

MARCUS; OR THE SECRET OF SWEET

BY
TARELL ALVIN McCRANEY



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World premiere of THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS produced by
the Public Theater
(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Andrew D. Hamingson, Executive Director),
and McCarter Theatre Center
(Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director).

THE BROTHER/SISTER PLAYS were developed with the support
of McCarter Theatre Center.

To my Best Loni and Luis

MARCUS; OR THE SECRET OF SWEET was produced at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, opening on May 22, 2009. It was directed by Robert O'Hara; the set design was by James Schuette; the costume design was by Karen Perry; the lighting design was by Jane Cox; the sound design was by Lindsay Jones; and the production stage manager was Cheryl Mintz. The cast was as follows:

MARCUS Alano Miller
OSHA Kianné Muschett
SHAUNTA IYUN Nikiya Mathis
OBA Heather Alicia Simms
SHUN/ELEGUA Kimberly Hébert Gregory
OGUN SIZE Marc Damon Johnson
OSHOOSI SIZE Brian Tyree Henry
SHUA Samuel Ray Gates
TERRELL Brian Tyree

CHARACTERS

MARCUS ESHU, a young man of Color, son of Elegba and Oba.

OSHA, a young woman of Color, Daughter of Shun and Shango.

SHAUNTA IYUN, a young woman of Color, Daughter of Nia.

OBA, a mother of Color, mother to Marcus Eshu.

SHUN, a mother of Color, mother to Osha (to be played by the same actress as ELEGUA).

ELEGUA, an older woman of Color, aunt to Ogun Size and Oshoosi Size (to be played the same actress as SHUN).

OGUN SIZE, a man of Color, brother to Oshoosi Size.

OSHOOSI SIZE, a ghost, brother to Ogun Size.

SHUA, a young man of Color, from Up North.

TERRELL, a young dark-skinned man of Color.

PLACE

San Pere, Louisiana.

TIME

Late August (distant present).

MARCUS; OR THE SECRET OF SWEET

Prologue

Marcus Eshu lies in his bed sleeping. Dreaming.

Enter Oshoosi Size from a pool or screen of water.

He speaks directly to the audience.

OSHOOSI SIZE.

Remind him ... Tell him that one day ...
I say to him one day. I walk up on him
He working on something ... I say I'm
Finna drive this truck. He must've been
'Bout eleven hell I was only seven I say to him, I
Say, "Look here man I'ma drive this here ..."
He look at me like he couldn't be bothered.
I say, "Alright." I hopped up in that
Seat. I ain't know what I was doing. Guess
He ain't know either 'til it crank up. Grrr!
Shot out from under that damn ... cut right
And say, "Nigga." Nah, now don't get all
Like that he ain't say, "Young man," he say,
"Nigga, get yo ass ... what you doing!?" I say
"I'm drivin' s'what I told you I was gone do."
Truck start to move though. I wasn't planning
On that. I'm panicking 'cause I know I can
Jump out right now but I don't want to
Leave the truck but not like I can do a damn

Thing to stop, move, turn it. I'm just seven.
Who let a seven-year-old ... I feel this arm reach 'round
And sling me out the seat. I'm tumbling
But I'm okay, skin't up but okay. I see him
He cut the engine.
And everything get quiet 'til I hear
Dress/skirt rustling through high grass.
"Whap." She slapped him
So hard blood spit from his lip. Whap!
"I told you to watch him," she saying low to him.
Put her finger close up in his face turn and walk away.
And I see him break down. I see him double over,
Put his hand to his mouth and just crying. (*Oshoosi illustrates
this motion.*)
He look at me.
And I realize he ain't crying 'cause she hit him.
He ain't crying cause she point her finger. He
In tears 'cause he almost didn't get me. He almost
Ain't catch me. Almost ... Huh.
Remind him of that. Tell him for me ... Tell him.
(*Oshoosi Size sinks into the pool or fades into the screen of water.
Shift.*)

OBA. (*Offstage.*)

Marcus ...

(*Lights out on Oshoosi. Marcus wakes breathing heavy. Offstage.*)

Marcus!

MARCUS.

Ma'am?

OBA. (*Offstage.*)

C'mon, we gone be late! (*Lights.*)

MARCUS; OR THE SECRET OF SWEET

by Tarell Alvin McCraney

5M, 5W

Marcus is sixteen and “sweet.” Days before Hurricane Katrina strikes the projects of Louisiana, the currents of his life converge, overflowing into his close-knit community and launching the search for his sexual and personal identity on a cultural landscape infused with mysterious family creeds. The provocative, poignant, and fiercely humorous coming-of-age story of a young gay man in the South, MARCUS is the stirring conclusion of *The Brother/Sister Plays*.

“[McCraney] writes with a passion and urgency that can’t be faked.”

—**The New York Times**

“With MARCUS; OR THE SECRET OF SWEET, playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney completes the last leg of an irresistible bayou trilogy.”

—**The Washington Post**

“An extraordinary event . . . MARCUS is an engaging, gently provocative, universal tale. And, yes, it’s sweet.” —**The San Francisco Chronicle**

“These are spiritual works that thrum with vitality, whether it’s joyous or melancholy, told in vigorous language that artfully folds together slangy vernacular with bursts of haunting poetry.”

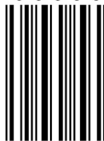
—**Variety**

Also by Tarell Alvin McCraney
THE BROTHERS SIZE
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