

For Immediate Release:

**LESLIE UGGAMS and REGINALD VELJOHNSON
To join Amas Musical Theatre to**

**Honor Grammy Winning Legend
DIONNE WARWICK
and Renowned Producer/Director
WOODIE KING, Jr.**

MARCH 30, 2009

**Celebrating its 40th Anniversary with a Gala Benefit Concert
Featuring Hit Songs from Four Decades of Amas Musicals**

New York: Amas Musical Theatre (Donna Trinkoff, *Producing Artistic Director*; Rosetta LeNoire, *Founder*), will celebrate its 40th Anniversary with a Benefit Gala on Monday, March 30th, 2009. The evening will feature a special "Blast from the Past" concert of songs and numbers from four decades of Amas Musicals, including *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, *Zanna Don't!*, *Barrio Babies*, *Bobos*, *SHOUT! The Mod Musical*, *Four Guys Named Jose*, *Latin Heat*, *Starmites*, *Langston Hughes's Little Ham*, *From My Hometown*, *Lone Star Love*, and *Wanda's World*. The director and choreographer for the evening is Amas Artist-in-Residence Maria Torres, with musical direction by Doug Oberhamer. The event will take place at the **Lighthouse International, 111 East 59th Street, at 7pm.**

The Amas Anniversary Benefit Gala will honor multiple Grammy-winning singer and philanthropist **Dionne Warwick** and prominent producer, director and writer **Woodie King, Jr.** with "The Rosie Award", named for Amas Founder Rosetta LeNoire. Presenting the award to Ms. Warwick will be noted actress and singer, **Leslie Uggams**. Presenting the award to Mr. King will be television and film star **Reginald VelJohnson**.

Donna Trinkoff, *Producing Artistic Director of Amas Musical Theatre*, said "We are thrilled to honor Dionne not only for her glorious recording and concert career, but for her inspirational leadership in the global fight against AIDS. And Woodie King, Jr. is one of the most influential leaders of the American theater. He has nurtured and shaped more careers than anyone I know."

The cast includes: **Adrian Bailey**, **Raymond del Barrio**, **Anton Briones**, **Erin Crosby**, **Janet Dacal**, **James Royce Edwards**, **Harriet D. Foy**, **Carmen Ruby Floyd**, **Kevin R. Free**, **Andre Garner**, **Georgia Hair**, **Beth Leavel**, **Michelle Marmolejo**, **Olga Merediz**, **Trish Rapier**, **Sandra Reaves-Phillips**, **Vivian Reed**, **Nicolle Rochelle**, **Eliseo Roman**, **Sandie Rosa**, **Erica Shroeder**, **Denise Summerford**, **Corliss Taylor-Dunn**, **Clarke Thorell**, **Kirk Torigoe**, and **Christopher Vettel**.

Event Sponsors include **PricewaterhouseCoopers**, **Continental Airlines**, **Ampacet Corporation**, **San Domenico Events**, **Sopranos Wines**, **Bocaj Vodka**, **Joel and Rhela Aragona**, **Bob Boyett**, **Kathy and Jim Gurfein**, and **Tom Miller**.

Dionne Warwick has established herself as an international musical legend for almost five decades. She is perhaps best known for her partnership with songwriters and producers **Burt Bacharach** and **Hal David** ("Make it Easy on Yourself", "Walk on By", "Do You Know the Way to San Jose", "Alfie", "Say a Little Prayer", etc.). According to *Billboard* magazine, Warwick is second only to **Aretha Franklin** as the female vocalist with the most *Billboard* Hot 100 chart hits during the rock era (1955-1999), with 56. Activist and humanitarian, she is **United Nations Global Ambassador for the Food and Agriculture Organization**, former **United States Ambassador of Health**, and a longtime leader galvanizing the international music industry's efforts against AIDS.

Prolific and award-winning producer, director and writer **Woodie King, Jr.** is the founder of the groundbreaking New Federal Theatre and the National Black Touring Circuit, where he remains Producing Director to this day. King has produced shows both On and Off Broadway, and has directed performances across the country in venues like the New York Shakespeare Festival, Cleveland Playhouse, Center Stage of Baltimore and the Pittsburgh Public Theatre. His work has earned him numerous nominations and awards over the years, including a 1988 NAACP Image Award, the 2003 Paul Robeson Award and 2005 Rosetta LeNoire Award from Actors' Equity, and an Obie Award for Sustained Achievement.

The evening festivities will include the presentation of the fifth annual **Rosetta LeNoire Scholarship**, which is given to a deserving college-bound student attending Amas' theatre arts education program, **The Rosetta LeNoire Musical Theatre Academy**.

Amas Musical Theatre is an award-winning pioneer in diversity and multi-ethnic casting in the performing arts since it was founded in 1968 by the late actress and producer Rosetta LeNoire. Amas ("you love" in Latin) is devoted to the creation, development and professional production of new American musicals through the celebration of diversity and minority perspectives, the emergence of new artistic talent, and the training and encouragement of inner-city young people.

For 40 years, Amas has engraved its unique trademark in the world of musical theatre, producing groundbreaking work embracing different cultural perspectives while reaching out to underserved audiences.

In recent years, under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Donna Trinkoff, Amas has emerged as an important laboratory for the development of new work, many of which have moved to expanded touring, regional, commercial, and licensed productions after their Amas appearances. These include *Wanda's World*, *Stormy Weather ... Imagining Lena Horne*, *SHOUT! The Mod Musical*, *Lone Star Love*, *Zanna Don't*, *From My Hometown*, *4 Guys Named Jose ... and Una Mujer Named Maria*, and Langston Hughes' *Little Ham*.

Celebrated Amas education programs span all grade levels and include in-school, after school, and weekend programming. *The Rosetta LeNoire Musical Theatre Academy* is a pre-professional training program for teenagers. Each graduating class presents a full Off-Off-Broadway showcase production. *The Immigration Experience* is Amas' artists-in-school program for public middle and high school students to research their personal and communities' immigration histories and create performance pieces for their school and community. *Lens on Live Theatre* brings Amas Teaching Artists into the schools to explore theatre skills and themes related to Amas Mainstage shows.

The Amas Benefit Gala is an annual event held to raise funds in support of Amas Musical Theatre's ongoing theatre and arts education programs.

BENEFITS/SPECIAL EVENTS LISTING INFORMATION

*Amas Musical Theatre Gala 40th Anniversary Benefit evening honoring
Dionne Warwick and Woodie King, Jr.
with "Blast From The Past" presentation of Hit Songs and Numbers from Four
Decades of Amas Musicals*

MONDAY, MARCH 30

LIGHTHOUSE INTERNATIONAL

111 East 59th Street.

**Arrivals at 6:30pm, Performance begins at 7pm
followed by cocktails, buffet dinner and silent auction**

Ticket prices are \$125, \$200 and \$500.

**For additional information and reservations
visit www.amasmusical.org or call (212) 563-2565.**

**For interviews or press requests please contact
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