

# Wings of Night Sky, Wings of Morning Light



Joy From musician, poet, and playwright Joy Harjo (Mvskoke) comes a deeply compelling journey of struggle, displacement, self-discovery, and healing. Invoking spoken word, storytelling, and song, Harjo combines character-driven narrative with tales inspired by the traditions of her people—and takes a few turns blowing a mean jazz saxophone. An allegorical work of tremendous

power, *Wings* demonstrates how theater and art can bring life full circle.

This unique and genre-bending one-woman play features Harjo's original music and a score that has been pushed and molded by Grammy award-winning record producer Larry Mitchell, who recently produced Harjo's *Winding Through the Milky Way* album.

Many of the songs are woven throughout the play. "Among Larry's many gifts," says Randy Reinholz, Artistic Director of Native Voices and *Wings* director, "is that he reaches into the story with the music and transports the action in amazing and unusual ways. I think the wide range of sounds he and Joy create together lifts *Wings* to the point of flight. "*Wings* is at the heart of theater—it is a heightened ceremony, a broad intersection of art forms, an intimate act that celebrates the beauty and investigates the inherent paradoxes of the human condition. Joy is fearless,

bringing all of her many talents to bear in this tour-de-force performance," continues Reinholz.

*Wings* was workshopped and performed as a staged reading at the Public Theater's 2007 Native Theater Festival in New York. Since then, it has received additional workshops in San Diego, Los Angeles, New Mexico, and Hawaii, and a staged reading with Native Voices at the Autry in Los Angeles.

*Joy Harjo's "Wings of Night Sky, Wings of Morning Light," begins with a creation myth. Harjo tells us how trickster Rabbit creates a clay man, more out of whimsy than for any real purpose. But Rabbit's prank backfires. The clay man's insatiable hunger for game, for women, for all the riches of the Earth, soon throws the universe out of balance. It is only belatedly that Rabbit realizes his fatal mistake: He has fashioned the clay man with no ears. The symbolism of that heedless, hungry clay man soon becomes apparent in Harjo's delicately structured narrative. Males, of a particularly capricious and abusive ilk, routinely dominate the unfortunate women in their orbit. Harjo's precociously sensitive heroine is the mixed-blood child of a Cherokee waitress and an alcoholic Creek father.*

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