

MTA Playwright's Work Produced by Los Angeles Theater

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE

(Nov. 20, 2003) David Lee Lindsey, MTA Senior Program Analyst, recently scored a big hit on the small stage. *Haints, Conjurmen, and Leaving*, a play written by Lindsey, just wrapped up a six-week-long production by the Towne Street Theatre.



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE BLYTHE

The title leaves many wondering what the play is about. "The play is about African-Americans in Mississippi in the 1940s. It is very spiritual and mythical," explained Lindsey. "It is more lyrical than any of the other plays that I have written."

MTA's David Lee Lindsey has created four theater works, and is hoping to write more.

All of the words in the title of the play are derived from the era in which it is set. *Haints* are ghosts, *conjurmen* are spiritual and herbal healers, and *leaving* refers to the migration of millions of African-Americans from the South to the North and West

"The story was inspired by my family who moved to California from Mississippi when I was five," said Lindsey. "I was immersed in the history of this culture my whole life because everyone around me was from the south."

Although this play has some definite links to his family and their experiences, most of his plays end up far from anything related to him. "I tend to start my plays with a life experience, but by the time I am done, I am the only one who can see the relationship," said Lindsey.

Inspired by writing class

Lindsey started writing when he was inspired by a high school writing class. The next summer he decided that he would write a 300 page novel. "At the end of the summer," said Lindsey, "I had a whole page and a half."

But he started writing again in college at Cal State Long Beach. He discovered that his real talent was with dialogue, so he decided to focus on plays.

Besides writing plays, Lindsey also writes poetry. "Writing poetry helps you gain control on your words and it helps you develop your style," explained Lindsey.

Although he enjoys writing poetry, his focus remains on his plays. He would like to try a screenplay in the future. He would also like to produce one of his own plays, but he is not interested in casting or directing.

One of the things that keeps Lindsey writing plays is the shortage that he sees when it comes to entertainment for African-Americans. "There really is a drought, unless you are talking about music or the occasional film that comes out," said Lindsey. "There is a great market for other forms of entertainment in LA and I would like to

see this audience grow.”

This is the second time that *Haints, Conjuremen, and Leaving* has been produced. Lindsey has also had two other plays produced: *A Zombie Tale* and *Avenging Angel*. His favorite play, *A Dream Gone Wild*, has not been produced yet.

“You never know when another play is in the works,” Lindsey said.

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