One Night in Miami Cast Announced

Baltimore—Dec. 17, 2014. Directed by Center Stage Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah, One Night in Miami... by Kemp Powers will have its East Coast premiere as the fourth mainstage production of Center Stage's 2014/15 season.

February 25, 1964. Twenty-two-year-old Cassius Clay has just won the world heavyweight boxing title. Instead of hitting the town, Clay chooses to celebrate in a Miami hotel room with three close friends—activist Malcolm X, singer Sam Cooke, and football star Jim Brown. Playwright Kemp Powers' story imagines what might have happened in that tiny hotel room. As the Civil Rights Movement stirs outside, and the melody of "A Change is Gonna Come" hangs in the air, four men will emerge from that one night ready to define a new world.

"I think part of my job is to bring the best new plays that I can to the theater," Kwei-Armah says. "This play focuses on an iconic moment – not just in sporting history, but in black history. Cassius Clay coming out and moving to Muhammad Ali within 24 hours of this. Malcolm X dying within the year. It's a huge moment for African American history, and for American history."

One Night in Miami... is the first full-length play by writer Kemp Powers, who was a full-time journalist for more than 20 years, writing for magazines and newspapers ranging from Esquire to Forbes. The world premiere of One Night in Miami... at Rogue Machine Theatre in Los Angeles won four NAACP awards and the Ted Schmitt Award for outstanding new play. Powers is the author of The Shooting: A Memoir. A recipient of a Knight Journalism Fellowship at the University of Michigan, his current projects include the development of his new play, The Two Reds. His work was selected for publication in NPR's storytelling series The Moth's first-ever book of collected works. He is a resident playwright at Los Angeles' award-winning Rogue Machine Theatre company.

All six actors in the cast are making their Center Stage debut with the production. Sullivan Jones is reprising his role as Cassius Clay after winning critical acclaim in the show's premiere last year at Los Angeles' Rogue Machine Theater. Jones’ credits also include Cinderella (Prince Charming) and Twelfth Night (Orsino) with the African American Shakespeare Company, as well as The Pillowman at McGowan Theatre, and Clementine in the Lower 9, for which he received a Bay Area Theater Critics Circle nomination.

Tory Andrus plays Malcolm X for the second time (previously in El Haj Malik at Anthony Bean Community Theater). He has also played Martin Luther King Jr. in the national tour of MLK, and the Lion in The Wiz and Benny in Rent at Dillard University. His New York credits include Caligula at the Classical Theatre of Harlem, and at NYU, Tis Pity She's a Whore, A Raisin in the Sun and Gem of the Ocean.

Acting and singing the role of Sam Cooke is Grasan Kingsberry. His Broadway credits include Motown the Musical, Nice Work If You Can Get It, Leap of Faith, On a Clear Day ... Forever, Catch Me If You Can, Finian's Rainbow, The Color Purple, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels and Aida. A Julliard graduate, Kingsberry has performed with the national tours of The Color Purple and Dreamgirls. His TV credits include Smash and All My Children.

Playing football star Jim Brown is Esau Pritchett, who has played Othello three times, and has received the Kennedy Center ACTF Irene Ryan Acting Award. At Lincoln Center in New York, Pritchett performed in A Free Man of Color. His regional credits include Antony and Cleopatra at the McCarter Theatre, the world premiere of The Fall of Heaven at Cincinnati Playhouse, and Meadow Brook Theatre’s I Am a Man, for which he won Detroit News Best Supporting Actor. On TV he has appeared in Law and Order, Law and Order: SVU and One Life to Live.

Royce Johnson and Genesis Oliver play Nation of Islam members. Johnson plays the more senior Kareem. His New York credits include the world premiere of The Occasion of Sin at Urban Stages, Brother/Sister Plays at the Public Theater, Fly at Lincoln Center, and Macbeth at the Classical Theatre of Harlem. His regional work includes The Motherfucker with the Hat and God of Carnage at Hartford TheaterWorks and Stamford Theater Works’ A Lesson Before Dying, for which he won the CT
Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Debut. On TV he has appeared in *Madam Secretary, The Blacklist, Law and Order: SVU* and *Law and Order.*

As Kareem’s apprentice Jamaal is **Genesis Oliver.** The Detroit native’s New York credits include *Primal Play* at New Georges, *Everything is Ours* at Colt Coeur, and the 52nd Street Project. His regional work includes Alliance Theatre’s *By The Way Meet Vera Stark, Denver Center’s Map of Heaven,* Seattle Shakespeare Company’s *Othello,* and *Dracula, Game On, Two Or A Carload and The Greekest of Tragedies* at Tennessee Shakespeare Company.

