

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ami Bennett 617-797-8267, ami@ashmontmedia.com

**In the Spirit of Elma Lewis
The National Center for Afro-American Artists,
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and
ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage**

Welcome the Cast of THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL to Boston

**With performances by SONS OF SERENDIP,
BLACK NATIVITY, and BOSTON TAP COMPANY
Monday, November 17, 7:30pm
The Strand Theatre, Dorchester--Free, Open to the Public**

[BOSTON, MA – November 13, 2014] In the spirit of artist, educator and activist Elma Lewis, The National Center for Afro-American Artists, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and ArtsEmerson: The World on Stage will collaborate with leading organizations in Boston’s African American community to welcome the cast of **THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL** to Boston Monday, November 17 at 7:30pm. The event, featuring speakers and performances in tribute to the national cast will be held at the historic Strand Theatre located at 543 Columbia Road in Dorchester, MA. **Welcome to Boston** is free and open to the public with RSVP at 617-824-8400 or online at bitly.com/WelcomeToBlackBoston.



Sons of Serendip



Black Nativity



Boston Tap Company

“We, with the sisters of Delta Sigma Theta sorority and the Boston community, proudly welcome THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL cast to our city,” says National Center for Afro-American Artists Executive Director Barry Gathier. “We present a welcoming evening expressing our love for these artists and their magnificent creative gifts, and celebrate them as brothers and sisters.”

“It is an honor to welcome this wonderful cast to Boston in the historic Strand Theater,” says ArtsEmerson Director of Artistic Programs David Dower, “Emerson College is privileged to be part of the community

carrying forward the legacy of Elma Lewis and we are excited to host this production in our ArtsEmerson 5th Anniversary season.”

The cast will be honored by Boston community groups including the National Center for Afro-American Artists; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; The Museum of African American History; Roxbury Community College; Eddie Cue; Discover Roxbury; The Word Boston; NAACP Boston Chapter; Black Boston Online; Outside the Box; Boston TAP Company; Elma Lewis Center for Civic Engagement, Learning and Research; New England Blacks in Philanthropy, and Rapture Events.

About Sons of Serendip

The quartet Sons of Serendip, finalists from *America's Got Talent*, were called "the most musically-talented act on the show" by Howie Mandel and Howard Stern. This unique and dynamic quartet who through a series of serendipitous events, came together in graduate school at Boston University, consists of harpist Mason Morton, cellist Kendall Ramseur, pianist Cordaro Rodriguez, and vocalist Micah Christian. Their "classical" arrangements of popular songs have taken the world by storm.

About Black Nativity

Produced by the National Center of Afro-American Artists, Black Nativity is the joyous account of an historic event that occurred 2,000 years ago. It's a celebration that tells the original story of the Nativity in scripture, verse, music and dance. Based on the Gospel of St. Luke, combined with the poetry of Langston Hughes, this song-play touches a special chord in the hearts of all. This legendary Christmas event, the Black community's Christmas gift to the world, is without a doubt a theatrical wonderment. A joyous company of singers, actors, dancers and musicians delivers its powerful message of joy, hope, victory and liberation. Boston's captivating production is the longest running performance of Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes' song-play in the world. The December 5th opening marks its 2014 season of 12 exhilarating performances. [Click here](#) for more information.

About Boston Tap Company

The Boston Tap Company's mission is to educate and entertain through art as a way of life; promoting respect for one's self and others while creating a firm foundation of cultural history by means of art as a universal language. The Boston Tap Company produces a positive, productive and respectful way of expression that encourages confidence amongst all. [Click here](#) for more information.

About Elma Lewis

Born in Boston to parents who had emigrated from the West Indies, Elma Ina Lewis financed her education by acting in local Elma Lewis theater productions, graduating from Emerson in 1943, and earning a Masters in Education from Boston University the following year. Ms. Lewis went on to teach drama, dance, and speech therapy. In 1950, Lewis opened the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts in Roxbury to promote arts and communication education for Boston's African American youth. In 1966, Lewis founded Playhouse in the Park in Boston's Franklin Park, offering free summer performances that were revived in recent years continuing her work and her legacy. In 1968, Lewis founded the National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA), which brought students from the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts to tour in stage productions on a national level. Lewis was one of the first women to receive a MacArthur Foundation "Genius Grant" in 1981. After a lifetime of service, Elma Lewis passed away on New Year's Day, 2004. She was the recipient of over 400 awards and 28 honorary degrees. Her former students continue in her footsteps all over the United States, many of them working in the performing arts in Boston. Ms. Lewis was committed to providing artistic opportunity for young Black children in Roxbury and Greater Boston, and to improving the world around her, one person at a time.

