



INVISIBLE THEATRE - PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Invisible Theatre continues its 49th Anniversary Season

with

DOWN TO EARTHA

**Starring Film, TV and Broadway Star
Dierdra McDowell**

**Directed by
Marishka S. Phillips**

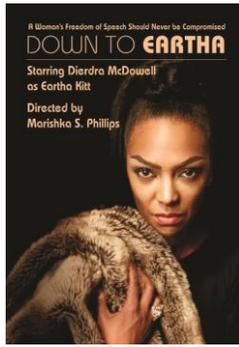
**Drum accompaniment by
Atiba Morales**

Three Performances Only!

November 22 and 23, 2019

(November 11, 2019, Tucson, Arizona); In 1968, at the height of her career as a world renowned entertainer, Eartha Kitt was invited to a White House luncheon by Lady Bird Johnson to discuss the issues of the rising crime rates in America. Eartha stood up and expressed her views that the increase in crime was mostly due to America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Lady Bird Johnson was personally insulted and by order of President Lyndon Johnson, Eartha was blacklisted from work in the United States for the following ten years! **DOWN TO EARTHA** chronicles, through her music and actual testimony, this amazing woman's journey back to her own power. It is a brilliant affirmation that a woman's freedom of speech should never be compromised.

**This production is made possible in part through the
generous support of Dee-Dee Samet**



DOWN TO EARTHA will play Friday, November 22, 2019 at 7:30 PM and Saturday, November 23, 2019 at 3:00 PM and 7:30 PM at the Invisible Theatre, located at 1400 N. First Avenue (at Drachman), Tucson, AZ 85719.

The single show ticket price for **DOWN TO EARTHA** is \$35. Discounts are available for groups, seniors, active military and students. Rush tickets are available for purchase at half-price one half hour prior to performance time and are subject to availability.

Tickets are available for purchase by calling the Invisible Theatre Box Office at (520) 882-9721 and are also available 24/7 on-line through OvationTix at www.invisibletheatre.com.

The running time is 75 minutes with no intermission.

DOWN TO EARTHA is appropriate for mature ages 13 and up.

THE INVISIBLE THEATRE

The Invisible Theatre (IT) of Tucson, a 501(c)(3) organization, is dedicated to producing quality theatre and arts education experiences for all facets of the community in an intimate setting that showcases local professional talent and guest artists. IT takes its name from the invisible energy that flows between a performer and audience, creating the magic of theatre. Started in 1971 as an arena for local playwrights, the theatre has expanded its programs to include adaptations of classics and recent Off-Broadway plays and musicals, while continuing to encourage new playwrights through both full productions and staged readings.

Under the leadership of Managing Artistic Director Susan Claassen, Associate Artistic Director James Blair, and PR Director Cathy Johnson, IT is strongly committed to community service and outreach programs. The company's current season includes a six play Main Stage season, many special events, a world class cabaret series, organizational collaborations, educational tours, seminars that encourage community dialogue and Project Pastime – an educational theatre program for mentally challenged youth.

The Invisible Theatre, the recipient of the first Arizona Theatre Association Award for Best Producing Theatre Company, is a member of the Theatre Communications Group and has long enjoyed both local and national recognition for its strong leadership role in the arts community. Productions take place in an intimate 80-seat converted laundry building. IT celebrates its 49th season with an even greater commitment to professionalism, artistic excellence, accessibility, freedom of expression, diverse programming and creative challenge – thus making the Invisible Theatre a very visible force in Tucson's cultural community.

ABOUT THE PEOPLE



DIERDRA MCDOWELL **Film, TV and Broadway Star**

Dierdra McDowell was born in Brooklyn, New York...with Panamanian roots! Being the first American born in her family, they often joked about her "celebrity status". Little did they know the power behind this choice of words!

She surrounded herself early on in the area of the arts, and attended the high school of Art and Design. Following, she completed studies at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and FIT in NYC. While in high school she gravitated towards the school's drama club, as part of her extra-curricular activities. It was here she found her passion.

Years later, Dierdra continued to study acting at several well acclaimed establishments, such as the Susan Batson Studio (formerly Black Nexxus), the T. Schreiber Studio, and the Marishka Phillips Theatrical Preparatory (MPTP). Her dedication to this art form led to her appearances in many commercials, television shows and films in the years to follow. She has also done lots of print modeling work and is often spotted in magazine and billboard ads for various commercial products.

As an actress, Ms. McDowell is honored to claim guest star appearances in current television shows, such as *POWER*, *Odd Mom Out* and *Mr. Robot*. She is honored for work in feature length and short films...such as the noted film *4:44* directed by Abel Ferrera and starring Willem Dafoe (as his ex wife). She remains proud of her work in commercials for Verizon Fios, Time Warner Cable, Pearle Vision, Home Depot, Spray and Wash, Wii, and Allegra D, to name a few. She is delighted to have worked with Susan Lucci, (Erica Kane) on the former hit soap opera *All My Children*. It's not a bad trail to leave behind...but Dierdra says. "it's just the beginning of the road!"

