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www.prosperitymediaent.org

Contact: Cheryl Hawkins
Prosperity Media Enterprise, Inc.
Phone: (202) 841-1807 - Email: cprosperity@aol.com

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Washington, DC Cultural Organizations Form Collaborative to Promote Black Film/Theatre

Washington, DC – *Prosperity Media*, a nonprofit media arts organization, *Koalaty Entertainment*, a film and video production company and *The Zhanra Group*, a new play development company, are coming together to create an arts collaborative to help stimulate the Black Art Storytelling Industry in the Nation's Capital.

According to Clayton LeBouef, artistic director of The Zhanra Group, "A thriving Black film/theatre industry in Washington, DC can bring social and economic benefits to residents on a national level." Known for his recurring role as Colonel Barnfather on NBC's *Homicide: Life on the Streets* and roles in HBO's highly acclaimed series, *The Wire*, *The Corner* and the HBO award winning film, *Something the Lord Made*, LeBouef recalls when the famed Black Arts Movement held the power to delight and inspire people to become socially engaged. He contends that this film/theatre collaborative will reveal that the black arts movement is still ongoing.

Cheryl Hawkins, Prosperity Media's CEO, says, "The recent impact and success of films based on books, like "Hidden Figures and others, suggests that the climate is right for forming an arts collaborative to promote Black film/theatre." A media veteran and book aficionado, Hawkins has interviewed hundreds of Black authors on UDCTV the cable channel of the University of the District of Columbia. "Black authors are telling cultural stories that can help us know each other better," says Hawkins. "Coming together to express the Black narrative through film literacy is something that is long overdue."

Koalaty Entertainment, founded by Sherelle R. Williams, PhD, develops and produces films about people of color. Williams a media scholar and educator whose scholarly research examines the representations of African American women in film and television, says, "There are many untold stories about people of color who have actually helped to make the world we live in a better place for everyone. As a partner in the collaborative, Koalaty Entertainment's goal is to bring these diverse stories to life."

The creators of the Black film/theatre collaborative will announce their upcoming production slate at a press conference scheduled for Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 10 AM at the National Press Club, 549 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC.