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## AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER ANNOUNCES FULL CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR *THE HALF-GOD OF RAINFALL*

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH NEW YORK THEATRE WORKSHOP  
BY HAY FESTIVAL MEDAL FOR POETRY WINNER  
**INUA ELLAMS**  
DIRECTED BY OBIE AWARD WINNER  
**TAIBI MAGAR**  
MOVEMENT DIRECTION BY OBIE AWARD WINNER  
**ORLANDO PABOTOY**

***“GORGEOUS, SPECTACULAR, AND STUNNING.” – TALKIN’ BROADWAY***

**LIMITED RUN BEGINS SEPTEMBER 8—TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

[\*\*IMAGES FOR DOWNLOAD\*\*](#)

Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, led by Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., announced today the cast and creative team of *The Half-God of Rainfall*, co-produced with New York Theatre Workshop. Written by Inua Ellams and directed by Taibi Magar, *The Half-God of Rainfall* begins performances at the Loeb Drama Center in Harvard Square, Cambridge on Friday, September 8, opens officially on Tuesday, September 12, and runs through Sunday, September 24, 2023.

From award-winning playwright and poet Inua Ellams (*Barber Shop Chronicles*) comes a new epic fusing Greek mythology and Yoruba spirituality, in which mothers, daughters, and goddesses rise up against the entitled lord of Mount Olympus. The A.R.T. cast will feature **Jason Bowen** as Sàngó, **Kelley Curan** as Hera, **Mister Fitzgerald** as Demi, **Patrice Johnson Chevannes** as Osún, **Russell G. Jones** as Elegba, **Michael Laurence** as Zeus, and **Jennifer Mogbock** as Modúpé.

“Sumptuous and staggering!” says *The New York Times*. “[Inua] Ellams is a writer whose intuitive understanding of the common threads of tradition, globalization, and human instinct could very well create a new mythological tapestry for our interwoven times.”

★★★★ Beautiful! Taibi Magar directs the thoughtful, meticulous NYTW and A.R.T. co-production,” says *New York Theatre Guide*.

***The Half-God of Rainfall*** is directed by **Taibi Magar** (*Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*; *Macbeth In Stride*; *We Live in Cairo* at A.R.T.). **Orlando Pabotoy** provides movement direction. Scenic design is by **Riccardo Hernández** (*Jagged Little Pill* and *The White Card* at A.R.T., among many others), costume design is by **Linda Cho** (*Endlings* at A.R.T. and NYTW), lighting design is by **Stacey Derosier**, sound design and music composition is by **Mikaal Sulaiman**, projection design is by **Tal Yarden** (*Ocean Filibuster* at A.R.T.), and Orisha Movement Consulting/Choreography is by **Beatrice Capote**. **Ann James** (*Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* at A.R.T.) is the intimacy director, **Dawn-Elin Fraser** (*Waitress*, *Crossing*, and *Finding Neverland* at A.R.T.) is the voice & dialect director, and **Iyvon E.** is the dramaturg. The stage management team includes production stage manager **Caroline Englander**. Casting is by Destiny Lilly CSA of **The Telsey Office**.

“There’s something humbling and mortal about basketball in the sense that there’s a simple equation,” Ellams told *The New York Times*. “The ball bounces; it comes back up to your palm. You can break that down. This is solitariness, which invites the blues and what it means to play the blues. There’s a longing. There’s a natural melancholy about it,” he added, which makes it “easier to pair with the human spirit.”

“Mythologies are frames through which we find our values,” says Magar, “and this play demands this new framing: play with love and play with pain. It’s a call to love.”

Performances of ***The Half-God of Rainfall*** continue at New York Theatre Workshop through Sunday, August 20.

A.R.T.’s 2023/24 programming is supported by **Harvard University**, **The Barr Foundation**, **The Bob and Alison Murchison New Work Development Fund**, **The Shubert Foundation**, **National Endowment for the Arts**, **Massachusetts Cultural Council**, **Barton & Guestier**, and **Meyer Sound**.

### **TICKETING INFORMATION**

**Tickets from \$35** are available at [AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/The-Half-God-of-Rainfall](https://AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/The-Half-God-of-Rainfall), as are a limited number of **\$5 Take Five** tickets for community members who feel attending theater is financially out of reach or want to take something new to experience the A.R.T.

