

THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

28TH ANNUAL 2004-2005 SEASON



THAT SERIOUS HE-MAN BALL

By Alonzo D. LaMont, Jr.

Directed by Marsha Jackson-Randolph

September 23 to October 17, 2004



Supported in part by:

JPMorgan Chase



The Ensemble Theatre

THAT SERIOUS HE-MAN BALL

written by

Alonzo D. LaMont, Jr.

featuring

Davi Jay
Broderick Jones
Steven J. Scott

set & prop designer

James Thomas

costume designer

Kertrina Fischer

sound designer

Wayne DeHart

light designer

David Gipson

fight director

Brian Byrnes

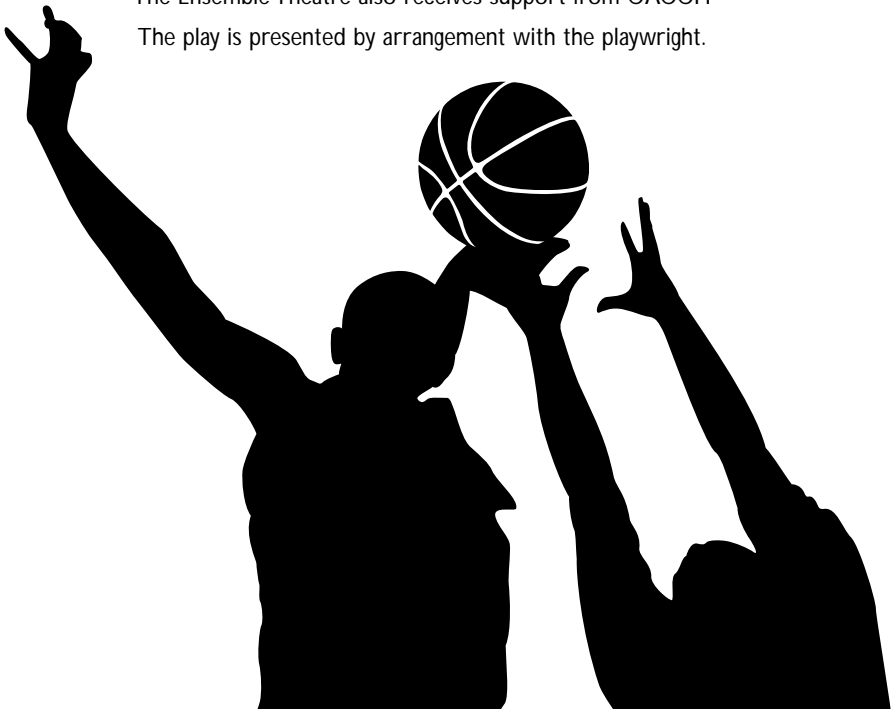
directed by

Marsha Jackson-Randolph

The Ensemble Theatre's "That Serious He-Man Ball" is sponsored by JPMorgan Chase

The Ensemble Theatre also receives support from CACCH

The play is presented by arrangement with the playwright.





About the Play

That Serious He-Man Ball is the game men play on the court and with each other. Three friends — one very employed, one barely employed, and one unemployed — meet for a game of hoops and shooting the breeze. At times hilarious and always probing, ‘*He Man*’ pushes the boundaries of male friendships where no play has gone before. Whereas the play rings true today, it was developed and given its world premiere almost 20 years ago by Atlanta’s Jomandi Productions, where Marsha Jackson-Randolph was also its first director. Following that premiere, *He-Man Ball* generated excitement about the play and playwright in theatre centers around the country. New York’s American Place Theatre mounted a critically acclaimed production in 1988, as did the Los Angeles Theatre Center (LATC) in 1990 with support from actress Jasmine Guy. Other leading African American theatres including The Oakland Ensemble Theatre and The Ensemble brought *He-Man* to the stage (1992). Four years ago, the playwright directed the play in his native Baltimore. LaMont has updated today’s references and turned up the court interplay and the emotional stakes. All the moments earlier audiences remember are there. LaMont shoots! The audience scores!

