



## American Repertory Theater

LOEB DRAMA CENTER  
64 brattle street,  
cambridge, ma 02138

OBERON  
2 arrow street  
cambridge, ma 02138

617•495•2668 TEL  
617•495•1705 FAX  
617•547•8300 TICKETS

[americanrepertorytheater.org](http://americanrepertorytheater.org)

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**Contact:** Rebecca Curtiss 617.496.2000 x8841 | 617.872.8254

[rebecca\\_curtiss@harvard.edu](mailto:rebecca_curtiss@harvard.edu)

### American Repertory Theater Announces Cast and Creative Team for *Barber Shop Chronicles*

[Images available for download here.](#)

Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, under the leadership of Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, announces the cast and creative team for ***Barber Shop Chronicles***. The Fuel, National Theatre, and West Yorkshire Playhouse co-production begins preview performances on Wednesday, December 5, 2018; opens Friday, December 7; and closes Saturday, January 5, 2019 at the Loeb Drama Center in Cambridge, MA.

One day. Six cities. A thousand stories. Newsroom and political platform, confession box and stadium—for generations, barber shops have been places where African men gather to discuss the world. Leaping from London to Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos, and Accra, **Inua Ellams'** dynamic new play traces the global ties between these spaces where the banter can be barbed and the truth is always telling. ***Barber Shop Chronicles*** arrives in Cambridge as part of its North American premiere tour following critically acclaimed runs at London's National Theatre and the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

"In the UK, as I imagine it is in America, the barber shop is a space where we can sit, chill for hours, and loiter in public space without fear," said Nigerian-born, London-based playwright **Inua Ellams**. "They are safe spaces for men to speak about things associated with masculinity. That harkens back to traditional African communities where men would gather to talk and, now and then, someone would cut their hair."

*The Guardian* called ***Barber Shop Chronicles***, "a razor-sharp portrait of African masculinity, fatherhood, diaspora and colonial legacy. A cut above in every way, and such fun." *The Independent* praised it as, "joyous, brilliantly acted, and life-affirming."

***Barber Shop Chronicles*** features a company of twelve actors who portray dozens of roles:

- **Tuwayne Barrett** (*Blue Orange* at Soho Theatre and *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Young Vic);
- **Elliot Edusah** (*Taming of the Shrew* and *Suckerpunch* at London Academy of Dramatic Arts);

- **Maynard Eziashi** (*The Winter's Tale* and *Pericles* at Royal Shakespeare Company);
- **Alhaji Fofana** (2017 Children's BAFTA Award for Best Performance for his role of Ryan in *Screwball*);
- **Solomon Israel** (*The Fantastic Follies of Mrs. Rich*, *Duchess of Malfi*, and more at Royal Shakespeare Company);
- **Mohammed Mansaray** (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at Sheffield Crucible and *Mrs. Dalloway* and others in the National Youth Theatre's Rep West End Season);
- **Patrice Naiambana** (*Pericles* at National Theatre and title role in *Othello* at Royal Shakespeare Company);
- **Anthony Ofoegbu** (*Circle Mirror Transformation* at HOME, Manchester and Royal Shakespeare Company Rome 2017/18 Season);
- **Kenneth Omole** (*Assata Taught Me* at Gate Theatre and *The Cane* at The Bush Theatre);
- **Ekow Quartey** (*Amadeus*, *Peter Pan*, and others at National Theatre);
- **Jo Servi** (*Chess* at London Coliseum and *The Life* at Southwick Playhouse); and
- **David Webber** (*Death and the King's Horseman* and *Taking Leave* at the National Theatre).

The creative team includes:

- **Inua Ellams**, Playwright (*An Evening With An Immigrant*, winner of a 2017 Liberty Human Rights Arts Award);
- **Bijan Sheibani**, Director (former Associate Director of the National Theatre, where he directed *A Taste of Honey* and *Emil and the Detectives*);
- **Rae Smith**, Design (*Nightfall* at The Bridge and *Translations* and *Macbeth* at the National Theatre);
- **Jack Knowles**, Lighting Design (*The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Vaudeville Theatre and *Machinal* and more at the Almeida);
- **Aline David**, Movement Director (*Dance Nation* and *The House of Bernarda Alba* at the Almeida);
- **Gareth Fry**, Sound Design (*Wild Swans* at the A.R.T. and *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* on Broadway); and
- **Michael Henry**, Music Direction (*An Octoroon* and *FELA!* at the National Theatre).

**Barber Shop Chronicles** was co-commissioned by **Fuel** and the **National Theatre**. Development funded by **Arts Council England** with the support of **Fuel**, **National Theatre**, **West Yorkshire Playhouse**, **The Binks Trust**, **British Council ZA**, **Òran Mór** and **A Play, a Pie and a Pint**.

Additional production support for **Barber Shop Chronicles** is provided by The Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University and the Harvard University Center for African Studies.

## **TICKETING INFORMATION**

**Tickets start at \$25 and are available now** online at [americanrepertorytheater.org](http://americanrepertorytheater.org), by phone at 617.547.8300, and in person at the Loeb Drama Center Ticket Services Offices (64 Brattle Street, Cambridge). Discounts are available to Subscribers, Members, groups, students, seniors, Blue Star families, EBT card holders, and others.

