



PHOTO BY SIDNEY DAVIS

**COMFORTING SCENE**—Tasha Smith and Ben Cain act out scene from "Sacred Ground" by the Kuntu Repertory Theatre.



PHOTO BY SIDNEY DAVIS

**DANCE**—Candace Smith, Rachel Cooper and Sheriden Booker perform in the Valerie Lawrence play "Sacred Ground" by the Kuntu Repertory Theatre.

## 'Sacred Ground' leads off Pitt's Kuntu Repertory Theatre season

**PITTSBURGH**—The University of Pittsburgh's internationally-known Kuntu Repertory Theatre has announced its 1998-1999 season which celebrates Pittsburgh playwrights. The four productions are:

- "Sacred Ground," written by Valerie Lawrence and directed by Vernell Lillie. Performed through Oct. 10 in the Stephen Foster Memorial Auditorium.

- "Lifting," written by Frank Hightower and directed by Ally Woods. Performed Jan. 28-Feb. 13 in the Stephen Foster Memorial Auditorium.

- "Papa's Blues," written by Javon Johnson and directed by Vernell Lillie. Performed April 14-May 1 in the Pitt Studio.

- "Sing Black Hammer," written by William Mayfield and directed by Eileen Morris. Performed June 17-July 3 in the

Stephen Foster Memorial Auditorium.

All four playwrights boast ties to the Pittsburgh region. Each is a graduate of the Kuntu Writers Workshop founded in 1976 by Rob Penny and August Wilson. Lawrence, a Franklin Park resident, opens the season with the world premiere of "Sacred Ground," set "at the annual fish fry, (where) church members, in rousing gospel and spiritual sounds, raise their ancestors, revealing a painful history while seeking to heal the wounds of the past."

Hightower's connection to

the area began in the late 1960s, when he worked with the First Black Horizon Theatre in Pittsburgh. Johnson, whose play is the 1998 winner of the Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, is a master of fine arts candidate in the department of theater arts at the University of Pittsburgh. Mayfield's play is the winner of the Theodore Ward Prize.

Performances are held Thursday through Sunday. Thursday through Saturday performances start at 8 p.m. Sunday curtain time is 4 p.m. For more information, call 412-624-7298.