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KARAMU HOUSE ANNOUNCES FREE, ONLINE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS TO CELEBRATE KWANZAA & MLK DAY

America's oldest Black producing theatre to premiere original virtual programs to celebrate the African American celebrations of Kwanzaa and MLK Day.

(Cleveland, Ohio)—Karamu House will kick-off its 2020-21 *In the Tradition* community program series with a virtual presentation, “Kwanzaa with Karamu,” available for free, on-demand streaming beginning December 26, 2020. Annually, the *In the Tradition* series features free and culturally-specific offerings that speak directly to the African American experience, including Kwanzaa, MLK Day, Black History Month, and Juneteenth, among others.

Heading into its 106th year, Karamu continues to prioritize the Kwanzaa holiday and celebration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. because it recognizes that history and legacy are important parts of current identity. “Our *In the Tradition* series is designed to engage people from different races, religions, and economic backgrounds through the arts—and to expand current levels of cultural awareness and understanding,” says Aseelah Shareef, Karamu’s Director of Community Engagement and Operations.

KWANZAA

Throughout the seven days of Kwanzaa 2020, the annual celebration of African American and Pan African culture, Karamu premieres “Kwanzaa with Karamu,” a virtual celebration of song and dance with an educational presentation on the meaning and traditions of the Kwanzaa holiday. This original 35-minute presentation is available for free, on-demand streaming December 26, 2020 – January 1, 2021. While free to access, individuals must register on the Karamu website to view the program.

MLK DAY

Beginning on MLK Day 2021 (Monday, January 18), Karamu House will premiere “Infinite Hope,” a special celebration in honor of Dr. King. This 55-minute virtual presentation of spoken word, song, and dance will be available for free, on-demand streaming January 18, 2021 – January 25, 2021. This production will be freely accessible to all, but registration on the Karamu website is required.

Karamu House’s holiday production, *Joyful*, also continues to be available through January 9, 2021. Patrons can purchase a 48-hour, on-demand access pass for \$24.99.

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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.