## PERFORMANCE DATES

### 7:30PM

December 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31  
January 2, 3, 4, 5

### 2PM

December 8, 9, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30, 31  
January 5

### Press performance

Friday, December 7, 2018

### Post-performance discussions

Saturdays, December 8, 15, and January 5 at 2PM; Wednesday, December 19 at 2PM

### ASL Interpreted performances

Sunday, December 16 at 2pm and Wednesday, December 19 at 7:30PM

### Open Captioned performances

Thursday, December 20 at 7:30PM and Saturday, December 22 at 2PM

### Audio Described performances

Friday, December 21 at 7:30PM and Saturday, December 22 at 2PM

## ABOUT FUEL

Fuel produces an adventurous, playful and significant program of work—live, digitally, and across art forms—for a large and representative audience across the UK and beyond. Fuel collaborates with outstanding artists with fresh perspectives and approaches who seek to explore our place in the world, expose our fears, understand our hopes for the future, create experiences which change us and in turn empower us to make changes in the world around us.

Fuel Director Kate McGrath and ***Barber Shop Chronicles*** playwright Inua Ellams met in 2008, after McGrath saw the beginnings of what became Inua's first play, *The 14th Tale*. Fuel helped Ellams develop this debut and produced its premiere at the Edinburgh Festival where it won a Fringe First before touring the UK and internationally, and Fuel presented it at the National Theatre. Since that first meeting, Fuel has worked closely with Ellams, producing *Untitled*, *Knight Watch*, *The Long Song Goodbye*, *Black T-shirt Collection*, *The Spalding Suite*, *An Evening with an Immigrant*, and *Barber Shop Chronicles* since its inception. Fuel previously toured Ellams' *An Evening with an Immigrant*, where with poems, stories, and extracts from his plays, he tells about his life through the lens of his experience of immigration.

Current Fuel projects include *Touching The Void*, adapted by David Greig and directed by Tom Morris, opening at the Bristol Old Vic in September 2018. And *The Half God of Rainfall* by Inua Ellams at the Kiln Theatre in April 2019.

## **ABOUT NATIONAL THEATRE**

The National Theatre makes world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring. And we make it for everyone. It stages up to 30 productions at its South Bank home each year, ranging from reimagined classics—such as Greek tragedy and Shakespeare—to modern masterpieces and new work by contemporary writers and theatre-makers. The work it makes strives to be as open, as diverse, as collaborative, and as national as possible. Much of that new work is researched and developed at the New Work Department: the National is committed to nurturing innovative work from new writers, directors, creative artists, and performers. Equally, we are committed to education, with a wide-ranging Learning program for all ages in its Clore Learning Centre and in schools and communities across the UK.

The National's work is also seen on tour throughout the UK and internationally, and in collaborations and co-productions with regional theatres. Popular shows transfer to the West End and occasionally to Broadway. Through National Theatre Live, we broadcast live performances to cinemas around the world. On Demand In Schools makes acclaimed, curriculum-linked productions free to stream on demand in every primary and secondary school in the country. Online, the NT offers a rich variety of innovative digital content on every aspect of theatre.

We do all we can to keep ticket prices affordable and to reach a wide audience, and use our public funding to maintain artistic risk-taking, accessibility and diversity.

## **ABOUT WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE**

There has been a Playhouse in Leeds for almost 50 years; from 1968 to 1990 as Leeds Playhouse and then with the opening of a brand-new theatre on its current Quarry Hill site it became West Yorkshire Playhouse.

West Yorkshire Playhouse is a leading UK producing theatre; a cultural hub, a place where people gather to tell and share stories and to engage in world class theatre. We make work which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire. From large scale spectacle, to intimate performance we develop and make work for our stages, for found spaces, for touring, for schools and community centres. Our 2015/16 production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* played to over 500,000 people across the country – our production of *Beryl* played to 100 in a village hall in Wickenby, Lincolnshire. We create work to entertain and inspire. As dedicated collaborators, we work regularly with other theatres from across the UK, independent producers, and some of the most distinctive, original voices in theatre today. We develop work with established practitioners and find, nurture and support new voices that ought to be heard. We cultivate new talent by providing creative space for new writers, emerging directors, companies and individual theatre makers to refine their practice. Alongside our work for the stage we are dedicated to providing creative engagement opportunities that excite and stimulate. We build, run and sustain projects which

reach out to everyone from refugee communities, to young people and students, to older communities and people with learning disabilities. At the Playhouse there is always a way to get involved.

## **ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER**

**American Repertory Theater at Harvard University (A.R.T.)** is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by producing transformative theatrical experiences, always including the audience as a central partner.

Throughout its history, A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards including the Tony Award for Best New Play for *All the Way* (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for *Pippin* (2013) and *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess* (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Regional Theater Tony Award; and more than 100 Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards.

A.R.T. collaborates with artists around the world to develop and create work in new ways. It is currently engaged in a number of multi-year projects, including a collaboration with Harvard's Center for the Environment that will result in the development of new work over several years. Under Paulus' leadership, the A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, has been an incubator for local and emerging artists and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, the A.R.T. catalyzes discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members, acting as a conduit between its community of artists and the university. The A.R.T. has trained generations of theater artists through its Institute for Advanced Theater Training, and also plays a central role in Harvard's undergraduate concentration in Theater, Dance & Media.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area.

Through all of these initiatives, A.R.T. is dedicated to producing world-class performances in which the audience is central to the theatrical experience.

**@americanrep**

**#BarberShopChronicles**

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