

**New Heritage Theatre Group/Voza Rivers and
Take Wing And Soar Productions**
present

Esther Armah's
SAVIOUR?

A new play

Directed by **Passion**

with **Michael Green** and **Jimmy Aquino***

Limited Engagement
October 7-30, 2011

DWYER Cultural Center
258 St Nicholas Avenue, New York, NY
(123rd Street between St. Nicholas Ave & Frederick Douglass Blvd)

[New York, NY – September 1, 2011] Today, New Heritage Theatre Group and Take Wing And Soar Productions announced **Esther Armah's SAVIOUR?**, a provocative new drama that is a love story about white privilege, black women, sex, betrayal, and power, will play a limited engagement at the **DWYER Cultural Center**, (258 St. Nicholas Avenue at 123rd Street between St. Nicholas Ave & Frederick Douglass Blvd) **October 7 through October 30, 2011**. The performance schedule is Friday and Saturday at 7:00 pm, Saturday at 2:00 pm and Sunday at 3:00 pm. Tickets are \$18 general admission and can be purchased by calling OvationTix at (212) 352-3101 or visiting www.takewingandsoar.org.

Directed by **Passion**, **SAVIOUR?**, features **Michael Green** and **Jimmy Aquino*** in a play about two men engaged in game of high stakes. Billy Hall (Aquino) is a white high profile New York activist who sues his company when a promised promotion as CEO was given to a black woman. He hires Michael Jamal Williams III (Green), an African-American attorney willing to win at any costs and needs the case as a career-changer. Power, passion, family, ambition, love, betrayal, white men, black women, white privilege: it's all on the table in this play that asks: who saves who?

"This play is a roller coaster drama love story with twists and turns. In the age of Obama, post racial means as a playwright I get to look at white privilege, white identity - this emotional, complicated thing through this lens as a black woman" playwright Armah said. "It's a dangerous, provocative and sexy world. But I get to look at it, interrogate it, I like that. I'm interested in power and intimacy, in what happens when you strip away the usual walls that keep people at a distance. What will you see? How will you take the truth you really don't want to hear?"

"Playing Billy Hall, I'm a protector of the under privileged; as the character I take things on myself and without being asked I'm a doer," Jimmy Aquino said. "Power is special to me because without it, I would be regular, I would be average. I am not average. I lose power; I lose myself, what I'm all about. Power is my paycheck; power is the energy that drives me forward. With power I can move any piece of the chess game, with power anybody privileged, in the middle, under privileged - all will be moved by my power. Losing my power, I lose myself, who I am, what I've built, why I'm here".



SAVIOUR? will offer post-performance conversations with prominent New Yorkers where its themes can be more deeply explored by the audience. The first panel, a discussion entitled **The Black and White of Activism** with New York City Council Member **Charles Barron** (D, Brooklyn, District 42) and playwright **Esther Armah**, will follow the opening night performance scheduled for Friday, October 7 at 7:00 pm.

In addition to Esther Armah and Passion, the **SAVIOUR?** creative team includes **Pavlo Bosyy** (scenic design), **Joyce Liao** (lighting design), **Gail Cooper-Hecht** (costume design), and **Sean O'Halloran** (sound design), and **William J Vila*** is the production stage manager.

Co-Producers for **SAVIOUR?** are **Voza Rivers**, Executive Producer of **New Heritage Theatre Group** and **Debra Ann Byrd**, Founder and Producing Artistic Director of **Take Wing And Soar Productions**.

The press performance for **SAVIOUR?** is Sunday, October 9 at 3:00 p.m. To arrange press tickets or interviews with Ms. Armah, Passion, Michael Green or Jimmy Aquino, contact Thysha M. Shabazz at 646.410.0246 or at info@shabazzcommunications.com.

