

NEW CAST ANNOUNCEMENT - PRESS RELEASE - 23 January 2024 12.00PM

## INTRODUCING...



### **THE NEW CAST OF *FOR BLACK BOYS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE HUE GETS TOO HEAVY* WEST END RETURN 2024**

29 Feb – 4 May

- MEET ONYX, PITCH, JET, SABLE, OBSIDIAN AND MIDNIGHT. SIX NEW CAST MEMBERS START REHEARSALS FOR THE RETURN OF THIS DOUBLE OLIVIER AWARD NOMINATED PLAY.
- RYAN CALAIS CAMERON'S AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTION OPENS AT THE GARRICK THEATRE FOR A LIMITED NINE WEEK RUN FROM 29 FEBRUARY - 4 MAY 2024.
- THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED PLAY IS INSPIRED BY NTOZAKE SHANGE'S SEMINAL WORK *FOR COLOURED GIRLS WHO HAVE CONSIDERED SUICIDE / WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF*.
- TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM £15.

*Father figures and fashion tips. Lost loves and jollof rice. African empires and illicit sex. Good days and bad days. Six young Black men meet for group therapy, and let their hearts – and imaginations – run wild.*

Today, the Royal Court Theatre and Nimax Theatres welcomes six new cast members to the *For Black Boys...* family. Starring in the iconic roles of Onyx, Pitch, Jet, Sable, Obsidian and Midnight are a powerful new blend of talented actors including **Tobi King Bakare**, **Shakeel Haakim** making his professional debut, **Fela Lufadeju**, **Albert Magashi**, **Mohammed Mansaray** and **Posi Morakinyo** respectively.

The brand-new ensemble will be directed by **Ryan Calais Cameron**. The six will bring their own interpretation and lived experiences to their respective roles, infusing a fresh dynamic and energy to this transformative theatrical experience which uniquely mixes music, movement, storytelling and verse.

Writer Ryan Calais Cameron was inspired by Ntozake Shange's seminal work *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*. *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy* is located on the threshold of joyful fantasy and brutal reality where six men clash and connect in a desperate bid for survival.

About the new cast **Ryan Calais Cameron**, writer and Nouveau Riche Artistic Director, said: *"The themes explored in the play are timeless, and I am genuinely thrilled about the prospect of witnessing the new cast infuse their own unique energy and brilliance into the production. Each member brings a wealth of talent and dedication to their roles, and I am confident that their interpretation will breathe new life into the narrative."*

**Nica Burns producer and theatre owner** said: *"Ryan Calais Cameron's exceptional, groundbreaking play brought a new audience in to the West End's Apollo Theatre in 2023, selling out the run. Responding to public demand, we are delighted to be bringing *For Black Boys* back to the Garrick Theatre with a completely new cast. It is especially fitting that the original commissioner of the play at the New Diorama, the visionary David Byrne, is now producing it again with us as the new Artistic Director of the Royal Court Theatre. This is a wonderful night in the theatre, so book your tickets quickly!"*

Movement direction and choreography is by **Theophilus O. Bailey**, musical direction and vocal arrangement by **John Pfumojena**, sound design and composition by **Nicola T. Chang**. Set and costume design by **Anna Reid**, lighting design by **Rory Beaton**. Joining the creative team as associate director is **Tatenda Shamiso**. Casting by **Isabella Odoffin**.

The production will run for a strictly limited season of nine weeks at the Garrick Theatre with previews from Thursday 29 February and Press Night on Thursday 7 March. As part of the overall aims of the production 25% of all tickets available will be priced at £25 or under throughout its run.

The double Olivier Award nominated play shortlisted for Best New Play and Best Actor in a Supporting Role at the 2023 Olivier Awards sold out its original run at the New Diorama Theatre, its subsequent transfer to the Royal Court Theatre and its initial West End run at the Apollo Theatre. The production has received widespread critical and public acclaim garnering notable fans such as John Boyega, David Harewood, Daniel Kaluuya, Beverley Knight, Rapman, Stormzy and Letitia Wright.

