



REMEMBERING

*Godfrey Stephen Sealy*

1959 - 2006



BIOGRAPHY OF  
**GODFREY STEPHEN SEALY**  
BY ANN MARIE SEALY

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Born on the 3rd of July 1959, Godfrey Sealy was one of the most accomplished performing arts producers and directors in Trinidad and Tobago. Renowned and respected as an actor, director and producer, Mr. Sealy saw his talents as being God given and as such he was instrumental in the development of the local theatre fraternity which included famous names as Raymond Choo Kong, Richard Ragoobarsingh, Penelope Spencer, Nikky Crosby and many others. To Godfrey it was a labour of love and as such he availed his knowledge and time equally to all new upcoming practitioners of the artform.

Godfrey grew up in the bustling town of St. James where he also attended Fatima College. As a student Godfrey joined the school's film department and immediately got involved in writing and theatre production. In Form 4, he produced the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* as well as *Rejuvenation* a dance production for which he engaged the assistance of Ms. Beryl Mc Bernie, an entertainer he adored and from whom gained inspiration, often referring to her as his mentor.

On leaving Fatima College, Godfrey's career as a writer, director, actor and producer grew exponentially, having worked with Helen Camps at The Trinidad Tent Theatre, performing in the productions *Rampanalgus Sunrise* and *Snow Cone and the Seven Douens*.



## Artistic Achievements

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In the early 1980's Godfrey got involved in the Prime Minister's Best Village Competition, which he saw as a challenge and an opportunity to explore the different elements of the performing arts, ranging from choreography, drama, costuming and directing. Despite major reservations from his grandmother regarding the class perceptions associated with the competition at that time, Godfrey Sealey persisted and persevered, finding his niche in using local folk heroes to highlight political and controversial issues.

Mr. Sealy's expertise as a writer and director were sought after by many villages for their dramatic presentations. He was instrumental in introducing a professional direction element into the competition. A few of the villages he worked with included: Diego Martin North, Carenage, Malick Folk Performers, Beetham Estate as well as few villages from South Trinidad. One of his popular presentations was *Anancy*, a presentation of Diego Martin North.

In 1989, Godfrey Sealey joined the National Drama Association being appointed to the post of President in 1992. A position from which he encouraged practitioners of the arts to use theatre as a medium for education.

Godfrey Sealey founded "The Playhouse Company" in 1984 for the primary purpose of producing plays with strong and sometimes controversial messages. In 1985 he first staged the cult musical *The Rocky Horror Show* which was followed by his musical titled *Limin*. Godfrey was the recipient of many Cacique Awards, including the first ever "Vanguard Award" for his

# ROLL CALL

A PLAY BY GODFREY SEALY  
DIRECTED BY JOHN ISAACS

THE AUDITORIUM, ERIC WILLIAMS PLAZA  
MAY 3 THRU MAY 14 8.30 P.M.

contributions to the performing arts. As the owner of his own company he would endure constant battles to gain corporate sponsorships for the hosting of his productions, added to which, there was a lack of appropriate venues to adequately stage his plays.

The following is a list of productions produced by The Playhouse Company:

## 1985

- "The Rocky Horror Show" written by Richard O'Brian
- "Limin" written by Godfrey Sealy
- "Strangers" by written by Dwight Arthur

## 1988

- "One of Our Sons Is Missing", which was later adapted and became the focus of the "Rural AIDS Project" a mobile AIDS Education Program staged in over thirty communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Barbados and St. Martin. The play was later published by MacMillan Publishing in 2005 as part of the publication *You can lead a Horse to Water*.

## 1989

- "Aida the Wicked Wench of the West", a play also performed at the 5th International Conference on AIDS held in Montreal, Canada.
- "Roll Call" written by Godfrey Sealy, he won the Cacique Award for Best Original Play for this production.
- "Home Sweet Home" written by Godfrey Sealy, an extremely controversial presentation resulting in the arrest of actors Heathcliff West, Mavis John and the late John Isaac for using

PLAYHOUSE Productions  
present

# TO HELL WID DAT!



A CARNIVAL COMEDY  
BY GODFREY SEALY

Adapted from original scrip By Felix Edinborough

Directed By  
RAYMOND CHOO KONG

obscene language on stage. They were found guilty, but discharged in 1996.

