

PRESS RELEASE WEDNESDAY 29 AUGUST 2018

FURTHER CAST ANNOUNCED FOR DEBRIS STEVENSON'S NEW WORK POET IN DA CORNER, DIRECTED BY OLA INCE OPENING IN THE JERWOOD THEATRE DOWNSTAIRS FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2018.

- New trailer [here](#).
- Downloadable artwork [here](#).
- Listen to a track *Kemi* from the show [here](#).



Left to right back row: Jammz, Debris Stevenson and Mikey 'J' Asante.
Left to right front row: Kirubel Belay and Cassie Clare.
Photo credit: Romany-Francesca Mukoro

In the semi-autobiographical *Poet in da Corner* poet, lyricist, and dancer Debris Stevenson explores how grime helped shape her youth. Debris and previously announced writer and performer Jammz will be joined by Cassie Clare and Kirubel Belay.

Directed by Ola Ince, *Poet in da Corner* will also feature music and composition from Michael 'Mikey J' Asante, co-founder and co-artistic director of Boy Blue.

The production runs Friday 21 September 2018 – Saturday 6 October 2018 with press in from 7.30pm Tuesday 25 September 2018.

In a strict Mormon household somewhere in the seam between East London and Essex, a girl is given Dizzee Rascal's ground-breaking grime album Boy in da Corner by her best friend SS Vyper.

Precisely 57 minutes and 21 seconds later, her life begins to change – from feeling muted by dyslexia to spitting the power of her words; from being conflicted about her sexuality to finding the freedom to explore; from feeling alone to being given the greatest gift by her closest friend.

A coming of age story inspired by Dizzee Rascal's seminal album, *Boy in da Corner*.

Stevenson has performed her unique work everywhere from BBC Radio 3's The Verb to London's Roundhouse. 13 years after encountering the early days of London's grime scene, Stevenson uses music, movement, lyrics and poetry to recall how it gave her permission to redefine herself.

Poet in da Corner is part of *Represent*, a series of artworks commissioned by 14-18 NOW, the UK's arts programme for the First World War centenary, and supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation

Poet in da Corner has been co-commissioned by the Royal Court Theatre and 14-18 NOW, in association with Nottingham Playhouse and Leicester Curve and is part of *Represent*, a series of artworks inspired by the Representation of the People Act 1918 by 14-18 NOW and supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation. While the act gave the vote only to some women over 30, *Represent* invites three young female artists to explore democracy, equality and inclusion in contemporary Britain. The series also includes new commissions by Rachel Maclean (BBC4 broadcast and screenings) and a performance by Selina Thompson (Arnolfini, Bristol). Find out more about *Represent* and the artists here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT1C_8w3ulA&feature=youtu.be

There will be four relaxed environment performances on Thursday 27 September, 2.30pm, Saturday 29 September, 7.30pm, Friday 5 October, 7.30pm and Saturday 6 October, 7.30pm. With pre-show touch tours before each of these shows with access to the set, instruments and costumes.



ENDS-

For more information or images please contact Anoushka Warden on 0207 565 5063 / AnoushkaWarden@royalcourttheatre.com

Notes to Editors:

Press Night:

Press in from 7.30pm Tuesday 25 September 2018.	<i>Poet in da Corner</i> by Debris Stevenson	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
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Biographies:

Michael 'Mikey J' Asante (Music Director/Lead Composer)

Michael is a producer, composer, singer, dancer and DJ who is at the forefront of the UK urban music scene. Co-Founder & Co-Artistic Director of Boy Blue, who are an Associate Artist at the Barbican, he is a leading UK producer of live events. Recent releases include George the Poet's Wotless with production and musical direction for George's sold out Search Party tour, and engineering and production on Kano's critically acclaimed album Made In The Manor (Mercury Prize and BRIT nominated, and winner of the MOBO Best Album Award) with whom Michael has collaborated extensively on the albums Home Sweet Home, London Town and 140 Grime Street. Mikey is currently collaborating with the new Sony/Plan B signing Ryan De La Cruz.

