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## Create Carolina Announces May 14-June 2 Classes, Workshops and Performances

### Quick Facts

- Producer Charles Randolph-Wright will direct the Vietnam-themed play "Medal of Honor Rag" as part of the Create Carolina Arts Festival.
- The play will run May 25-26 and June 2 in Johnson Theatre.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Acclaimed writer, director and producer of theatre, film and television **Charles Randolph-Wright** unveiled details Jan. 25 about **Create Carolina**, a partnership with Winthrop University to create a unique annual arts festival on campus. The first **Create Carolina Festival** at Winthrop will run May 14-June 2 and encompass acting and playwriting classes, workshops and performances under the York, S.C., native's artistic direction. This year's festival theme centers on war and its social and psychological effects.

"When I came to Winthrop for the Medal of Honor in the Arts ceremony in 2005, I was excited and inspired by Winthrop's artistry and diversity. I felt Winthrop would be an ideal location for an arts festival," **Randolph-Wright** said. "I look forward to raising the awareness of the amazing talent and energy that is in the Carolinas."

Once an honors pre-medical graduate of Duke University, **Randolph-Wright** turned to the arts after studying acting with the Royal Shakespeare Company in London and dance with the Alvin Ailey School in New York City. His directorial film debut "Preaching to the Choir" swept the feature film prizes at the American Black Film Festival as well as many other festivals. He currently is writing and directing the film version of the stage musical "Mama, I Want to Sing."

**Randolph-Wright's** television credits include writing and producing the acclaimed Showtime series "Linc's" as well as directing the series "South of Nowhere." His recent theatre projects include writing the plays "Cuttin' Up" and "Blue" (starring Phylicia Rashad) and directing the 50th anniversary tour of "Guys and Dolls" (starring Maurice Hines), "Me and Mrs. Jones" (starring Lou Rawls) and the world premiere of Frank Loesser's last musical "Senor Discretion."

For **Create Carolina**, **Randolph-Wright** will direct "**Medal of Honor Rag**," Tom Cole's 1976 play about a decorated Vietnam veteran's troubled adjustment to life after a controversial war. Charlotte, N.C., native Chandler Parker, whom Randolph-Wright directed in "Preaching to the Choir," will play the black veteran, DJ, while Polly Adkins, Winthrop alumna and local theatre veteran, has been cast as the psychiatrist. Written as a male role, Adkins will be the first female to play this role.

"With writing that transcends time and place, this play simply is extraordinary. Although written 30 years ago, the play feels as if it were written for today as young men and women deal with survivor guilt, post-traumatic stress, the horror of war, and a divided populace here at home," said **Randolph-Wright**. "In addition to the compelling storyline, these two actors are phenomenal, and we are honored that the playwright Tom Cole has allowed us to present to Carolina audiences a new interpretation of his tremendous work."

Showtimes will be Friday, May 25, Saturday, May 26, and Saturday, June 2, at 8 p.m. and Saturday, June 2, at 2 p.m. in **Johnson Theatre**.

In keeping with the theme of war, a staged reading of a new commissioned play by New York based

playwright, filmmaker and actor **Jonathan Davidson** rounds out the performance schedule. The play is a musical comedy inspired by the **Granny Peace Brigade**, a group of elderly woman arrested for attempting to enlist in the Armed Forces as a form of protest against the Iraq War. The play deals not only with issues of war but with youth apathy, the generation gap and the notion that one is never too old, too young or too insignificant to make a difference.

Showtimes will be Thursday, May 31, and Friday, June 1, at 8 p.m. in Johnson Theatre.

The **Create Carolina Arts Festival** is a three-week multidisciplinary intensive arts experience offering three hours of university credit and the expectation for college-age students and adults to participate in production of both the play and staged reading through classes and workshops. Opportunities are available for cast and crew. At least nine master workshops also will be offered. This creative catalog of activities will provide Winthrop students and the community a variety of hands-on cultural events for their participation.

**Create Carolina** is committed to the collaboration among students, faculty, emerging artists and industry professionals. This interaction is central to a mission of not only creating a major arts festival in the Carolinas but also providing an opportunity for local students and artists to gain additional skills needed to succeed in the profession.

Tuition for the three credit hour course, THRT 490: "Arts as Social Commentary," is \$500. The cost of each master workshop is \$25. Over the coming months, more information will follow about the topics and guest artists presenting at the master workshops. Prior enrollment at Winthrop University is not required for participation in these festival activities.

For more information on classes, times and cost, contact Andrew Vorder Bruegge, chair of the **Department of Theatre and Dance**, at 803/323-2287.

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