FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMART PEOPLE

By

Lydia R. Diamond

Directed by

Chuck Smith

Presented by UW-Madison Department of Theatre and Drama’s University Theatre

“The play holds up a mirror to the choppy, one-step-forward-one-step-back workings of an increasingly multicultural society.” - The Boston Globe

University Theatre will tackle the dynamics of race with Lydia R. Diamond’s critically-acclaimed play, SMART PEOPLE, directed by renowned Chicago theatre director, Chuck Smith. Inspired by actual research on implicit bias, Diamond’s play directs our focus to a fictional academic study of neurological responses the brain has to racial images. A diverse quartet of young professionals, representing African-American, Chinese-Japanese-American and white ethnicities, will see their lives intertwine over the two years leading up to President Barack Obama’s first election. A seamless blend of controversy, sexuality and fast-paced comedy, SMART PEOPLE takes a provocative look at one of the most hot-button topics in America, posing the question of whether or not our beliefs and prejudices are hard-wired.

The University of Wisconsin – Madison’s Department of Theatre and Drama is proud to partner with the Department of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement and the Anonymous Block Grant on this production. A symposium entitled “Conversations about Race Take Center Stage” featuring the playwright and the director will be a capstone event of UW-Madison’s celebration of Black History Month. The symposium is co-sponsored by the Department of Theatre and Drama and the Department of Afro-American Studies and is also supported by the DDEEA, TCSA, ITS, Asian American Studies, and the Arts Institute. This production will also feature a talk back on Sunday, February 28th following the performance. American Sign Language Interpretation will be provided at the Sunday, March 6th performance.

Chuck Smith serves as Resident Director for Goodman Theatre, where his directing credits include the Chicago premieres of PULLMAN PORTER BLUES, BY THE WAY, MEET VERA STARK, RACE, THE GOOD NEGRO, PROOF, and THE STORY, the world premieres of BY THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES, THE GIFT HORSE, and James Baldwin’s THE AMEN CORNER. He sits on Board of Directors of the Goodman Theatre and the African American Arts Alliance of Chicago and serves as Resident Director for MPAACT and Associate Producer for Legacy Productions.
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Smith has directed in theaters all over the United States. In 2001, he was named a Chicagoan of the Year by the Chicago Tribune. He has also been honored with the Award of Merit by Black Theater Alliance of Chicago, Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Director, IRNE Award for Best Direction, a Chicago Emmy Awards for the teleplays “Crime of Innocence”, “Fast Break to Glory”, and “The Martin Luther King Suite.”

Ms. Diamond’s plays include: SMART PEOPLE (2014 IRNE Nomination for Best New Play), STICK FLY (’12 Outer Circle Critics Nomination – Best Play [Broadway], ’10 IRNE Award, ’10 LA Critics Circle Award, ’10 LA Garland, ’09 LA Weekly Theatre Award, ’08 Susan S. Blackburn Finalist, ’06 Black Theatre Alliance Award, ’06 Joseph Jefferson Award Nomination), VOYEURS DE VENUS (’06 Joseph Jefferson Award – Best New Work, ’06 BTAA), THE BLUEST EYE (’06 Black Arts Alliance Image Award, ’08 American Alliance for Theatre and Education Distinguished Play Award), THE GIFT HORSE (’05 1st Place Theodore Ward Prize, Kesselring Prize 2nd Place), and HARRIET JACOBS.

Ms. Diamond was a W.E.B. Du Bois Institute non-resident Fellow, an TCG/NEA Playwright in Residence at Steppenwolf, a Huntington Playwright Fellow, a Radcliffe Institute Fellow at Harvard, a Sallie B. Goodman McCarter Fellow, a Sundance Institute Playwright Lab Creative Advisor, is a Playwright Emerita at Chicago Dramatists, and served on faculty at Boston University (’05–’12). Lydia has served on The Executive Board of Directors at Theatre Communications Group, Huntington Theatre Company Board of Directors, Company One Board of Directors, Chicago Dramatist’s Board of Directors and Dramatist Guild Legal Defense Fund Board of Directors.

Performances will be held at the Mitchell Theatre, 821 University Avenue 608-265-2787  
www.theatre.wisc.edu

Tickets: $15-$22*  
*plus facility fee

Memorial Union Box Office  
800 Langdon Street  
Monday – Friday | 11:30am – 5:30pm

or

Vilas Hall Box Office  
821 University Avenue  
Monday – Friday | 11:30am – 1:30pm
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The Vilas Hall Box Office remains open on Thursday & Friday performances until 30 min past curtain. For Saturday and/or Sunday events in Vilas Hall, the Box Office opens 1 hour before show-time and remains open until 30 min past curtain.

By phone at 608-265-2787

Online ticket portal can be reached by theatre.wisc.edu or arts.wisc.edu.

Performance Calendar:

** “Conversations about Race Take Center Stage” Symposium
   Event time & location: TBD

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<td>Friday</td>
<td>Feb. 26th</td>
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