



WILD WITH HAPPY

BY COLMAN DOMINGO



DRAMATISTS
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WILD WITH HAPPY
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World Premiere production by
The Public Theater
(Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director)

WILD WITH HAPPY was developed, in part, with the assistance of
the Sundance Institute Theatre Laboratory.

WILD WITH HAPPY was also developed at
TheatreWorks, Palo Alto, CA
as part of their New Works Festival
(Robert Kelley, Artistic Director; Phil Santora, Managing Director)

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For Edie

AUTHOR'S NOTE

With this work, I am exploring many composites of African American men and their relationships to their mothers. I wanted to examine religion, sexuality and the surreal that surrounds extraordinary circumstances such as death and eventual healing. This is not my story. These are many stories and they started to speak to me and tell me more about themselves as I wrote at my desk at home, while running on the treadmill, and being pushed to be as creative as possible by my visionary director Robert O'Hara in the snowcapped Canadian Rockies until I became *Wild with Happy*. This play thrived with the support and nurturing of fellow artists such as Raul, Robert, Sharon, Maurice, Ariel, Phillip, Mandy, Oskar, Maria, Liz, Doug, Jen, Sarah, Philip, Christopher, Kelley, Meredith, Leslie, Jim and Linda.

WILD WITH HAPPY was produced at The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director; Mandy Hackett, Associate Artistic Director) in New York City, opening on October 23, 2012. It was directed by Robert O’Hara; the set and costume design were by Clint Ramos; the lighting design was by Japhy Weideman; the original music and sound design were by Lindsay Jones; the projection design was by Aaron Ryhne; and the production stage manager was Erin Maureen Koster. The cast was as follows:

GIL Colman Domingo
TERRY, CHURCH NURSE Korey Jackson
MO, ELDER BOVANE Maurice McRae
ADELAIDE, AUNT GLO Sharon Washington

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**SUNDANCE
INSTITUTE**

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CHARACTERS

GIL — 40-year-old African American male. Ivy League educated. Bitter. Sardonic. Deep down inside, a romantic and believer. He is our deconstructed Cinderella.

ADELAIDE/AUNT GLO — African American woman that is versatile to play 25 – 60s. Wide range of kind and good-natured to hell on wheels. From the fairy godmother to the evil stepmother.

TERRY/OTHERS: 30-year-old very good-looking man, very bright spirit. A healer. Prince Charming.

MO/OTHERS: 40-year-old African American male, vain, and sassy. Masculine-looking, well-built, with a dash of “lady.” The fairy.

NOTE: Asterisks (*) indicate overlap, and silences are to be played. They are key to the rhythm. This moves at a brisk pace. Acting ON the line is imperative for this surreal dark comedy of manners.

Suggested preshow music: Every possible version of the classic song “Get Happy.” Ending with the end-all-to-be-all version ... Judy Garland and Barbara Streisand. Lights Up!

WILD WITH HAPPY

GET UP AND GET US SOME JESUS!

Lights up on Gil, a forty-year-old African American man, dressed impeccably, standing in front of a theatrical curtain.

GIL. As a matter of fact, the last time I was in a church, it was very upsetting! We hadn't been to church in a really long time and Adelaide, my mother, said to me one Sunday morning that we had to "get up and get us some Jesus!" "Get us some Jesus?" I thought, as a precocious ten-year-old, I thought that Jesus had moved or something by the way that she had been throwing parties and cussin'! You see, the Saturday night before we went to this church service, we had a rent party. Why? 'Cause we needed the rent. Everyone was smoking and drinking and carrying on. Miss Richardson's RED WIG that she SWORE was her hair, almost caught on fire, as Miss Flossy's Virginia Slim cigarette dangled dangerously on the corner of her mouth, as she stood, posing as if she was a Virginia Slims model! She wasn't HARDLY a Virginia Slims model! They didn't look like Shirley from *What's Happening!!* Well, Adelaide was nowhere to be found until her latest boyfriend, Ray Ray, was caught showing some woman the backyard and stayed out there a little too long. My mother leapt out into that backyard as if she was that Bruce Lee doll with the Kung Fu Kick! You remember those? How old are you? Never mind! My mother cussed and turned that party OUT! I handed out coats from the bedroom with exceptional velocity! Adelaide went to bed drunk and shattered as I cleaned the entire house and sampled all of the leftover cocktails. So when Adelaide yelled into my room first thing Sunday morning, that we were going to "get up and get us some Jesus," I thought, was this heifa crazy? I was trying to get up and get us some sleep! (*The curtain opens and reveals a gigantic Black Jesus*