## 1990

- “To Hell Wid Dat”, a Carnival comedy performed in collaboration with Arbee Productions
- “Funny Business” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “Is There A Doctor In The House?” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “Cinderama” (a pantomime)

## 1991

- “Play Yuh Mas” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “La Cage Aux Folles” written by Jean Poiret

## 1999

- “Over My Dead Body” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “Three Lost Souls” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “The Little House of Horrors” written by Godfrey Sealy
- “Angel” written by Godfrey Sealy, produced and directed in London
- “Killing of Sister George” written by Godfrey Sealy

## 2007

- “Paradise Garage” his last play produced by his sister Ann Marie Sealy

## For Television

- 1985 - “Limin”
- 1996 - “Better Daze” (a situation comedy)
- 1999 - “What A Life What a Time”  
(a series of comic monologues)

THE PLAYHOUSE COMPANY  
presents

# La Cage aux Folles

## Speciality Events

1987

- “Rage”, an annual fashion show produced by Godfrey Sealey showcasing new designers.
- “Season Wonderment”, produced for Astor Johnson’s Repertory Dance Theatre
- “Linear”, a Tea Party and Fashion Show launching the works and careers of his sister Ann Marie and designer Cyprian Thomas.

## Cacique Awards Received:

- 1989 Best New Play Script – Roll Call
- 1990 Best Supporting Actor – To Hell With Dat
- 1991 Best Director / Best Actor – La Cage Aux Folles
- 1997 Best Director – Nicki Does  
(in collaboration with Errol Fabien, Tony Hall and Bernard Hazel)
- 1997 Best Original Script – Nicki Does  
(in collaboration with Nicki Crosby)
- 1999 First Ever National Vanguard Award for his contributions to the performing arts



THE PLAYHOUSE COMPANY

# ONE OF OUR MISSING

## HIV / AIDS

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In 1998 after being diagnosed HIV positive, Godfrey Sealy got involved in the fight for the prevention and protection against HIV/AIDS, becoming a spokesperson writing and campaigning throughout the country educating about the dreadful disease. The themes for the majority of his productions focused on the social issues affecting the lesbian and gay community. He was very open about his lifestyle and spoke publicly about being homosexual. According to his sister Annmarie Sealy “he was brutally honest about his sexuality and worked tirelessly to bring the LGBTQ community together to restore dignity and pride”. Godfrey often stated, “AIDS is about sex!” and pleaded with Caribbean policy-makers and the general public not to relegate sex issues to the back burner.

Godfrey became a teacher, mentor, counsellor and friend to all who came into his life, he welcomed prostitutes, bisexuals, transsexuals and the poor, anyone who may be affected by HIV/AIDS in the hope of providing not only information, but also as an avenue to the realization of health sustainability and hope. His home in Woodbrook, affectionately known as “Bohemia,” was open to all who were in need.

Sealy’s activism and openness came at a price and he eventually left Trinidad in 2001, citing discrimination on the part of the government. His request for assistance from the National Achievers Fund had been turned down, he said, because of his medical condition.



Sealy first moved to Miami and then to London where opportunities opened up for him to produce theatre. It was here that he staged *Jean and Dinah* written by the late Tony Hall. Sealy would later work in New York, returning to London, where he lived for three years, after which he returned to Trinidad against his doctor's objections.

Alongside Dr. Dani Lyndersay, Godfrey hosted workshops at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Centre for Creative & Festive Arts Department, ultimately resulting in the development of an HIV awareness production for primary schools titled "We Love the Clowns". The production was presented and performed by Arts-n-Action receiving sponsorships from various multi-national corporations. Throughout Trinidad and Tobago the production toured sixty-four primary schools.

Commenting on his passing, Bishop Clyde Harvey noted that Godfrey Sealy was a true prophet whose messages challenged the status quo. Godfrey's interests and awareness came out of his strong sense of justice and willingness to risk himself in the service of others, thereby highlighting the concerns about HIV/AIDS and the effects on the gay community.