Past production credits include Delilah's Inside My Love (From The Roots Up), Raleigh Ritchie's Stay Inside, Mikey J and the female All-stars, Estelle's Back to Love remix and Mz Brat's Get Dark. Michael has produced music for television, theatre and film including Boy Blue's Olivier Award nominated production Blak Whyte Gray, The Five & the Prophecy of Prana, Olivier Award winner Pied Piper: A Hip-Hop Dance Revolution, Touch and Legacy as well as the UK box office hits Street Dance 3D and All Stars.

In 2012, Michael worked closely with Kenrick 'H2O' Sandy, director Danny Boyle and musical directors Underworld, creating musical compositions for the Frankie and June say thanks Tim... section of London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony.

Kirubel Belay (Cast)

Music videos include: Like Sugar (Chaka Khan); Back for More (Example); Needing U (Desta French); Go Low (Jelani Blackman); Only (DJ Snake); What Is a Man? (iD Magazine).

Concerts & live events include: Peter Andre (UK Tour); Leona Lewis (Glassheart Tour); Kanye West (Brit Awards); Leah McFall (The Voice UK); Diversity Live (ITV); Michael Jackson (MTV); Omarion (KOKO Camden);

Paloma Faith (Diageo Anniversary, Battersea Power Station).

As choreographer, music videos include: Moving Too Fast (Kyle Lettman ft. Scorcher).

Concert & live events include: Klickz Entertainment at Victoria & Albert Museum (Zibrant Events).

Cassie Clare (Cast)

Theatre includes: An Octoroon (National/Orange Tree); Little Shop of Horrors (UK tour); Oliver (Curve, Leicester); CATS (West End/European tour); Nights (White Bear).

Television includes: Delicious, The Bisexual, Endeavour, Maigret, The Coroner.

Film includes: Aladdin, Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again, Death Race 4, What Happened to Monday, Beauty & the Beast.

Ola Ince (Director and Dramaturge)

For the Royal Court: White Sky (& RWCMD/Gate).

As director, other theatre includes: Twilight: Los Angeles 1992 (Gate); Start Swimming (& Summerhall), Dutchman, One Million Tiny Plays About Britain (Young Vic); Broad

Shadow, Access Denied, Cutting It (National); Rachel, The Soft of Her Palm (Finborough); Pets Corner (Arcola); Games (Pleasance).

As associate director, other theatre includes: **Tina: The Musical (West End); Tipping the Velvet (& Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh), Bugsy Malone (Lyric, Hammersmith); Fog (UK tour).**

As assistant director, other theatre includes: **Shakespeare Trilogy (Donmar/St. Ann's Warehouse, New York); Ma Rainey's Black Bottom, Dara, A Taste of Honey (National); Porgy & Bess (Regent's Park Open Air); Josephine & I (Bush); Wild Swans, Disco Pigs, Electra (Young Vic); Fanta Orange, Blue Serge (Finborough); Secret Thoughts, The Demolition Man (Octagon, Bolton).**

Awards include: **Genesis Future Director Award.**

Ola has been Resident Assistant Director and Senior Reader at the Finborough Theatre, and was recipient of the Rose Bruford Directing Bursary and the Boris Karloff Bursary. In 2015 Ola became a BBC Performing Arts Fellow and Resident Associate Director at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. She is currently Artistic Associate at the Lyric, Hammersmith and Theatre Royal Stratford East.

Jammz (Feature Writer/Performer)

Jammz came up studying grime and in 2018 finds himself at the forefront of it. Born and bred in East London, Jammz started to make a name for himself on London's radio circuit in 2014 and 2015 appearing regularly on Rinse FM, Radar Radio, NTS, Mode FM and BBC 1xtra, teaming up with established DJs like Slimzee, Spooky, Bok Bok and Spyro as well as newcomers like Moleskin and Finn. His free EP Hit Then Run became a cult classic: the title track was playlisted on BBC 1Xtra and Noisey's #3 grime track of 2015, and the remix was Sian Anderson's #1 Remix of the Week six weeks on the spin.

Subsequent singles Final Warning and London Living further established Jammz as one of grime's best new hit-makers, while his live reputation is also quickly on the rise: he's been booked for Glastonbury, Eskimo Dance, Outlook, Night Slugs and Bestival, has headlined FWD>> and in March 2016 was the support act on Kano's UK tour. Jammz has been supported heavily by Fader, Noisey, FACT, GQ, Mixmag, SBTV, MTV and more, and featured on the front cover of the Observer Music's British MCs special.

