SOTC INTERN, KARAMU HOUSE AND CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

BACKGROUND

In 1915 Russell and Rowena Jelliffe came from Oberlin College and founded a settlement house focused on the performing arts that welcomed Cleveland's African American community. The rich past of Karamu House, arguably the nation's oldest African-American theatre, is a story of continuous re-invention during more than a century of engagement with culture and community. Beginning with the socially engaged work of the Gilpin Players (Karamu's first incarnation), to the growing artistic stature of the Karamu House that emerged during WWII and beyond, and through to the influence of politics and Black Nationalism that characterized its mid-century identity, Karamu House reflected and made art from its context and times. During the late twentieth century the institution transformed again, focusing on diverse roles in its city and neighborhood, including day care, youth education (in dance, music, and drama) and outreach. And in the early part of the twenty-first century, Karamu began to work towards bridging the technology divide with digital arts classes for children. The latest incarnation of Karamu is moving the institution back towards its dramatic and performing arts roots, building on the institutions strengths with regard to history and theater.

SUMMER ON THE CUYAHOGA (SOTC)

Summer on the Cuyahoga is an immersive summer internship program that brings together 50-70 students from 8 universities to explore the professional, civic, and social offerings of the Cleveland area. SOTC provides interns with free housing in college dormitories, substantial cultural and recreational activities, and alumni connections. Learn more at http://summeronthecuyahoga.com/.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVE

Karamu’s history is documented in an extensive archives that need significant work in order to be properly housed, arranged and described. The goal is to make the history of this great institution available for a number of purposes:

- To enable Karamu House itself to use the materials for exhibit and dramaturgy
- To empower Cleveland and Ohio students by enabling better study of the place of Karamu House in the history of their state, city, and neighborhood.
- To offer easily accessible information about the history and legacy of Karamu House to researchers for scholarship and inquiry.
- To organize and preserve the materials that embody the history and institutional memory of Karamu House.
- To assist Karamu House to establish systematic approaches to managing its legacy, properly housing, arranging, and describing its collections more effectively and thoroughly.

Cleveland Public Library has completed an initial survey of the collection which consists of 341 linear feet of materials related to Karamu House spanning the entire period of its existence as
well as a collection of items from Carl and Louis Stokes. These materials include production files containing correspondence, photographs, slides, programs, performer files, and institutional and partnership materials.

The intern, supervised jointly by staff at Cleveland Public Library and Karamu House, will work with professionals from Cleveland Public Library, Karamu House, and the Cleveland Museum of Art in order to advance project goals. To that end, the intern will also be asked to contribute to the process whereby Karamu redesigns its archival and records management mission and goals, plotting a scheme for giving access to researchers studying the history of the Karamu, Karamu’s evolution, the social background of twentieth century African American theater, and the social and cultural history of the Cleveland area.

Additional aims, should there be time, will involve developing a records management plan, developing a plan for records digitization, and addressing rights clearance issues, amongst other issues.

There will also be opportunities to meet with and shadow archivists, librarians, conservators, and museum staff.

**TASKS**

1. Attend trainings/meetings/staff development sessions on DACS, EAD, Ohio’s Finding-Aid Factory, and other topics at CPL.
2. Work with the project team to develop a processing plan for the collection.
3. Begin processing on priority areas of the project.
4. Learn about and begin to apply appropriate content schema, such as DACS, to descriptions.
5. Learn about and begin to apply appropriate data structures to descriptions and finding-aids.
6. Prepare minutes and lead team meetings.
7. Meet regularly with CPL’s Metadata Archivist and Digital Library Strategist.
8. Shadow Cleveland Digital Public Library staff to gain an understanding of library archival, digitization, preservation, and conservation work.
9. Other duties as assigned may include some small archives projects, database cleanup work, digitization, and records management activities.

**OUTCOMES AND SKILLS GAINED**

The intern will gain knowledge of and experience with the following:

1. Archival arrangement and description.
2. Preservation of physical and analog items.
3. Project management.
5. Digitization tools and standards.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- Solid research, organization, and problem-solving skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills for working with a variety of Karamu, CPL, and CMA staff members.
- Excellent attention to detail.

Coursework, experience, or interest in the following will be helpful but is not necessary:

- Interest in museums, libraries, archives, or art history.
- Knowledge of image processing software.
- Experience or coursework with cultural heritage management.
- Experience or coursework with digital libraries.

SUPERVISORS

Karamu: Day to day supervision done by staffer at Karamu House. Please feel free to contact Rockell Llanos at Karamu with questions about the internship at rllanos@karamuhouse.org.

CPL: Weekly meeting with Chatham Ewing, Digital Library Strategist and/or members of his staff. Please feel free to contact Chatham with questions about the internship at chatham.ewing@cpl.org

HOURS

9 AM – 5 PM, Monday through Friday

COMPENSATION

It is required that the student use Praxis, Praxis-Plus, or other, similarly substantial funding for this position.

APPLICATION

This position is not open to first-years.

The intern is required to participate fully in Summer on the Cuyahoga, including living in the provided housing, attending after-work events, and engaging with Smith alumnae.

Please submit a resume and cover letter to Rockell Llanos at Karamu at rllanos@karamuhouse.org before March 15, 2018.