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Fresh Visions Youth Theatre Company

Transforming Kids and Communities Through the Arts

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE NEGROES GONE!?

FreshVisions Youth Theatre Adult Series proudly presents:

Douglas Turner Ward's "DAY OF ABSENCE"

Come see a small racist town as it asks the searching question: "Where have all the Negroes gone!?" as **FreshVisions Youth Theatre Company's Adult Series** is proud to present Douglas Turner Ward's classic play, the outrageous and biting satirical farce about race relations, "**Day of Absence.**" This production runs **the first three weekends in August, August 4th – 20th.** **Friday and Saturday evening shows are at 8:00pm with Sunday afternoon matinees at 4:00pm.** **Ticket prices are \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for youth (14 years and under).** **The Sunday, August 13th show is a special Show/Reception Fundraiser for FreshVisions. All tickets for this special performance will be \$25.00.** **The production will be playing at FreshVisions' home theatre, 4821 Germantown Avenue, Phila. PA.** For further information or group rates call **215-888-1146, 267-334-1512 or 267-226-7135.-** This play is suggested for those 14 and older.

"**Day of Absence**" is set in a small, unnamed southern town in the not-so-distant past. As the sun rises, the day begins normally, but shortly, it is discovered that every black citizen in the town has mysteriously disappeared into thin air. All are nowhere to be found. This throws the whites that are left into absolute panic and psychosis. In the absence of its black citizens, the town comes to a complete standstill. With no one to clean, take care of the children, and to provide its economic foundation, the town rapidly disintegrates. The white townspeople come to realize just how much, how intricately and intimately, their lives and prosperity were wrapped around and intertwined with that of their black neighbors. They also come to realize how emotionally and psychically dependent they are on the very people who they hated, scorned, and dismissed the day before. Now these same black citizens are wanted, needed, and are pleaded with to return. The entire cast, with one exception, is black and in "reverse minstrel style" performs in "white face" as all the white characters.

"**Day of Absence**" subtitled by its brilliant author, Douglas Turner Ward as "*A Satirical Fantasy*" is the companion piece to his play, "Happy Ending" both of which opened at The Saint Marks Playhouse in November, 1965. The piece had an immediate and powerful impact on the theatrical community. Both of these combined works led to Ward's winning the off-Broadway Vernon Rice Drama Award for playwriting and The Obie award for acting. For over forty years "**Day of Absence**" has influenced and inspired generations of playwrights, actors and theatre goers. A few short years after the show's opening, Ward went on to co-found the prestigious Negro Ensemble Company.

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"Day of Absence" is directed by FreshVisions Associate Director, Thom Wilkins who last directed FreshVisions acclaimed production of Robert Hightower's, "The Wait." **"Day of Absence"** is Mr. Wilkins' follow up to the phenomenal success and artistic excellence of that show. Day of Absence stars FreshVisions' alumni adult performers, Maurice Graves and Tanya Scott, with returning thespians from "The Wait", Maxine "Canada" Brown, Learly McAllister Wilkins, and Donna Marie Earl; it also features two current FreshVisions' Players youth actors, Justin Coffey and Michael St. John. In addition, FreshVisions' welcomes to its stage Bob DeMarco and one of the Philadelphia areas premiere actors, Damien Wallace, who was last seen as *The Stage Manager* in the Ritz Theatre Company's production of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town."

"Day of Absence" is the final show of what has been an amazing season for the FreshVisions Youth Theatre Company. FreshVisions, with its youth-performed productions of "The Three Chillin' Little Pigs," "Marching to Freedomland," "Alicia in Ghettal-Land," and "Who Done It??!!" has set a standard of unparalleled theatrical excellence. Now, our adult series production is primed and ready to put the exclamation point to and even further exceed the standards already established in this most incredible season.

"Day of Absence" is a timeless social farce that has ever new resonances. It is a brilliantly constructed work that makes its point with both a hatchet and a scalpel. Audiences will howl, gasp, and be made to think. They will truly be treated to a compelling and unforgettable theatrical experience.

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A program of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition