

## ***RUINED***

By Jane Zussman, April 26, 2012

This is the kind of bold choice we've come to expect from Peppermint Creek. This tragic African saga by Lynn Nottage, directed by Deborah Keller, explores the insanities of war and the accompanying brutalization of women in war-torn Congo.

Sounds pretty dark, and it IS -- but the humanity of the characters along with some wonderful background music as well as beautiful singing and dancing make it entertaining as well. It is a challenging script, with a challenging leading role. "Mama Nadi" (Chelsea Lucas) has created a brothel that is an island of survival for herself and her women. She is a larger than life character, hardened by her situation, with a well disguised heart. Young Chelsea does a good job portraying this complex, strong woman. Mama takes in two war victims, beautifully played by Ja'Nay McClaster and Danielle Mitchell -- and Teri Brown is excellent as her more "seasoned" prostitute, "Josephine." Sineh Wurie as "Christian" the philosophical salesman manages to redeem an otherwise pretty damnable picture of the male sex. (There's a useful list of organizations on the back of the program to which people can contribute or find more information on these issues, which continue to this day.)

*Ruined* continues at 8pm Saturday and 2pm Sunday -- then 8pm Thur/Fri/Sat (no Sunday) NOT at Creole Gallery as usual but at the CURRY STREET THEATRE, which is the former Miller Community Center 6025 Curry Lane, 48911. It is on the south side, off Miller Road just west of the south Cedar intersection, a little "driveway-like" street just east of North Elementary School. \$15/\$10 - [www.peppermintcreek.org](http://www.peppermintcreek.org)