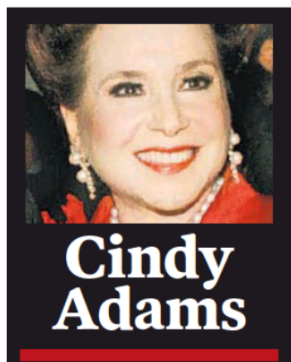


December 12, 2022

Life 'Lesson' in friendship



B'WAY'S SRO Ethel Barrymore Theatre houses August Wilson's "The Piano Lesson" with **Samuel L. Jackson**. Why only a limited run through January? Its director **LaTanya Richardson Jackson**: "Movie stars have to go where the bills get paid."

LaTanya, Jackson's wife of 42 years: "I was raised in Georgia by grandparents. She was a cook, he sold hardware. Mom a nurse. My uncle ran the post office. Aunt, board of Ed. Stationed in Germany, my Marine father wrote poorly, so my name, Sonya, ended up LaTanya.

"At 14 I was in pageants in Spelman College — where I met Sam. That's when I could remember everything. Years later, acting in 'To Kill a Mockingbird,' I forgot my lines."

She run lines with Sam



Shea Whigham (left) stops in to see pals **LaTanya** and **Samuel L. Jackson** in Broadway's "The Piano Lesson."

at home? "No. He's not that type guy. We're not in bed and me rehearsing him. We watch movies. Maybe in my foolishness of being a black woman in America, I wasn't even scared to be directing something this major — and I never thought of anyone but Sam for this.

"Y'know, audiences rattle paper, phones go off but really disruptive are latecomers. The cast sees people who have to stand to let them in. Not like a

movie where the screen won't see you.

"We love New York. I'm eating and drinking too much in your great restaurants. It's like a big cocktail time. Back again is the martini — and I'm loving it."

Saying goodbye we shared a laugh because we also shared our very close friend — Judge **Judy**. And Judge Judy, LaTanya Richardson and my Yorkshire terrier **Jellybean** all have the same birthday.