ATIBA MORALES **Drum accompaniment**

Atiba Morales has been a D'Jembe and Dun Dun drummer for 23 years. He was taught by his older sister, a master drummer, and got his start playing at Bernice Johnson's Dance School. Since then he has played with numerous African dance companies and schools. Atiba also currently teaches D'Jembe & Dun Dun drumming and plays for dance classes at public, private and after school programs throughout New York City. He has been working with these programs for over 19 years.

MARISHKA S. PHILLIPS

Director

Broadway actress, accomplished director, and thespian guru, Marishka S. Phillips is an actor's actor with an extraordinary wealth of talent.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Marishka began performing at age of eight, and by the time she was thirteen, was cast in the European tour of RAISIN, a musical version of the popular play A RAISIN IN THE SUN. Upon graduating from Springfield Gardens High School, Marishka honed in on her skills at the prestigious Alvin Ailey School of Dance, the Broadway Dance Center, and Fordham University, where she studied theater arts.

Marishka's big break came at the age of nineteen when the budding actress landed a feature role in the Broadway musical, UPTOWN: IT'S HOT, Directed by the legendary Maurice Hines. Marishka found her niche on stage, and would go on to star in a host of other musicals, including BUBBLIN' BROWN SUGAR, FAME THE MUSICAL, THE WIZ and THE ME NOBODY KNOWS.

During a quick stint in Los Angeles, in 1991, Marishka made the move to television, scoring bit parts on the last two seasons of *The Cosby Show* and it's spin-off *A Different World*, but by 1997, Marishka found herself back on stage, and spent the next ten years touring Europe in big budget plays and musicals. Covering over eight countries, Marishka performed various roles in productions such as TRIBUTE TO THE BLUES BROTHERS, LUDWIG THE MUSICAL and TEATRO PIAZZO. In between stage work, in 2002, Marishka released a musical recording on Hinterland Records entitled *The Hike*, and in 2007, released *At The Waterfront* on Mole Listening Pearls.

Under the mentorship of renowned acting coach, Susan Batson, Marishka returned to New York and continued studying the art of acting. In 2005, Marishka obtained the lead in an all-female cast of OHELLO, but by 2006, Marishka earned the lead in ABSOLUTE FIGHT at the NY Fringe Festival, and received an Audelco nomination for her role in Woody King's production of SWEET MAMA STRING BEAN, as a young Ethel Waters. The talented actress would go on to star in STAGE & SCREEN, a play directed by Tony Award winner Hinton Battle.

As an actress, singer, and dancer, Marishka is a bona fide triple threat, and has performed and toured with Sean P.Diddy Combs, Christian Castro, and CeCe Winans, just to name a few.

As an acting coach, in 2011, Marishka founded the Marishka Phillips Theatrical Preparatory. She coached and trained some of Hollywood's biggest names, including Deborah Cox, Kerry Washington, Terri Vaughn, Nafessa Williams, Tasha Smith and Elizabeth Rohm, to name a few. Marishka's ingenious acting method combines the traditional art of storytelling through a spiritual connection.

As a director, Marishka studied at the Los Angeles Community College, and has directed two highly revered off-Broadway productions: BOX produced by Stuart Films LLC, and PRECIOUS written and directed by Damian Bailey. On screen, she made directorial debut with *Love Always, Eartha* - a short film that takes an in-depth look at the life of Eartha Kitt in 1955, which has won 8 awards. Since, she has directed numerous other films including her self-penned *Melinda*.

Marishka lives and resides in New York City.
www.marishkasphillips.com

TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR FOR INFORMATION:

To charge tickets by phone, call our Box Office at (520) 882-9721.

You may also visit the Box Office in the Invisible Theatre Lobby (1400 N. First Avenue at Drachman).
Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express are accepted.

To buy tickets online 24/7, go to www.invisibletheatre.com and click on the OvationTix logo.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:

The Invisible Theatre is fully accessible to patrons using wheelchairs or with other mobility challenges. Seating areas to accommodate persons using wheelchairs are located in the theatre. If patrons require special seating they should inform the Box Office at (520) 882-9721.

ABOUT THIS PRESS RELEASE:

This mailing list is for members of the professional media and allied organizations who have requested e-mail press releases from The Invisible Theatre. If you no longer wish to receive e-mail press releases or if there is someone else with your organization that should be added to our list, send a message to cathy@invisibletheatre.com or phone Alayna at (520) 884-0672 with your request.

ONLINE MEDIA MATERIALS:

Attached to this email are photos of Dierdra McDowell (photo credit courtesy of the artist). These photos are also available at www.invisibletheatre.com (Press). You may also send an email to cathy@invisibletheatre.com requesting photos be sent directly to you.

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