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& Still Your Friend Present

Afeni

Fringe Brings Together Edmonton and Toronto Talent in a Collaboration, Exposing the Life of Tupac’s Mom

Edmonton actress, **Onika Henry** (*Chanzo, Bello, Hags*), was interested in working with Toronto writer and storyteller **Adam Bailey** (*My Three Deaths, 2025 Patrons Pick Winner and Toronto Star Critic’s Pick*) and approached him to collaborate. This led to the creation of **Afeni**, a new solo show celebrating the story of how the Black Panther (also **Tupac’s Mother**) took on the US Government after being arrested under false charges in the spring of ’69.

The show premiered in Edmonton last August and was received extremely well, receiving ★★★★★ from the emerging critic program at **AYTC** (the only reviewers to cover the entire Edmonton Fringe), hailing it as “*incredibly important, significant, and powerful*”. Audiences called the show “*phenomenal from start to finish*” as well as “*densely packed, emotionally charged and inspirational*”. This should be no surprise for Toronto Audiences familiar with Adam Bailey’s work, from the **Best of Fringe Winning Assassination of Robert Ford** to *The Life Henri*, their queer approach to history have always been a Fringe must. But Onika Henry has been giving **Black History** to Edmonton Fringe goers since *Balance Board* brought local Black history to the Edmonton Fringe in 2019 and is credited for her “*truly fantastic acting*” by **The Edmonton Journal**. It was her desire to work with Bailey that opened up a natural opportunity to bring this story to light.

Afeni Shakur’s tale is a parable that would resonate in any period but has extra poignancy during our times, featuring an untrustworthy US government breaking the law in the name of a twisted sense of nationhood. In the face of outrageous oppression, (**156 false charge and the threat of over 300 years in prison**) this is the story of the resistance and coalition building that Afeni would be famous for until her son became her most known achievement. While the show does not cover Tupac’s rise, only mentioning his name once, it does tell the story of his birth and how he got his name. Defiantly, this show is about a woman who takes on impossible odds, surviving brutal treatment during what was New York State’s longest and most expensive trial, all while acting as her own lawyer.

Afeni is playing at The Factory Theatre Main Stage, 125 Bathurst St. Toronto

Performance Dates & Times:

30th June 7:15pm

9th July 4:00pm

4th July 10:15pm

10th July 8:00pm

5th July 5:15pm

11th July 10:30pm

7th July 3:30pm

Tickets are on sale now via <https://fringetoronto.com/fringe/show/afeni> : Don’t miss your chance to witness the Toronto Debut of an exciting collaboration.

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