The play was originally conceived by Ryan Calais Cameron in the wake of the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and has been developed over the course of the last decade with young Black men and mental health groups.

*For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy* was originally commissioned by New Diorama Theatre, co-commissioned by Boundless Theatre. Tristan Fynn-Aidueni directed the show's original run at the New Diorama Theatre. Royal Court Theatre, Nica Burns, Tegan Summer Theatricals, Hackney Empire, Sarah Verghese Productions Present The Royal Court Theatre, Nouveau Riche and New Diorama Theatre production.

## **Outreach and Community Tickets**

The Royal Court continues with the West End partners to remain committed to diversifying and providing accessible ticket prices for every performance. They are offering a number of tickets at £15 or less to individuals, youth groups, community groups and charities who would like to experience the show and otherwise would not be able to afford to. For more information, email [FBB@royalcourttheatre.com](mailto:FBB@royalcourttheatre.com).

## **Cast**

Tobi King Bakare plays Onyx  
Shakeel Haakim plays Pitch  
Fela Lufadeju plays Jet  
Albert Magashi plays Sable  
Mohammed Mansaray plays Obsidian  
Posi Morakinyo plays Midnight

## **Creative Team**

Writer & Director: Ryan Calais Cameron  
Original Director: Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu  
Designer: Anna Reid  
Lighting Designer: Rory Beaton  
Sound Designer & Composer: Nicola T. Chang  
Movement Director & Choreographer: Theophilus O. Bailey  
Musical Director & Vocal Arrangement: John Pfumojena  
Associate Director: Tatenda Shamiso  
Associate Designer: Noemi Daboczi  
Associate Lighting Designer: Jack Ryan  
Vocal Coach: Salvatore Sorce  
Assistant Choreographer: Jade Hackett  
Company Stage Managers: Constance Oak & Mica Taylor  
Deputy Stage Manager: Jade Hunter  
Assistant Stage Manager: Emily Obasohan  
Wellbeing Practitioner: Rukiya Jemmott  
Outreach Manager: Jade Franks  
Outreach Coordinator: Selorm Adonu

**ENDS**



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## **IMAGES**

For images see [HERE](#)

Photo caption Top Row: Tobi King Bakare, Shakeel Haakim, Fela Lufadeju. Bottom Row: Mohammed Mansaray, Posi Morakinyo, Albert Magashi

## **LISTINGS**

Royal Court Theatre, Nica Burns, Tegan Summer Theatricals, Hackney Empire, Sarah Verghese Productions Present

The Royal Court Theatre, Nouveau Riche and New Diorama Theatre production

***For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy***

**Written and Directed by Ryan Calais Cameron**

**Original Direction by Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu**

**Garrick Theatre,  
2 Charing Cross Rd,  
London  
WC2H 0HH**

**First Preview - Thursday 29 February 2024**

**Final Performance - Saturday 4 May 2024**

**Press Performance/Official Opening Night - Thursday 7 March 2024, 7pm**

[www.nimaxtheatres.com](http://www.nimaxtheatres.com)

Box Office

Booking Line: 0330 333 4811

Group Bookings: 0330 333 4817 | [groups@nimaxtheatres.com](mailto:groups@nimaxtheatres.com)

Access Bookings: 0330 333 4815 | [access@nimaxtheatres.com](mailto:access@nimaxtheatres.com)

Tickets from £15

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Cast

### **Tobi King Bakare (Onyx)**

Tobi King Bakare trained at RAaW in Southwark, London. Tobi is an actor & writer, most known for *Temple S1+2* (Sky One) starring as Jamie, *Cursed* (Netflix) and *I May Destroy You* (BBC1). He was recently seen in *Marriage* (BBC). His most recent stage work includes *Fog Everywhere* (Camden People's Theatre) and his own one-man play *Before I Go* (Peckham Theatre, Camden People's Theatre). Screen credits include *Non Recyclables*, *Cerebrum*.

