



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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The Web of Anansi is a Captivating Production for the Entire Family

*A diverse cast and production team stage this special production, running for three shows
February 18 & 19 in Gordon Square Arts District Venue*

CLEVELAND – A brand-new original production of *The Web of Anansi*, a timeless tale based on West African, Caribbean and Black American folklore, premieres in Cleveland mid-February thanks to a special collaborative partnership between Cleveland’s community theatre Near West Theatre; Twelve Literary Arts, an intergenerational teaching, learning, workshop, & performance space for poets, playwrights & performance artists; and playwright Nina Domingue. Directed by the acclaimed Nathan Henry, the production runs for three performances during the weekend – Friday, February 18 at 7 p.m., and Saturday, February 19 at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. – at Near West Theatre in the heart of Gordon Square Arts District.

Through captivating storytelling and movement, *The Web of Anansi* takes audiences on a journey that teaches us that there is always more to the story than we first believe. The play follows a cast of many characters and Anansi, a wise spider, who is set on teaching a lesson to tiger cubs Oselo and Osela, using live performance and puppetry to bring his lessons to life. Centered on choices, the tiger cubs – and the audience – soon learn just how important our choices are and how they shape both our lives and the lives of others.

"We are thrilled to have collaborated with Nina, Nathan, and Twelve Literary Arts to bring this production to life at Near West Theatre," says Mike Obertacz, executive director at Near West Theatre. "While based on stories from hundreds of years ago, Anansi’s lessons still ring true today, and we are eager for audiences to experience the work of this incredible cast and production team."

The production is made possible thanks to a generous award from the Cleveland Foundation Affiliated Fund and the City of Cleveland’s Cable Television Equity in the Arts Fund (Formerly Minority Arts & Education Fund). Tickets to the show are entirely "Pay What You Can," and all ages are welcome to attend.

Written by Nina Domingue, *The Web of Anansi* was developed during her Barbara Smith Playwriting Fellowship with Twelve Literary Arts' writer-in-residence program. Nina comes to NWT with an impressive list of credits as a playwright under her belt. Her solo show ***The Absolutely Amazing and True Adventures of Miss Joan Evelyn Southgate*** has been included on The Kilroy's List 2020. She was a Nord Family Foundation Playwriting Fellow and Catapult Artist at Cleveland Public Theatre during the 2019-2020 theatrical season. Her solo show ***Ya Mama!*** (also directed by: Nathan Henry) launched its tour at the Hollywood Fringe Festival.

Director Nathan Henry is the recipient of the 2018 Cleveland Scene Theatre Award for Best Director for Karamu House's critically acclaimed production of ***Passing Strange***. He directed the Cleveland Public Theatre production of ***Ya Mama!***, Idris Goodwin's ***Jacked!*** at Cleveland Play House, as well as the world premiere of ***White Man's Burden***, a collaboration with Beck Center for the Arts, Baldwin-Wallace University Music Theatre Program, and the National Alliance for Musical Theatre.

Pay What You can tickets are available at nearwesttheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 216-961-6391 on weekdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theater, constructed as part of the Gordon Square Arts District capital campaign, is at 6702 Detroit Avenue. The facility is a state-of-the-art, ADA-compliant building that is climate controlled and fully accessible.

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About Near West Theatre

Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable and transformational theatre arts experiences. Since 1978, Near West Theatre has been shaping, changing, even saving the lives of children, teens, and adults. The community theater hosts a variety of free community events and free after school programs to underline its commitment to accessibility for all people. The organization serves people of all ages, but a focus on youth goes back to its founding and continues to this day. NWT is grateful to receive financial support from the Ohio Arts Council and Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. www.nearwesttheatre.org

Suggested Performance Listing

Near West Theatre, 6702 Detroit Ave., Cleveland's Gordon Square Arts District. Box Office: 216-961-6391 or nearwesttheatre.org. "The Web of Anansi" runs February 18 at **7:00 p.m.** and February 19 at **3:00 p.m.** and **7:00 p.m.**