



BWW Interview: Charlie Hudson III in A RAISIN IN THE SUN at Two River Theater 9/9 to 10/8

by Marina Kennedy

Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, launches its 2017/18 Season with Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, directed by Carl Cofield. The performances in Two River's Rechnitz Theater will begin on Saturday, September 9 and continue for an extended four-week run through Sunday, October 8.

The cast of *A Raisin in the Sun* includes Jasmine Batchelor, Nat DeWolf, Crystal A. Dickinson, Brandon J. Dirden, Willie Dirden, Charlie Hudson III, Brenda Pressley, Owen Tabaka, and York Walker. Andrew Binger and David Joel Rivera play the Moving Men.

Broadwayworld.com had the pleasure of interviewing Charlie Hudson III who plays Asagai in the production.

Charlie Hudson III performed at Two River Theater in *Seven Guitars*. He was last seen performing in Detroit '67 at Playmakers Rep. Previous shows include *The Mountaintop*, Northern Stage; *Father Comes Home from the Wars*, ART; *A Raisin in the Sun*, Barrymore Theatre (Broadway); *The Raisin Cycle: Clybourne Park & Beneatha's Place*, Baltimore Center Stage; *Hurt Village*, Signature; *Fences*, Virginia Stage; *The Piano Lesson*, Yale Rep; *Bike Wreck*, EST; *White Women Street*, Irish Rep; *"Master Harold"...and the boys*, Portland Stage; *Fly, Crossroads and Vineyard Playhouse*; *A Raisin in the Sun*, Richard III, *A Christmas Carol*, All the King's Men, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Trinity Rep; *Hillary*, New Georges; *Old Comedy*, Classic Stage; *Mother Courage*, Public Theater/NYSF; *Sweet Bird of Youth*, Williamstown; *Romeo and Juliet*, Bread Loaf Acting Ensemble; *Julius Caesar*, Topdog/Underdog, Brown/Trinity Consortium. TV: *The Night Of* (HBO), *Shades of Blues* (NBC), *The Good Fight* (CBS), *Unforgettable* (CBS), *Forever* (ABC), *The Rosa Parks Story* (CBS), and *A Raisin in the Sun "Revisited"* (PBS). Film credits include *Roxanne Roxanne*; *Complete*



Unknown; Newlyweeds; Lillian; and his voice is featured in the McGraw-Hill's PodClass GRE Vocabulary Study Guide. He is the 2003 KC/ACTF Irene Ryan Best Actor Award winner (Region IV) and is MFA graduate of the Brown University/Trinity Repertory Consortium.

What was your earliest interest in theatre?

I fell in love with the performing arts at a very young age. I remember telling my parents that I wanted to be Rudy's best friend on the The Cosby Show. Once my parents realized that I was serious about my desire to act, they started looking for opportunities for me to perform. If I remember correctly, my Aunt Betty heard about a summer theater program for kids at Alabama State University. She took me over there, and the rest is history.

Is there someone in particular who encouraged your career?

I've been extremely blessed to have the full support of my family to pursue my dreams. Everyone readily made themselves available to give me a ride to and from rehearsals and they were always in the audience for my shows. My Mother and Father went above and beyond to make sure that my dream was a priority.

What advice would you give young people seeking a career in the theater or performing arts?

First and foremost, you should have a healthy love of the arts. This love will sustain you during the hard times. With anything that you take seriously, I recommend that you continually study and find different ways to learn as much as possible. I believe that the learning process never stops, and if you incorporate that mentality into your work, you're bound to find success.

What are some of the challenges of your role of Asagai?

One of the biggest things when working with an accent is to make sure that you are always completely understood. After that, I want to make sure that the character's beliefs and desires are clearly articulated. Another major challenge to playing this character is making sure that is passionate feeling and opinions don't come across as overbearing.

Why do you think "A Raisin in the Sun" is an important show for our times?

A Raisin in the Sun has always been a very important literary work in my opinion. This country has continued to struggle with fairness, racial equality, freedom, and legacy. This play tackles all of these ideas head-on in a powerful way. The African-American community has been denied access to true freedom and wealth through unjust laws, intimidation, and the threat of death. Ms. Hansberry uses the Younger family, a loving and hard working group of people, to shed light on what a lot of minorities went through and continue to go through. Walter Lee, like every father I've met, wants to provide for his family and be able to give his offspring an inheritance to build upon. These struggles we still fight today.

How do you like being back at TRT?

I love being back here at Two Rivers Theater! There are very few places that have a true family atmosphere, and TRT is definitely one of those places. Everyone that works at TRT and the Red Bank community welcomes you with open arms. This is truly a second home.

Two River Theater is located at 21 Bridge Avenue, Red Bank, NJ. Ticket prices for A Raisin in the Sun range from \$40 to \$70, with discounts available for groups, seniors, and U.S. military personnel, their families, and veterans. A limited number of \$20 tickets are available for every performance; \$20 tickets may be partial view. Tickets for patrons under 30 are \$20 and include the best available seats at every performance. Tickets are available from www.tworivetheater.org or 732.345.1400.

Photo: Courtesy of Charlie Hudson III