

THE 99-SEAT BEAT

BY DARYL H. MILLER

**'Native Son' by
Antaeus Theatre**

The essentials: Clamp down hope long enough and something's bound to explode. Richard Wright showed how it can happen in his searing 1940 novel "Native Son," in which a toxic mix of poverty, fatherlessness, lack of opportunity and rage propel Bigger Thomas, a young black man, toward violence. Among the book's many telling lines: "There was just the old feeling, the feeling that he had had all his life: he was black and had done wrong; white men were looking at something with which they would soon accuse him."

Why this? Wright meticulously spells out what's going on in Bigger's mind, and what's there reflects what W.E.B. Du Bois called the "double consciousness" — seeing himself as the dominant culture sees him: as less worthy, less valuable, always less. Nambi E. Kelley's adaptation manifests the double consciousness as a character. Andi Chapman, who is directing for the Antaeus Theatre Company, says she wants the audience "to experience this play from the inside out," to live inside Bigger's head.

Details: Antaeus, 110 E. Broadway, Glendale. 8 p.m. Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays; ends June 3. \$30 and \$34. (818) 506-1983, www.antaeus.org