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ROBBIN, FROM THE HOOD

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WOW!

Robbin, from the Hood, goes head-to-head with a multibillion-dollar conglomerate in Marlow Wyatt's invigorating follow-up to 2023's Best-of-the-Year Scenie-winning SHE.



Meet 17-year-old African-American

Robbin Woods (iesha m. daniels), who along with her Mexican-American high school classmate Juan Aviles-Rodriguez (Enrike Llamas) has just been given the opportunity of a lifetime, a summer job-training program at Kennedy Global, a corporation so humongous it's got its finger in pretty much every pie: Real Estate, Banking, Financial Investments, Communications, Pharmaceutical Technology, Sports, Entertainment, Fashion, A.I. Research, Urban and Rural Development, Solar Energy, Marketing Research, Education, and Oil.



Not only that, but no work

environment could be a farther cry from the hood Robbin and Juan call home than KG, Robbin caring for her rapidly deteriorating grandfather Percy (William L. Warren) and Juan sharing digs with holy-roller parents who have him out mornings spreading the gospel, no matter that their son is a non-believer.



As to how Robbin and her bestie got

these prestigious summer internships, well that's thanks to African-American KG executive Margaret Brown (Geri-Nikole Love), who has managed to persuade her white fellow exec Kyle Mayhew (Rob Nagle) that affording opportunities to gifted underprivileged teens like



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Robbin and Juan is precisely what Kennedy Global needs, no matter that Robbin has a reputation for being scrappy or that Juan spent a little time in Juvie for tagging and stealing art supplies when he was twelve.

Robbin is, after all, the only student in the history of her school district to master every Advanced Accounting, Algebra and Statistics course given to her, and promising young artist Juan could well end up KG's Graphics department if he succeeds in the executive mailroom where he's been assigned.



Thus begins a roller-coaster ride of a play as a freshly, professionally coiffed-and-garbed Robbin and Juan embark on a thrilling, eye-opening, and almost certainly disenchanting adventure in corporate America where greed is God and adulterous inter-executive hanky-panky must at all costs be kept under wraps.



Like last year's SHE, Robbin, from the Hood reveals playwright Marlow's talent for creating smart, engaging, enterprising young black women on the cusp of adulthood, and director Chuma Gault brings out the absolute best from a cast of stage vets and two highly promising newbies.

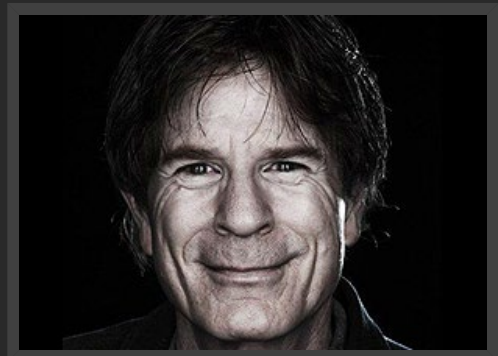
The instantly likable Daniels and Llamas are on fire as Robbin and Juan and never more so than when divergent paths provoke the play's most explosive scene. (Expect big things ahead from both.)



Warren is heartbreakingly real as a man slowly but surely losing control of his mind and body and Joshua R. Lamont is terrific as Robbin's victim-of-the-system incarcerated uncle Charlie.



Love and Nagle ace two very different roles in corporate offices and bedrooms, she as a woman who's climbed the ladder



ABOUT STEVEN STANLEY

As editor of StageSceneLA.com, Steven Stanley is one of Los Angeles' most prolific theater reviewers. He is also the author of *Moroccan Roll*, and an ESL instructor in the English Language Program at California State University, Los Angeles since 1979. ([read more](#))

photo credit: Eric Schwabel

of success without completely losing her principles and he as someone who didn't have nearly as high a ladder to climb or nearly as many principles to lose.



All of this adds up to a thoroughly entertaining, often edge-of-your seat new play, one whose main drawback is that it features over a dozen time-consuming scene changes, each of which involves cast members hidden under black hoodies moving scenic designer Amanda Knehans' set pieces this way and that way, and though John Zalewski's pulsating hip-hop/R&B underscoring and Nick Santiago's exciting, locale-establishing projections keep audience members occupied between scenes, these delays could probably only have been avoided on a stage wide enough to feature three or more different locations at once.

One more minor quibble. If you're going to divide a play into two acts, make sure the first one ends on a dramatic note. The lights-up signaling intermission here come as a complete surprise.



Derrick McDaniel's vibrant lighting, Wendell C. Carmichael's eclectic array of costumes, and Scottie Nevil's kitchen-and-corporate blend of props are all topnotch.

Alternate cast members Stirling Bradley, Jiliane Brown, Edgar de Santiago, Cherish Monique Duke, Borge Etienne, and Brian Graves have three scheduled performances in November. (See website for dates.)



Robbin, from the hood is produced by Danna Hyams, Taylor Gilbert, Duke, and Wyatt. Haowen Luo is associate producer. Maurie Gonzalez is stage manager. Celina Sumiak is intimacy/fight coordinator. David Elzer is publicist.

Exactly a year ago, Marlow Wyatt's SHE had me singing the praises of a young woman "who's bound and determined to soar." I was referring to Marlow's title character, but the words could just as easily have applied to the playwright herself. Robbin, from the Hood has Marlow Wyatt once again flying high, and taking the audience with her.

The Road Theatre, NoHo Senior Arts Colony, 10747 Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood.

Through November 17. Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00. Sundays at 2:00.
www.RoadTheatre.org

–Steven Stanley
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Photos: Lizzy Kimball
