

## Storyteller to present free performance at Alfred University

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"Rage Is Not A 1-Day Thing: the Untaught History of the Montgomery Bus Boycott," a one-woman show written and performed by Awele Makeba and directed by Benny Sato Ambush, will come to the Alfred University stage Thursday, Feb. 9. The performance, to be held at 7:30 pm in Holmes Auditorium, Harder Hall, on the AU campus, is open to the public, free of charge. The late Rosa Parks may have been the best-known, but she was not the only hero of the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott that precipitated the end of racially segregated facilities. In "Rage Is Not A 1-Day Thing," Awele tells the story of the other "foot soldiers" - women and teen-agers - who were instrumental in making the Bus Boycott possible. Trying to answer the question - "Who were these other critical catalysts who with their determination to apply their citizenship to the fullness of its meaning and the love for democracy made history that impacted the world?" - Awele wrote what she calls "the little-known, true tale of these vital contributors that history forgot." Their courage, the support of their Montgomery community and the civil disobedience they engaged in resulted in the overturning of the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision that made racial segregation and "separate-but-equal" facilities the law of the land, explains Awele. She frames her theatrical story by the voice of Claudette Colvin, who was a 15-year-old girl who refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, AL, bus nine months before Rosa Parks' arrest for the same act. Colvin became a star witness in the federal court case, Browder v. Gayle, which led to the Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation in the United States. In the production, Awele portrays Colvin as a teen-ager and as an elderly woman; she also gives voice to 16 other characters - male and female, black and white - who were major players in the Montgomery Bus Boycott saga. "Rage" unveils such history-makers as 18-year-old Mary Louise Smith; Joanne Robinson, president of the Women's Political Council; Fred Gray, lead attorney for the Montgomery Improvement Association; Mayor W.A. Gayle, the defendant in Browder v. Gayle; and Rosa Parks, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) youth director and secretary. Awele says "Rage" is based on real events, and explores how "heroism is daily, how courage is a simple matter of taking a stand according to your principles and how ordinary people took direct action to achieve full citizenship and to have their humanity recognized." Using oral histories, court transcripts, interviews she conducted and memoirs from actual bus boycott participants, Awele created a piece that "challenges our collective memory 50 years after the fact and challenges us to re-articulate our vision of a just society." Awele considers "Rage" to be a work-in-progress. She completed a major re-write in August 2005 under the direction of Ambush. In December 2005, during the kick-off celebration for the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Awele made contact with additional participants and organizers she wants to interview. She will return to Montgomery later this year to continue her work. Awele Makeba is a storyteller, teaching artist, actor and voice-over-artist, who has recorded four compact discs: "Tell That Tale Again," "Trailblazers: African-Americans in the California Gold Rush," "This Land is Your Land," and "The Undiscovered Explorer: Imagining York." She's the voice of Rose on Playstation2: Legend of the Dragon, and is a featured storyteller in the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign. She holds a Master of Arts degree in elementary education from San Francisco State University. In her work, Awele has researched both primary and secondary sources, and has uncovered significant, yet neglected, figures in American history. She has appeared before audiences throughout the United States, as well as in Russia, Australia, Taiwan, France, Canada, Austria and Suriname. Sponsored by the Division of Performing Arts, her appearance at Alfred University is made possible by assistance from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' dean's office; Student Activities; and the David and Bebes Miller Performing Arts Endowment.