Discounts are available to students and ticket-buyers under age 25, Blue Star families, EBT cardholders, seniors, Harvard faculty and staff, and others.

More information at [AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/PlanYourVisit](https://AmericanRepertoryTheater.org/PlanYourVisit).

# The Half-God of Rainfall

SEP 8 - 24, 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					8 SEP 7:30PM	9 2PM 7:30PM
10 2PM 7:30PM	11	12 7:30PM	13 7:30PM	14 7:30PM	15 7:30PM	16 2PM 7:30PM
17 2PM 7:30PM	18	19 7:30PM	20 11AM 7:30PM	21 7:30PM	22 7:30PM	23 2PM 7:30PM
24 2PM						

## NOTABLE DATES

### **Morning Matinee Performance**

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 11AM

For booking availability for student or other group tickets contact [Groups@amrep.org](mailto:Groups@amrep.org) or call 617.547.8300.

### **Access Performances**

Book Access seats online, by contacting [Access@amrep.org](mailto:Access@amrep.org), or calling 617.547.8300

### **Open Captioned**

Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 7:30PM

Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 2PM

### **Audio Described**

Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 7:30PM

Saturday, September 23, 2023 at 2PM

### **Relaxed**

Sunday, September 24, 2023 at 2PM

*Open to all audience members who could benefit from a more relaxed atmosphere at the theater*

### **ASL Interpreted**

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 7:30PM

Sunday, September 24, 2023 at 2PM

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**INUA ELLAMS** (Playwright) Born in Nigeria, **Inua Ellams** is a poet, playwright & performer, graphic artist, and designer. He is a Complete Works poet alumni and facilitates workshops in creative writing where he explores reoccurring themes in his work—Identity, Displacement and Destiny—in accessible, enjoyable ways for participants of all ages and backgrounds. His awards include: Edinburgh Fringe First Award 2009, The Liberty Human Rights Award, The Live Canon International Poetry Prize, The Kent & Sussex Poetry Competition, Magma Poetry Competition, Winchester Poetry Prize, A Black British Theatre Award, and The Hay Festival Medal for Poetry. He has been commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Theatre, Tate Modern, Louis Vuitton, BBC Radio & Television. His poetry books include *Candy Coated Unicorns and Converse All Stars* published by Flipped Eye, *The Wire-Headed Heathen* by Akashic Books, *The Half-God of Rainfall* by 4th Estate and *The Actual* by Penned in The Margins. His plays include *Black T-shirt Collection*, *The 14th Tale*, ***Barber Shop Chronicles*** (A.R.T. 2018), and *Three Sisters* published by Oberon. He founded The Midnight Run, an arts-filled, night-time, urban walking experience; The Rhythm and Poetry Party (The R.A.P Party) which celebrates poetry & hip hop; and Poetry + Film / Hack (P+F/H) which celebrates Poetry & Film.

**TAIBI MAGAR** (Director) was recently named the Co-Artistic Director of Philadelphia Theatre Company. Her previous A.R.T. credits include ***Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992***, ***Macbeth in Stride***, and ***We Live in Cairo***. As a freelance director, her recent credits include *Help* (The Shed) and ***Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*** (Signature Theatre, Lortel Award). Other credits include *Capsule* by Whitney White and Peter Mark Kendall (Under the Radar Festival/The Public Theater, co-directed with Tyler Dobrowsky); *Blue Ridge* starring Marin Ireland and *The Great Leap* starring BD Wong (Atlantic Theater Company); *Is God Is* (Soho Rep, 2018 Obie Award); *Master* (The Foundry, NYT Critics Pick); and *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova, NYT Critics Pick). Regional credits include productions at CTG, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Alley Theatre, The Guthrie Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. International credits include Hamburg Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne), and Soho Theatre (London). She is the recipient of a Stephen Sondheim Fellowship, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Fellowship, Public Theater Shakespeare Fellowship, and TFANA Actors and Director Project Fellowship. Taibi is an alumnus of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab and a NYTW Usual Suspect. She received an Obie Award in 2018 and the SDC Breakout Award in 2019.

