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Johnson To Perform In 'Turf' In Citywide Tour Including Charlestown

In collaboration with 10 Boston-area actors, storytellers and singers, including Charlestown's Kristin Johnson, New York-based writer/director Robbie McCauley has created "Turf," a new performance theater work that explores issues of education, race and class relations in Boston over the past two decades. Produced and presented by The Arts Company in Cambridge, "Turf" will inaugurate the re-opening of the Charlestown Working Theater, 442 Bunker Hill St., where Johnson is co-director, on Friday and Saturday,

March 12 and 13 at 8 p.m. The Charlestown Boys & Girls Club is a community co-sponsor.

Throughout the month of March, "Turf" will be performed at four Boston neighborhood locations. The premiere will be at the Boston Center for the Arts in the South End on March 5 and 6. Following the Charlestown engagement, it will travel to The Strand Theater in Dorchester on March 18 and 19 and the South Boston Boys & Girls Club on March 26 and 27. All performances are at 8 p.m. except March 18,

which is at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$8 and, in Charlestown, are available in advance at **The Charles-**

town Patriot office, One Thompson Square. For other ticket locations call

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KRISTIN JOHNSON of Charlestown and John Ennis rehearse for the upcoming production of "Turf" which will be performed at the Charlestown Working Theater, 442 Bunker Hill St. at 8 p.m. on Friday, March 12 and Saturday, March 13.

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"Turf" is a mixed-media work that uses stories, music, slide and video images, dialogue and the words of living witnesses to explore the impact of the 1974 court order to desegregate Boston's public schools. "Turf" unfolds with drama and humor how one historical event affected many people and continues to affect a whole community. It celebrates and challenges the similarities and differences of culture, race, religion, class, belief and attitude within the city.

McCauley's 10 collaborators in the creation and performance of "Turf" are of different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and range in age from 17 to 55. In addition to Johnson, they are: Janice Allen from Mattapan, Paula Elliott and Terrence Yancey from the South End, John Ennis from Milton, Mari Novotny Jones from Hyde Park, Paul Leary and Tom Sypek from South Boston, Juanita Rodriques from Cambridge and James Spruill from Roxbury.

Over the past year, these artists have joined McCauley in collecting first-person accounts, recollections and anecdotes from individuals in Boston communities who describe experiences related to the 1974 federal man-

date and its aftermath. An open dialogue among these artists has also been central to the making of "Turf," and this dialogue will be carried into each performance. Members of the audience, in a welcoming environment, will be able to join McCauley and the actors in a discussion of contemporary issues.

"Turf" has a structure similar to jazz, according to McCauley. "I use the term 'conventional music' a lot. The music in the language of ordinary people, this conversational music, is a way of tuning into stories that need to be told over and over. The stories in 'Turf' are personal and charged, humorous and serious, and reflect a range of emotion, like the range in music. They are told in a jazz-like, organized improvisation, a form I have been working on for some time."

McCauley began her performance theater work in 1979, collaborating with composer Ed Montgomery

on "The History of the Universe According to Those Who've Had To Live It" and other pieces. Her work in New York theater, however, has spanned several decades and has included performances with Marshall Mason and Lanford Wilson at Cafe Cino and with Adrienne Kennedy at the New York Shakespeare Festival. On Broadway, she appeared in the original cast of "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf."

The Arts Company is a non-profit organization based in Cambridge, that collaborates with contemporary artists on the production, presentation and touring of new work in a variety of art forms. To keep the presentation of "Turf" close to the various communities from which it was generated, The Arts Company is presenting the piece in four neighborhood locations within the city of

Boston. This is being done with the assistance of a number of community co-sponsors, which include the Charlestown, Roxbury and South Boston clubhouses of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston and the United South End Settlements. The Boston Center for the Arts and The Strand Theater are also assisting the production.