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651 ARTS & The Irondale Ensemble Project present  
Pick Up Performance Co(S.) production, in collaboration with LexArts

## **IN THIS PLACE...**

A new play by **Ain Gordon**  
Starring **Michelle Hurst**

**January 29, 30, 31 and February 6 & 7, 2009 | 7:30PM**

The Irondale Center  
85 S. Oxford, Ft. Greene, Brooklyn  
Tickets \$20 | \$15 students, seniors  
Tickets at TheaterMania.com or call 212.352.3101



(Brooklyn, New York) **651 ARTS will begin its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season** celebration by teaming up with Brooklyn's Irondale Ensemble Project for the *New York debut* of ***In This Place...*** a Pick Up Performance Company(S.) production, in collaboration with LexArts.

**1830:** Samuel and Daphney Oldham are the first free African-Americans to build their own home in Lexington, KY. Five years later, they disappear. Now, award winning artist **Ain Gordon** imagines the full story behind these bare facts as told from Daphney's perspective in a new one-woman play featuring Brooklyn's own **Michelle Hurst**.

***MORE...***

**“A gorgeously wrought one-woman show that employs 21<sup>st</sup> century media to tell a 19<sup>th</sup> century story... Hurst's portrayal of Daphney is...achingly realistic... heartbreakingly tender and terrible and hopeful and sad and funny”**

*Lexington Herald-Leader, 2008*

Inspired by the true story of Daphney and Samuel Oldham, the first free African-American couple to build their own house in Lexington, Kentucky—award-winning writer/director/actor Ain Gordon, at the invitation of arts organization, LexArts, delved into Lexington’s depths and found this story to tell.

“I began to question the relevance of historical plaques and wondered what the forgotten and unmarked stories were,” Gordon explains. As he surveyed the city, Gordon discovered an abandoned, unmarked house that, upon further investigation, turned out to have been built by Samuel Oldham, the first African-American landowner in Lexington.

Following a multi-year development process, including numerous interviews with local historians and archival research, *In This Place...* imagines the Oldham’s lives, and 19<sup>th</sup> century Lexington, through the eyes of Samuel Oldham’s wife, Daphney. In the play, Daphney comes back as a ghost striving to remember her “living days,” in fact, her history. Interwoven are images of her after-life and a phantom Lexington populated by the famous and the disappeared, a land where every building that ever stood – still stands.

**AIN GORDON** is a three-time Obie Award-winning writer, director and actor, a two-time NYFA Fellow and the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in Playwriting. In 2008, his alternative historical portrait of Lexington, KY, *In This Place...*, was commissioned and produced by LexArts in partnership with the Actor’s Guild and funded by the Rockefeller MAP Fund. In 2007 he re-mounted his *Epic Family Epic* (with the Arts Presenters Ensemble Theatre Collaborations Program funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Trust) to tour to VSA North Fourth Arts Center, NM and the Krannert Center, IL. He is currently writing a one-woman play rooted in the Galveston, TX flood of 1900 to premiere in Houston, TX in 2009 in a co-production with DiverseWorks and Stages Repertory Theatre. His work has been commissioned, produced or presented by New York Theater Workshop, Soho Rep., The Public Theatre, Dance Theater Workshop, PS 122 (all in NYC); and the Mark Taper Forum (CA), the George

Street Playhouse (NJ), the Baltimore Museum of Art, Spirit Square (NC) Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (MA), and Dance Space (DC), and with David Gordon at American Repertory Theatre (MA), American Conservatory Theater (CA) and American Music Theatre Festival (PA). As a performer, Gordon recently appeared in the Off-Broadway run of *Spalding Gray: Stories Left To Tell*, and toured nationally with the production. Gordon has also written for NBC's "Will & Grace." He has been Co-Director of the Pick Up Performance Co(S.) since 1992.

**MICHELLE HURST** was born and bred in Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights Brooklyn. Theatre includes *Tough Titty* (Williamstown Theater Festival); *Proposals* (Arts Center of Coastal Carolina); *The Story* (Long Wharf Theater and NYSF/The Public Theater); *Idylls of the King* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art); *Wally's Ghost* (Soho Rep); Film: *Choke*; *Sherrybaby*; *In the Cut*; *Stepmom*; *I Shot Andy Warhol*; *Blue in the Face*; *Smoke*; and *Airheads*. Television: *6 Degrees*; *Third Watch*; *Rescue Me*; all three "Law & Order" shows; *Sex and the City*; *Cosby*; *All My Children*; *As The World Turns*; and *New York Undercover*. Hurst is also a member of Gad's Hill Theater Company and Relentless Theater Company in New York.

**Performances of *In This Place...* will take place January 29, 30, 31 and February 6 and 7 at the newly renovated Irondale Center, located in the former Sunday school of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Fort Greene, Brooklyn – the new home of Irondale Ensemble Project.**

*In this Place...* was made possible, in part, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Multi-Arts Production Fund founded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and LexArts.

**The Irondale Ensemble Project** has had a rich, 25-year history of producing and teaching experimental theater with a strong voice for social change. So, when Irondale discovered a neglected, long-vacant former Sunday school space in the historic Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, the ensemble company saw its future – a vibrant, 7,300-square-foot center for creating and presenting inventive theater, as well as for using theater to educate children. The setting offers a perfect match with a like-minded organization, a culturally diverse church with activist roots dating back to this country's abolitionist movement. And it also provided an opportunity for Irondale to play an important role in an exciting and growing cultural district.

**Pick Up Performance Co(S)** was founded in 1971 and incorporated in 1978 to facilitate projects by David Gordon. In 1992, the company was expanded to include projects by Ain Gordon, and subsequently renamed The Pick Up Performance Co(S.) in recognition of the company's plural artistic leadership with individual projects. From his seminal beginnings as a founding artist in the Judson Dance Theater, David Gordon has purposefully examined and expanded the line between theater and dance and pioneered the use of text and textual narrative in movement work. Starting with his first work in

1983, Ain Gordon found his roots in the performance art world his father helped to create and by the late 1980's he was producing and touring his work nationally. In 1993, Ain Gordon and David Gordon collaborated on *The Family Business* (as writers, directors, and performers) and received an OBIE for their work. Alyce Dissette has been the Co.'s producer since 2001 and has worked with Ain Gordon and David Gordon for over 20 years.

**651 ARTS** Since 1988, 651 ARTS has been committed to developing, producing and presenting performance and cultural programming rooted in the African Diaspora, with a primary focus on contemporary performing arts. 651 ARTS serves the cultural life of New York City, with a particular focus on Brooklyn, one of America's most culturally diverse communities.

651 ARTS' 2009 Season is sponsored in part by the following: Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, Lila Acheson Wallace Theater Fund, New York State Music Fund, Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Independence Community Foundation, Axe-Houghton Foundation, Tides Foundation, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, National Dance Project, Carnegie Corporation, Con Edison, American Express, Altria Group, Inc., JPMorgan Chase Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, Council Member Letitia James, National Performance Network, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Network of Cultural Centers of Color, and Emmanuel Baptist Church.

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