



Press Release
Thursday 22 July 2021

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#HeartOfHammersmith

FULL CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM ANNOUNCED FOR *HEART OF HAMMERSMITH* AT LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE FROM 12-14 AUGUST

- Set & Costume Designer Charlotte Espiner, Lighting Designer Shaun Parry, Sound Designer Lorna Munden and Choreographer Diane Alison-Mitchell join Writer and Creator Nicholai La Barrie and Director Eva Sampson with Alex Hurst to complete the Creative Team
- Full casting announced with an adult Community Chorus, Young Lyric Partner Chorus and Amici Dance Theatre Company, with participants from ages 11 to 88, joining the previously announced Lyric Community Company
- New cast and rehearsal images available to download [here](#)
- Tickets on sale now at www.lyric.co.uk

Full casting and creative team is announced today for *Heart of Hammersmith*, the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's first large-scale community play celebrating true stories of West London with a cast of over 40 local people, aged from 11 – 88 years, running in the Main House from Thursday 12 to Saturday 14 August.

Heart of Hammersmith is written and created by Nicholai La Barrie (*Tina – The Tina Turner Musical* Resident Director and Lyric Associate Director) with The Lyric Community Company, directed by Eva Sampson (*Decades, The Tide*) with Alex Hurst (Lyric Resident Assistant Director, Birkbeck Placement) with set and design by Charlotte Espiner (*Kingdom Come, It is Easy to be Dead*), lighting design by Shaun Parry (*Broadway Jews*), sound design by Lorna

Munden (*Noises Off, Cinderella*), and choreography by **Diane Alison-Mitchell** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream – Criterion, When The Crows Visit*).

Heart of Hammersmith celebrates West London stories past and present. The production started rehearsals in January during Lockdown via Zoom with the **Lyric Community Company's** 17 young members, aged 18-25. The production has been developed throughout the year and now brings together a cast of over 40 West Londoners, including an **Adult Community Chorus**, aged 30-88 years; the **Amici Dance Theatre Company** of disabled and non-disabled performers aged from 20-70 years; and a Young Lyric **Partner's Chorus**, aged 11-18 years.

From lives lived to lives lost, lives forced out and lives brought together, Heart of Hammersmith celebrates West London through all of its hardships and triumphs and the vibrant individuals who make it what it is. Inspired by true stories from West London, the play tracks immigrant arrivals, million-pound homes and social housing sitting side by side, the rise of gentrification and the shadows left by the Grenfell tragedy, the changing of attitudes, facing of tragedies and the rallying of a resilient community. Heart of Hammersmith tells the story of Dieppe Street, a street from West London's past, and a place that today unites us.

The adult **Community Chorus** includes **Colm Gallagher, Patricia Mantuano, Denise Clarke-Williams** and **Nutun Ahmed** in speaking roles and **Alessio Bagiardi, Francis Cherry, Margaret Cramp, Isobel Leaviss, James Mcauley, Binita Patel, Lizzie Popoff, Priya Narayan, Pauline Singh, Anne-Marie Wedderburn, Jamie Woodard, Donna Wright** and **Faisal Yusuf**.

Amici Dance Theatre Company is a unique dance theatre company integrating non-disabled and disabled artists and performers. The **Amici Company** includes: **John Athnasious, Stuart Cowie, Ekeama Henry-Ferrazzi, Nicolas Serial, Wilma Serial** and **Delson Weeks**.

The children's **Partner Chorus** includes: **Amaiya Coleman, Luka Jankovick, Nikolas Obradovic, Agnes Suckling, Imiya Summers** and **Alyssia Tachie-Menson** in collaboration with the Young Lyric Partner Organisations **Action on Disability, Amici Dance Theatre Company, New English Ballet Theatre, Tri-Borough Music Hub, Turtle Key Arts** and **Zoo Nation Academy of Dance**.

Working together with **Nicholai La Barrie** (*Tina – The Tina Turner Musical Resident Director*), the script has been created with **The Lyric Community Company**, aged 18-25, from West London. They are **Gehna Badhwar, Eva Bate, Wes Bozonga, Ömer Cem Çoltu, Tom Claxton, Kitty Cockram, James Douglas-Quarcoopome, Harry Drane, Harri-Rose Hudson, Lex MacQuire, Ella McCallum, Ele McKenzie, Alfie Neill, Priyanka Patel, Danielle Tama, Wilf Walsworth, Aliyah Yanguba**.

