

Cottonwood, AZ — March is Women's History Month and what better way to honor women than to learn about how they shaped the history of the Verde Valley and Sedona. Experience an hour of music, laughter, tears, and a whole lot of pioneer women's soul with the Blazin' M Ranch's live production of Dev Ross' *A Woman's Hand*, featured the first four Sundays in March, 2014. Along with the Blazin' M's signature chuckwagon dinner and pre-dinner activities and attractions, guests will also engage in interactive experiences with the colorful Old West living history characters in the courtyard, showcasing the hard work, challenges, triumphs and everyday hardships of women in the 1800's.

From the moment the production opens, the audience begins to experience the life of a woman forced to pick up the pieces of her life and move out west, as well as the women already present in the wild frontier, Native Americans with their own stories to tell. Through dialogue and song, the hour-long production takes us up to Jerome to meet the first African-American woman to own a business there, into the life of a Chinese singsong girl, to a soiled dove from Flagstaff who can definitely handle herself (and her whiskey), and through the story of an operatic Latina who helped found the Homemaker's Club. Of course, no play about the history of the Verde Valley would be complete without Sedona Schnebly, —*A Woman's Hand* promises guests a glimpse into the trials and the triumphs of Sedona's namesake.

The result of tireless research by Dev Ross and author and historian Kate Ruland-Thorne, this play features a small treasure trove of women who helped weave the fabric of Sedona and the Verde Valley. Their stories are heartwarming, often heartbreaking, and rich with spirit. In true 1800's fashion, popular music from the day supports the play just as music so often supported and uplifted the rugged life of a lady pioneer.

Along with producer Dev Ross, Sedona favorite, singer, songwriter and actress, Shondra Jepperson, is also producing the show. Both are pleased to announce that successful stage and film actress, Michele Lamar Richards, a successful stage and film actress mostly known for her role as Whitney Houston's sister in Kevin Costner's, *The Bodyguard*, is currently working as a writer, producer, director and professional acting coach for studios. (Some selected credits as an dialogue coach are: *Imagine That*, with Eddie Murphy as well as numerous projects with John Singleton - *Boyz In The Hood*, *Baby Boy*, *2 Fast 2 Furious* and *Four Brothers*.) Her theatre career has spanned over two decades internationally as well as domestically. (Selected highlights are; *Hopscotch* – Director – Theatre de Marie Stuart, Paris, France, Artistic Director - St. Croix Academy of the Arts, St. Croix, USVI, *Lone Wolf Rhapsody* – Director (garnering a Dramalogue award,) and *Anna in the Tropics* – Director for the Graduate Program at American Academy of the Arts, Los Angeles. And as a producer she has garnered the 2002 San Diego Latino Film Festival's Audience Choice for *The Hungry Woman*. Michele is currently working on her film short *Bar Room Babies* shot entirely in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Sponsored by National Processing Solutions, Inc., limited dates for this historical production are March 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd. For dinner and show reservations call (928) 634-0334 or book on-line at blazinm.com. Gates open at 5:00PM for pre-show activities and actor/audience interactions. Dinner is

served at 6:30PM. The hour-long show starts at 7:30PM. Adults: \$35.95+tax, Seniors: \$32.95+tax, Children (3-12). \$19.95+tax.