

ACT Solo Performance Festival
With Special Guest Artist
Dr. Mary E. Weems



***African Community Theatre, Oscar Ritchie Hall, Room 230. Dept. of
Pan-African Studies, Kent State University
Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:30pm***

***Featuring artists – Dr. Asantewa Sunni-Ali, Film-maker Bobbi Broome,
faculty, students and community members in the Pan-African Theatre
Ensemble with special guest actor, Dr. Deana Thomas, Professor
Emerita, University of Louisville, Kentucky***



Special Guest Artist: Dr. Mary E. Weems

Award-winning poet, playwright and solo performance artist, Dr. Mary Weems will conduct a performance workshop entitled, "Loss and Found: Using the Language Arts to Deal with Grief" on Wed. April 10 at 2:15pm in our African Community Theatre, Kent State University. Dr. Weems will be using drama-based pedagogy for students, faculty, and community members in teaching solo performance techniques and strategies for community engagement. Other audience members will include faculty in the social work and counseling disciplines for professional development, mental health and suicide professionals, nonprofit organizations which serve these communities and groups interested in using theatre and personal experience to explore issues addressed in this work. Dr. Weems will perform "Loss and Found" during the ACT Solo Performance Festival on Thursday, April 11 at 6:30pm in the African Community Theatre demonstrating her drama-based methods in exploring grief, personal experience, race and gender through theatre.

Bio

*Dr. Mary E. Weems, poet, playwright, performer, author, and social foundations scholar. Author of thirteen books, most recently: **Blackeyed: Plays and Monologues**, and **Writings of Healing and Resistance: Empathy and the Imagination-Intellect**. In 2015, Dr. Weems was awarded the **Emerging Artist Award in Literature** for her play **MEAT** about the murder of eleven black women by Anthony Sowell in Cleveland, Ohio, her hometown.*

<https://www.maryeweems.org/>

Dr. Mary Weems's selected plays and production history

Black Notes

SYNOPSIS: Original Negro Spirituals were composed of only the Black keys on a piano. Some say it was to echo the sounds coming from the bowels of slave ships. *Black Notes* begins by returning to the past, then moving forward through contemporary moments both lived and imagined. In this one-woman performance piece, Weems uses autoethnography and poetic and narrative inquiry to investigate the Black experience through a cultural lens which shifts from the personal to the political.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Performances include St. Timothy's Church (Cleveland, OH), 2015. University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, AL), 2015. Washington State University (Pullman, WA), 2015. Ohio University (Athens, OH), 2015. University of Illinois (Urbana, IL), 2015. Directed by Jeanne Madison. Cast: Mary E. Weems.

Purses

SYNOPSIS: *Purses* is a 3-character, one-act play about the trials and tribulations of African American women from different generations living in the same urban neighborhood. It explores complex social issues including love, alcoholism, domestic violence, male/female relationships and the importance of taking time to come together for support on what Hattie the lead character calls "Talkin's Sundays" which happen at her house right after church.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Performances include Karamu House (Cleveland, OH), 2015. Director: Ashley Wheadon. Cast: Christal Christian, Keeya Chapman-Langford, Tanielle Latrice, Prophet Seay, and Darryl Tatum.

Hats

SYNOPSIS: In *Hats*, six Black men from different generations tell the stories of their lives as they prepare to honor a member of their group who has just died.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Performances include Ensemble Theatre (Cleveland Heights, OH), 2015. Director: Mary E. Weems. Cast: Peter Lawson Jones, Cornell Calhoun III, Jimmie Woody, LaShawn Little, Kyle Carthens, Kenny Parker, and Ashley Aquilla.

Blink

SYNOPSIS: *Blink* is based on the stories of faculty, staff, and students and their experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and religious intolerance at a private college. The play prompts critical dialogues leading audiences toward greater empathy, acceptance and interculturalism as we move toward becoming a more unified society in the 21st Century.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Performances include John Carroll University (University Heights, OH), Spring 2013, Fall 2013 and Fall 2014. Directors: Dr. Karen Gygli and Michael Oatman. Choreographer: Kevin D. Marr II. Managing Director/Stage Manager: Keith Nagy. Stage Manager: Andre Brown. Cast: Students of John Carroll University.

Meat

SYNOPSIS: *Meat* takes a surreal look at the serial killings of eleven Black Cleveland women through the lens of Tone, the accused murderer. Combining fiction with facts from the case of Cleveland serial killer, Anthony Sowell, the tragedy begins with an up close and personal look into the mind of Tone and ends with a community having its say.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Staged reading at the National Black Theatre Festival (Winston-Salem, NC), 2011. Staged reading at the New Africa Theatre (Cleveland OH), 2013. Director: Michael Oatman.

Closure

SYNOPSIS: *Closure* was originally produced with an ensemble of four women and two men who played all of the objects. In this choreopoem, which was inspired by Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow is Enuf*, the actors become the objects while telling stories of loss, betrayal, and what happens when bankers, employees of a corrupt mortgage system, and others prey on the poor.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: Karamu House (Cleveland, OH), 2010. Director: Terrence Spivey. Choreographer: Dianne McIntyre. Cast: Rodney Freeman, Cameron Dashiell, Amanda Lanier, Saidah Mitchell, Shambriion Treadwell, and Kyle Carthens.

<https://www.maryeweems.org/plays>





From Digital Masks to Africa – Cheikh Anta Diop: Poem for the Living (2019) Special Guest Actor, Dr. Deana Thomas, Professor Emerita, University of Louisville, Kentucky. Photo by Mark Horning



From Digital Masks to African – Cheikh Anta Diop: Poem for the Living (2019). Actor Huda Alhamed. Photo by Mark Horning





From “Digital Masks to Africa – Cheikh Anta Diop: Poem for the Living” (2019) Actors: Mike Esekwen and Yayra Tamakloe. Photo by Mark Horning.



From “Digital Masks to Africa – Cheikh Anta Diop: Poem for the Living” (2019) Actor: Sri Varshani Raghujie. Photo by Mark Horning



**A.C.T. SOLO
PERFORMANCE
FESTIVAL, 2019**

WORKSHOP
April 10, 2:15 PM, Free!*

SHOWTIME
April 11, 6:30 PM, \$10*

*Free to KSU faculty, staff and students

Tickets may be purchased online.

www.kent.edu/pas/act

African Community Theatre
featuring Dr. Annette's Johnson-Williams, Director of the Center for Pan-African Studies
With special guest Dr. Mary E. Weems

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

*Special thanks and appreciation for all
who helped to make this a great success.*

One Love. One Heart

*Please help the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble make it to the Fringe
Theatre Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland this summer, 2019.*

*Please Donate \$5, \$10, \$20 to help us achieve our goal in our donation
box and/or*

[https://www.gofundme.com/help-us-go-to-the-fringe-
panafrican-theatre](https://www.gofundme.com/help-us-go-to-the-fringe-panafrican-theatre)

*From the African Community Theatre,
Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University*

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