nailed to the cross. It is lit up with bright white lights. Gil shifts into his ten-year-old self. He holds Adelaide's hand. Suddenly Elder Bovane, played by the actor that plays Mo, and the Church Nurse, played by the actor that plays Terry appear. This is the church service to end all church services. It is from ten-year-old Gil's perspective. In Technicolor.)

ELDER BOVANE. So glad to see you, sister!

CHURCH NURSE. Lawd, look what the cat done dragged in!

ELDER BOVANE. Mmm, mmmph, mm-mph!

CHURCH NURSE. I hope the choich don't fall down! She got a ton of Fashion Fair on!!!

ELDER BOVANE. Welcome sister, we ain't seen you in a month of Sundays! Hey heeyy! The Lord will root you out of the devils house and bring you — BRING YOU BACK HOME! Hi dee hi dee ho!

CHURCH NURSE. *(To an unseen parishioner.)* Sinning Adelaide and her little limp-wristed Gil! Thank you, Jesus! Praise him!

ELDER BOVANE. SINNERS! YOU'VE COME ON HOME! COME ON HOME TO JESUS! You have been running and you cain't run no more. Drinking! Living with Lucifer. Carrying on! Smelling like Saturday night while staring Sunday dead in the eye! Have you ever noticed that when nothing is going right in your life you can't run from your problems? It is because you have what?

CHURCH NURSE. Left yourself!

ELDER BOVANE. Can I get a Cheech and Chong? It's because you what?

CHURCH NURSE. Left yourself!

ELDER BOVANE. Just like your man left you! *(Points to Adelaide.)* Hakalalakalaka! *(We hear the organ chords that will now drive this scene to pure rapture.)* Somebody told me about a party. Mmm-hhhmmm. Do you hear me? A partay! Where a woman! I said a WOE-man! Who was a member of this very church many moons ago! This WOE-man!

CHURCH NURSE. Who has a limp-wristed spawn of Satan!

ELDER BOVANE. Praise God! This woman got tired of the devil's work! And like the great M.C. Hammper said, "Turned that motha' out!" She turned that mother out and has crawled like a child wrapped in a Donna Karan dress, back into the loving embrace of this here house of the Lord! Can I get an Amen?

CHURCH NURSE. AMEN!

WILD WITH HAPPY

by Colman Domingo

3M, 1W (doubling)

From the mind of Colman Domingo (a Tony Award nominee for *The Scottsboro Boys* and an Obie Award winner for *Passing Strange*) comes a deeply imaginative and utterly outrageous new work that explores the bizarre comedy that lies within death and healing. Gil, an actor who's struggling to carve out his own new life, finds his worlds colliding when his mother dies and he decides to have her cremated. But where should he scatter the ashes? And can he make a fairytale ending for her in the one place that made her WILD WITH HAPPY?

"WILD WITH HAPPY, a sweet, funny and forgivably sentimental new play ... leaves behind a warm, pleasurable glow without becoming too sticky."

—The New York Times

"An irreverent, fast-moving comedy that satirizes organized religion, Disneyworld, the American funeral industry and 21st-century burial rituals ... Underlying all the one-liners are some serious themes about community, the value of rituals and the unexpected effects of grief. Warm-hearted and nicely informed by Domingo's irrepressible irony."

—Associated Press

"As a writer, Domingo has such a huge heart that you just want to indulge him."

—The New York Post

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