RATED: For mature audiences due to subject matter and some mature language.

About the Playwright

Alonzo D. LaMont, Jr.

Alonzo D. LaMont, Jr., received his masters in playwrighting from the University of Iowa. He enjoyed success with numerous early works including *The Black Play* and *Twenty-first Century Outs and Back*, but *He-Man*, one of the most produced of his early work, became the play to thrust him into the limelight of regional theatres in a major way. The LATC production of *He-Man*, drew the attention of producers of *A Different World*, the TV series, and landed him a half-season as a staff writer on the show. In the years immediately following, major regional theatres — The Goodman, Washington’s Arena Stage, Seven Stages, among them, and Theatre De Brakke Grond, in Amsterdam Holland, would produce *Vivisections from the Blown Mind*, and *Life Go Boom* — his other works with a ‘cutting edge’ view of pop culture and media exploitation. ‘*Vivisections*’ was published by TCG and LaMont would be among the first in a new generation of playwrights to push the language, presentation, and subject matter of Black plays from domesticity into a hip, urbanized, multimedia world.





The Cast

TwinDAVI JAY
 SkyBRODERICK JONES
 JelloSTEVEN J. SCOTT

Understudies: Terren Gamble (Jello), Kevin Williams (Twin)

THE PLAY IS PRESENTED WITH A BRIEF INTERMISSION.


Production Staff

Marsha Jackson-RandolphDirector
 James ThomasSet & Props Designer
 Kertrina FischerCostume Designer
 David GipsonLighting Designer
 Wayne DeHartSound Designer
 Brian ByrnesFight Director
 Glenn StarksProduction Consultant

Spotlight on Design

Kertrina Fischer (Costume Designer) is in her third year as a seasonal designer with The Ensemble, through her professional design company, In Character. Her background in design includes receipt of her degree in fashion merchandising from Florida A&M University, study of costume design at Houston Community College, and extensive professional credits including design for the Mainstage, Young Performers, and touring educational plays of The Ensemble, contract work with The Dionysus Theatre Troupe, and most recently, designs featured in successful productions of *Dreamgirls*, at The Great Caruso, and for The Ensemble’s Young Performer’s Program. For the past two summers, the design artist was a teacher in The Ensemble’s Young Performers Program motivating youth participants to “get their sew on!” The former senior flight attendant and recruiter for Continental Airlines is a proud mother and a new grandmother.





From the Director

Marsha Jackson-Randolph

“Serious!” “Serious,” that’s the vernacular and the fact about friendships among men. Playwright Alonzo D. LaMont, Jr. — a “brother” dares to toss male friendships into the court of public opinion — the basketball court. He says, “Now the ladies, they let sisterhood cascade out; ladies aren’t afraid to make those sensitive, intimate confessions to our best “girlfriends.” But “the brotherhood” have a lot in life to be M-E-N, i.e., hard. Those are the rules. Real men don’t break, don’t confess, just “deal with it!” — the job, the ladies, your progeny, whatever! In the “one-on-one” hustle to be a B.M.W. (Black-man-working), you “deal with it!” Real men don’t cry “foul!” — unless it’s on the B-ball court!”

This play portrays what is “classic” in the rituals of men. I love it! Even LaMont’s backyard lot “BS” sounds “classic.” The play reveals where the men we love are vulnerable and also the values men prize in other men — loyalty and trust. Simply put — who’s got their back? Who’s got their balls? Every move is unspoken dialogue; it’s more than just a game. Now, here’s the three-point play: dare to look at yourself through the eyes of your friends. Very funny! Very “Serious.” (And not just for “the brothers!”)

Much success
during your
28th season
as you **have**
a ball telling
your story!



