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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Def Poetry Jam on Broadway

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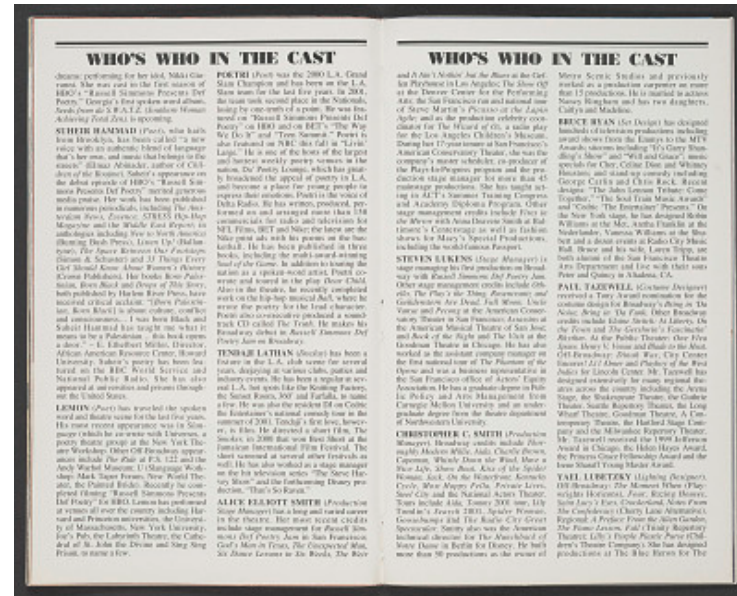
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dreams; performing for her idol, Nikki Giovanni. She was cast in the first season of HBO's "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry." Georgia's first spoken-word album, *Seeds from da S.W.A.T.Z. (Southern Woman Achieving Total Zen)*, is upcoming.

SUHEIR HAMMAD (Poet), who hails from Brooklyn, has been called "a new voice with an authentic blend of language that's her own, and music that belongs to the streets" (Elmaz Abinader, author of *Children of the Roojme*). Suheir's appearance on the debut episode of HBO's "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry" merited generous media praise. Her work has been published in numerous periodicals, including *The Amsterdam News*, *Essence*, *STRESS Hip-Hop Magazine* and the *Middle East Report*; in anthologies including *New to North America* (Burning Bush Press), *Listen Up!* (Ballantyne), *The Space Between Our Footsteps* (Simon & Schuster) and *33 Things Every Girl Should Know About Women's History* (Crown Publishers). Her books *Born Palestinian*, *Born Black* and *Drops of This Story*, both published by Harlem River Press, have received critical acclaim: "[*Born Palestinian*, *Born Black*] is about culture, conflict and consciousness... I was born Black and Suheir Hammad has taught me what it means to be Palestinian... this book opens a door." - E. Ethelbert Miller, Director, African American Resource Center, Howard University. Suheir's poetry has been featured on the BBC World Service and National Public Radio. She has also appeared at universities and prisons throughout the United States.

LEMON (Poet) has traveled the spoken word and theatre scene for the last five years. His most recent appearance was in *Slanguage* (which he co-wrote with Unverses, a poetry theatre group) at the New York Theatre Workshop. Other Off-Broadway appearances include *The Ride* at P.S. 122 and the *Andy Warhol Museum*; *U (Slanguage Workshop: Mark Taper Forum, New World Theater, the Painted Bride)*. Recently he completed filming "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry" for HBO. Lemon has performed at venues all over the country including Harvard and Princeton universities, the University of Massachusetts, New York University, Joe's Pub, the Labyrinth Theatre, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Sing Sing Prison, to name a few.

POETRI (Poet) was the 2000 L.A. Grand Slam Champion and has been on the L.A. Slam team for the last five years. In 2001, the team took second place in the Nationals, losing by one-tenth of a point. He was featured on "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry" on HBO and on BET's "The Way We Do it" and "Teen Summit." Poetri is also featured on NBC this fall in "Livin Large." He is one of the hosts of the largest and hottest weekly poetry venues in the nation, Da' Poetry Lounge, which has greatly broadened the appeal of poetry in L.A. and become a place for young people to express their emotions. Poetri is the voice of Delta Radio. He has written, produced, performed on and arranged more than 150 commercials for radio and television for NFL Films, BET and Nike; the latest are the Nike print ads with his poems on the basketball. He has been published in three books, including the multi-award-winning *Soul of the Game*. In addition to touring the nation as a spoken-word artist, Poetri co-wrote and toured in the play *Dear Child*. Also in the theatre, he recently completed work on the hip-hop musical *Ball*, where he wrote the poetry for the lead character. Poetri also co-executive produced a soundtrack CD called *The Truth*. He makes his Broadway debut in Russell Simmons *Def Poetry Jam* on Broadway.



