FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SASSY MAMAS RETURNS TO THE KARAMU HOUSE STAGE

(*Cleveland, Ohio*)—Award-winning playwright, Celeste Bedford Walker’s *Sassy Mamas* returns to Karamu House for its 2019-20 Mainstage Season. This year, this fun and feisty romantic comedy not only comes to the larger (and now renovated) Jelliffe Theatre, but also includes a racially diverse cast. *Sassy Mamas* tells the story of three newly-single, sophisticated women who now find themselves with young male suitors. This reprise production, brought to life by a talented cast, and directed by Tony F. Sias, now also has new twists and surprises in this mature and comedic storyline.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR
TONY F. SIAS is the President and CEO of Karamu House, Inc., America’s oldest African American producing theatre. Under the direction and leadership of Sias since 2015, Karamu has been widely accredited for producing professional theatre, arts education, and programming for all communities while honoring the African American experience. Prior to his tenure at Karamu, Sias served in several progressive roles for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) including Director of Arts Education and Artistic Director of Cleveland School of the Arts. As a creative, Sias has produced, performed in, and directed more than 100 productions. Additionally, Sias has received the Ohio House of Representatives Tribute for Excellent Leadership in CMSD’s All-City Arts Program and the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for Contributions in Education and Cultural Arts. His work has been highlighted nationally in *The New York Times*, *American Theatre Magazine*, and on NBC’s *Today*, among others. Sias served as a delegate from the U.S. Department of State in Istanbul, Turkey, representing the Council of International Programs in the Youth Arts for Peace Project.

In 2018, Sias was inducted into The HistoryMakers, the largest African American oral history archive collection in the U.S. In 2019, Sias was named the Cleveland Arts Prize Barbara S. Robinson award winner, was selected as a fellow in the National Arts Strategies Chief Executive Program in partnership with Harvard Business School and continues his service as a National Board member for the League of Historic American Theaters. Sias earned a Bachelor of Science degree in dramatic art from Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi and a Master of Fine Arts in acting from The Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

– MORE –
Karamu House Event Fact Sheet

EVENT: *Sassy Mamas*

DATES/TIMES: Thursday, January 30, 2020 through Sunday, February 23, 2020
Performances on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays are at 7:30 pm
Performances on Sundays are at 3:00 pm
Select Saturday (2 PM) matinees

VENUE: Karamu House Cleveland Foundation Jelliffe Theatre
2355 East 89th Street Cleveland, OH 44106

CAST:
- Wilhemina – Jeanne Madison
- Jo Billie – Sheffia Randall Dooley (AEA)
- Mary – Susan Lucier (AEA)
- Wes – Dyrell Barnett
- LaDonte – Darelle Hill
- Colby – Peter Rebar

CREATIVES:
- Director + Executive Producer - Tony F. Sias
- Production Stage Manager - Mia Jones
- Assistant Stage Manager – Alyssa Alexandra Jacobs
- Set and Costume Design - Inda Blatch-Geib
- Lighting Design - Colleen Albrecht
- Multimedia Design-T. Paul Lowry
- Associate Sound Designer – Chuck Hatcher
- Props Master - Dred Geib
- Intimacy Choreographer.- Casey Venema
- Wardrobe Coordinator - Brielle McGrew
- Director of Production-Vonetta Flowers

SUMMARY: Set in Washington, D.C., Sassy Mamas is a fun and feisty, romantic comedy with three sophisticated and successful women that find themselves living single and ready to mingle...but this time with much (much) younger men. A recent widow, a divorcée, and a career woman all use their social status and wealth to ensnare their younger male suitors.

RUNNING TIME: 2 hours with a 15-minute intermission

TICKET INFO: Tickets range from $25 to $45. Call 216.795.7077 or visit www.karamuhouse.org

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About Karamu House

Recognized as the oldest African American 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 104-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 www.karamuhouse.org.