**ORLANDO PABOTOY** (Movement Direction) HVSF 2022 season; Acting Company 2017/2018 season; *The Cherry Orchard* directed by the late Andrei Belgrader at CSC. Collaborations include those with Geof Soebelle (The Object Lesson, Home); Lars Han (Holoscenes); David Neumann (Advanced Beginner group). Select theater direction projects include *Serpent Woman*, *The World In the Moon*, *Scapin*, *Chalk Circle*, *Pericles*, *The Frogs* (The Juilliard School); *That Beautiful Laugh* (La MaMa). Film Direction: Alan Tudyk (K2S0, *Star Wars: Rogue One*). Theater Performance (Selected): The Public, NYTW, Yale Rep, Met Opera, Kirk Douglas, Guthrie. Ma-yi Theater, American Airlines Theater, Salzburg Festpieler (Austria). Film/TV Performance: Comedy Central, WB, NBC, ABC. Awards: Obie, TCG Fox Fellow.

**JASON BOWEN** (Sàngó) Broadway credits include *The Play That Goes Wrong*. Off-Broadway credits include *Crumbs From The Table of Joy* (Keen Theater), *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Audible Theater), *Native Son* (The Acting Co.), and *If Pretty Hurts...* (Playwrights Horizons). Boston credits include *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Boston Magazine's Best Actor 2012), *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, and *A Civil War Christmas* (The Huntington); *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Commonwealth Shakespeare Company). TV/Film credits include *Blue Bloods*, *Madam Secretary*, *Elementary* (CBS); *Law & Order: SVU* (NBC); *The Good Fight* (Paramount Plus); *Mother/Android*, *The Upside*.

**KELLEY CURRAN** (Hera) Broadway credits include *Present Laughter*. Off-Broadway credits include *Mother of The Maid* (The Public Theater), *Dracula* (CSC), *The Winter's Tale* (TFANA), *Sense & Sensibility* (Bedlam), *Angels In America* (Signature Theatre Company), and work with Red Bull, LAByrinth, The Acting Company. She performed in the world premiere adaptation of *The Oresteia* (Shakespeare Theatre of DC). Film/TV credits include *The Man Who Killed Hitler...*, *The Blacklist*, and currently HBO's *The Gilded Age*. Awards include Emery Battis Award, Joe Callaway Award, and NTC Emerging Professional Award, as well as Drama League and Princess Grace Award Nominations.

**MISTER FITZGERALD** (Demi) hails from Baltimore, MD. Previous Broadway credits include *Ohio State Murders*. Off-Broadway credits include *On Sugarland* at NYTW, *A Raisin In The Sun* (The Public Theater), and *Exception To The Rule* (Roundabout Theatre Company). Film credits include *The Last Deal*, *Boogie*, and *30 Weeks*. TV credits include *Power*, *FBI*, *The Blacklist*, and *Godfather of Harlem*. Awards include: Best Duo Performance (DTLAFF). BFA, FSC.

**PATRICE JOHNSON CHEVANNES** (Osún) is an award-winning, Brooklyn-based actress, writer, filmmaker, educator, director and the executive producer of God-and-all-o-wee Productions and Ubigwitus Records. Broadway credits include *Racing Demon* and *The Crucible* directed by Sir Richard Eyre. Off-Broadway/Regional credits include *Othello* (Desdemona opposite Sir Patrick Stewart), *Pericles* with Sir Trevor Nunn (TFANA), *Tamburlaine* with Sir Michael Boyd (TFANA), *Endgame* (Irish Rep), *I'm Revolting*, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven* with Stephen Adly Guirgis and John Ortiz (Atlantic Theater Company), *runboyrun/In Old Age* with Awoye Timpo and Loretta Greco (NYTW). Patrice garnered a 2023 Lortel Award nomination for her role as Nell in *Endgame*, 2020 Drama Desk and Drama League nominations for *runboyrun/In Old Age*, and an Audelco nomination for her role in *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*. TV credits include *Chambers*, *POSE*, *SHRILL*, *EVIL*, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *The First Lady*, and *The Good Fight*. Films written and directed by Patrice include *Kings County*, *NY's Dirty Laundry*, and *Hill and Gully*. Patrice is on the faculty of The New School, where she teaches acting in The School of Drama

**RUSSELL G. JONES** (Elegba) is an Audelco, Obie, and SAG Award-winning actor, as well as director, producer, facilitator, moderator, and teaching artist. A fixture on New York City stages since the mid-1990s, he is proud to have originated roles in plays by Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Tanya Barfield, Fernanda Coppel, Kirk Wood Bromley, and Stephen Adly Guirgis. Onscreen, he currently recurs on Steven Soderbergh's *Full Circle* on HBO, was recently a series regular opposite Edie Falco in CBS' *Tommy*, and recurred on Hulu's *Only Murders In the Building*. He is also the founder and Chief of Pedagogy at BLIND SPOT EXPERIENCE, a campaign that facilitates cross-cultural dialogue and critical thinking by providing context and tools for perceiving racial inequity. [russellgjones.com](http://russellgjones.com)

