

MARGUERITE MARIAMA

ACTIVIST · PERFORMING ARTIST · EDU-CULTURAL
SPEAKER/CONSULTANT

Marguerite Mariama is an acclaimed artist, activist, educator – and noted speaker on issues related to the arts and personal and collective transformation. Black cultural pride and nationalism during the '60's and '70's gave rise to artists such as Dr. Mariama, who used their craft to affirm Black culture as a tool for Black 'upliftment'. These "cultural workers" launched the Black Arts Movement – where social justice, history, cultural consciousness, the arts, and education intersected.

A trained professional in music, dance, and theatre arts, Marguerite is also a dance/movement therapist, who completed a clinical residency at Manhattan Children's Psychiatric Hospital in New York City. She is a former professor in the City University of New York (CUNY) and City Colleges of Chicago. Dr. Mariama created the arts integration theory and methodology, *Performance Pedagogy*®. A personal and collective transformation strategy, it intersects the arts (dance, music, theater, literary and visual) – arts therapies and educational psychology, and employs performance as both an evaluation and teaching tool. Trauma-based in application, *Performance Pedagogy* is an essential component of her consulting work with adults, students, and communities.

An early civil rights activist, she participated in her first protest event at age 13 with a march against the *Willis Wagons*, Chicago's attempt to uphold de-facto school segregation. A documentary, '63 *Boycott*, about this event, was on the 2019 Academy Awards short list. Marches and rallies (1966 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – Soldier Field) and other experiences during her teen years set the stage for a life of activism that has included work with the Black United Front in Cairo, Illinois, involvement with the Black Panther Party's *Breakfast Program*, training with SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), and the *TransAfrica* anti-apartheid movement.

Early mentoring was life shaping and included: the tutelage of Dr. Barbara A. Sizemore, the first African American female superintendent of schools; international composer and teacher, Lena McLin – gospel music founder, Thomas A. Dorsey's niece and protégé whose students included singers Jennifer Hudson, Chaka Khan, and MET opera star, Eric Rucker, and others. Dance training was reinforced at Mayfair Academy – Michelle Obama's alma mater. She played French horn in the Harlan High School concert band led by William Abernathy – and appeared in solo features in the dance performing ensemble, *Orchesis*, under the leadership of Alonza Austin.

Scholarship, in hand, she headed to Southern Illinois University and continued her dance training with W. Grant Gray, a former Martha Graham dancer, who invited Ms. Graham to perform at the University where she regaled the students with her stories and presence. Marguerite co-founded the dance troupe *MUWARA DADA*, and the group traveled to East St. Louis to study with the legendary Katherine Dunham and her Senegalese drummers and dancers. Turning point: "Sitting at Ms. Dunham's feet and hearing her stories was awesome; and she reminded us of our social responsibility as young artists. We answered the 'call' in performances that made social commentary on the turbulent 1960's and 70's. Arriving in New

York after graduating from SIU as a HUD fellow, she met and trained with Charles Moore, a former Dunham dancer, and guest performed with his *Drums and Dancers of Africa* Dance Troupe. Later, she met and trained with yet another Dunham dancer, Lavinia Williams. Still active, she is a member of the Chicago Bulls Basketball Team's *Swingin' Seniors Dancers*.

Marguerite has traveled the world as a national and international big band and small ensemble jazz and blues stylist. She has held artist residencies in Singapore, Taiwan and Shanghai, China. Marguerite has performed with "some of the greatest musicians on the planet" – including her mentor, Jimmy Sigler – music director to jazz great, Dinah Washington. Working together for 14 years, her CD, *Wild Women Never Get the Blues...* was his final recording. Over the years, acting programs and classes have led to roles and appearances in films, commercials, print, and theatre – including an 8-week run in Chicago in the role of matriarch, Madame Armfeldt, in the Stephen Sondheim/Hugh Wheeler musical *A Little Night Music*.

She narrated the award-winning documentary *70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green* and was a contributor to "The Blues" a PBS TV installment on the history of Blues in Chicago, by director Martin Scorsese. Mariama made a cameo appearance in the Chicago segment, *Godfathers and Sons*. Dr. Mariama is a Southern Illinois University College of Liberal Arts and Science (CoLa) Distinguished Alum, former Illinois Humanities Council *Road Scholar*, member of the International Dance Council (CID), the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) – and the Smithsonian Institution's Regional Council (SRC). Marguerite is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (AKA) of which, Vice-President, Kamala Harris, is a Soror.

"Most recently, she has been working with bureaus within the United States Department of State – including International Organization Affairs (IO); Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA), and U.S. Missions to the United Nations – on transformational arts education programs, performances, and presentations. For one of them, Dr. Mariama was honored with a rousing introduction from U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

Marguerite Mariama produces, presents, and performs worldwide. She holds a Ph.D. in Performance Education/specializing in African American Musical Culture. A member of the Screen Actors Guild and Association for Television and Radio Artists (SAG/AFTRA), Mariama is represented by Stewart Talent Agency, and SMG Speakers.