About THE TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL

Cicely Tyson reprises her Tony Award-winning and Emmy-nominated performance as the frail but feisty Carrie Watts in Horton Foote's beloved American classic **The Trip to Bountiful**, a story of intergenerational family conflict. Living in a cramped apartment in Houston with her dutiful son Ludie (Golden Globe nominee Blair Underwood) and bossy daughter-in-law Jessie Mae (Grammy and Tony nominee Vanessa Williams), the elderly Carrie dreams of making one final journey to her hometown of Bountiful, Texas, which she was forced to abandon twenty years earlier. With pension check in hand, her last journey to Bountiful begins. Filled with joyous gospel hymns including an unforgettably moving "Blessed Assurance," this American treasure is a masterpiece of memory, mortality and the undeniable, universal yearning for the warmth of home. [Click here to watch The Trip to Bountiful video from the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles.](#)

Cicely Tyson | Vanessa Williams | Blair Underwood

The Trip to Bountiful

November 20 –December 7, 2014

By Horton Foote

Directed by Michael Wilson

ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage with Jonathan Reinis Productions

in association with Center Theatre Group (Los Angeles, CA)

Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theatre

Performance Schedule

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Thursday, November 20, 2014 | 7:30PM |
| Friday November 21, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Saturday, November 22, 2014 | 2:00PM |
| Saturday, November 22, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Sunday, November 23, 2014 | 2:00PM |
| Tuesday, November 2, 2014 | 7:30PM |
| Monday, November 24, 2014 | 7:30PM (just added performance) |
| Friday, November 28, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Saturday, November 29, 2014 | 2:00PM |
| Saturday, November 29, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Sunday, November 30, 2014 | 2:00PM |
| Tuesday, December 2, 2014 | 7:30PM |
| Wednesday, December 3, 2014 | 7:30PM |
| Thursday, December 4, 2014 | 7:30PM |
| Friday, Dec ember 5, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Saturday, December 6, 2014 | 2:00PM |
| Saturday, December 6, 2014 | 8:00PM |
| Sunday, Dec ember 7, 2014 | 2:00PM |

PLEASE NOTE:

Vanessa Williams will not appear in performances on Saturday, December 6.

The Cutler Majestic Theatre does not have an elevator.

It is 30+ stairs to the Mezzanine and 60+ stairs to the Balcony levels.

The Trip To Bountiful Cast

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cicely Tyson | Mrs. Carrie Watts |
| Blair Underwood | Ludie Watts |
| Vanessa Williams | Jessie Mae Watts |
| Jurnee Smollett-Bell | Thelma |
| Devon Abner | Houston Ticket Agent |
| Wade Dooley | Second Houston Ticket Agent |
| Arthur French | Roy |
| Devon Abner | Sheriff |

Pat Bowie, Russell Edge,
Dalila Ali Rajah, Keiana Richard,
Duane Shepard, Sr., and
Desean Kevin Terry

Travelers and Houston Bus Station Employees

Cicely Tyson (Carrie Watts)

Best known for her groundbreaking double Emmy Award-winning performance as Jane in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, Ms. Tyson was also nominated for an Academy Award for the film *Souder*. Her third Emmy Award was for *The Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All* and she was nominated for her performances in *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Roots*, *King*, *Sweet Justice*, *The Marva Collins Story* and *A Lesson Before Dying*. Her many film credits include *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *Hoodlum*, *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, *Madea's Family Reunion*, *Why Did I Get Married Too?*, *The Help* and *Alex Cross*. In 2013, Ms. Tyson returned to the Broadway stage after a 30-year hiatus as Mother Carrie Watts in Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*. This role not only garnered rave reviews, but earned Ms. Tyson the triple crown of theatre awards: the Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards for Best Actress in a Play. In addition to a record number of NAACP Image Awards, in 2010, Ms. Tyson became the 95th recipient of the prestigious Spingarn Medal, the highest honor presented by this esteemed organization. This year Ms. Tyson added additional Honorary Doctorate degrees from both Columbia University and American Film Institute for her artistry to her impressive list honors. Other Broadway credits include *The Corn Is Green*, *Trumpets of the Lord*, *A Hand is on the Gate*, *Tiger*, *Tiger Burning Bright*, *The Cool World* and *Jolly's Progress*. In 1997, Hollywood honored Ms. Tyson with a star on the world famous Hollywood Walk of Fame. In 1995 a middle school in East Orange, NJ, was named for Ms. Tyson and following her continued active involvement, she was able to open a new \$143 million state-of-the-art, 300,000 sq. ft. campus renamed the Cicely L. Tyson Community School of Performing and Fine Arts to educate students kindergarten through high school.