**MICHAEL LAURENCE** (Zeus) has theater credits that include *Coal Country* (The Public Theater), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *Appropriate* (Signature Theatre), and *Talk Radio* (Broadway). He is the playwright/performer of *Krapp, 39* (Drama Desk nomination) which played Soho Playhouse, Tristan Bates Theater/London, Axis Ballymun/Dublin, and Pleasance Theater/Edinburgh. He wrote and performed (opposite Annette O'Toole) *Hamlet in Bed* (published by Dramatists Play Service) which premiered at Rattlestick Theater (directed by Lisa Peterson), with a UK premiere at Pleasance Theater, Edinburgh. Other credits include *Opus* (Primary Stages), *Desire Under the Elms* (Broadway), *The Morini Strand* (Primary Stages), Samuel D. Hunter's *The Few* (Old Globe and Rattlestick), Dael Orlandersmith's *Horsedreams* (Rattlestick), *Poison* (Origin), Sam Shepard's *Tooth of Crime* (Signature), Edgar Oliver's *Hands In Wartime* (La MaMa), *Good People* (Huntington), Starbuck in *The Rainmaker* (Arena Stage), John Proctor in *The Crucible* (Hartford Stage), Eric Bogosian's *Humpty Dumpty* (McCarter), and Jean Genet's *Splendid's* (Theatre National de Paris/La Colline). TV credits include recurring roles on *Shades of Blue* (NBC), *The Blacklist* (NBC), *Damages* (FX), and Adult Swim's *The Heart She Holler*. Also, *Prodigal Son* (FOX), *Evil* (CBS), *The Good Wife* (CBS), *L&O: SVU* (NBC), *Hit & Run* (Netflix), *Elementary* (CBS), *Person of Interest* (CBS), and *Dexter: New Blood* (Showtime). Film credits include *Can You Ever Forgive Me*, *Man on A Wire*, *The Last Thing Mary Saw*, *One For the Money*, and many indies. He is the author of the full length plays *Cincinnatus* (O'Neill National Playwrights Conference finalist 2022), *The Escape Artist*, and *The Twilight Shopper*. He wrote and directed the indie feature film *Escape Artists*. He is a graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts/ Experimental Theatre Wing.

**JENNIFER MOGBOCK** (Modúpé) Theater credits include *Merry Wives* (The Public Theater), *Yemanjá* (Kennedy Center), *BDOTJ* (Society Theatre), *King John*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Hamlet* (Stratford Festival). TV credits include *The Good Fight* (Paramount +), *Evil* (CBS), *Designated Survivor* (Netflix), and *Golden City* (Marvel/Disney+). Upcoming credits include *Lady in The Lake* starring Natalie Portman (AppleTV+). SUNY Purchase (BFA) and NYU Grad Acting (MFA).

## **ABOUT NEW YORK THEATRE WORKSHOP**

**New York Theatre Workshop** empowers visionary theater-makers and brings their work to adventurous audiences through productions, artist workshops and education and community engagement programs. We nurture pioneering new writers alongside powerhouse playwrights, engage inimitable genre-shaping directors, and support emerging artists in the earliest days of their careers. We've mounted over 150 productions from artists whose work has shaped our very idea of what theater can be, including Jonathan Larson's *Rent*; Tony Kushner's *Slavs!* and *Homebody/Kabul*; Doug Wright's *Quills*; Claudia Shear's *Blown Sideways Through Life* and *Dirty Blonde*; Paul Rudnick's *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* and *Valhalla*; Martha Clarke's *Vienna: Lusthaus*; Will Power's *The Seven* and *Fetch Clay, Make Man*; Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, *Far Away*, *A Number* and *Love and Information*; Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen's *Aftermath*; Rick Elice's *Peter and the Starcatcher*; Glen Hansard, Markéta Irglová and Enda Walsh's *Once*; David Bowie and Enda Walsh's *Lazarus*; Dael Orlandersmith's *The Gimmick* and *Forever*; Heidi Schreck's *What the Constitution Means to Me*; Jeremy O. Harris's *Slave Play*; Kristina Wong's *Kristina Wong*, *Sweatshop Overlord*; Aleshea Harris's *On Sugarland*; and eight acclaimed productions directed by Ivo van Hove. NYTW's productions have received a Pulitzer Prize, 25 Tony Awards, 2 Grammy Awards and numerous Obie, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Awards.

