

The Body Project: Anatomy, Relationships, and Representation
An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference
University of Missouri
Presented April 12, 2008

Milbre Burch

MU Department of Theatre
Theatrical Performance

“Here and Now/Hear and (k)Now”

Funny, frank, informative and touching, “Here and Now/Hear and (k)Now” is a one-woman show examining female sexuality within the context of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) epidemic. It is presented through the eyes of a middle-aged woman who is a newly diagnosed carrier of the virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control, by the age of 50 more than 80% of American women will have contracted at least one strain of HPV. Certain strains of the virus cause 70% of all cervical cancers. In recent years HPV infection rates have reached epidemic proportions among young women (and presumably among young men). At present, the epidemic is addressed by a campaign to vaccinate young women aged 9-26 against the four most virulent strains of HPV. There is no vaccine currently being offered to men.

Unless they are infected with the strains that cause genital warts or anal or penile cancer, men with HPV tend to be asymptomatic. Medical researchers began to make the link between HPV and cervical cancer when husbands of women who had died of the disease married again and their second wives began to be diagnosed with cervical cancer. If one in ten people is gay, nine out of ten women are at risk of being HPV- infected by men. The HPV-infected mother of two daughters, I don't understand why women aren't taking to the streets and pushing for inoculation of men against this sexually transmitted virus. With this performance, I'm headed out the door by way of the stage.

This is a work-in-progress originally developed in Dr. Heather Carver's Advanced Adaptation of Literature for the Stage class. 15-60 minutes would be available for the conference.

Audience Feedback on the First Fifteen Minutes of the Show

“Excellent, moving, powerful!”

“Great visuals!”

“Wonderful performance! Great writing!”

Biography of Performer

A Grammy-nominated performing and recording artist, Milbre Burch is an internationally known storyteller. She has appeared at the National Storytelling Festival,

the LA Women's Theatre Festival, the NC Stage Company Theatre in Asheville, NC, and the Sushi Performing and Visual Arts "Solo Visions" Festival in San Diego, and at storytelling festivals and other venues in 32 states and 12 European cities. A Master's Degree applicant, she has attended graduate-level classes at MU since summer, 2007.

Technical Needs

Ideally this performance would take place in the Corner Playhouse as it affords the raked seating, black floor and black cubes needed to mount the performance at this stage of its development. Otherwise, the performer will ask to borrow the black cubes and find a piece of slate for the part of the show that involves drawing the female reproductive system in chalk on the floor. Whatever the setting, it would be helpful for the audience to sit in raked seating for the sightlines to be optimal. If the performance space is any bigger than the Corner Playhouse, a remote lapel microphone and sound system would also be needed.