

Daily Press

"A Raisin in the Sun" shines at Virginia Stage Company

April 03, 2010 | By David Nicholson | 247-4794

Thoughtful plays engage us on many different levels, and Virginia Stage Company has found one in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun."

When it was first presented on Broadway 50 years ago, the play focused on the struggles of an African-American family searching for a better life. Their dreams are about to become a reality with the arrival of a \$10,000 insurance check paid on the death of the family's father, but each member has a different idea of how to spend the money. The sharpest disagreement is between Mama Younger, who wants to buy a house in a better neighborhood, and her son, Walter, who wants to go into business with his friends and buy a liquor store.

The yearning for a better life still occupies our thoughts in viewing this play today, but what emerges more compellingly are the honest relationships Hansberry has drawn between the various members of the Younger family. Those portraits stand out because of several fine performances, including Elain Graham as Mama, Wendell B. Franklin as Walter and Lisa Renee Pitts as his wife, Ruth.