COMPANY BIOS

MICHAEL GREEN (Michael Jamal Williams III) Michael has received critical praise for his ongoing performance as Dr. King in Jeff Stetson's "The Meeting" at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and at venues across the United States. Other roles of note include Sam in "Blues for an Alabama Sky" (Our Place Theatre-Boston), Reverend Ambrose in "A Lesson Before Dying" (New Repertory Theatre-Boston), the Governor in "The Blacks" (Classical Theatre of Harlem-New York), Michael in "Blues Train" (National Black Theatre-New York), and Moses in "Camp Logan" (Victoria Five Theatre-New York). Michael can be seen on CBS's "Walker Texas Ranger" and can be heard as the voice of Uncle Al on Nickelodeon's "Little Bill". For the past seven years, Michael has been the drama instructor for the Artists Collective in Hartford, CT. and teaching artist for Medgar Evers College English Department's "Re-envisioning Ourselves Through Literature" working with Dr. Brenda Greene. As the Producer / Director of Shades of Truth Theatre he is committed to positive and provocative Black Theatre"

JIMMY AQUINO* [Billy Hall] Carlos in "The Eleventh Commandment" at 42nd Street-Theatre Row, created five different characters for the show "Laugh and Cry", three for multiple comedy skits and an additional two characters in the one act play "Do you mind If I Join You", in which he received a nomination for best actor by the "Spotlight On Off Broadway" awards. Other theatre credits include; Muscles (Joe) in "Evaluating Woody" at The Mint, he played multi-character roles Lucius and Mr. Wilson in the dramatic new play "Easy Money" at The Lambs, Dorn in Chekhov's "The Seagull", Father, Paul and Harvey in A.R. Gurneys "The Dining Room", Madrone in "Barcinda Forest." Film credits include; "Mariposa", "Directing Eddie", "Legacy of Lies", "Beautiful Vacation". Appearing in comedy skits on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and "The David Letterman Show". A native of Chicago's "South Side," now calls Brooklyn home.

ESTHER ARMAH [Playwright] is a playwright, an award-winning international journalist, an author and radio host. Her first play was *'Can I Be Me?'* a one woman show adapted from her book by the same name. Her second play is *'Forgive Me?'*, which debuted in 2008 at *'The Roger Furman Playreading Series'* where it broke audience attendance records for this prestigious play-reading series. It was then selected for the September 2008 *'Urban Stages Playreading Series'* and appeared on Mainstage Theatre, produced by Take Wing And Soar Productions, in July and August 2009's *'Midtown International Theatre Festival'* *'Entitled!'* is the third play penned by Esther Armah. It debuted at Harlem's *'Dwyer Cultural Center'* on June 2009. Esther has also worked in print, radio and television in the UK, US and Africa for more than a decade as a journalist. As a New York radio host, you can hear her WBAI's morning show *'Wake Up Call'* on WBAI99.5FM. As a reporter and journalist she has traveled and worked in London, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Lesotho, Washington and Philadelphia. She now lives in New York. SAVIOUR? is her fourth play and debuts as an equity show case October 2011 at the Harlem's Dwyer Cultural Center.

PASSION [Director] Passion has directed more than 35 productions including *Another Man's Poison* (Off-Broadway), *Antigone Asata Shakur*, *T'was The Night Before Kwanzaa*, *Real Black Men Don't Sit Crosslegged On The Floor* (Best Ensemble Audelco Award), *Air Force 525*, *Jazz Housewife* and *Blog Out Loud*. In the N.Y. Fringe Festival she directed *Damon & Debra* and *Black Martian*. Other festivals include Estrogenius, Going To The River and Melba Moore's *Sweet Songs of the Soul* (Best

Solo Performer Audelco Award) at the National Black Theater Festival and Bermuda Festival. At Newark and Houston airports, she directed *Gimme Wings!* and *Formerly Known As Sarah*, a tribute to Madame. C.J. Walker, was presented at the National Arts Club, the Museum of the City of New York and Freedom Theatre. This Audelco Outstanding Pioneer honoree is former Artistic Director of the NJPAC Young Writers Workshop, a Lincoln Center Directors Lab alum, SDC Associate and Workshop Theater Company member.

