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Photos for *The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence* available here:

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MEDIA ALERT

***THE WORK OF ADRIENNE KENNEDY:
INSPIRATION & INFLUENCE* NOMINATED
FOR 2021 DRAMA LEAGUE AWARD**

Bethesda, Md. (March 30, 2021)–Round House Theatre, in association with McCarter Theatre Center, is honored to announce that ***The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence*** has been nominated by the 400+ artist alumni of The Drama League in the category of **Outstanding Digital Theatre, Collection, or Festival**. This historic nomination follows the recent announcement that the Drama League Awards will celebrate its 87th year by recognizing excellence in digital and socially distanced theatrical work created during the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally honoring Broadway and Off-Broadway productions, this year’s ceremony has been redesigned to amplify the resiliency, experimentation, and innovation of the theatrical community across the country.

Produced in association with McCarter Theatre Center, *The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence* is a digital festival celebrating the award-winning experimentalist, with four of Kennedy’s plays produced as virtual theatrical experiences: ***He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box*** directed by **Nicole A. Watson**, ***Sleep Deprivation Chamber*** directed by **Raymond O. Caldwell**, ***Ohio State Murders*** directed by **Valerie Curtis-Newton**, and the world premiere of ***Etta and Ella on the Upper West Side*** directed by **Timothy Douglas**. Recently extended through April 30, 2021, all four plays in the festival are available for on-demand streaming. Tickets are on sale now.

Four dynamic panel discussions reflecting on Kennedy’s lasting influence are now archived on the Round House YouTube channel and will also remain available for free viewing. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/AdrienneKennedy

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence

Available for streaming through April 30, 2021

Hailed as “American theatre’s greatest and least compromising experimentalist” (*New York Times*), Adrienne Kennedy is one of the most prolific and widely studied living playwrights. Since bursting onto the scene in 1964 with *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, Kennedy’s enthralling lyrical dramas have influenced generations of storytellers, from Suzan-Lori Parks to Robert O’Hara, Shonda Rhimes to Jeremy O. Harris. Despite her outsized influence, three Obie Awards, and induction into the Theater Hall of Fame, Adrienne Kennedy is not a household name. This festival is a celebration of why she should be. Round House Theatre and McCarter Theater Center team up to shine a light on four deeply personal stories from Kennedy’s astonishing body of work with four weeks of virtual theatrical experiences and dynamic conversations, offering audiences the opportunity to discover Kennedy’s singular voice—a startling mix of the surreal with the all too real. *The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence* is sponsored by the RPM Fund.

He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box

By Adrienne Kennedy

Directed by Nicole A. Watson

It is 1941, and Kay and Chris are in love. Yet the letters they exchange are not tender professions, but painful reminiscences—of Chris’ wealthy white father who laid the architecture for local segregation, of Kay’s brutalized Black mother whose death remains a mystery, and of the myriad forces that separate them. Written in 2018, Adrienne Kennedy’s newest work is a brief but expansive memory play that conjures “dread, romance and a tragic surrealism all at once” (*New York Times*). *He Brought Her Heart Back in a Box* is a heartbreaking collage of family memories, historical specters, and theatrical allusions, hypnotically woven together with a poetry that is distinctively Kennedy’s own.

Sleep Deprivation Chamber

By Adam P. Kennedy and Adrienne Kennedy

Directed by Raymond O. Caldwell

“I’m an American citizen, could you please let me up and breathe?” Teddy Alexander gasps out these words to the police officer who has beaten, dragged, and pinned him in the driveway of his family’s Arlington home—all because of a broken taillight. Teddy is a young Black college student studying theatre, but his senior year becomes a waking nightmare when the officer accuses him of assault. Written by Adrienne Kennedy and her own son, Adam, the semi-autobiographical drama shifts between Teddy’s trial and the unrelenting letters his sleepless mother writes in his defense. Although it won the Obie

Award for Best New American Play nearly 25 years ago, *Sleep Deprivation Chamber* is a chilling meditation on race and powerlessness that remains painfully relevant today.

Ohio State Murders

By Adrienne Kennedy

Directed by Valerie Curtis-Newton

When asked by Ohio State University to speak about the violent imagery in her work, Suzanne Alexander answers with her own story of brutality and betrayal. The accomplished writer attended Ohio State in the 1950s, but instead of academic sanctuary and self-discovery, Suzanne experienced a dark landscape of pain—not only exploitation, kidnapping, and murder, but also the insidious violence of segregation, ostracization, and misogyny. Blending captivating monologue with haunting memories, *Ohio State Murders* is a poignant reminder of human cruelty, past and present.

***Etta and Ella on the Upper West Side* | World Premiere**

By Adrienne Kennedy

Directed by Timothy Douglas

Etta and Ella Harrison are astoundingly gifted scholars, deeply connected sisters, and dangerously bitter rivals. They frequently write and teach together, and even their separate works are unnervingly similar, often sourced from their own family history. Now, after a lifetime of competition, they are on the verge of destroying each other. Adrienne Kennedy intricately blends monologue, dialogue, voiceover, and prose to create an experience that is part experimental play, part narrative thriller, and wholly unforgettable. Set against the gothic backdrop of their academic New York world, *Etta and Ella on the Upper West Side* is a taut, kaleidoscopic tale of ambition and madness—brought to theatrical life for the very first time.

TICKET INFORMATION

The Work of Adrienne Kennedy: Inspiration & Influence features four plays, which will be available to view on demand until April 30, 2021. Festival passes to all four plays are available for \$60 (with ticket handling fees waived), and tickets to each individual show are available for \$15.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org. If you have any questions, our Box Office associates will be happy to assist you. Associates are working remotely, Monday through Friday, 11:00am – 5:00pm.

ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 197 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 37, including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. Cornerstone programs include Free Play, which provides free tickets for students age 13-college, the Teen Performance Company, which culminates in the student-produced Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Summer Camp for students in grades K-12, and a full slate of classes for adults and youth.

ABOUT MCCARTER THEATRE CENTER

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen and Managing Director Michael S. Rosenberg, McCarter's mission is to create world-class theater and present the finest artists for the community engagement, education, and entertainment. Winner of the 1994 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, world premieres include Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (2013 Tony Award for Best Play); Tarell Alvin McCarey's *The Brother/Sister Plays*, Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*, and Danai Gurira's *The Convert*. During COVID-19, McCarter has pivoted to offer virtual programming to a global audience, including [McCarter@HOME](#) and [McCarter Online Classes](#). Visit the digital stage at mccarter.org.

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