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National Theatre of Ghana to perform Tennessee Williams across Southeast Michigan

By [STATESIDE STAFF \(/PEOPLE/STATESIDE-STAFF\)](/PEOPLE/STATESIDE-STAFF/) • SEP 13, 2017

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A street performance in Ghana from the National Theatre.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA

Stateside's conversation with Kate Mendeloff, a drama lecturer at the University of Michigan, Mawuli Semevo, artistic director and actor with the National Theatre of Ghana, and stage manager Agnes Panfred.

The magic of theater is coming to Michigan (<http://lsa.umich.edu/world-performance/news-events/all-events.detail.html/42049-9529955.html>) in a new, unique form. Starting today through Sunday, the University of Michigan Center for World Performance Studies (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4cc4sMQpQJEZm1STjVOOFVGNUEU/view>) hosts the National Theatre of Ghana (<http://nationaltheatreghana.com>).

The centerpiece of this residency is a series of open-air performances of the Tennessee Williams one-act play *10 Blocks on the Camino Real*. Written in 1948, it's the story of an American sailor struggling to survive in a poor foreign town.

The series is part of the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival (<http://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4cc4sMQpQJEaEpTVVRZc2JlcG8/view>), and it is the second of five stops on this U.S. tour.

"This is something that I'm very excited about because we're going to reach a wide range of people," said Kate Mendelof (<http://lsa.umich.edu/rc/people/faculty/mendelof.html>), a drama lecturer at the University of Michigan and director of Shakespeare in the Arb. (<http://www.facebook.com/ShakespeareintheArb/>)

The National Theatre of Ghana has three resident groups: drama, dance, and music, according to Agnes Panfred, stage manager for the National Theatre.

"We take drama [to our people] so they really understand that's what government wants to say about laws, rules, and social issues in the community," Panfred said.

Artistic Director Mawuli Semevo admits it's an odd choice for a Ghanaian company to choose a work from a Southern American playwright, but he likes the challenge.

"Everything in life is difficult, but it's the way you approach it," Semevo said. "Turn the play inside out. Visit different communities, and see how the communities can identify themselves with the production."



(<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files>)

Agnes Panfred (left) and Mawuli Semevo (right) at the Michigan Radio studios.

CREDIT MERCEDES MEJIA / MICHIGAN RADIO

The National Theatre of Ghana will perform its adaptation of *10 Blocks on the Camino Real* at noon Friday, Sept. 15 on the University of Michigan Diag, Saturday, Sept. 16 at 11 a.m. at the Ypsilanti Farmers Market in Depot Town, and at CMAP (Carrie Morris Arts Production) in Detroit at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 17.

For more on the National Theatre of Ghana and the company's performances in Michigan, listen to the full conversation above.

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