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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CSULB THEATRE ARTS GRAPPLES WITH RACE IN DYNAMIC COMING OF AGE MUSICAL

THE BUBBLY BLACK GIRL SHEDS HER CHAMELEON SKIN CHALLENGES CONVENTIONS

LONG BEACH, CA, February 2017 – California State University Long Beach (CSULB) Theatre Arts presents *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*, with book, music and lyrics by Kirsten Childs and directed by Dr. Jaye Austin Williams. This imaginative and multifaceted musical follows Viveca, a black woman who hides behind a mask of cheerfulness while searching for success on the Broadway stage and for love in her life. Viveca pursues her dreams from 1960s LA to present day New York City, navigating through some of America's most turbulent times, Playing March 10 to March 25 in the University Theatre, *Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* continues CSULB Theatre Arts' "season of self-discovery."

In *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*, Viveca enters as a young girl smiling through school-yard pains with the instruction from her father, "Smile for me! don't ever let them know you feel the pain; their loss – your gain". Taking her father's advice, Viveca dances her way past racism, skates her way through misogyny, protests with her boyfriend and much more, all while denying her true identity. Along the way, she is haunted by her white Chitty Chitty doll who presents Viveca with conflicting ideals of beauty that drive her journey of denial and discovery. Mixing sugar, spice, and satire, *The Bubbly Black Girl...* brings Harriet Tubman, flower power hippies, police brutality, and Broadway chorus dancers all to the same stage.

Kirsten Childs received her MFA from the Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and in 2001 became the first black playwright, lyricist, and composer to receive the Musical Theatre Award from the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Theater Foundation. Childs continues to produce new musicals at the Dallas Theater Center and Playwright Horizons. *The Bubbly Black Girl...* premiered in 1999 at Playwrights Horizons in New York City. Director Dr. Williams says Childs created *The Bubbly Black Girl...* "with the intent of pushing the boundaries of the musical theatre form".

Dr. Jaye Austin Williams is an award-winning director, playwright, actor, teacher, writer, and consultant who has opened plays from the famous Apollo Theatre in New York to the Historical Black College and University's tour of Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*. A specialist in the melding of drama theory and critical Black studies, with a PH.D. in Drama and Theatre from UCI and an MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Dr. Williams offers piercing insight into the musical:

"Childs' meditation on blackness and turbulent times – spanning the 1960s into the present – and their impact on an L.A. born-and-raised Black girl named Viveca Stanton, brings the past crashing down in front of and around us." Dr. Williams said, "In this intricate "little" musical, the devastating residue of slavery continually disrupts Viveca's dream of becoming a star on Broadway, until she must confront an immutable reality: that unlike the chameleon, she cannot shed her (black) skin. The labor of stretching the mask of bubblyness across that skin is exhausting, and worse, does not spare her the trauma from racial oppression's blunt force..."

In conjunction with *Bubbly Black Girl...* a Symposium will be held before the show on Friday, February 17th at 2:00pm on the stage of the University Theatre. Dr. Williams will facilitate several panel discussions filled with student, academic, and professional voices to investigate the topics raised by *Bubbly Black Girl...* and to critically examine anti-blackness. Fred Carl, the Musical Director and collaborator of the original production of *Bubbly Black Girl* will be one of the panelists, lending insight into the inspiration and conception of *Bubbly Black Girl...* The Symposium is free, open to the public, and all are encouraged to attend.

Calendar Listing for *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*

Kirstin Childs' *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*

Directed by Dr. Jaye Austin Williams

CSULB Theatre Arts, 1250 Bellflower Blvd, Long Beach, CA, 90840

Performances:

Thursday, March 9 at 8:00 pm

Friday, March 10 at 8:00 pm (Opening Night)

Saturday, March 11 at 8:00 pm (\$10 Tickets for High School Night)

Wednesday, March 15 at 8:00 pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)

Thursday, March 16 at 8:00 pm

(Symposium, Friday, March 17 at 2:00 pm)

Friday, March 17 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, March 18 at 8:00 pm

Wednesday, March 22 at 8:00 pm

Thursday, March 23 at 8:00 pm

Friday, March 24 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, March 25 at 8:00 pm

Tickets and Information:

Tickets: <http://web.csulb.edu/colleges/cota/theatre/on-stage-now/index.html>

Prices: General Admission \$25

Students (w/ID)/ CSULB Faculty & Staff/ Seniors (55+)/ Military: \$20

Groups: Groups of 10 or more start at \$20/ticket

Location: University Theatre at CSULB, 7th Street and East Campus Drive

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