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### Spring 2012, Acclaimed Ghanaian Author and Politician Is UNH's First international Playwright in Residence

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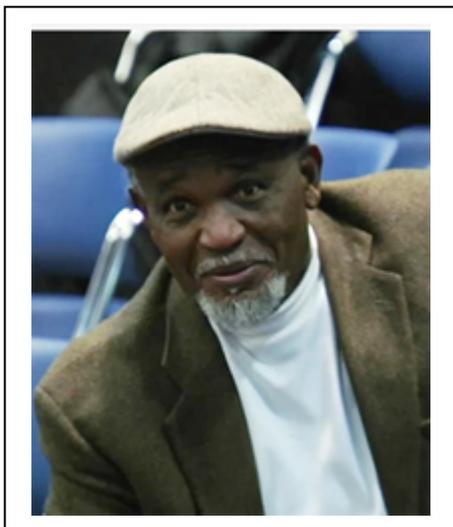
University of  
New Hampshire

# International Educator

The UNH Center for International Education Newsletter

Spring 2012

## ACCLAIMED GHANAIAN AUTHOR AND POLITICIAN IS UNH'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL PLAYWRIGHT IN RESIDENCE



Mohammed Ben-Abdallah of Ghana joined the faculty of Theatre & Dance this spring to teach playwriting as part of the Woodward International Drama and Dance Initiative. The aim of this program is to enrich campus life and broaden and deepen the understanding of international cultures through drama and dance. In addition to teaching, Dr. Ben-Abdallah also focused on mentoring student writers, fine-tuning his commissioned play *Song of the Pharaoh* with Director and Theater and Dance Department Chair David Kaye during rehearsals. The **world premiere** which runs from **April 18-22, 2012 at UNH's Johnson Theater** is based on the life and times of the legendary “heretic Pharaoh” Akhenaten, husband of Queen Nefertiti and father of Tutankhamen. Filled with music and dance, this epic migrates between ancient and modern times and incorporates “Abibigromma” a unique form of modern African theatre. “Mohammed is an amazing innovator, weaving so many African and Western influences into his creative work,” according to Professor Kaye. “These innovative skills also make him a great educator.” (*To see a behind-*

*the-scenes view of the staging of the play, click on the video below.*)

### Song of the Pharaoh promo



Dr. Ben-Abdallah was educated at the University of Ghana, the University of Georgia and the University of Texas at Austin. He is one of Ghana’s foremost playwrights. Among his major plays are *The Witch of Mopti*, *The Fall of Kumbi*, and *The Slaves Revisited*. He lectures at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, where several of his plays have been produced.

Government service is another significant way Ben-Abdallah has contributed to life in Ghana. He served as Ghana's Secretary for Information, Education and Culture, and was the first Chairman of the National Commission on Culture during the 1990s. He was also instrumental in reforming the country's education system during his tenure, increasing access to learning, consolidating the number of years of study and revamping content and curricula. Ben-Abdallah engaged the UNH community on this topic on April 12, as a keynote speaker of the Center for International Education's New Hampshire International Seminar. *(To hear an audio recording of his talk, click [here](#).)*

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