

Newsfrom Karamu House, Inc.



Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –Thursday, May 9, 2007
15th Annual R. Joyce Whitley
ArenaFest Festival of New Plays

Over forty plays were submitted last fall for consideration to be part of the 15th Annual R. Joyce Whitley Arenafest Festival of New Plays for presentation this year. Eight plays were selected; five of which were written by playwrights from the Greater Cleveland area. These local playwrights are Cornel Calhoun, III, Michael Oatman, Vickie Williams Morris, Ernesta Thomas and Gwen Wright. The ArenaFest Festival of New Plays are performed as staged readings and will take place nightly in Karamu's Arena Theatre May 14th thru May 24th.

The annual Arenafest festival is named in honor of the late R. Joyce Whitley, a major contributor to Karamu House. Plays chosen for ArenaFest must focus on themes of the African American experience. The two week festival of stage readings are double billed and will be performed, Monday-Friday at 7pm & 9 pm of the first week and Monday-Thursday of the second week.
the Arena Theatre. **Admission is free.**

Jim K. Spriggs, the moderator, will conduct a post-discussion after each reading with audience and playwright (if present). **These are the selected plays, dates and times for 2007.**

MONDAY, May 14 @ 7:00PM & FRIDAY, May 18th @ 9:00PM

***Ceremonies for Nineteen Fifty Eight* by Cornell H. Calhoun, III (Cleveland, OH)**
Local restaurant owner battles medical giant for his property on East 43rd Street.
(director: Renee Matthews-Jackson)

MONDAY, May 14 @ 9:00PM & FRIDAY, May 18th @ 7:00PM

***Stormy Monday* by Gregory Carr (St. Louis, MO)**
A young poet, storyteller and professor, who takes us on a trip through his world, reflecting on the recent events of his life.
(director: Timothy Avant))

TUESDAY, May 15 @ 7:00PM & THURSDAY, May 17th @ 9:00PM

***Redemption of Allah Black* by Reginald Edmund**

Redemption of Allah Black tells the story of a paroled ex-con recently released from prison who tries to go straight but finds that the world he returns to is a difficult one to find redemption within.
(director: Kim Brown)

TUESDAY, May 15 @ 9:00PM & THURSDAY, May 17th @ 7:00PM

***Remnants from Senegal* by Von H. Washington, Sr. (Kalamazoo, MI)**

Members of the Michigan arm of the Jenkins family have been charged with preparing a historical program for a family reunion near Charleston, South Carolina. Chucky, a student studying African History at a Southern black college agrees to spearhead the project. As the family members show up for their rehearsal, and unexpected cousin arrives and desires to be a part of the program. She is told that this may not be possible because the order of the program is set but she insists on staying anyway.

(director: E. B. Smith)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2007 @ 7:00 PM & MONDAY, May 21 @ 7:00PM

***This Girl's life* by Ernesta Thomas (Cleveland, OH)**

(director: Neal Hodges)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2007 @ 9:00 PM - SCENE STUDY

MONDAY, May 21 @ 9:00PM & WEDNESDAY, May 23 @ 7:00PM

***Even the Blind Can See* by Vickie William Morris (Cleveland, OH); Music by Duane A. Morris**

For years William sat in the penitentiary even after new evidence proved he was innocent. However, the parole board would only grant his freedom if he agreed to change his plea to guilty and to be registered as a sex offender. William refused the stipulation and remained in prison until the State of Ohio granted him his freedom without being labeled a sex offender.

(director: iris Tucker-Berry)

TUESDAY, May 22 @ 7:00PM & THURSDAY, May 24th @ 9:00PM

***Ms. Rosetta and The Mt. Calvary M. Club* by Gwen Wright (Cleveland, OH)**

(director: Doug Pratt)

TUESDAY, May 22 @ 9:00PM & THURSDAY, May 24th @ 7:00PM

***In Man* by Michael Oatman (Cleveland, OH)**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2007 @ 9:00 PM - SCENE STUDY

ArenaFest plays were selected by a readers committee and coordinated by Festival Moderator, Jim K. Spriggs and Terrence Spivey, Artistic Director.

Gregory J. Ashe, Interim Executive Director

Karamu is located at 2355 East 89th Street, on the corner of East 89th and Quincy Avenue. Karamu is the oldest African American Cultural Arts Institution in the United States and is listed in the National Registry of Historic places and the recipient of an Ohio Historical Marker.

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