### **Shakeel Haakim (Pitch)**

Shakeel is currently in his final year at Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. This will be his professional debut. Previous theatre includes: *A Profoundly Affectionate*, *Passionate Devotion to Someone (-Noun)*, *Metamorphoses*, *Light Falls*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Double Dealer*, *Antigone*, *Twelfth Night* (RADA), *Abandon* (Lyric Hammersmith as part of the Ensemble).

### **Fela Lufadeju (Jet)**

Trained at Arts Educational Schools London. Recent stage credits include *Standing at the Sky's Edge* (Sheffield Crucible), *Guys and Dolls* (Royal Exchange), *Room* (Theatre Royal Stratford East/Abbey Theatre), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Birmingham Rep/Leicester Curve) *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (Aldwych Theatre), *Rose* (Trafalgar Studios), *Drunk* (Leicester Curve/Bridewell Theatre), *Chicago* (Leicester Curve), *Hairspray* (National Tour), *Dirty Dancing* (National Tour).

Screen credits include *Doctor Who* (BBC), *Santiago* (313 Features), *I May Destroy You* (BBC, HBO) *Demons*, *Hipster-White Girl*.

### **Albert Magashi (Sable)**

Awarded a scholarship at 14 to train at Italia Conti and was selected to partake in the Young Actors Showcase in partnership with RADA, Guildhall and Theatre Royal Stratford East before graduating. Albert recently appeared on stage in James Graham's *Dear England* (National Theatre). Screen credits include *Still Up* (Apple TV), *Sherlock* (BBC). Upcoming film *Firecracker*.

### **Mohammed Mansaray (Obsidian)**

Screen credits include *Boarders* (BBC), and feature films *The Cut*, *Gassed Up* (Amazon). Stage credits include *I Love Acting But F\*\*k This Industry* (Theatre Peckham), *Much Ado About Nothing* (RSC), *Barbershop Chronicles* (UK, US & Canada Tour), *The Long Song* (Chichester Festival Theatre).

### **Posi Morakinyo (Midnight)**

Trained at Italia Conti Arts Centre. Theatre credits include: *Ain't Too Proud* (Prince Edward Theatre), *Mandela* (Young Vic), *Tina – The Tina Turner Musical* (Aldwych Theatre), *Madagascar* ((UK & International Tour).

Writer & Director

### **Ryan Calais Cameron**

Ryan Calais Cameron's *Retrograde*, was produced at Kiln Theatre, April/May 2023, was nominated for Evening Standard Award, 'Best Play' 2023. *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When the Hue Gets Too Heavy* premiered at New Diorama Theatre, transferring to Royal Court, then Apollo Theatre, West End in March 2023 (producers: Nouveau Riche/Boundless/New Diorama/Royal Court Theatre). At Black British Theatre Awards 2022 it won Best Production Play Award and Best Director Award [co-director]; at The Stage Debut Awards 2022 the ensemble were joint-winners of Best Performer in a Play.

Other productions include *Living Newspaper*, *My White Best Friend (and Other Letters Left Unsaid)*, (Royal Court Theatre); *Human Nurture* (Theatre Centre/Crucible Sheffield co-produced UK tour); *Queens of Sheba* [co-writer] (producers: Nouveau Riche/New Diorama/Soho Theatre) premiered at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and New Diorama, won Edinburgh Untapped Award, The Stage Edinburgh Award, Offie Award for Best Performance Piece. It toured UK and was revived twice at Soho Theatre before its 2023 run at Chelsea Factory and 2024 run at Lincoln Center, New York and US tour.

Also, *Typical* (Nouveau Riche/Soho Theatre) at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Soho Theatre; *Rhapsody* won Off West End Adopt A Playwright Award 2018 and was produced at Arcola Theatre (Nouveau Riche); *Timbuktu* produced at Black Lives Black Words Festival, Bush/Theatre Royal, Stratford East (Nouveau Riche). Ryan is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Nouveau Riche Theatre Company. He also writes for film and television.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **The Royal Court**

The Royal Court Theatre is the writers' theatre. It is a leading force in world theatre for cultivating and supporting writers - undiscovered, emerging and established.

