

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 9, 2014**

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**Sleeping Weazel to unveil *African American History and Its Expressions*:  
a festival of plays, dolls, and oral history**

Boston, Mass., January 9, 2014 — **On February 27–March 1, 2014 at 7:30 pm**, multimedia theatre company **Sleeping Weazel** presents its second event of the season at The Factory Theatre (791 Tremont Street, Boston) with ***African American History and Its Expressions***, a three-day festival celebrating Black History Month with plays, poetry, and a view of history seen through the symbolic power of puppets and dolls — appealing to adults and children alike.

The event features Obie-award winning, Roxbury-based playwright **Ed Bullins'** *The Man Who Dug Fish* (directed by Noe Montez); playwright **Keli Garrett's** adaptation (with puppets) of Boston-born Harlem Renaissance writer **Marita Bonner's** never-before-produced play, *The Purple Flower* (directed by Dominic Taylor); a presentation of black dolls through history by **Debra Britt and Felicia Walker**, founders of The National Black Doll Museum of History & Culture (Mansfield, MA); and renowned theatre artist **Robbie McCauley** in a special performance of poetry.

“Ed Bullins and Marita Bonner are seminal 20<sup>th</sup> century African American writers,” says Charlotte Meehan, Sleeping Weazel Artistic Director. “Mr. Bullins is still with us and Ms. Bonner should have lived to see her multiple award-winning 1927 play produced in her lifetime. We are producing Keli Garrett's adaptation of the play to right that wrong.”

Sleeping Weazel launched its second season in October 2013 at ArtsEmerson's Paramount Center with *The Madness of Small Worlds*, featuring works by legendary playwright Mac Wellman and Whiting award winner Elana Greenfield, whose play, *Wrench*, was performed by IRNE award winner Kate Snodgrass and OBIE award winner Katie Pearl.

Tickets to ***African American History and Its Expressions*** are \$20 and available online at [africanamericanhistory.brownpapertickets.com](http://africanamericanhistory.brownpapertickets.com).

**About Marita Bonner**

Marita Bonner (1899–1971) was an award-winning Harlem Renaissance playwright, fiction writer, and essayist. Born in Boston, she moved to

Washington, DC, and later to Chicago, IL, to teach. She wrote numerous short stories, many of which were published in *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and *Black Life* (among other magazines). Her plays include *Pot Maker*, *Exit*, *An Illusion*, and *The Purple Flower*. *The Purple Flower* was published in the October 1929 issue of *The Crisis* and, though it went on to receive much critical acclaim in her lifetime, the play was never produced.

### **About Ed Bullins**

Ed Bullins is a Roxbury-based playwright and leading artist of the Black Arts Movement of the 1950s. He was also a founder of Black Arts/West, a San Francisco-based theatre company, as well as organizer of the Surviving Theatre and playwright-in-residence and Associate Director of the New Lafayette Theatre (New York). He has written over 50 plays and is the recipient of the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, The Obie Award, the AUDELCO Award, and the Vernon Rice Drama Desk Award. He was the Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at Northeastern University.

### **About Keli Garrett**

Keli Garrett's plays and adaptations have been produced and developed at Dixon Place in NYC, Zoo District in L.A., Penumbra Theatre, the LABYRINTH, New York Theatre Workshop, Playwrights Horizons, Rites and Reason Theatre, Victory Gardens, City Lit Theater, Chicago Theater Company, Organic Theater, and the California College of Arts and Crafts. The Rhode Island Arts Council, The Joyce Foundation, City Lit Theater and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum have commissioned her work. She holds an M.F.A. (1999) in Creative Writing from Brown University, was a Beinecke Foundation fellow, and has a B.A. in Theatre from Columbia College, Chicago.

### **About Debra Britt and Felicia Walker**

Debra Britt (author of *The Legend of Cecilia*), Felicia Walker, and Tamara Mattisson are three sisters who founded the Doll E Daze Project & Museum Inc in 2004 with a mission to nurture self-esteem, promote cultural diversity, and educate through the eyes of a doll collector. In July 2012, they opened the doors to the National Black Doll Museum with yet another sister, Laverne Cotton. A 501(c)3 nonprofit cultural institution located in Mansfield, MA, the Museum exhibits their collection of over 6,000 dolls of color and promotes academic, cultural, personal, professional, and social discovery. To date, the Doll E Daze project has served 25,000 patrons at school, libraries, shelters, and museums. [www.nbdmhc.org](http://www.nbdmhc.org)

### **About Robbie McCauley**

Playwright, actor, and director Robbie McCauley became involved in theater as an apprentice at the Negro Ensemble Company in New York during the late 1960s. Her first play, *Sally's Rape* (1990), a story about slavery that was inspired by her great-great grandmother, received an Obie Award for Best Play (1992) and a Bessie Award (1990). Her most recent play, *Sugar* (2012), is a solo

performance piece in which she recounts her experiences of living with diabetes.

### **About Sleeping Weazel**

Sleeping Weazel explores and engages novel approaches to developing and presenting new art — multimedia theatre, interdisciplinary installations, performance events, music, poetry, and video/audio. We develop work that crosses and confounds the boundaries of “mainstream” and “avant-garde” as well as boundaries between art forms. We’ve produced works that have been hailed “as one of the more fearless performances in recent memory” (*The Boston Globe*) and “some of the most interesting experimental theatre in New England” (*EDGE Boston*). [www.sleepingweazel.com](http://www.sleepingweazel.com)

### **CALENDAR LISTING**

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Friday, February 28, 2014

Saturday, March 1, 2014

at 7:30 pm

The Factory Theatre  
791 Tremont Street  
Boston, MA

Sleeping Weazel presents:

### **AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND ITS EXPRESSIONS**

*The Purple Flower*

written by Marita Bonner

adapted by Keli Garrett

directed by Dominic Taylor

*The Man Who Dug Fish*

written by Ed Bullins

directed by Noe Montez

A presentation of historical black dolls by Debra Britt and Felicia Walker

A performance of poetry by Robbie McCauley

**Tickets:** \$20 online at [africanamericanhistory.brownpapertickets.com](http://africanamericanhistory.brownpapertickets.com).

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