Colm Gallagher is part of the adult Community Chorus in a speaking role. He grew up in Newry Co Down and has worked in Hammersmith and West London since 1988. Colm is the Education Co-Director and assistant choreographer with AMICI Dance Theatre and regularly performs with his daughter in their productions. He said: *"Creating and performing together is always exciting. The fact that this is such a large scale piece ups the ante for me. I am excited by, firstly, that sense of excitement of being with other actors and performers on that stage again. Secondly, I love the process of putting together such an ambitious piece of community healing, particularly after all we have been through for the last couple of years. Finally, probably connected with this, is actually getting to see London again on a weekly basis after not being near it for so long."*

Patricia Mantuano grew up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where she studied Gastronomy and Performing Arts and has lived in London for the past 16 years. Patricia has previously competed

in show jumping, horse riding and swimming, she also plays guitar, drums, dances salsa, and is handle of firearms, and takes part in Mixed Martial Arts. Her other hobbies are studying psychology, forensic science, and Quantum Mechanics. She said: *"I wanted to join Heart of Hammersmith to be able to give a voice to the unknown. I'm excited by the eclecticism and to see that every life has an equal value."*

Denise Clarke-Williams grew up in and lives in Chelsea. She attended Holland Park School, Kensington and Chelsea College London Southbank University. She is a carer for her son and mum, and in her spare time is writing a book about her mum's journey from Jamaica to England in 1953. She also enjoys cooking Jamaican food and DJing. She said: *"I'm excited to see the story come alive and knowing that others will be thrilled to see it, I wanted to join, especially as I grew up in West London, and one of the parts, Connie, reminded me of my mum."*

Nutun Ahmed was born in Kensington and grew up in Ealing where she has lived over the past 50 years. She is an architect and past projects she has worked on include Heathrow terminal 2. In her spare time she likes to paint and draw and has recently illustrated a children's book for publication. She said: *"The idea of being part of a community production based in West London made me want to join and seeing the collaborative effect of the play being written by the cast and Nicholai. I originally thought that I would only be considered for the chorus, this excited me as I sing in a community pop choir on a regular basis."*

The performances will be socially distanced in line with See It Safely industry approved guidelines and all tickets are £10 available at www.lyric.co.uk

Creative team biographies:

Charlotte Espiner, Set and Costume Designer, trained at the Motley Theatre Design School in 2011 and since then has worked extensively in theatre and film both in the UK and abroad. Theatre Design credits include: *Let Loose* (ENB/The Unicorn), *Grimm Tales* (The Unicorn), *Civilisation* (Underbelly, New Diorama Theatre, HOME, Staatsschauspiel Dresden), *Kingdom Come* (RSC), *Adler&Gibb* (Summerhall, The Unicorn, Kirk Douglas Theatre LA), *Lands* (Bush Studio), *It is Easy to be Dead* – Olivier Award nomination (Finborough Theatre/Trafalgar Studios), *All or Nothing*, *The Musical* (West End/UK National Tour/Waterloo Vaults), *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale* (Sainsbury Theatre, LAMDA), *The Changeling* (GBS Theatre, RADA), *Pufferfish* (The Cage, VAULT Festival), *Parents' Evening*, *A Play About My Dad* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Hamlet* (The Rose Theatre). Film credits include: *Stand Still*, *The Rain Collector*, *Lizard Girl* – BAFTA award winner, *Double Take*, *Paper Mountains*.

Shaun Parry, Lighting Designer is currently in his sixth year at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre as Head of Lighting. During this time he has worked on numerous sharings on the START and REWIND programmes with the Young Lyric. *Heart of Hammersmith* is his first main house production. Prior to the Lyric, Shaun was Deputy Technical Manager at St James's Theatre where his production credits include *Broadway Jews* and *This is My Body*. Shaun has also worked as Deputy Electrician in Venue Cymru for five years where he started his career on the apprenticeship programme in Technical Theatre.

Lorna Munden, Sound Designer, is Head of Sound and Video at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre where her recent sound design credits include *Cinderella* and *Noises Off*. She has designed

sound for companies including the Oldham Coliseum Theatre, Octagon Theatre, Bolton, Lip Service Theatre Company, imitating the dog and Tamasha Theatre Company, including over 70 productions for the Oldham Coliseum, including *Bread & Roses*; *The Father* and *Chicago*. Lorna is Winner of Best Design – Manchester Theatre Award for *Singin' In The Rain*, for The Octagon Theatre, Bolton, Salisbury Playhouse and The New Vic, Newcastle-Under-Lyme.

