

Tyler native, Arlington resident to join Color Purple cast

By Antoinette Nevils
Contributing Writer

The story that touched millions of people is back again for another round of tours across the world, as Oprah Winfrey's *The Color Purple* musical returns to the stage once again. The hit Broadway show is coming to the Dallas Music Hall at Fair Park from January 19-24. The show will be filled with passion, spirit, and great performances.

There are many interesting characters that light up the stage in *The Color Purple*. One of the characters is Shug, who will be played by Tyler-born, now Arlington-based actress, Virlinda Stanton in late February. When Stanton joins the cast in Baltimore, after rehearsing in New York City, she will play Shug as an understudy and portray the church lady Darlene, one of the three gossiping church ladies.



Virlinda Stanton

"I like musicals mostly because I enjoy singing; it's my passion, it comes from the heart and soul and the acting kind of came later," Stanton told *The Dallas Weekly*. "Once I saw a play, a musical at my church, then I said that's what I want to do, I want to be able to do both."

Stanton knew she wanted to be an entertainer since age nine. Her first play after high school was in a production of *The Wiz*, where she played the character of Dorothy.

"Throughout schooling and just watching television it has been my dream to be a

five-star entertainer," Stanton said. "I just wanted to do it all from acting, singing, dancing, you name it all, I've done it. I just kept going forward with it."

Stanton has performed in over 10 musicals and plays, including *The Wiz* and *The Lion King*. She loves to sing and act, and is excited to take on this new role and musical. She first saw the play at church and felt the passion and spirit instantly.

"What moved me so was the passion, I felt the holy spirit, the actors, they weren't acting, they became what the show was about; you could feel that connection from the beginning and it was from the soul. It's very moving and touching," she said. Stanton said she felt like she was at church, and could feel the connection to the music.

The story is famous for its unique characters and its difficult issues addressed. For women dealing with abuse, love, marriage, and

friendship, it is an entertaining yet touching experience. Stanton said this play allows women who have been abused to relate to the characters, and may even help them open up about their issues. She said that unfortunately, many people who are abused sometimes feel like the

problem instead of the victim. Audiences should leave with the message of hope, and that people shouldn't judge or put down others. Anyone can be loved despite what happens in life, Stanton said.

The musical will not only be filled with important life

lessons, but also lively costumes, African dances, and great musical numbers and acting. The current run will go to Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth from Jan. 26-31.

Stanton said that her cast will make a third Dallas run of the musical play late this year.

Marry Your Baby Daddy

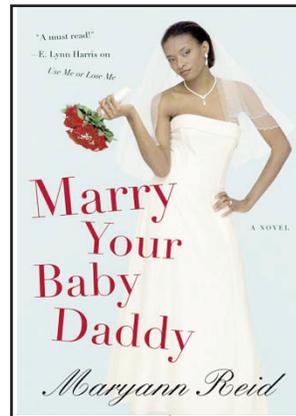
By Maryann Reid
Reviewed by Cheryl Smith

What an interesting concept--women marrying the men they have babies from. When you consider the number of African American women who have children out of wedlock, many of them never developing a relationship with the fathers, it sounds good to hear someone saying those important words--marry your baby's daddy.

Well, when Ms. Reid's most important character in

Marry Your Baby Daddy, Grandma June, dies, she has a stipulation in her will that is sure to be an issue for her three granddaughters. She's leaving them each \$1 million dollars, but they have six months to marry the father of their children!

Now the task would be so much easier if they could share the information, but they can't. The baby daddies can not know that they stand to get a nice windfall if they marry their baby mommas. Grandma June wants better for her



granddaughters and their children, but she does not want money to be the driving factor for the fathers.

The story takes several different turns as the men

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