Vanessa Williams (Jessie Mae Watts)

After starring on Broadway last season as Jessie Mae Watts in the Tony and Emmy Award-nominated adaptations of Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*, Vanessa is thrilled to bring her wickedly funny performance to the Ahmanson Theatre! She also reprised her role for Lifetime's television adaptation, which was nominated for a 2014 Emmy Award. Throughout her career, Vanessa has maintained a reputation as one of the most respected and multi-faceted entertainers in the world. She has conquered the musical charts, Broadway, television and motion pictures. She has sold over 20 million records worldwide and has garnered 11 Grammy nominations. She received a Tony nomination for her portrayal of *The Witch in Into the Woods*, and starred in the seven-time Tony-nominated musical *After Midnight*. Her other stage credits include *Sondheim on Sondheim* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman* on Broadway and *St. Louis Woman* for Encores. Her TV credits include her three-time Emmy-nominated performance as Wilhelmina Slater in *Ugly Betty*, Renee Perry in *Desperate Housewives* and Olivia Doran in *666 Park Avenue*. Her movie credits include *Soul Food*, *Dance with Me*, *Eraser*, *Johnson Family Vacation* and *Tyler Perry's Temptation*. A proud mother of four children and bestselling author with her own mother Helen for their memoir *You Have No Idea*, Vanessa is living her dream.

Blair Underwood (Ludie Watts)

Award-winning actor, director and producer Blair Underwood, who recently appeared as Othello at The Old Globe in San Diego, is equally at home in the worlds of theatre, film and television. He made his Broadway debut as Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire* for which he received a 2012 Drama League Distinguished Performance Award nomination. His many film and TV credits include *Just Cause*, *Deep Impact*, *Something New*, *The Event*, *Dirty Sexy Money*, *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, *Sex and the City*, *In Treatment* (Golden Globe nomination) and *L.A. Law* (Golden Globe nomination), among many others. He starred in the Lifetime TV movie *The Trip to Bountiful* with Cicely Tyson and Vanessa Williams and received a Critics Choice Television Award for his performance. He is a Grammy Award-winner for the audiobook of *An Inconvenient Truth*. He made his feature directorial debut with *Bridge to Nowhere*.

Jurnee Smollette-Bell (Thema)

Jurnee Smollett-Bell is an award-winning actress and activist. She played an integral role in this past season of NBC's critically-acclaimed series *Parenthood*, and most recently costarred in HBO's *True Blood*. Jurnee also starred in Tyler Perry's 2013 film *Temptation*, was seen in the last two seasons of NBC's Emmy Award-winning series *Friday Night Lights* (alongside Connie Britton and Kyle Chandler) and starred opposite Jim Belushi and Jerry O'Connell in CBS' *The Defenders*. Jurnee also starred in *The Great Debaters* (NAACP Image Award, Outstanding Lead Actress in a Motion Picture) with Forest Whitaker and Denzel Washington, who also directed the film. *The Great Debaters* was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Picture. She made her breakthrough performance at the age of 11, starring in *Eve's Bayou* opposite Samuel L. Jackson.