NYTW is represented on Broadway with Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown*, developed with and directed by Rachel Chavkin; and the upcoming Broadway engagement of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's *Merrily We Roll Along*, directed by Maria Friedman and choreographed by Tim Jackson. Alongside its artistic and community engagement activities, NYTW is engaged in the essential, sustained commitment of becoming an anti-racist organization in support and affirmation of Black people, Indigenous people and People of Color in its community. In June of 2020, NYTW published its [Core Values statement](#) and initial action and accountability steps. In an effort to provide greater transparency, NYTW shares progress updates, further commitments and next steps at [nytw.org/accountability](https://nytw.org/accountability). More information at [nytw.org](https://nytw.org).

## **ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER**

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work that is driven by risk-taking and passionate inquiry. 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 and co-leads the theater in partnership with Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., who began his tenure in 2022.

The Loeb Drama Center where the A.R.T. performs is located on the traditional and ancestral land of the Massachusett, the original inhabitants of what is now known as Boston and Cambridge. We pay respect to the people of the [Massachusetts Tribe](#), past and present, and honor the land itself which remains sacred to the Massachusett People.

## **MISSION**

The American Repertory Theater is dedicated to expanding the boundaries of theater, always including the audience as a partner.

## **VISION**

We focus on the research and development of groundbreaking theatrical experiences that catalyze dialogue and transformation. We believe that by engaging our hearts, minds and bodies, theater has the power to heal and imagine collective pathways forward.

We commit to advancing public health in our practice and our programming, recognizing that racism in America is a national public health crisis. Our new home in Allston will be a breathable and healthy building envisioned as a town hall for the twenty-first century. Inspired by the model of a teaching hospital, the building will be a vibrant center for research, experiential pedagogy, and performance.

We build community with our audiences, artists, students, staff, and neighbors across Greater Boston, embracing theater's power to cultivate the full breadth and beauty of our shared humanity. We affirm and celebrate a multitude of perspectives and experiences that reflect the diversity of our country and world. We are dedicated to making a welcoming and accessible space for people of any identity, background, or ability.

## VALUES

We hold the institution and each other responsible and accountable for living our shared values. There is no hierarchy to these values; they are all equally important and interrelated. We acknowledge that as an institution we must devote time to implementing and sustaining these values:

We center anti-racism

*Habituate anti-racist practices in our policies, structure and culture.*

We lead with inquiry

*Ask questions in a spirit of brave curiosity in our never-ending journey of learning and growth*

We believe in collaboration

*Work together with trust and respect to unlock collective creativity*

We practice adaptability

*Challenge assumptions and create capacity to support “next” practices*

We embrace regenerative practice

*Promote the health and vitality of our planet, our organization, and each other*

## HONORS & AWARDS

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 eighteen 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. Additional Broadway productions include ***Life of Pi***; ***1776***; ***SIX***; ***Jagged Little Pill***; ***Waitress***; ***Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812***; and ***Finding Neverland***. Since their premieres in Cambridge, A.R.T. productions have also [gone on](#) to reach audiences Off-Broadway, on US National Tour, and at partner theaters across the country, as well as in London’s West End, Tokyo, and Sydney. Under Paulus’s leadership, A.R.T.’s club theater, OBERON, was recognized annually as a top performance venue in the Boston area, and attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, A.R.T. is committed to playing a central role in the cognitive life of the University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members. A.R.T. plays a central role in Harvard’s undergraduate Theater, Dance & Media concentration, teaching courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy. A.R.T. staff also mentor students in the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club working at the Loeb Drama Center.

A.R.T. is also engaged in a number of multi-year initiatives with partners at Harvard that explore some of the most pressing issues of our day. Recent work includes collaborations with the Harvard University Center for the Environment (to commission and develop a series of new works that address climate change and the environment), the Healthy Buildings Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (to develop a *Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater*), and the Initiative for Racial Equity at Harvard Business School (to pilot the Program in Arts and Culture Organization Management).

## **ENGAGEMENT**

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages 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.

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