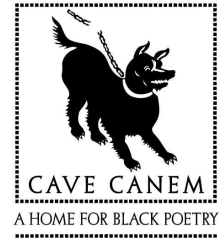


**Media Contact & Request for Images:**

Camille Rankine, Manager of External Relations & National Programs

Cave Canem Foundation: 718.858.0000; [crankine@ccpoets.org](mailto:crankine@ccpoets.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAVE CANEM “BRINGS THE DRAMA” TO BROOKLYN: BENEFIT PERFORMANCE**

*Suzanne Douglas, Samantha Maurice, Tracie Morris, Lili Taylor & John Douglas Thompson Headline; Ted Sod Directs*

**BROOKLYN, NY** (September 26, 2011) — **Cave Canem Foundation, North America’s premier “home for black poetry,”** will showcase the dramatic works of award-winning writers **Cornelius Eady, Jessica Hagedorn, May Joseph, Casey Llewellyn** and **Claudia Rankine** at its second annual benefit performance on **Monday, October 24, 2011** at **Pratt Institute’s Brooklyn campus**. The program will be held 8 – 10 pm at Memorial Hall, 200 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. Directed by **Ted Sod**, actors **Suzanne Douglas, Samantha Maurice, Tracie Morris, Lili Taylor** and **John Douglas Thompson** will present selections from Eady’s *Brutal Imagination*, Hagedorn’s *Stairway to Heaven*, Joseph’s *Fled* and Rankine and Llewellyn’s *Existing Conditions*. Poet **Mahogany Browne**, host and curator of Friday Night Slam at New York City’s Nuyorican Poets Café, is emcee. Admission for general seating is \$40 (\$30 through October 10); tickets for reserved seats and a VIP reception begin at \$125. To purchase tickets, visit [www.cavecanempoets.org/benefit](http://www.cavecanempoets.org/benefit) or call 718.858.0000. Pratt Institute is Benefit Host, and Benefit Sponsors are the Atlantic Center for the Arts; Adelphi University; the Institute for Research in African American Studies, Columbia University; *Mosaic Magazine*; New York University Creative Writing Program; Poetry Society of America; Poets & Writers, Inc.; United Federation of College Teachers; The University of Georgia Press; Words without Borders; and the YMCA of Greater New York.

“We’re delighted to celebrate writers who are producing ground-breaking work, and we’re doubly pleased that director Ted Sod and five extraordinary actors will interpret their texts in exciting new ways,” said Cave Canem’s co-founder **Toi Derricotte**. Co-founder **Cornelius Eady** added, “Cave Canem Brings the Drama’ follows on the heels of our participation as Programming Partner at the Brooklyn Book Festival. Two years after putting down roots in DUMBO, we’re enjoying more and more opportunities to contribute to and benefit from Brooklyn’s vibrant art scene.”

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**CAVE CANEM FOUNDATION, INC.** \* 20 Jay Street, Suite 310-A, Brooklyn, NY 11201\*  
[www.cavecanempoets.org](http://www.cavecanempoets.org) / 718.858.0000

## Performers

Actress, singer, director and producer **Suzanne Douglas** has appeared on Broadway in *The Threepenny Opera*, *It's a Grand Night for Singing*, *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Into the Woods*. Off-Broadway, she recently appeared in the premiere of Kara Lee Corthron's *Julius by Design*. She has won two NAACP Image Awards for her performances in, respectively, *Tap*, alongside Sammy Davis, Jr. and Gregory Hines, and Regina Taylor's play *Crowns*. She co-starred with Robert Townsend in the Warner Brothers' family sitcom *The Parent 'Hood*, and has appeared in several critically acclaimed television shows, including *The Good Wife* and *NYPD Blue*. Ms. Douglas will perform a selection from **May Joseph's *Fled***.

Currently appearing in productions of *The Grasshopper Way* and *The Winter's Tale*, **Samantha Maurice** is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London. She recently performed as a dancer in Ray Bradbury's musical *2116* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. With John Douglas Thompson, Ms. Maurice will perform a selection from **Cornelius Eady's *Brutal Imagination***.

**Tracie Morris** is an interdisciplinary poet who has worked extensively as a sound artist, writer, actor, bandleader and multimedia performer. Her most recent poetry collection is *To Do w/John* (Zasterle Press, November 2011). Several forthcoming projects include *Rhyme Scheme*, a book of poems (Chax Press, 2012), as well as the recordings *sharpmorris*, with Elliott Sharpe, and *Introducing the Tracie Morris Band*. She is Associate Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at Pratt Institute. Dr. Morris will perform a selection from **Claudia Rankine and Casey Llewellyn's *Existing Conditions***, a full-length work exploring race, gender and nation building.

**Lili Taylor** has appeared in dozens of films since 1988, including *Dogfight*, *Mystic Pizza*, *Rudy* and most recently, *Brooklyn's Finest*. She is well known for playing the lead role of Valerie Solanas in the 1996 film *I Shot Andy Warhol*. She portrayed Lisa Kimmel Fisher in the Emmy-and Golden Globe-award-winning HBO drama *Six Feet Under*, and received the 2005 Best Actress award at the Copenhagen International Film Festival for her role in *Factotum*. Ms. Taylor will perform a monologue in the character of Nena from **Jessica Hagedorn's *Stairway to Heaven***.

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**John Douglas Thompson** has been called “one of the most compelling classical stage actors of his generation” by *The New York Times*, winning Obie and Lucille Lortel awards for his portrayal of Othello with Theater for a New Audience. He has performed in such modern classics as *Cyrano de Bergerac* on Broadway and *Hedda Gabler* at the New York Workshop Theater. He played the lead role in Eugene O’Neill’s *The Emperor Jones* at the Irish Repertory Theater. With Ms. Maurice, Mr. Thompson will perform a selection from **Cornelius Eady’s *Brutal Imagination***.