Michael Wilson (Director)

Michael Wilson directed the 2013 Broadway revival, as well as the 2014 Emmy-nominated Lifetime/Ostar Productions movie, of Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*, which garnered a Tony Award for Best Actress for Cicely Tyson. Over a two-decade collaboration with Foote, Wilson directed *Dividing The Estate* (Broadway), the premieres of *The Carpetbagger's Children* (Lincoln Center Theater), *The Day Emily Married* (Primary Stages), *The Death of Papa* (Hartford Stage) and *The Orphans' Home Cycle* (Signature Theatre), for which he received 2010 Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards. Also on Broadway, he has directed Gore Vidal's *The Best Man*, *Enchanted April*, and *Old Acquaintance* (Roundabout Theatre Company). Off-Broadway, he has directed numerous plays, including last season's premiere of Foote's *The Old Friends*. Internationally, he directed Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* for the 1995 Venice Biennale. He has directed at our nation's major theatres, including Hartford Stage, where as Artistic Director from 1998 to 2011 he commissioned and developed numerous new works, including Quiara Alegria Hudes' 2012 Pulitzer Prize winner *Water By the Spoonful*.

Horton Foote (Playwright)

HORTON FOOTE (*Playwright*) created *The Trip to Bountiful* as a live television drama in 1953 starring Lillian Gish and Eva Marie Saint, who reprised their roles in Foote's Broadway stage adaptation. The play became an Oscar-winning film in 1985 (Best Actress, Geraldine Page), earning Foote his third Academy Award nomination. The play was revived on Broadway in 2013 (winning a Best Actress Tony Award for Cicely Tyson), and became an Emmy-nominated Lifetime television movie in 2014. For his epic nine plays *The Orphans' Home Cycle*, Foote received the New York Drama Critics Circle, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lortel Awards for Best Play. He received two Academy Awards, one for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and another for *Tender Mercies*. In 1995, he received both an Emmy Award for his teleplay of William Faulkner's *Old Man*, and the Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Young Man from Atlanta*. In 1998, he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, receiving their Gold Medal of Drama. In 2000, he was bestowed the National Medal of Arts Award by President Clinton. In 2008, his play *Dividing the Estate* won Obie and Outer Critics Circle Awards, as well as a Best Play Tony nomination. Mr. Foote's memoirs, *Farewell* and *Beginnings*, are published by Scribners.

About the National Center for Afro-American Artists

The National Center of Afro-American Artists (NCAAA) is a private, not-for-profit institution committed to preserving and fostering the cultural arts heritage of black peoples worldwide through arts teaching, and the presentation of professional works in all fine arts disciplines. Located in Boston, it was founded in 1968 by Dr. Elma Lewis who remained its Artistic Director until her passing. Responding to needs identified at a conference of black creative intellectuals convened at Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois, in 1967, Lewis conceived the NCAAA. It subsumed the Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts (ELSFA) which she had launched in 1950, thereby creating a teaching, performing and visual arts institution which would emphasize artistic excellence and the contribution of the arts to wholesome human development. Lewis intended the organization to be locally, nationally and internationally active in bringing black heritage in the arts to the world.

About Sigma Delta Theta Sorority

Since its founding in 1913 on the campus of Howard University, the mission of Delta Sigma Theta has been rooted in service within the African-American community. In 1925, two members from the Iota Chapter started Jabberwock, an annual program of entertainment for the public designed to raise funds for college scholarships. Other service programs have included helping to organize the Fort Hill Mental Health Association to support mental health awareness in the 1960s, providing resources for the establishment of a community health center in the African-American community, initiating an annual program for young teenagers on African-American history and culture in 1986, and active involvement in civil rights and political action.

About ArtsEmerson: The World On Stage

ArtsEmerson was established by Emerson College to program the beautifully restored 590-seat Emerson/Paramount Center Mainstage; the versatile, intimate Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre (“The Jackie”), which can seat up to 150 people; the state-of-the-art 170-seat Bright Family Screening Room (all located within the Emerson/Paramount Center, a cornerstone in the revitalization of downtown Boston); and the beloved, historic 1,186-seat Emerson/Cutler Majestic Theatre in the heart of the Theatre District, fully restored by Emerson in 2003. Under the leadership of Rob Orchard, ArtsEmerson gives Boston audiences a new level of cultural choice, bringing live professional American and international stage work to its four distinct venues as well as films and music. For more information, visit www.artsemerson.org.

About Emerson College

Located in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city’s Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,660 undergraduates and 829 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 80 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its study and internship programs in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic. A new, permanent facility on Sunset Boulevard for its L.A.-based program opened in February, 2014. For more information, visit www.emerson.edu.

-###-