Since 1956, we have commissioned and produced hundreds of writers, from John Osborne to Mohamed-Zain Dada. Royal Court plays from every decade are now performed on stages and taught in classrooms and universities across the globe.

Through the writers, the Royal Court is at the forefront of creating restless, alert, provocative theatre about now. We open our doors to the unheard voices and free thinkers that, through their writing, change our way of seeing.

We strive to create an environment in which differing voices and opinions can co-exist. In current times it is becoming increasingly difficult for writers to write what they want or need to write without fear, and we will do everything we can to rise above a narrowing of viewpoints.

Through all our work we strive to inspire audiences and influence future writers with radical thinking and provocative discussion.

The Royal Court Theatre is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

## **Nimax Theatres**

Nimax Theatres is an entrepreneurial and innovative company that owns and operates 6 prestigious theatres in the heart of London's West End: the Palace, Lyric, Apollo, Garrick, Vaudeville and Duchess and operates @sohoplacé, an exciting new theatre on Charing Cross Road. Nimax was founded in 2005 and is co-owned by Chief Executive Nica Burns OBE, an award-winning producer of over 100 productions, and Max Weitzenhoffer, a veteran American theatre producer. The theatres have a combined capacity of 5,600 seats and in addition to hosting some of the UK's most critically acclaimed plays and musicals, present a busy and varied programme of comedy, concerts and children's theatre. Current productions at the group include *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* at the Palace, *Six* at the Vaudeville and *The Little Big Things* musical @ sohoplacé. The Apollo theatre hosted the first, sell-out and critically acclaimed West End season of *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets To Heavy* from March to May 2023.

## **New Diorama**

New Diorama Theatre is a pioneering London studio, home to the country's best independent theatre companies and ensembles, recently winning both the Critic's Circle Venue Award 2023 and The Stage Fringe Theatre of the Year 2022. Since opening in 2010, New Diorama's work has also received three prestigious Peter Brook Awards, ten Off-West End Awards including Off-West End Artistic Director of the Year and The Stage Innovation Prize. Work commissioned and produced at NDT frequently tours nationally and internationally, including regular transfers Off-Broadway. In 2022, NDT's premiere production of *For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy* transferred to the Royal Court Theatre Downstairs for an extended, sold-out run before moving to the West End; while previous NDT commission *Operation Mincemeat* also made their West End transfer in 2023 and continues to play at the Fortune Theatre

## **Nouveau Riche**

Nouveau Riche is a multi award-winning creative movement, making art that has the power and potential to change lives. Our objective is to discover, nurture and produce unique stories with a keen scope on work that is both educational and entertaining. The most common theme in our work is that we tend to depart from traditional Western storytelling, and nurture new writing that is thought provoking, challenging and culturally inclusive.

*For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets To Heavy* by Ryan Calais Cameron premiered at New Diorama Theatre in 2021, it then transferred to the Royal Court in 2022 and made its West End transfer to the Apollo Theatre in 2023. We have been nominated for Best New Play Olivier 2023, won Best Director and Best New Play at the Black British Theatre Awards in 2022 and the entire cast won Best Actor at The Stage Debut Awards 2022.

*Queens of Sheba* received the Off West End Award, 2020 for Best Performance Piece and both the Edinburgh Untapped Award plus The Stage Edinburgh Festival Award in 2018. It has sold-out multiple times at Soho Theatre and sold-out a 10 venue regional tour. In January 2023 we premiered the show in New York at the Under the Radar Festival and subsequently returned the following year to the Lincoln Center. We are now associate artists at the Broadway Theatre in Catford, Lewisham. Enabling us to experiment with new work, support artists to produce their work and bring groundbreaking work to the local community.



