‘For Colored Girls’ tells story through verse and dance

Seven “colors” tell individual stories of women’s struggles, intertwine their individual tales, and come together to speak in a collective voice in *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*, the choreopoem being staged in Sacramento State’s Playwrights’ Theatre.

Performances are at 8 p.m. Nov. 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10; 2 p.m., Nov. 4 and 11; and 6:30 p.m. Nov. 7 and 8.

Written by Ntozake Shange and directed by Theatre and Dance Professor Melinda Wilson Ramey, the play focuses on the struggles and hardships of different women as they find God, peace, love and happiness in themselves.

It’s told through a choreopoem, meaning it is a poem set to dance. “They relate their stories through dance and tell their stories in poetic verse fashion,” Wilson Ramey says. The choreography was directed by Linda Goodrich, a Sacramento State professor and founder and director of Sacramento/Black Art of Dance.

Because the play is a collection of poems, with each poem standing on its own, the actors play seven “colors.” “They may be one person in one poem and a different person or representation in another poem,” Wilson Ramey says. “And when they put their colors together, they become this collective voice.”

Wilson Ramey also added three “shadows” bringing the integrated cast to a total of 10 performers.

Shasta Slaughter, a junior theater major, plays the Lady in Brown and explains the significance of the colors. “We all have different sides to ourselves,” she says. “You can consider them different hues, depending on the day, how you’re feeling or what you’re thinking.”

Elizabeth Ferreira, a junior majoring in English with a theater minor, portrays the Lady in Purple. “She’s similar to how I am,” she says. “She’s fiery and, at the same time, wounded in certain ways.”

To develop her character, Ferreira considered how women can be silenced throughout their lives. “Through this choreopoem and through these words, our
characters, our pieces of ourselves, are finally being heard when they otherwise would be silenced.

While the subject matter may sound rather heavy, there is great joy in *For Colored Girls*, with the actresses at times clapping, and singing a cappella harmony.

“It’s a fun, fun piece,” Wilson Ramey says, adding that the audience is invited to join in. “The whole point is it is a participatory performance, so we’re looking for audiences to come and play and sing and clap with us and enjoy with us.”

Tickets for the 6:30 p.m. performances are $8 general admission, students and seniors, and $5 for children. All other performances are $12 general, $10 students and seniors and $8 children. Tickets are available at the University Ticket Office, (916) 278-6156 or [http://bit.ly/xRmEZ8](http://bit.ly/xRmEZ8).

For more information, visit [www.csus.edu/dram](http://www.csus.edu/dram) or call (916) 278-6368. For media assistance, call Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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