NEW HERITAGE THEATRE GROUP | VOZA RIVERS [Producer] is the oldest Black nonprofit theater company in New York City. NHTG was originally established in 1964 under the name New Heritage Repertory Theatre by the late Roger Furman, a revered playwright, director, actor and lecturer who began his career in the 1940s with the American Negro Theatre in Harlem. It was created to present entertaining, informative and quality productions and to preserve and institutionalize classic works of Black theatre. In 1983, Voza Rivers, an award winning music and theatre producer took over the company. Today, New Heritage Theatre Group serves the community through presentations of entertaining, informative and quality productions of performing arts events, stage readings, and documentary shorts and films. Through its umbrella organizations Impact Repertory Theatre, Furman Theatre Rep and New Heritage Films we reach out to the New York City and world community, giving training, exposure and experience to new and emerging artists. Our works reflect the historical, social, and political experiences of African and Latino descendants in America and abroad. We seek to bring attention to works by international writers, directors and performing artists who have achieved success in their respective country but lack exposure in the United States.

TAKE WING AND SOAR PRODUCTIONS, INC | DEBRA ANN BYRD [Producer] founded in 1999 by classically trained actress Debra Ann Byrd, is a women-led, New York State, 501(c) 3 Professional Theatre Arts Corporation, dedicated to supporting women, youth & especially classically trained actors of color. In its brief history, Take Wing And Soar Productions has enjoyed many successes including the creation of The TWAS Theatre Project, The TWAS Classical Lab Reading Series, The Take Wing And Soar "Spirit of Excellence Awards" and the Hackney Harlem International Youth Project. The theatre company is the 2009-2010 recipient of the LPTW Lucille Lortel Award, presented in recognition of the theatre's body of work in the community, audience development in Harlem – and in celebration of the "International Exchange Program" between Take Wing And Soar Productions and London's Hackney Empire Theatre. Other honors include five AUDELCO Awards & 19 AUDELCO Award nominations for its mainstage productions of "Richard III," "The Darker Face of the Earth," "Hamlet," "Medea," "King Lear" and "Pecong." SAVIOUR? is TWAS' 30th production and ninth main stage project. For more information about TWAS Inc. visit us online at www.takewingandsoar.org

**Denotes Member AEA*

PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE

Esther Armah's SAVIOUR?
October 7-30, 2011

Theater: Dwyer Cultural Center
258 St. Nicholas Avenue (Entrance on 123rd Street btw St. Nicholas and Frederick Douglass Blvd | New York, NY

Playwright: Esther Armah
Director: Passion
Cast: Michael Green (Malcolm Jamal Williams III)
Jimmy Aquino* (Billy Hall)

Scenic Design: Pavlo Bosyy
Lighting Design: Joyce Liao
Costume Design: Gail Cooper-Hecht
Sound Design: Sean O'Halloran

Production Stage Manager: William J. Vila*

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Fri, Oct 7 7pm – Followed by panel “The Black and White of Activism” w/ Charles Barron & Esther Armah
Sat, Oct 8 2pm
Sat, Oct 8 7pm
Sun, Oct 9 3pm – Followed by reception

Fri, Oct 14 7pm
Sat, Oct 15 2pm
Sat, Oct 15 7pm - No performance
Sun, Oct 16 3pm

Fri, Oct 21 7pm
Sat, Oct 22 2pm
Sat, Oct 22 7pm
Sun, Oct 23 3pm

Fri, Oct 28 7pm
Sat, Oct 29 2pm – No performance
Sat, Oct 29 7pm
Sun, Oct 30 3pm

TICKETS: General Admission \$18

RESERVATIONS: OvationTix (212) 352-3101 or www.takewingandsoar.org

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This production of SAVIOUR? is an Equity Showcase and is presented in part by the Department of Cultural Affairs New York City, New York City Council, New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, New York City Council Member Inez M. Dickens, The New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair, The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, International Communications Association/dba, Dwyer Cultural Center, The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, and The Arlen Charitable Trust.