

## Why I Wrote *The Stiletto Monologues*

If you know me, then you know that I love – LOVE – stilettos! So much so that after back surgery years ago, I was devastated to learn from my orthopedic surgeon that I would have to wear flats. (If he said that would be for the rest of my life, I don't remember.) Any who, I was traumatized! That word choice might be a bit dramatic, but you get it. That revelation was quite difficult for me to accept. Perhaps that



Alethea McCollin's experience played a critical part in our lives, and in particular what

I began by researching the many tropes behind the iconic stiletto, and that ultimately led me to write the first iteration of *The Stiletto Monologues*. The first monologue I wrote was based on my question, "If I were a shoe, what would I be?" I'll let you guess! ☺ My exploration of the stiletto solidified my hypothesis that shoes, and more so stilettos, hold and are metaphors for life!

In 2014, I held a one-night workshop performance of an early version of the play. Then, as now, the stories were crafted around themes of identity, love, desire, and empowerment. Even though I was encouraged by audience feedback to the play, I felt that it wasn't what I wanted it to be. So, I set it aside for several years. In early 2020, before you know what would cast looming shadows on our lives, I finally re-opened the script and wrote what is now the work I imagined *The Stiletto Monologues* should be – an episodic play that explores its themes by integrating African American and Caribbean cultural expressions. From Jazz to blues, traditional poetry to slam, gospel, hip hop and reggae, and the performative treat that are indelible parts of African American/ Black sororities – stepping and call and response.

I've kept portions of a few monologues from the original play, and the work has grown from twelve to fifteen monologues. For me, this play speaks to the complexity of woman-ness. I enjoyed creating stories that form a part of our daily lives, and tying them all to a shoe. So, whether it's a comic stiletto telling of her stint on *Maury* in a paternity issue, an older woman reminiscing of her "glorious past", a woman dealing with her cheating lover and many other stories of life, I know you will laugh out loud, and also have something to think about as the stories settle in. In 2021, I presented the play at the Atlanta Black Theatre Festival as a reading, and knew that it was ready for a full production.

*So, here we are – months away from the first of many performances! We're excited to deliver stellar stories in a way that you have not heard before. As playwright, I'm stoked to see this play come to life! I hope to see you at the show. I know it will give you something to talk about, and more than that – I know you will enjoy it! Please encourage your friends, relatives, and anybody else to come out to the show. This artform that brings words and actions to life on stage needs you! People are at the heart of what we do.*

*Yours,  
Alethea*

*P.S. Thankfully, I can now wear stilettos without issue. (The mind is indeed a powerful tool.) ☺*