Diane Alison-Mitchell, Choreographer, is a movement director and theatre choreographer. She is Head of Movement at Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and co-founder of Movement Directors' Association (MDA). Recent theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Criterion Theatre); *When The Crows Visit, Wife, Holy Sh!t* (Kiln Theatre); *Shuck 'n' Jive* (Soho Theatre); *Our Lady of Kibeho* (Royal & Derngate/Theatre Royal Stratford East); *The Hoes* (Hampstead Theatre); *Snow White and the Happy Ever After Salon* (Ovalhouse/Plymouth Theatre Royal); *Never Vera Blue, Offside* (Futures Theatre); *The Island* (Theatre Chipping Norton/Dukes Lancaster); *Roundelay, Klippies* (Southwark Playhouse), *They Drink It In The Congo* (Almeida Theatre), *SOUL* (Royal & Derngate/Hackney Empire), *Othello, Julius Caesar* (RSC), *The Emperor Jones* (LOST Theatre), *How Nigeria Became: A story, and a spear that didn't work* (Unicorn Theatre), *The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation about the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884-1915* (Bush Theatre), *The Island* (Young Vic), *Lola - The Life of Lola Montez* (Trestle Theatre), *The Relapse* (Embassy Theatre).

Nicholai La Barrie, Creator/Writer, is a theatre and film director, an Artistic Associate of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and has been a MOBO Fellow. His work in theatre includes: *Tina - The Tina Turner Musical* as Resident Director (West End), *Liar Heretic Thief* (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre), *Portrait For Posterity* (Arcola Theatre), *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act* (Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama), *Grey, There is Nothing There* (Oval House), *White* (Edinburgh Festival), *Gob* (London International Festival of Theatre), *The Book of Disquiet* (Blue Elephant Theatre), *I'll Take You There* (Gate), *Chet Baker: Speedball* (606 Jazz Club). Film Credits Include: *Hamlet Sort Of, North East South West, Aingeal, Dark Stranger* (2009 Official selection Caribbean film festival). Dramaturge credits include: *Feels, The Mob Reformers* (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre).

Eva Sampson, Director, trained on the National Theatre Studio Directors' Course and at the University of Birmingham. Work as Director includes: *The Little Gardener* (Kew Gardens), *The Last Nine Months* (Vaults Festival), *Sticky* (Southwark Playhouse), *The Tide* (Young Vic), *The Scarecrows' Wedding* (Watford Palace Theatre), *A Peter Rabbit Tale* (Singapore Repertory), *Rudolf* (Leeds Playhouse) and *Decades* (Ovalhouse). Work as Staff Director at The National Theatre includes: *The Visit or The Old Lady Comes to Call* and *Downstate* with Steppenwolf Theatre. Work as Associate and Assistant Director includes: *Four Quartets* with Ralph Fiennes (UK Tour), Olivier Award winning *Noye's Fludde* (Theatre Royal Stratford East and ENO), *Twelfth Night* (Young Vic, Jerwood Assistant Director) and *Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas* (Lyric Hammersmith Theatre). Eva was Resident Assistant Director for Chichester Festival Theatre's 2019 season: *This is My Family* and *8 Hotels*. Digital Theatre work includes: *Meet Mo, Ribena* and *Jack and the Beanstalk: A Pocket Pantomime* (Theatre Royal Stratford East) and *At the Statue of Venus* (Royal Opera House). As Associate Director: *Unprecedented* (Headlong and Century Films) for BBC. For TV/Radio: *That's How It Feels* and *Keep the Home Fires Burning*. Eva Sampson is the Co-Artistic Director of How It Ended theatre company and is an Associate Artist of National Youth Theatre.

Alex Hurst, Director, is the Resident Assistant Director at the Lyric and is currently training for an MA in Theatre Directing at Birkbeck. He is a graduate of the BA Drama course at the University of Manchester and has directed for the Edinburgh and Manchester fringes. *Heart of Hammersmith* will be his professional directing debut. Assisting credits include the Lyric's upcoming production of *Out West* marking the theatre's reopening this June, and *Market Boy* (Rose Bruford College).

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#)

Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre presents *Heart of Hammersmith*
Written and Created by **Nicholai La Barrie** and **The Lyric Community Company**
Directed by **Eva Sampson with Alex Hurst**
Set & Costume Design by **Charlotte Espiner**
Lighting Design by **Shaun Parry**
Sound Design by **Lorna Munden**
Choreographed by **Diane Alison-Mitchell**

Dates: Thursday 12 to Saturday 14 August 2021

Performance Schedule: Thursday to Saturday at 7.30pm plus Saturday matinee at 2.30pm

Open Captioned Performance: Saturday 14 August, 2.30pm

Audio Described Performance: Saturday 14 August, 7.30pm

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL
Box office: 020 8741 6850

www.lyric.co.uk

Tickets from £10

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The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is 'See It Safely' approved

Ensuring the safety of our artists, audience and team is our number one priority. Our socially distanced seating and industry standard 'See It Safely' approved cleaning and Covid-safety measures complying with the latest Government guidelines mean that everyone can experience the joy of live theatre again at the Lyric. You can find out more at <https://lyric.co.uk/faqs/>