TENDAJI LATHAN (DeeJay) has been a fixture in the L.A. club scene for several years, deejaying at various clubs, parties and industry events. He has been a regular at several L.A. hot spots like the Knitting Factory, the Sunset Room, 360° and Farfalla, to name a few. He was also the resident DJ on Cedric the Entertainer's national comedy tour in the summer of 2001. Tendaji's first love, however, is film. He directed a short film, The Smoker, in 2000 that won Best Short at the Jamaican International Film Festival. The short screened at several other festivals as well. He has also worked as a stage manager on the hit television series "The Steve Harvey Show" and the forthcoming Disney production, "That's So Raven."

ALICE ELLIOTT SMITH (Production Stage Manager) has a long and varied career in the theatre. Her most recent credits include stage management for Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam in San Francisco; God's Man in Texas, The Unexpected Man, Six Dance Lessons in Six Weeks, The Weir

WHO's WHO IN THE CAST

and It Ain't Nothin' but the Blues at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles; The Show Off at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts; the San Francisco run and national tour of Steve Martin's Picasso at the Lapin Agile; and as the production celebrity coordinator for the Wizard of OZ, a radio play for the Los Angeles Children's Museum. During her 17-year tenure at San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater, she was the company's master scheduler, co-producer of the Plays-In-Progress program and the production stage manager for more than 45 mainstage productions. She has taught acting in ACT's Summer Training Congress and Academy Diploma Program. Other stage management credits include Fires in the Mirror with Anna Deavere Smith at Baltimore's Centerstage as well as fashion shows for Macy's Special Productions, including the world-famous Passport.

STEVEN LUKENS (Stage Manager) is stage managing his first production on Broadway with Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam. Other stage management credits include Othello, The Play's the Thing, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, Full Moon, Uncle Vanya and Pecong at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco; Assassins at the American Musical Theatre of San Jose; and Book of the Night and The Visit at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. He has also worked as the assistant company manager on the first national tour of The Phantom of the Opera and was business representative in the San Francisco office of Actors' Equity Association. He has a graduate degree in Public Policy and Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University and undergraduate degree from the theatre department of Northwestern University.

CHRISTOPHER C. SMITH (Production Manager). Broadway credits include Thoroughly Modern Millie, Aida, Charlie Brown, Capeman, Whistle Down the Wind, Have a Nice Life, Show Boat, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Jack, ON the Waterfront, Kentucky Cycle, Most Happy Fella, Private Lives, Steel City and the National Actors Theater. Tours include Aida, Tommy 2001 tour, Lily Tomlin's Search 2001, Spider Woman, Goosebumps and The Radio City Great Spectacular. Smitty also was the American technical director for the Hunchback of Notre Dame in

Berlin for Disney. He built more than 50 productions as the owner of Metro Scenic Studios and previously worked as a production carpenter on more than 15 productions. He is married to actress Nancy Ringham and has two daughters, Caitlyn and Madeline.

BRUCE RYAN (Set Design) has designed hundreds of television productions including awards shows from the Emmys to the MTV Awards; sitcoms including "It's Garry Shandling's Show" and "Will and Grace"; music specials for Cher, Celine Dion and Whitney Houston; and stand-up comedy including George Carlin and Christ Rock. Recent designs: "The John Lennon Tribute: Come Together," "The Soul Train Music Awards" and "Cedric 'The Entertainer' Presents." On the New York stage, he has designed Robin Williams at the Met, Aretha Franklin at the Nederlander, Vanessa Williams at the Shubert and dozen events at Radio City Music Hall. Bruce and his wife, Loren Tripp, are both alumni of the San Francisco Theatre Arts Department and live with their sons Peter and Quincy in Altadena, CA.

PAUL TAZEWELL (Costume Designer) received a Tony Award nomination for the costume design for Broadway's Bring in 'Da Noise,

Yael Lubetzky (lighting Designer) Off-Broadway; The Moment When (Playwrights Horizons), Four, Razing Houses, Saint Lucy's Eyes, Crockerland, Notes From The Confederacy (Cherry Lane Alternative). Regional: A Preface From the Alien Garden, The piano Lesson, Fall (Trinity Repertory Theatre); Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse (Children's Theatre Company). She has designed productions at The Blue Heron for The

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