Iowa New Play Festival

University of Iowa

Monday, May 5, through Saturday, May 10

And this is why I don't live in Iowa City.

From May 5 through 10, the University of Iowa presents the annual New Play Festival, and if you're a theatre junkie such as myself, this celebration of debuting works might tempt you into blowing off your job, your social engagements, and your friends and family members for six straight days.

Taking place at several locales within the university's Theatre Building, this year's festival features staged performances of five new pieces by Iowa authors, more than a half-dozen readings, Q&A with the writers, and guest respondents from the realm of professional theatre, including John Eisner, the producing director of the Lark Play Development Center in New York, and Regina Taylor (pictured), the award-winning actress from the TV series *The Unit* and *I'll Fly Away*

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The festival schedule can be found at (http://www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa), and among this year's titles are Sarah Sander's
ménage à trois
exploration
Seven Dreams of Her
, Jennifer Fawcett's fantasy drama
The Toymaker's War
, and Morgan Sheehan-Buba's
Dust Town
, which the Web site tells us involves "a man, a monster, a thing from the dark, a hero, and a three-headed dog." Hmm. I didn't know Todd was the subject of a
play
... .

For more information on the Iowa New Play Festival, call (319) 335-2700.

Acting Smart

Helpful Tips on Appearing More Intelligent Than You Actually Are

For the organization's final Visiting Artists of the 2007-8 season, Quad City Arts has recruited the performers of **The Vanginanga Troupe**, who, on May 2, will present a 7 p.m. public concert at Augustana College's Centennial Hall. If the subject pops up in conversation and you wish to join in, here are five things to know in order to avoid looking stupid:

1) Know who they are. Dedicated to raising awareness of traditional Rwandan dance and song, the Vanginanga Troupe is a trio of musicians who perform (in traditional costume) at colleges, universities, and festivals worldwide, who have released four albums, and who frequently collaborate with the famed Rwandan artist Samputu.

2) Know what they do. In addition to singing and dancing, the musicians play such instruments as the inanga (guitar), amokondera (trumpets), ingoma (drums), and icyembe (piano).

3) Know who the troupe is composed of. The trio's members are Fidele Mutagoma, August Mbanda, and Vanginanga Troupe founder Vincent Nsengiyumva.

4) Know how to *pronounce* "Nsengiyumva." It's sin-JOOM-va.

5) Know how to effectively employ his name in a sentence. Say, "I understand that Vincent Nsengiyumva is incredibly gifted on the inanga, amokondera, ingoma, and icyembe." Then smile with confidence, even if you're not sure that you pronounced those words correctly.

For more information on the Vanginanga Troupe's May 2 performance, visit (http://www.quadcityarts.com).

A World of Culture: India

Family Museum

Saturday, May 3, 1 p.m.

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