As a co-founder of Community Action Resource (CARE) alongside Father Clyde Harvey, Godfrey took on the responsibility of facilitating medication, food items and providing counselling to those infected and affected. He was an advisor to Friends for Life offering support for Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) and Commercial Sex Workers. He utilized his limited financial resources to educate the public on the





importance to join the fight against HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

Godfrey completed several research studies on the gay community and in June 2005 he took on the post as Consultant with The Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+) on MSM related issues.

Other international agencies Godfrey worked with to raise awareness and educate the public on the life threatening disease include, Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC); United Nations Development Program (UNDP); Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Pan American Aids Program (PANCAP); United Nations Aids (UNAIDS).

**Community Outreach Experimental Projects:**

- 1989 Aida The Wicked Wench of the West  
(Montreal International conference on AIDS)
- 1996 We Love The Clowns  
(HIV project for Primary Schools)
- 1997 Shout Out  
(Youth initiative on Sexual Health issues)
- 1998 The Maids  
(The Male Prospective)
- 2004 Nationwide distribution of literature  
and contraceptives.



## Awards

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As an Activists/Advocate Godfrey Sealy received the following Awards:

- Artists Against ADIS/HIV 2000, in recognition for his outstanding courage and support.
- The Champion For Change, from CARICOM Heads of State
- Posthumous Award (2006) from the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC)

Godfrey Sealy represented Trinidad and Tobago and the region at international conferences where he used the theatre as his medium to deliver messages related to persons living with HIV/AIDS. He made presentations at numerous workshops throughout the Caribbean region, and served on national AIDS/HIV Program Sub-Committees. Just before his death, Godfrey Sealy received an honor from CARICOM for his courage in the fight against HIV/AIDS, however, due to his failing health he was not strong enough to travel to Guyana to accept the award and as such Father Harvey accepted the award on his behalf.



## International Travels

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Godfrey Sealey's travels spanned the globe, including the following countries:

- Ghana
- Ixtapa, Mexico  
(Conference on Communication)
- Cape Town, South Africa,  
(the international conference of persons living with HIV/AIDS)
- Geneva  
(International Aids Conference, sponsored by partners for the Americas for “ We Love The Clowns” in 1996).
- Durban, South Africa  
(Presented a paper on his Gay Research Project in the Caribbean)
- Cuba
- Montreal, Canada  
(Presentation of “Aida The Wicked Wench of the World”)
- St. Martin
- Berlin, Germany
- Connecticut  
(The Carnival Symposium)
- Jamaica  
(“One of Our Sons is Missing”, staged at The Phillip Sherlock Centre for the performing Arts in Kingston 2004)
- Brooklyn New York  
(“One of Our Sons are Missing” staged at Kumble Theatre for the performing Arts, Long Island 2008).



Godfrey was extremely patriotic to Trinidad and Tobago, despite being offered numerous opportunities to showcase his works in England and The United States of America, he was determined to return home to make a difference in his beloved country, thus sacrificing advanced HIV/AIDS medical facilities and health care services available to him.

Godfrey Sealy was a free spirited soul, after a very long battle with HIV/AIDS he succumbed to the disease on April 26th 2006 at 3:55 pm at The Mercy Home Hospice, Fitt Street, Woodbrook, just a few minutes away from his home he loved so much around the corner at #33 Murray Street, Woodbrook, called "Bohemia". He was 46, and died- of complications related to pneumonia.

At the time of his death, Sealy was working on a musical called Paradise Garage aimed at youth with HIV/AIDS. It was posthumously staged with the assistance of his sister, Ann Marie.

Godfrey Sealy's passing was peaceful holding his sister Ann Marie's hand.

**Contributors:**

- Ann Marie Sealy
- Curtis Bachan
- The National Black Justice Coalition at :  
<https://beenhere.org/2017/07/02/godfrey-sealy/>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeD5B\\_PSmKQ&t=23s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EeD5B_PSmKQ&t=23s)
- <https://youtu.be/jZr1-uRkNS4>



REMEMBERING  
GODFREY STEPHEN SEALY

"ONE OF OUR SONS IS GONE"