Jammz's first release of 2016, Mr. Wait (a collaboration with Trends & Mr. Dubz) was recently featured on Channel 4 and picked as one of Sleaford Mods' favourite tracks. He followed that with the acclaimed Underdog Season Vol. 1 mixtape (with Jack Dat), a self-released instrumental 12" (which sold out in four days) and a collaboration with Dread D on Local Action, 10 Missed Calls. 2017 saw the release of the DJ Q produced smash, Who's that girl? featuring Aleisha Lee, which received constant airplay across all mainstream stations including BBC Radio 1Xtra, Rinse FM and more. Jammz recently dropped Get What I Mean? through Annie Mac's Free Music Mondays and has EPs on I Am Grime and Local Action scheduled after the summer.

Debris Stevenson (Writer/Performer)

Dyslexic-Writer, Grime Poet, Working-Class Academic, Pansexual Ex-Mormon and Bashment Dancing Social Activist from the seam between East London and Essex: It's not simple.

Debris Stevenson has no choice but to explore the intersectional, unexpected and unjust – it's not just who she is, it's her responsibility in a world that all too often summarises us into a caption.

At secondary school 2002 – 2008 Debris was educated through the evolution of Grime, finding poetry in the mouths of the teenagers around her. Nurtured by the Roundhouse, Debris was then followed by Channel 4 for a year (Yeardot), published by organisations such as, Louis Vuitton, Oxford University, BBC Radio 4 and Flipped Eye with her debut pamphlet, Pigeon Party.

A social carrier pigeon, Debris has performed, written and taught poetry in over 20 countries and 10 American States. Her passion for nurturing and educating poetic communities started with The Mouthy Poets, teaching young people; creative writing, performance and event coordination as emotional, professional and creative life skills. Debris has since been awarded over £250,000 by Arts Council England to develop young talent.

Debris can also often be found dancing sober to Grime, Soca, Afrobeats and Dancehall for organisations such as The Heatwave and Red Bull Music Academy.

Listings Information:

Poet in da Corner

Co-commissioned by 14-18 NOW and the Royal Court Theatre, supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation. In association with Nottingham Playhouse and Leicester Curve

Written and performed by Debris Stevenson

Directed by Ola Ince

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS

Friday 21 September 2018 – Saturday 6 October 2018

Monday – Saturday 7.30pm

Thursday & Saturday matinees 2.30pm

Relaxed performances Thursday 27 September, 2.30pm, Saturday 29 September, 7.30pm, Friday 5 October, 7.30pm and Saturday 6 October, 7.30pm.

Press Performances press in from 7.30pm Tuesday 25 September 2018.

Standard Tickets £12 - £30 (Mondays all seats £12 available from 9am online on the day of performance)

Access £15 (plus a companion at the same rate)

*ID required. All discounts subject to availability.

About 14-18 NOW

14-18 NOW is a programme of extraordinary arts experiences connecting people with the First World War, as part of the UK's official centenary commemorations. It commissions new work by leading contemporary artists across all art forms; the programme has included over 200 artists from 35 countries, taking place in 160 locations across the UK. Over 30 million people have experienced a project so far, including 7.5 million children and young people. 16.7 million people took part in LIGHTS OUT in 2014, and 63% of the population were aware of Jeremy Deller's, *'We're here because we're here'*. The UK tour of the poppy sculptures by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper has been seen by over 3.75 million people to date. 14-18 NOW has won many awards for its work, including the National Lottery Heritage Award, 2017. 2018 is the final season, marking 100 years since the end of the First World War. 14-18 NOW is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts

Council England, by the DCMS with additional funding from The Backstage Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clore Duffield Foundation, NatWest and support from individuals.

Jerwood Charitable Foundation is an independent grant-making foundation and UK registered charity dedicated to imaginative and responsible funding of the arts, with a particular focus on supporting talent and excellence. It works with exceptional, dedicated artists and producers enabling them to develop and thrive at important stages in their practice, often in partnership with leading UK arts organisations.