



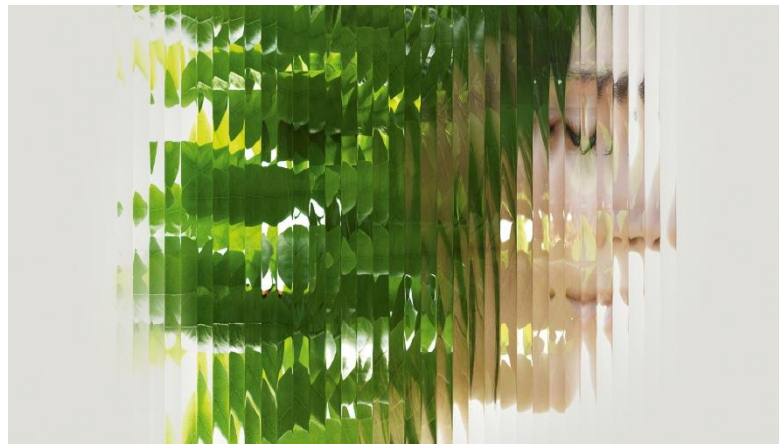
Press Release

Thursday 18 May 2023

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## LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE'S SECOND YEAR COHORT OF SPRINGBOARD TO STAGE FRESH ADAPTATION OF *THE BACCHAE* THIS JULY



A new adaptation of Euripides' Greek tragedy *The Bacchae* by Katherine Soper (Evening Standard Award winner for Most Promising Playwright), directed by Kwame Owusu and commissioned for the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's ground-breaking performance training programme, **SPRINGBOARD**, will run in the Studio from **Thursday 20 - Saturday 22 July 2023**.

Following the success of the inaugural SPRINGBOARD production of *Lysistrata* in the Studio in 2022, the new 2023/24 cohort of trainees will perform this exciting re-lensed production, examining the pressures that young women face in a society bound by authoritarian control. In doing so, *The Bacchae* sets out to explore the fine lines between influence and power and speaks to the current pop culture zeitgeist of who we idolise in 2023. Whilst this adaptation sits in a contemporary society, it retains the mystical and fantastical elements of the original.

The show marks director Kwame Owusu's return to the Lyric after his successful year as Resident Assistant Director in 2021/2022. The cast features all ten trainees of this year's [SPRINGBOARD](#), a ground-breaking, free two-year training programme providing unrivalled theatre-based training and development opportunities to nurture the next generation of performers from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and groups underrepresented in theatre. SPRINGBOARD is kindly supported by **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation** and **The Emmanuel Kaye Foundation** who have helped to launch the programme through funding over

the next three years for the first 30 trainees. Each year SPRINGBOARD commissions a new play on a re-lensed classic, building on last year's progression of the 2021/22 cohort signing with major talent agencies following their production of *Lysistrata*.

It brings together a strong ensemble of ten SPRINGBOARD trainees, including **Rima Georges**, 26, from Westminster, **Stacey Ann Henry**, 20, from Brent, **Kabira Imona**, 25, from Kensington & Chelsea, **Isaiah James-Mitchell**, 23, from Ealing, **Kim Mac**, 25, from Hammersmith & Fulham, **Bella Macdonald**, 26, from Harrow, **Louisa McClintock**, 21, from Ealing, **Bethany Monk-Lane**, 26, from Wandsworth, **Joshua Ogbue**, 22, from Brent, and **Behkam Salehani**, 22, from Kensington & Chelsea.

**Katherine Soper (Writer) and Kwame Owusu (Director)**, said: "*Parallels between Euripides' play and society emerge with every generation. From political scandals, the cost of living crisis, climate crisis, the unstoppable growth of social media making us more isolated to the ever-growing awareness of strictures placed on women – we are living in a society where power is taken for granted, and things aren't fit for purpose. This thrilling play is about the clash between the old world and the new: where young people, led by a mysterious leader, create a new world. We're looking forward to collaborating with this brilliant next generation of actors to bring this exciting story to life.*"

**Rachel O'Riordan, Artistic Director at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**, said: "*I am incredibly proud to see the new cohort of SPRINGBOARD trainees come together in their first Studio production, The Bacchae, announced today, written by Katherine Soper. We are thrilled to welcome back Kwame Owusu as Director following his time at the Lyric as Resident Assistant Director. Working with a professional creative team, this next generation of actors take on Euripides' Greek classic and transform it in a bold and intricate way. Drawing upon our rich history of nurturing talent, SPRINGBOARD reflects our strong commitment to creating new opportunities in theatre, and we are delighted to see this talented cohort of 10 inspiring trainees take the stage and industry by storm.*"

**"It felt like I was going around with a secret, like I had this whole beautiful rainforest inside myself."**

When a group of young women discover the mysterious and charming Bacchus, they instantly form an unshakeable devotion to him and each other – it has awakened something inside of them that cannot be contained. Is this a supportive sisterhood or something more dangerous? And as their community strengthens, how do the authorities scramble to regain control?

