veronica Claypool**, **Hon. Theresa Freeman** and the **Hon. David Weaver**.

Featured in the cast are **Bradley Cumberbatch**, **Chantelle Nandi Masuku**, **Debbie Aramide**, **Enrico Delves**, **Isabella Adutwim**, **Jessica Symonds**, **Kate Cox**, **Kofi Km Boateng**, **Mekel Edwards**, **Rashmika Torchia**, **Renell Shaw**, **Samson Jatto** and **Yao Adu**.

For many of the young people (all from East London), this is their first time abroad and will be the trip of a lifetime. You will see from their rather humbling mission statement, that these are young people who early on in their careers see the benefits in "giving back," and are not only creating new work, but devising outreach and workshops to run alongside these productions.

In addition to creating professional artists to carry on the rich tradition of live theatre, the Hackney youth troupe is a remarkable group of talented young people of every cultural background imaginable. The program is designed to create Young Ambassadors for Hackney, Harlem, London, New York, the UK and the USA. The Hackney youth troupe will meet young artists from Harlem, under the umbrella of **Take Wing And Soar Productions**, forging links that will begin the cultural exchange. It is our hope that this project will show how talented young artists can serve as positive role models for young people on both sides of the Atlantic.

While in New York, the youth group will get to experience the **2009 Harlem Week Festival**, meet the Broadway legends **Stephen Flaherty** and **Lynn Ahrens**, visit **Lincoln Center**, tour the **Apollo Theatre**, visit the **Studio Museum**, see an Off-Broadway show courtesy of the **Theatre Development Fund** and Shop Harlem. The highlight of their visit will be their performance and workshop leading up to a special Harlem Reception at the beautiful and historic **National Black Theatre**.

Special Invited Guests for the reception include Tony Award winning actresses **Trezana Beverley** and **Lillias White**, Broadway actors **Thomas Jefferson Byrd**, **Chuck Patterson**, **Jane White**, **Petronia Paley** and **Novella Nelson**. Other invited guests include the British Consulate-General **Sir Alan Collins**, **KCVO CMG** and several of Harlem's political leaders including the **Hon. Inez Dickens**, **Hon. Keith Wright**, **Hon. Bill Perkins**, **Hon. Charles Rangel** and Manhattan Borough President - the **Hon. Scott M. Stringer**.

DATES & TIMES: **Monday, August 17th, 2009**
6PM – Harlem Reception [By Invitation] All Press Welcome RSVP to Maya PR
7PM – Performance
8PM – Meet the Artists Post Reception

THEATRE: Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre
2031 Fifth Avenue | 3rd Floor North Tower
New York, NY 10035 | Between 125th & 126th Streets

TICKETS: General Admission \$10

RESERVATIONS: Take Wing And Soar Productions Online www.takewingandsoar.org
SmartTix (212) 868-4444 or www.smarttix.com

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To learn more about the collaborating partners visit them online at www.takewingandsoar.org and www.hackneyempire.co.uk