



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Andrea Wedren
awedren@karamuhouse.org
216-272-1084

**KARAMU HOUSE'S PRESENTATION OF KEITH HAMILTON COBB'S
AMERICAN MOOR WINS BEST TOURING PRODUCTION FROM
CLEVELAND CRITICS CIRCLE THEATER AWARDS**

CLEVELAND, Ohio– January 6, 2023: Karamu House is proud to announce that it has been awarded Best Touring Production for Keith Hamilton Cobb's *American Moor* by the Cleveland Critics Circle (CCC). This poetic exploration of Shakespeare, race, and America. Directed by Kim Weild and written and performed by national television and theatre actor, Keith Hamilton Cobb, the action of the play takes place in an audition for the role of Shakespeare's character, Othello. A middle-aged African American man is auditioning for the role opposite a male director who is considerably younger and white. During the audition, the director, from his place of authority and oblivious privilege, attempts to guide the actor's performance towards a rendition of the black character that he (the director) insists is most authentic.

American Moor, published by Methuen Drama, ran off-Broadway at Cherry Lane Theatre in the fall of 2019. It is the recipient of an Elliot Norton Award, an AUDELCO Award, two IRNE Awards, and is part of the permanent collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Visit [AmericanMoor.com](https://www.americanmoor.com)

Each year, CCC honors outstanding local productions as well as select performers, directors, designers, and playwrights. Eligible plays include those staged by Cleveland-area professional theaters during the 2022 calendar year.

For more than 50 years, the CCC has provided support and recognition for professional theaters in our community and for the talented individuals who create and stage their productions.

-continued-



CCC members are local theater critics who write for print and/or online publisher(s); or who have established a distinct, credible, and consistent online presence (blog, etc.) for their reviews. Members of the CCC who voted for the 2022 Awards are:

Roy Berko (Broadwayworld.com, CoolCleveland, *Theatre Criticism*, www.royberko.info)

Kerry Clawson (*Akron Beacon Journal*)

Howard Gollop (*Chronicle-Telegram*)

Sheri Gross (*Cleveland Jewish News*, *The Lorain Journal*, *The News Herald*)

Mark Horning (*WIX* blog)

Christine Howey (*Cleveland Scene*)

Laura Kennelly (*CoolCleveland*)

ABOUT KEITH HAMILTON COBB

Keith Hamilton Cobb is an actor and a playwright who has been drawn mostly to the stage in his working life but is also recognized for several unique character portrayals he has created for television. He has appeared in classical and contemporary roles on regional stages country wide. He is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts with a BFA in acting. His award-winning play, *American Moor* (published by Methuen Drama), which explores the perspective of the African American male through the metaphor of Shakespeare's *Othello*, ran off-Broadway at Cherry Lane Theatre in the fall of 2019. It is the winner of an Elliot Norton Award, an AUDELCO Award, two IRNE Awards, and is part of the permanent collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Keith is currently driving a new project called *Untitled Othello*. The organic evolution of *American Moor*, the *Untitled Othello Project* seeks to create an extended touring interrogation of Shakespeare's *Othello* with an ensemble of actors and intellectuals.

ABOUT JOSH TYSON

Josh Tyson (*Performer*) has been involved in the development of *American Moor* since 2015 including its debut at The Globe Theatre of London's First Annual Shakespeare & Race Festival, Washington DC's Anacostia Playhouse, ArtsEmerson at Boston's Paramount Center, and its successful off-Broadway run at the historic Cherry Lane Theatre in New York in conjunction with Red Bull Theater. Other credits include off-Broadway: *Modotti* (The Acorn @ Theatre Row), *Three Sisters* (Classical Theatre of Harlem). He is also a long-time player with New York's Phoenix Theatre Ensemble where favorite roles include Judas in *Judas*, *Tartuffe* in *Tartuffe*, *Adolph* in *Creditors*, *Orestes* in *Electra*, *Achilles* in *Iphigenia at Aulis*,

-continued-



Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny* and Haemon in *Antigone*. Josh's film and television credits include *No Retreat* (Nominated Best Feature Austin Film Fest), *Laura Gets A Cat*, *The First Day*, *Stoop Sale*, *Whales*, *Alabaster*, and *Law & Order*.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Kim Weild is an award-winning theater director whose work intentionally centers marginalized voices. A Drama Desk Award nominee for *Unique Theatrical Event* and the recipient of the NY Innovative Theater Award for Outstanding Performance Art Production. She is founder of *Our Voices*, an innovative live performance company dedicated to investigating themes of "otherness". *OV* creates and produces original, universally accessible, theatrical experiences that amplify the stories of marginalized populations, squarely placing the human condition front and center, while offering up alternative ways for society to organize itself in an ever-changing world. On Broadway, Weild was associate director to multiple TONY Award winning director Michael Blakemore on the world premiere of *Deuce* by Terrence McNally with Dame Angela Lansbury and Marian Seldes; the world premiere of *Mark Twain and David Ives' Is He Dead?* starring Norbert Leo Butz and Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit* with Dame Angela Lansbury, Rupert Everett, Jayne Atkinson, and Christine Ebersole. She was also associate director for the world premiere of the Broadway musical *Amazing Grace*. The recipient of multiple fellowships and residencies Weild is the Head of The John Wells Directing Program where she is responsible for guiding students in the MFA and BFA directing programs. She holds an MFA in directing from Columbia University School of the Arts and a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Member SDC. www.kimweild.com.

ABOUT KARAMU HOUSE

Recognized as the oldest Black performing arts institute in the nation, Karamu House is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and featured in the Smithsonian's African American Museum.

Legendary artists including Langston Hughes, Ruby Dee, Robert Guillaume, Ron O'Neal, Bill Cobbs, James Pickens, Jr., Vanessa Bell Calloway, and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 107-year-old "place of joyful gathering" (the meaning of "Karamu" in Swahili.)

-continued-



Today, Karamu is a beating heart for the entire community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identification, or age. Core programs include socially relevant and professional quality theatre; arts education programming for all ages; and community programming, such as comedy, live jazz, and spoken word performances, that invites participation and engagement, reflection, and a re-commitment to cultural values.

For more information about supporting Karamu House, visit www.karamuhouse.org/contributions.

###