

WORD from the Artistic Director – Fall 2007

"... there is a deeper area, a wellspring which is resourceful, regenerative, and useful ... that place at the root of mind, below habits of thinking. It's at that level that we know as much as we can ever know about anything. That is the level at which we truly love, at which we truly exist ... and it's at that level that we experience human solidarity."

~ Sekou Sundiata (1948-2007)

The level of being articulated by the great American poet Sekou Sundiata is the level at which artists create, the level that great performances take us to. This season, New WORLD Theater invites you to go there with us. To celebrate and contemplate, to deepen relationships and make new connections. Roberta Uno, NWT's founding artistic director, and Talvin Wilks, interim artistic director 2002-04, each share beautiful, anecdotal remembrances of Sekou in this issue.

In the wake of Sekou's passing, it was fitting that we began our 29th season with poetry. This year's Community Spirit showcase, supporting the work of local artists, featured Lenelle Moïse in *Womb-Words, Thirsting*. Leading up to her performance, Lenelle developed this solo project during a two-week residency with NWT in the department of theater at Smith College. Her celebratory and provocative voice as a queer Haitian-American artist, aesthetically gorgeous and politically powerful, blessed audiences over two interactive evenings in the Hallie Flanagan Theater in September.

In October, local collaborations continued with the Somali Women's Project, an arts-based economic self-sufficiency initiative, recently renamed *Walaalo!* (meaning "sisters" in Somali). This year's Somali Community Festival in Springfield, MA, featured Somali hip-hop artist Musa and lively performances by *Walaalo!* members.

In November, we welcome writer / director Concepción León and the Sa'as Tun Theater Company from Yucatán, Mexico, with *Mestiza Power*. This original interview-theater piece reveals the powerful dignity of Mayan women amidst the complex challenges of contemporary indigenous life. *Mestiza Power* will be performed in Spanish, with English supertitles in the first translation of this play by Harley Erdman, commissioned by NWT.

Along with new artists and renewed relationships, we welcome two new staff members this season: celebrated musician Angel Rodriguez as our Project 2050 Coordinator, and Nicole Young bringing fresh ideas to the new position of Audience & Community Development Coordinator - including some great ways you can get involved with NWT. You can read more about Angel and Nicole in our People section. We are excited about the energy and creativity of our growing team!

This season is full, challenging, beautiful, and will take us deeper - to that level of love and revolution, creativity and solidarity. Join us.

Peace,

Andrea Assaf, Artistic Director