



Press Release

Friday 12 January 2024

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#ForTheCultureLyric

LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE ANNOUNCES FOR THE CULTURE SPRING 2024 SEASON



Following the success of **For the Culture – Celebrations of Blackness Festival** in 2022, the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre today announces brand new events taking place in Spring. **For the Culture** is a programme of work that champions and celebrates Black British artists, activists and thinkers within the UK.

- **For the Conversation:** BAFTA Award nominated poet, author, broadcaster and adaptor of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, **Lemn Sissay OBE**, joins the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's Associate Director and For the Culture curator, **Nicholai La Barrie**, for an in-conversation about Lemn Sissay's career, his experience as an artist and his current work. The special, one-off Q&A precedes a performance of *Metamorphosis* at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre on Thursday 08 February.
- **Sancho & Me – For One Night Only:** acclaimed actor and author **Paterson Joseph**, tells the extraordinary story of an unlikely hero, **Charles Ignatius Sancho**, who was born on a slave ship on the Atlantic Ocean in 1729, but yet became a writer, composer, shopkeeper and respected 'man of letters' in 18th century London becoming the first man of African Heritage to vote in Britain.
- **For the Comedy:** some of the country's best Black British comedians come together for an evening of stand-up. Joining the line-up is **Dana Alexander** (BBC Russell Howard's Good News and The Culture Show), **Dane Baptiste** (Live at the Apollo and Mock The Week), **Darren Harriott** (ITV's Love Island Aftersun and C4's The Last Leg), **Aurie Styla** (ITV Jonathan Ross' Comedy Club and C4's Black, British and Funny) and **Slim** (BBC Live at The Apollo and C4's Black, British and Funny).

- **For the Culture Podcast:** hosted by the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's Associate Director, **Nicolai La Barrie**, For the Culture Podcast celebrates Black joy, talent, culture and creativity. Episode one features **Monique Touko**, director of the UK premiere and sell-out success of *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* and who returns to the Lyric this spring to direct Alice Childress' seminal play ***Wedding Band: A Love/Hate Story in Black and White***.

Associate Director, **Nicolai La Barrie**, said today, *"I'm incredibly excited to be unveiling the next instalment of For the Culture with a new Spring Season. With all of the events we curate, it is my hope that audiences can take away the message that our history as people from the African diaspora is not of pain only, but that we are joyful and magical and celebratory. For the Culture acts as an open space for our community to come together, have meaningful discussions, see ourselves reflected in each other's artistic work, and most importantly celebrate our shared history and heritage."*

For the Culture is kindly supported by **Hammersmith Bid**.

FOR THE CONVERSATION **Thursday 08 February | Studio**

Join award-winning poet, author and broadcaster Lemn Sissay OBE in a special pre-show Q&A with the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre's Associate Director, Nicolai La Barrie.

The talk will explore Lemn's career, his motivations, his background as an Artist and his current work – including his adaptation of ***Metamorphosis*** for Frantic Assembly, playing at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre from 01 Feb – 02 Mar. Tickets to the pre-show Q&A are £5 and available to book now.

SANCHO & ME – One Night Only **22 & 23 February | Studio**

Charles Ignatius Sancho was born on a slave ship on the Atlantic Ocean in 1729, yet he became a writer, composer, shopkeeper and respected 'man of letters' in 18th century London becoming the first man of African Heritage to vote in Britain.

This is the extraordinary story of an unlikely hero, brought to life by actor and author Paterson Joseph, who performs an enthralling account of one man's remarkable life. Part-biography and part-dramatized readings from Paterson's acclaimed novel 'The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho', *Sancho & Me* is an unmissable evening of storytelling with themes intersecting with Paterson's own story of being Black and British. This is a vital story connecting a Black Life in the transatlantic world from nearly three hundred years ago with a modern-day Black Life in today's UK.

Sancho's music features during the piece and is arranged by the Musical Director Ben Park who joins Paterson on stage.

Paterson Joseph's novel 'The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho' won the RSL Christopher Bland Prize and The Historical Writer's Association Debut Novel Prize in 2023. Paterson most recently starred in the film *Wonka* and the BBC hit series *Boat Story*.

The team also comprises Co-Director and Designer, Michael Vale and Costumier Linda Haysman.

FOR THE COMEDY

Monday 04 March | Main House

The one night-only fundraising comedy night For the Comedy will take place on Monday 04 March in the Main House of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, in association with Nice N' Spiky Comedy.

The Lyric will welcome some of the UK's best Black British comedy performers including **Dana Alexander** (BBC Russell Howard's Good News and The Culture Show), **Dane Baptiste** (Live at the Apollo and Mock The Week), **Darren Harriott** (ITV's Love Island Aftersun and C4's The Last Leg), **Aurie Styla** (ITV Jonathan Ross' Comedy Club and C4's Black, British and Funny) and **Slim** (BBC Live at The Apollo and C4's Black, British and Funny) with further comedians to be announced.

This is a fundraising event on behalf of the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith (registered charity no. 278518) for the Lyric's 'For the Culture: Celebrations of Blackness' Festival - a programme honouring Blackness through art, performance, conversation, love, and joy.

FOR THE CULTURE PODCAST

Now streaming on all platforms

Episode one is out now and features an interview by Lyric Associate Director **Nicholai La Barrie** with **Monique Touko**, director of the UK premiere and sell-out success of *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*. Touko returns to the Lyric this spring to direct **Alice Childress'** seminal play *Wedding Band: A Love/Hate Story in Black and White*, a moving and emotive drama exploring interracial love and relationships.

Further episodes and guests to be announced.

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#).

CREATIVE biographies available to download [here](#).

Listings

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

www.lyric.co.uk

Tickets from £5

Twitter: [@LyricHammer](https://twitter.com/LyricHammer)

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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 and Executive Director Amy Belson, 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.