

Comedy & Tragedy

meet Marvelous and Fantastic



Trendsetters to Trendsetters Magazine and Ujima Theatre Company
(Columbus, OH) Visits the 2009 National Black Theatre Festival

By Brian K. Jones

The purple carpet was rolled out in Winston-Salem, NC once again, as they hosted the 20th National Black Theater Festival (NTBF), which showcased black theater to audiences coming from all over the world. The event was kicked off this year by an opening day parade, press conference, the arrival of the more than 50 celebrities from television, film, and stage, and a reception, to welcome back the 65,000 attendees, which took place August 3rd - 8th. The brainchild of founder, producer and director, the late Larry Leon Hamlin, who passed in 2007, the festival featured over 100 stellar shows held in 11 venues, as well as films, seminars, workshops, poetry jams and networking opportunities for audiences, actors, playwrights, scholars, and others in the industry. High profile names, such as Maya Angelou, John Amos, Ted Lange, Melba Moore, Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Ella Joyce, Wendy Raquel Robinson, and Kim Wayans, provided some of the the star power needed to draw crowds, but other recognizable names, just as noteworthy showed up as well, in the portrayals of the Tuskegee Airmen, Emmett Till, Rosa Parks, Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, and Teddy Pendergrass.

The festival, coined as being "An international celebration and reunion of spirit," also included various theater achievement awards presented during the opening ceremony, adorned with the names of such prominent black theatre figures as Sid-

ney Potier, August Wilson, Larry Leon Hamlin, and Lloyd Richards, as well as the festival's first annual Winston-Salem Urban League Endowment Scholarship awarded to a UNC School of the Arts student, in the name of the late founder and his widow, Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin.

This event, themed "Black Theatre Holy Ground, continues to honor its people, it's craft, and it's founder. In a word, albeit indigenous to NBTF and invented by Larry Leon Hamlin by combining two words marvelous and fantastic, The National Black Theatre Festival on its 20th, succeeds in being one "Marvtastic" event all should plan to attend every time. □



AT A GLANCE: 1. John Amos pictured with Ron Pitts, CEO of Ujima Theatre Company; 2. Wendy Raquel Robinson and Ted Lange, Co-Chairs; 3. Ujima Theatre Staff with Actor John Amos; 4. Actor Jeff Obafemi Carr (The Second Chance) and Woddie King, recipient of the Sidney Poitier Lifetime Achievement Award

EVENT TRENDS



Post your Profile
and meet someone new!

BlackSinglesFindLove.com