

## **Bullins and Kayden to launch preparations for "Storyville"**

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Award-winning playwright Ed Bullins and eclectic composer/lyricist Mildred Kayden will be in San Diego March 22-25 to launch preparations for the world premiere of their jazz musical "Storyville," which opens at the University of California, San Diego May 18.

Bullins and Kayden will join other principals, production personnel and cast members at a press conference, cocktail party and introduction to the show at 8 p.m. Friday, March 25, in the International Center, Hutchinson Way, on the Matthews campus UC San Diego.

The musical, which will include local cast members as well as theatrical talent from Los Angeles and the East Coast, spins off from the events just preceding the shutting down of Storyville, New Orleans' famed "Back-O-Town" section. Storyville was the home of New Orleans jazz and America's first experiment with legalized vice. Its inhabitants shout and dance their way throughout Bullins' and Kayden's re-creation of the rough, romantic and syncopated early days of what has been called America's finest art form - jazz music.

Jazz is a part of the experience of everyone growing up in the United States and "Storyville" is a panorama of such jazz stories and jazz characters, to quote composer/lyricist Kayden, as "the old-time jazzman with his head turned back, eyes closed, wailing the blues, the Holy Rollers clapping the beat in church, dancing at the pulpit, the waltzes of elegant Frenchmen around the gazebo in the park, the gorgeous sexy coonshouters in Funky Butt Hall, the whorehouse pianist at his upright, the gaudy Grand Marshal at the funeral and his spasm band second line following along, the little boy at the dock learning to play the trumpet from an old man

"Certainly," adds Kayden, "New Orleans was not the only American city where jazz grew up, but Storyville, that unique district in the French Quarter where America's first experiment with legalized vice flourished, was the most colorful background for a musical."

Kayden explains she intended the life and times of Storyville to be "an original re-creation, for that is the essence of a musical -- to see and hear these people not as historical characters, but as living people with the same ghetto problems we still have today."

Kayden suggested that playwright Ed Bullins write the book of "Storyville," she says, because this well-known and well-respected writer "had a first-hand knowledge of the musicians, singers, dancers and denizens of our world of 'Storyville.'"

A New York director, according to Kayden, heard of the project and suggested UC San Diego professor of drama Floyd Gaffney as "the man who could bring this to life." Gaffney will act as co-artistic director with Los Angeles choreographer Jaime, Rogers, whose credits include television and Broadway dance and musical design and direction and who has been dancing professionally since the age of 9.

Cecil Lytle, an assistant professor of music at UC San Diego, will be musical director of "Storyville." Lytle is known and respected as both a classical and a jazz musician. He has founded several jazz ensembles and a 32-voice Gospel Choir at UC San Diego.

Elan, a fashion and theatrical costume designer, now based in Los Angeles, will be costume designer for the show. Elan's designs have been featured in Home Magazine and in several film and television productions.

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For information contact: Barbara Ann Firger, 452-3120