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CLEVELAND PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCE HISTORIC JOINT HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

Apollo's Fire, Cleveland Play House, and Karamu House to co-present a select run of performances to celebrate the holidays this December.

(Cleveland, OH) **Apollo's Fire, Cleveland Play House, and Karamu House** are pleased to announce joint programming to bring diverse audiences of Northeast Ohio together during the 2022 holiday season this December. The three performing arts organizations will join forces for a historic celebration of community to co-present holiday programming in Playhouse Square's Allen Theatre Complex. Programming includes Cleveland Play House's **Festival of Trees**, as well as performances of the Karamu House classic, **Black Nativity**, and the Apollo's Fire celebratory concert, **WASSAIL! - An Irish-Appalachian Christmas**. Tickets for all performances will be available to the general public in late November and will be sold exclusively at clevelandplayhouse.com.

To kick off the holiday season, Northeast Ohio families can once again enjoy **Cleveland Play House's Festival of Trees** displayed in the Allen Theatre Complex from **December 3rd through December 22nd, 2022**. Cleveland's favorite holiday tradition is free and open to the public. Visitors of all ages will be surrounded by dozens of beautifully decorated Christmas trees, designed by the most talented artists in Greater Cleveland. For hours of operation and further details, visit clevelandplayhouse.com/FOT.

"When an unfortunate situation necessitated a change in our December artistic programming at CPH, we immediately decided to look for local partners to perform in the Allen Theatre," says **Mark Cuddy, CPH Interim Artistic & Managing Director**. Cuddy says, "The first people I thought of were Tony Sias and Jeannette Sorrell. Their excellent leadership of Karamu House and Apollo's Fire make it natural to come together with CPH to give our region something special in the heart of Playhouse Square."

Karamu House, the centerpiece of Cleveland's historic Fairfax neighborhood and the oldest Black producing theatre in the country, will present the soul-stirring, gospel celebration **Black Nativity** in the Allen Theatre from **December 9th through December 18th, 2022**. **Black Nativity** is the joyous retelling of the traditional New Testament account of the Nativity story, using gospel music, dramatic dance and a biblical narrative. Written and conceived by legendary playwright and poet **Langston Hughes**, this soulful, heartwarming story is a Karamu House classic!

Tony F. Sias, CEO and President of Karamu House and director of the celebrated production says, "Karamu House is excited to partner with Cleveland Play House to present Langston Hughes' *Black Nativity*. As the oldest Black producing theatre in the nation, working alongside the nation's first regional theatre (both founded in 1915) speaks to our storied past as collaborators and trailblazers in American theatre." Sias says, "This historic event is but one of many examples of how community partnerships together can showcase local talent, provide employment opportunities and provide holiday entertainment for all ages."

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Apollo's Fire, Cleveland's Grammy Award-winning Baroque orchestra, will present their holiday concert, **WASSAIL! - An Irish-Appalachian Christmas** in the Allen Theatre on **December 21st and December 22nd, 2022**. On Christmas night in Old Ireland, families and friends gathered for singing, storytelling, and plenty of wassail, a traditional Yuletide drink of hot cider and ale. From a caroling party through the streets of Dublin, to a holiday barn dance in Virginia, this heartwarming program follows the hopes and fears of the Irish who bravely crossed the Atlantic. Irish singer Fiona Gillespie joins with fiddlers, medieval harp, hammered dulcimer, and bagpipes in this communal celebration of the American immigrant experience. The people of the mountains welcome Christmas with love, singing, dancing and prayer.

Jeannette Sorrell, Founding Artistic Director of Apollo's Fire says, "I have always been a fan of Cleveland Play House and Karamu House, so I'm delighted that Apollo's Fire is partnering with both of these wonderful companies." Sorrell says, "One of the things that makes Apollo's Fire different from most music ensembles is that we see ourselves as storytellers. Our goal is always to take the audience through a series of emotional moods. We try to bring out the drama that's inherent in music of the past, and to give voice to the ancient ballads and legends that help all of us reconnect with our shared roots as citizens of this planet. So, we are happy to make our debut at the Allen Theatre, where stories come to life and touch the soul."

Single tickets to **Black Nativity** and **WASSAIL!** are on sale now and can be purchased online or via phone by calling **216.241.6000**. Groups can save up to 33% on ticket purchases. Discounts are available for military personnel, seniors, students, and Ohio Direction/EBT cardholders. Accessibility services are available for select performances. Additional details regarding programming events, hours of operation, and online ticket purchases can be found exclusively at clevelandplayhouse.com.

HOLIDAY EVENTS IN THE ALLEN THEATRE COMPLEX

Cleveland Play House's Festival of Trees

December 3-22, 2022

** Free and open to the public. See website for hours of operation.*

Karamu House

Black Nativity

Written by Langston Hughes

Directed by Tony F. Sias

December 9-18, 2022

** Thursday through Saturday performances at 7:30 p.m.*

** Saturday matinees at 2:00 p.m.*

** Sunday matinees at 3:00 p.m.*

**** A matinee for student groups will be presented on Wednesday, December 14th at 10:30 a.m. School administrators and educators can call 216.400.7053 for additional information.*

Cleveland Play House

Photos with Santa at the Festival of Trees

December 10, 2022

** Free and open to the public. Santa will be available for photographs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Apollo's Fire

WASSAIL! - An Irish-Appalachian Christmas

Directed by Jeannette Sorrell

December 21 & 22, 2022

** All performances at 7:30 p.m.*

For further details regarding programming, events, and to purchase tickets, please visit clevelandplayhouse.com.

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ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

ABOUT APOLLO'S FIRE

Performing on historical instruments, **APOLLO'S FIRE** brings to life the music of the past for audiences of today, with Passion. Period. Now a GRAMMY Award-winning orchestra, Apollo's Fire has performed sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall, the BBC Proms, the Royal Theatre of Madrid, the Tanglewood Festival, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and more! But what Apollo's Fire musicians love most is bringing world-class performances to your doorstep – in a continuous “tour” of Northeast Ohio neighborhoods. Apollo's Fire is dedicated to reviving the true spirit of baroque performances – not only with period instruments, but with the emotional impact the music was meant to convey. For more information, visit apollosfire.org.

ABOUT CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE

CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE, founded in 1915 and recipient of the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is America's first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, CPH has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate, and entertain diverse audiences across Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. CPH has produced more than 100 world and/or American premieres, and over its long history more than 12 million people have attended over 1,600 productions. Today, Cleveland Play House celebrates the beginning of its second century of service while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland. Cleveland Play House is made possible in part by state tax dollars allocated by the Ohio Legislature to the Ohio Arts Council (OAC). The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. Cleveland Play House is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. To learn more, visit: clevelandplayhouse.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, Debra Byrd, and Imani Hakim have been associated with the 107-year-old “place of joyful gathering” (the meaning of “Karamu” in Swahili). In 1915, Oberlin College graduates Russell and Rowena Jelliffe opened the Playhouse Settlement in an area called Cleveland's “Roaring Third.” The Jelliffes wanted to build an environment where people of different races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds could come together to share common ventures through the arts. Karamu was established as a gathering place for racially diverse members of the surrounding community at that time. 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, visit karamuhouse.org.

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