### **Director**

**Ted Sod’s** directorial credits include, among others, *How To Be A Good Italian Daughter in Spite of Myself*, (Cherry Lane Theatre); *Blood Type: Ragu* (Actors’ Playhouse/Capital Rep); *By Jupiter* (York Theatre Co.); *Agnes of God*; *A Night In Tunisia*; *Talley’s Folly*; *Wit* (George Street Playhouse) and *Who Popped Poppi Chulo?* and *Scarlet Sees the Light* for the New York City Fringe Festival. He is the librettist of the musicals *The Cousins Grimm* and *27, Rue de Fleurus*; and produced, wrote and acted in *Crocodile Tears*, an independent feature. Other works written for the stage include *Stealing, Damaged Goods, Salon, The Kiss, A Rude Awakening, Satan and Simon Desoto* and *The Lost Art of Conversation*. He has acted in plays produced by The Public Theatre, The Culture Project, Second Stage, Playwrights’ Horizons, American Place Theatre, BAM Theatre Company, the Circle, Seattle and Yale Repertory Companies, among others; and has appeared in the television series *Bored To Death, Nurse Jackie, Ugly Betty, Law and Order, Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *Law and Order: SVU*. Mr. Sod is currently dramaturge for the education department at The Roundabout Theatre Company in New York City.

### **Playwrights**

**Cornelius Eady** is the author of eight books of poetry, most recently *Hardheaded Weather* (Penguin, 2008). His *Victims of the Latest Dance Craze* received the 1985 Lamont Prize from the Academy of American Poets; *Running Man*, a jazz opera with a score by Diedre Murray and libretto by Eady, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama; and a production of *Brutal Imagination*, in which “he deftly parses the toxic products of the white racist imagination” (*Booklist*), won the 2002 Oppenheimer award for the best first play by an American playwright. He is Professor of English and the Miller Family Endowed Chair in Literature and Writing at the University of Missouri-Columbia. With Toi

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Derricotte, he is co-founder of Cave Canem.

Called by Russell Banks “one of the best of a generation of writers who are making the American language new,” poet, musician, playwright and fiction writer **Jessica Hagedorn** has published four novels, including *Dogeaters*, nominated for a National Book Award, and *Toxicology*, published by Viking Penguin in April 2011. She has written or co-written 10 critically acclaimed works for theater, most recently the musical play *Most Wanted*, a collaboration with composer Mark Bennett and director Michael Greif; *Fe in The Desert*; and *Stairway to Heaven*. The stage adaptation of *Dogeaters*, presented at the NYSF/Public Theater and elsewhere, has been called by Chay Yew “a stunning play of epic proportions...packed with wit, nostalgia, satire, irony, politics, poetry and the humanity of the turbulent and triumphant history of the Philippines.” Ms. Hagedorn is the Parsons Family University Professor of Creative Writing at Long Island University in Brooklyn.

**May Joseph** is a puppeteer, theater director and the founder of Harmattan Theater in New York City. In 2009, she co-created and directed “The Living Lines Project,” a performative installation in Nolita documenting human movement against built environments in different scales of urban mapping. The author of *Nomadic Identities: The Performance of Citizenship* (1999), she currently is completing a play, *Fled*, as well as a book on urban citizenship, *Metro Lives: Performing the City*. She is Professor of Global Studies in the Department of Social Science and Cultural Studies at Pratt Institute.

Co-author of *Existing Conditions* with Claudia Rankine, **Casey Llewellyn** is a theater artist whose work interrogates identity and form. Excerpts of her play *The Quiet Way* have been presented as part of the Little Theatre series and Puppet BloK at Dixon Place. She has performed in and written for David Neumann's work at Barnard College and was seen last year at The Tank in *All you need is one good idea, son*, choreographed by Yve Laris Cohen.

**Claudia Rankine** is the author of four collections of poetry, most recently, *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*, called “a master work in every sense” by Robert Creeley. Her plays include the revelatory *Provenance of Beauty: A South Bronx Travelogue*, described by *The New York Times'* Charles

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Isherwood as an “elegant meditation on a pocket of the city you might never think of exploring with guidebook in hand.” Her *Existing Conditions* (with Casey Llewellyn), re-imagines the voice of Jamaican-born Mary Seacole, celebrated for her service as a nurse in the Crimean War. A recipient of the Cleveland State Poetry Prize and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lannan Foundation and elsewhere, Ms. Rankine is the Henry G. Lee Professor of English at Pomona College.

### **Emcee**

Cave Canem fellow **Mahogany L. Browne** is the author of several books, including *Swag* and *Dear Twitter: Love Letters Hashed Out On-line*. She has released five LPs, is the co-founder of the Off Broadway poetry production *Jam On It*, and co-producer of New York City’s SoundBites Poetry Festival. She is an Urban Word New York City mentor; publisher of Penmanship Books, a small press for performance artists; a freelance journalist; and host and curator of Friday Night Slam at New York City’s Nuyorican Poets Cafe.

### **Cave Canem Foundation**

Founded by poets Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady to remedy the under-representation of African Americans in writing workshops and MFA programs, since 1996 Cave Canem has been advancing the artistic and professional growth of African American poets in New York City and across the country. The organization has grown to become an influential movement with a high-achieving national fellowship of 319; a renowned faculty that includes Inaugural Poet Elizabeth Alexander and Pulitzer Prize winners Yusef Komunyakaa and Natasha Trethewey; and numerous programs, including a writing retreat, regional workshops, anthology publication, and two book prizes. In October 2009, the organization moved its headquarters from Manhattan to DUMBO and expanded its Brooklyn-based programs. To learn more, visit [www.cavecanempoets.org](http://www.cavecanempoets.org).

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