PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Denise Saunders Thompson, Theatre Manager
(202) 806-7050, ddsaunders@howard.edu
DATE: October 20, 2014

HOWARD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS
CONTINUES ITS THEATRICAL SEASON
WITH THE TENNESSEE WILLIAMS DRAMA
NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES

WASHINGTON, DC----- Howard University’s Department of Theatre Arts continues its 2014-2015 Theatre and Dance season, TOP OF THE HEAP with Tennessee Williams’ – NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES, an early Williams play based on a true incident in which a prison warden locked a number of inmates in a section of jail made unbearably hot by radiators. NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES is directed by Howard University Department of Theatre Arts Professor and Alum, Eric Ruffin and will be performed in the Ira Aldridge Theater, Wednesday – Friday, November 5 – 7, Saturday, November 8 at 2:30pm and 7:30pm, and Sunday, November 9 at 3:00pm and 7:00pm.

NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES tells the story of a group of diverse inmates who argue, celebrate, and struggle to survive while on a hunger strike to better their situation against the inhumane prison conditions. We meet the psychopathic, corrupt and immoral prison warden, Boss Whalen; the heroine, Eva, willing to sacrifice her honor for the man she loves; the stoic anti-hero barely containing his emotions in a cage of intellect, while enduring his incarceration, Jim; and the hardened convict, Butch, using his status in the prison hierarchy to promote a personal agenda of revenge. Williams gained inspiration for the play after reading newspaper accounts of inmates who suffocated in a steam room in a Pennsylvania prison.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS, Pulitzer Prize winner, was a master playwright of the twentieth century, and his plays A Streetcar Named Desire, The Glass Menagerie, Summer and Smoke, and Cat On A Hot Tin Roof are considered among the finest of the American stage. At their best, his twenty-five full-length plays combined lyrical intensity, haunting loneliness, and hypnotic violence. He is widely considered the greatest Southern playwright and one of the greatest playwrights in the history of American drama.

-MORE-
Williams also continued to experiment with writing other genres. He wrote two novels, *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* and *Moise and the World of Reason*, short stories, including "One Arm" and "Hard Candy," a book of poetry called *In the Winter of Cities*, the film, *Baby Doll*, and his autobiography, *Memoirs*. In the last years of his life, Williams divided his time between his residences in New York and Key West. He also kept an apartment in New Orleans's French Quarter. In 1981, his *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* was produced Off-Off Broadway at the Jean Cocteau Theater, and the following year, his final play, *A House Not Meant to Stand* premiered at the Goodman Theater in Chicago. Williams died at his New York apartment in 1983, at the age of 71.

**ERIC RUFFIN**’s most recent regional theatre directing credits include *2-2 Tango* at Studio Theatre, *A Raisin in the Sun* at Crossroads Theatre, *Old Settler* for The African Continuum Theatre Company, *Gutta Beautiful* at New Federal Theatre, *New Kid* for Imagination Stage, and the critically acclaimed New Jersey premiere of *Topdog /Underdog* for Luna Stage. He has also directed *Venus, Passing Strange*, and *Cut Flowers* at the Ira Aldridge Theatre in addition to *In The Blood, Antigone, In Arabia We’d All Be Kings, Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train* and *Our Lady of 121st Street* for the Rutgers Theatre Company. Other credits include *Public Ghosts/ Private Stories* at the George Street Playhouse, *Romeo and Juliet* at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, *The Piano Lesson* for The African Globe, *My Children! My Africa!* at Luna Stage, *Waiting to be Invited* for The Black Theatre Troupe, and *The Story* for the Howard Players.

He founded “The Acting Studio” at the Newark School of the Arts, a professional training program for actors, and was the founder and Artistic Director for the Newark Youth Ensemble, Newark, NJ. Additionally he has served as the Artistic Director for The New Jersey Performing Arts Center’s Young Writer Workshop and has taught acting and performance theory courses at various schools including Howard University, Duke Ellington School of the Arts and Rutgers University’s Mason Gross School of the Arts. Ruffin is a Society for Stage Directors and Choreographers Associate, a New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect and a 1999 recipient of the New York Drama League Directing Fellowship. He has also been honored with a Shakespeare Theatre Acting Fellowship, and the Princess Grace Grant for Dance.

-MORE-
Tickets may be purchased at the Ira Aldridge Theater Box Office or by calling (202) 806-7700. Additional information about *NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES* can be obtained by calling (202) 806-7050.

**NOT ABOUT NIGHTINGALES INFORMATION**

**WHERE:** Howard University, Ira Aldridge Theater  
**DATES:** Wednesday – Friday, November 5 – 7 at 7:30pm, Saturday, November 8 at 2:30 & 7:30pm, and Sunday, November 9, 2014 at 3:00 & 7:00pm.  
**PLAYWRIGHT:** Tennessee Williams  
**DIRECTOR:** Eric Ruffin  
**DESIGNERS:**  
- **Set Designer,** Michael Stepowany  
  - **Light Designer,** TW Starnes  
  - **Costume Designer,** Dennis McBride  
  - **Sound Designer,** Cresent Haynes  
  - **Props Artisan,** Greg Jackson  
  - **Stage Managers,** Raegan Henderson and Shaq Sanderson  
**AUDIENCE:** Maybe inappropriate for children 13 and younger. Production contains graphic and adult language.

**HOWARD UNIVERSITY, IRA ALDRIDGE THEATER INFORMATION**

**PERFORMANCE AND TICKET PRICES**: $17.00 General Admission; $10.00 Faculty/Staff/Senior Citizens/Alumni/Military; $7.00 Students (with valid ID)  
**GROUPS:** Discount rates are available for Groups of 10 or more, contact Denise Saunders Thompson at (202) 806-7050.  
**ACCESSIBILITY:** Accessible seating available by reservation  
**LOCATION:** 2455 6th Street, NW (located next door to Cramton Auditorium on Howard University’s campus)  
**INFORMATION:** Tickets (202) 806-7700; Department of Theatre Arts (202) 806-7050; Fax (202) 806-9193  
**WEBSITE:** [www.coas.howard.edu/theatrearts](http://www.coas.howard.edu/theatrearts)  
**EMAIL:** ddsaunders@howard.edu

###