*One Night in Miami …* performances are Jan. 14 through Feb. 8. For more information, visit centerstage.org or call 410-332-0033.

**THE CAST** (in alphabetical order)

Tory Andrus  Malcolm X  
Royce Johnson  Kareem  
Sullivan Jones  Cassius Clay  
Grasan Kingsberry  Sam Cooke  
Genesis Oliver  Jamaal  
Esau Pritchett  Jim Brown  
Captain Kate Murphy  Stage Manager  
Kayla Whisman  Assistant Stage Manager  
Marian Jackson  Assistant Stage Manager

**THE ARTISTIC TEAM**

Kemp Powers  Playwright  
Kwame Kwei-Armah  Director  
Brandon Butts  Assistant to the Director  
Brenda Davis  Scenic Designer  
Clint Ramos  Costume Designer  
Colin Young  Lighting Designer  
Marika Kent  Assistant Lighting Designer  
Alex Koch  Projections Designer  
Catherine Rodriguez  Production Dramaturg  
Stephanie Klapper  Casting Director

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About Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE

Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE, an award-winning British playwright, director, actor, and broadcaster, is in his fourth season as artistic director of Center Stage in Baltimore, Maryland. At Center Stage he has directed dance of the holy ghosts (Baltimore City Paper Top Ten Productions of 2013); The Mountaintop; An Enemy of the People; The Whipping Man (City Paper Top Ten Productions of 2012), for which he was named Best Director; and Naomi Wallace’s Things of Dry Hours. Among his works as playwright are Elmina’s Kitchen and Let There Be Love — which had their American debuts at Center Stage — as well as A Bitter Herb and Statement of Regret. His latest play, Beneatha’s Place, debuted at Center Stage in 2013 as part of the ground-breaking Raisin Cycle. His other directorial credits include Let There Be Love and Seize the Day at the Tricycle Theatre, Dominique Morisseau’s Skeleton Crew at the Lark Play Development Center in New York, New York’s Public Theater’s production of Much Ado About Nothing, the world premiere of Detroit ’67 (nominated for Best Director) at The Public Theater, and the world premiere of The Liquid Plain at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Kwame has served on the boards of The National Theatre and The Tricycle Theatre, both in London. He served as artistic director for the World Arts Festival in Senegal, a month-long world festival of black arts and culture, which featured more than 2,000 artists from 52 countries participating in 16 different arts disciplines. He was named the chancellor of the University of the Arts London, and in 2012 was named an officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

ABOUT CENTER STAGE

Under the leadership of playwright, actor, and director Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE (Artistic Director) and national arts leader Stephen Richard (Managing Director), Center Stage is an artistically driven institution committed to engaging, entertaining, and enriching audiences through joyous and bold performance. Hailed by The Wall Street Journal as “a model of what regional theater can and should be,” Center Stage has, for more than 50 years, dedicated itself to exploring new works and bringing classics to life. This rich history is marked by critically acclaimed new works that have shaped the American theater; from the Tony Award-winning The Triumph of Love to world premieres such as Miss Evers’ Boys by David Feldshuh and On the Verge by Eric Overmyer. In 2013, Center Stage’s unprecedented presentation of the Tony Award-winning Clybourne Park in repertory with the world premiere of Kwei-Armah’s Beneatha’s Place sparked dialogue, drew international media attention and became the subject of a nationally broadcast PBS documentary, “A Raisin in the Sun Revisited: The Raisin Cycle at Center Stage.” With its signature focus on civic and community engagement, Center Stage, The State Theater of Maryland, enters its second 50 years with a commitment to exploring how art and entertainment communicate in the 21st century and to igniting conversation in Baltimore and beyond.