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About the Director



Marsha Jackson-Randolph (Director), Producing Artistic Director of The Ensemble, has extensive credits in the professional theatre including work as a director, published playwright, actor, co-founder of a cultural institution, and arts advocate. She has garnered impressive acting credits abroad and nationally, including her Broadway debut in 1988, acting in the play *Checkmates*, with co-stars Denzel Washington, Ruby Dee, and Paul Winfield. She was director of a play featured in the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, and has been guest director for theatres and showcases nationally, including The Studio Theatre in Washington, Mixed Blood Theatre of Minneapolis, The National Black Theatre Festival, Pittsburgh's City Theatre, The Springer Opera House of Columbus, Georgia, and for colleges and universities including Florida A&M and Clark Atlanta University. Other highlights of her career as a stage director include productions of *Checkmates* with Carl Gordon, *Higher Ground* with Whitman Mayo, and numerous plays of The Ensemble, among them, *Black Nativity*, *Having Our Say*, *Fences* and *From the Mississippi Delta*. Among numerous career awards, she has been recognized by The Washington Theatre Society in ceremonies at the Kennedy Center, with a Helen Hayes nomination for Best Director, and with an Audelco Award nomination for her directorial work in New York. She lovingly thanks her mother and son for their love and support, and God from whom all blessings flow!

About the Actors



Davi Jay (Twin) is no stranger to the “faithful” patrons of The Ensemble Theatre. He is a 22-year veteran of The Ensemble stage. Davi has had the honor of appearing in more than 25 productions at the Theatre, some of which include, *A Hatful Of Rain* as Polo; *Lotto* as Blaze; *And The Men Shall Also Gather* as Bobby (a role for which he won the coveted “Georgee” award); *Black Eagles* as Clarkie; *A Soldier's Story* as CPL. Ellis; *No Place To Be Somebody* as Gabe; *Flying West* as Frank; and The Ensemble's first production of *That Serious He-Man Ball* as Twin. The artist was most recently seen in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* as Levee Greene, at the Lillian Theatre in Hollywood, California. He is so pleased to be back on the boards at “the E.,” particularly reappearing in the role of Twin. Peace-Love-&-Joy.





Broderick Jones (Sky) is an accomplished actor and director, born and raised in Houston. He was last seen in The Ensemble Theatre's production of *They Sing Christmas Up in Harlem*; prior to that, he has appeared frequently in productions including *In Walks Ed*, *Sundown Names and Night-gone Things*, *The Gospel at Colonus* and *Black Nativity*. He received his initial training from Madison Senior

High School. He furthered his education, first, at Sam Houston State University, and later at Prairie View A&M University. He has been featured in several movies and videos. Brod' J. has appeared on other stages in the Houston area, including; the Alley Theatre, Encore Theatre, and Main Street Theatre. In addition to leading roles at The Ensemble, he has been a leading man in countless stage performances including: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Native Son*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Some of his accolades include; Best Actor in UIL competitions, 2001 Encore Theatre Hall of Fame inductee, ACTF Irene Ryan Award recipient, and a 1994 George Hawkins Award recipient.



Steven J. Scott (Jello) performs in his third season and third production with The Ensemble. The native Texan has been acting on stage for more than seven years professionally in Houston, Chicago, Dallas, Atlanta and Washington at some of the finest theatres, including The Kennedy Center, where he was the 1997 recipient of the ACTF "outstanding actor award." In addition, he has been honing his film-

acting skills with eight independent film projects to his credit; they include *Killing The Badge*, *Manhood is Dead* and VH1's television movie, *The Way She Moves*. Steven's prior appearances with The Ensemble include Cairo in the world premiere of Leslie Lee's *Sundown Names and Night-gone Things*, and the regional premiere of *They Sing Christmas Up in Harlem*. Other stage roles include: Jason in *Medea* and *Medea the Remix*; George in *Of Mice and Men*; Floyd in *Seven Guitars*; Bono in *Fences*; and Youngblood in the Alley theatre premier of August Wilson's *Jitney*. Steven, an educator teaching theatre arts to youth and young adults all over Texas, is also a frequent guest director at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. His directing credits include: *Don't Bother Me*, *I Can't Cope*, *Profiles in Black* and *The Gospel at Colonus*. Steven is currently teaching as an artist-in-residence at HCC and is preparing to relocate to Los Angeles in the near future.