A thrilling exploration of power and the modern world, Euripides' seminal play is brought up to date in this mystical new version by award-winning playwright Katherine Soper, directed by Kwame Owusu (Lyric Resident Assistant Director 2021-22).

**The Bacchae** is written by **Katherine Soper**, directed by **Kwame Owusu**, design by **Tomás Palmer**, lighting design by **Ros Chase**, sound design by **Kayodeine Gomez**.

**Biographies**

**Creative Team**

### **Katherine Soper – Writer**

Katherine Soper's first play, *Wish List*, won the *Bruntwood Prize* for Playwriting, *The Stage Debut Award* for Best New Play, and caused Katherine to be nominated as Most Promising Playwright at the *Evening Standard Awards*. It was performed at the Manchester Royal Exchange and Royal Court, directed by Matthew Xia, and is published by Nick Hern Books. Her next play, *The Small Hours*, was written for National Theatre Connections. Katherine has written for *The Big House* and for BBC Radio 4 and is currently under commission to the Royal Court.

### **Kwame Owusu – Director**

Kwame Owusu is a director and writer. He was the Resident Assistant Director at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in 2021/2022 and is a Young Associate at the Gate Theatre. His work in theatre as a director includes *Othello* at ArtsEd; *stoning mary* at Arts University Bournemouth; *The Wolf from the Door* at the John Thaw Studio; *Rota* at Antwerp Mansion; and *Pomona* at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and the *King's Arms*, Manchester. Work as a Staff Director includes *Romeo and Julie* at the National Theatre and Sherman Theatre. Work as an associate or assistant director includes *Closer*, *Britannicus*, *Scandaltown*, and *Running With Lions* at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre; *Bee* at the Old Vic; and *Utopolis* at Manchester International Festival. His writing for audio includes *The Factory* for English Touring Theatre. His writing for theatre includes *HORIZON* for the Bush Theatre. He trained at the University of Manchester and Birkbeck, University of London.

### **Tomás Palmer – Designer**

Tomás Palmer (he/him) creates work for theatre, new writing, dance, opera, musicals and film. Tomás trained at The Glasgow School of Art and The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He is one of the 2021 winners of The Linbury Prize for Stage Design and was the production designer on the BAFTA and BIFA Award winning short film *Too Rough* in 2022.

Theatre Design credits include: *My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar* (Brixton House); *Julius Caesar* (co-costume designer with Rosanna Vize, RSC); *Sanctuary* (Black Cab); *Sophocles' Oedipus / Silent Practice* (Lamda); *The Wellspring* (co-designer with Rosie Elnile, Royal and Derngate); *Time Is Running Out* (Gate Theatre/Cardiff); *Half Full* (Bute Theatre/RWCMD); *Winning* (Glasgow School of Art); *Autocue* (Centre for Contemporary Art Glasgow).

Associate design credits include: *Word-Play* (Royal Court Theatre); *The Cherry Orchard* (Yard Theatre/ETT/Home Manchester); *Sound of The Underground* (Royal Court Theatre).

### **Ros Chase – Lighting Designer**

Ros will graduate with a BA (Hons) in Theatre Technology from Guildhall in July 2023. She is passionate about using design to transform a space and is interested in theatre as a form of education, inspiration, and amplification for voices of underrepresented communities, especially women and the LGBTQ+ community. Ros' work has been described as 'a masterclass in how to light a small space' by WhatsOnStage, and she was nominated for Best Lighting Design of a new play or musical by Broadway World UK in 2022. Her recent credits include *Attempts on Her Life* at Guildhall's Silk Street Theatre; *For a Palestinian* at Camden People's Theatre and Bristol Old Vic; *Rapture* at the Pleasance Theatre and VAULT Festival; *SHE* at Tara Theatre and UK Tour; *Shake the City* at the Leeds Playhouse and Greenwich Theatre; *TuckShop's Dick Whittington* at the Phoenix Theatre; and *Hyde & Seek* in Guildhall's Milton Court Theatre.

## Kayodeine Gomez – Sound Designer

Kayodeine (she/they) is a Black trans femme sound designer and performing electronic musician and DJ working across theatre, film, nightlife, performance art and music with a focus on amplifying marginalised stories and experimentation, constantly referencing her identity, heritage and culture in her work, and staying connected with community through workshops and collaboration. She was recently awarded the Light and/or Sound Recognition Award by the Black British Theatre Awards.

- ENDS -

### Press contacts:

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### Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#).

### Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre presents

#### ***The Bacchae***

By **Katherine Soper**, after Euripides

Directed by **Kwame Owusu**

Design by **Tomás Palmer**

Lighting Design by **Ros Chase**

Sound Design by **Kayodeine Gomez**

### **Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**

Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL

**Dates:** Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 July 2023

**Performance Times:** Thursday 20 – Saturday 22 July, 8pm

Friday 21 – Saturday 22 July, 3pm

**Box office:** 020 8741 6850

[www.lyric.co.uk](http://www.lyric.co.uk)

Tickets £10

Age guidance: 14+

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#LyricTheBacchae

### **ABOUT THE LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE**

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre produces bold and relevant world-class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith, the theatre's home for more than 125 years. Under the leadership of Artistic

Director and CEO Rachel O’Riordan, it is committed to being vital to, and representative of, the local community. A major force in London and UK theatre, the Lyric produces adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work that tells the stories that matter. The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre has a national reputation for ground-breaking work to develop and nurture the next generation of talent, providing opportunities for young people to discover the power of creativity and to experience the life changing impact of theatre. We are the creative heart of Hammersmith, proud of our history and ambitious for our future.

## **LISTINGS**

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre presents  
***For the Culture – Celebrations of Blackness***  
Curated by **Nicholai La Barrie**  
Summer 2023  
Full festival events to be announced soon

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production  
***School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play***  
By **Jocelyn Bioh**  
Directed by **Monique Touko**  
**Dates:** Thursday 08 June – Saturday 15 July 2023  
**Press Night:** Wednesday 14 June, 7pm  
**Audio Described Performance:** Tuesday 27 June, 7.30pm  
**Chilled Environment Performance:** Wednesday 28 June, 2.30pm  
**BSL Performance:** Tuesday 04 July, 7.30pm  
**Open Captioned Performance:** Friday 07 July, 7.30pm

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production  
***The Bacchae***  
By **Katherine Soper**, after Euripides  
Directed by **Kwame Owusu**  
**Dates:** Thursday 20– Saturday 22 July 2023

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre & MEI Theatrical present  
***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***  
Based on the book by **Eric Carle**  
**Dates:** Tuesday 25 – Sunday 30 July 2023

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Norwell Lapley Productions present  
***Tales from Acorn Wood***  
Based on the favourite stories by **Julia Donaldson** and **Axel Scheffler**  
**Dates:** Tuesday 08 – Sunday 20 August 2023

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production  
***God of Carnage***  
By **Yasmina Reza**  
Translated by **Christopher Hampton**  
Directed by **Nicholai La Barrie**  
**Dates:** Friday 01 – Saturday 30 September 2023  
**Press Night:** Wednesday 06 September 2023, 7pm  
**Open Captioned Performance:** Fri 15 September, 7.30pm

**Chilled Environment Performance:** Wednesday 20 September, 2.30pm  
**BSL Performance:** Thursday 21 September, 7.30pm  
**Audio Described Performance:** Tuesday 26 September, 7.30pm

A Royal Shakespeare Company production

***The Empress***

By **Tanika Gupta**

Directed by **Pooja Ghai**

**Dates:** Wednesday 04 – Saturday 28 October 2023

**Press Night:** Tuesday 10 October 2023, 7pm

**Audio Described Performance:** Tuesday 17 October, 7.30pm

**Chilled Environment Performance:** Wednesday 18 October, 1.30pm

**Open Captioned Performance:** Friday 20 October, 7.30pm

**Integrated BSL Performance:** Friday 27 October, 7.30pm

**Swan Theatre Stratford-upon-Avon dates:** Friday 07 July - Saturday 18 November

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production

***Cinderella***

By **Vikki Stone**

**Dates:** Saturday 18 November 2023 – Saturday 06 January 2024

**Press Day:** Saturday 25 November 2023, 2pm and 6pm

**Relaxed Performance:** Tuesday 05 December, 10am

**Audio Described Performance:** Thursday 14 December, 7pm

**Open Captioned Performance:** Wednesday 20 December, 6pm

**BSL Performance:** Wednesday 27 December, 2pm

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Pins and Needles co-production

***Raymond Briggs' Father Christmas 2023***

**Dates:** Wednesday 22 November – Saturday 30 December 2023

A Frantic Assembly, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Curve, MAST Mayflower Studios and Lyric Hammersmith Theatre co-production

***Metamorphosis***

By **Franz Kafka**

Adapted by **Lemn Sissay OBE**

Directed by **Scott Graham**

**Dates:** Thursday 01 February 2024 - Saturday 02 March 2024

**Press Night:** Tuesday 06 February 2024, 7pm

**Audio Described Performance:** Tuesday 13 February 2024, 7.30pm

**Open Captioned Performance:** Friday 16 February 2024, 7.30pm

**BSL Performance:** Monday 19 February 2024, 7.30pm

**Chilled Environment Performance:** Wednesday 21 February 2024, 1.30pm

A Lyric Hammersmith Theatre production

***Faith Healer***

Written by **Brian Friel**

Directed by **Rachel O'Riordan**

**Dates:** Thursday 14 March – Saturday 13 April 2024

**Press Night:** Wednesday 20 March 2024, 7pm

**Chilled Environment Performance:** Wednesday 27 March 2024, 2.30pm

**Open Captioned Performance:** Tuesday 02 April 2024, 7.30pm

**Audio Described Performance:** Monday 08 April 2024, 7.30pm

**BSL Performance:** Thursday 11 April 2024, 7.30pm