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LOOKING BACK AT THE END OF THE WORLD

For the past 25 years, Detroit's **Ron Allen** has been inciting young people to write by his example as a poet, teacher, mentor and cultural activist. As the founder of the city's longest-running poetry series, Horizons In Poetry (HIP), Allen was way ahead of the curve of the current spoken word/performance scene. Allen has been expansive in his vision and strident in his prophetic call that only by making art a part of everyday life can we hope to save our city, state and civilization from oblivion and self-destruction. Lately, Allen has broadened his own horizons by becoming a playwright. This Friday celebrates the opening of his first play (which he also directs) at the First Unitarian-Universalist Church (4605 Cass) in Detroit. Entitled "**The Last Church At**

The End of the Twentieth Century," the work examines, via political satire, the notions of ego, vanity, gettin' paid and the jive word, and will be performed by Allen's company, the Thick Knot Rhythm Ensemble. Allen says that "this is not a narrative play in the usual sense, but instead, we have come up with a theater of the strong arm word. It talks about how the human spirit is being depleted by ego and greed. This happens in a metaphorical context via attitudes, and physical and psychic dramas." And

while the company's series of movements, monologues and dialogues is not a linear story, there are many stories contained within and all of them have a message or ten. "Ultimately, the relevancy of our project is that of attempting to use the creative word in order to facilitate healing of minds, hearts and bodies. We can use surreal theater to bring forth living, breathing images." If past experience is any guide, if Allen can envision it, we can learn from it. "The Last Church At The End of the Twentieth Century," will be performed Fridays and Saturdays this month beginning on Oct. 4. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Fridays and 2 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets are \$10 and each performance will be opened by a local poet reading their work. For more information, call 313-833-9102. —**Thom Jurek**

