

THE HALF-GOD OF RAINFALL

BY
Inua Ellams

MOVEMENT DIRECTION BY
Orlando Pabotoy

DIRECTED BY
Taibi Magar

SCENIC DESIGN	Riccardo Hernández
COSTUME DESIGN	Linda Cho
LIGHTING DESIGN	Stacey Derosier
SOUND DESIGN & MUSIC COMPOSITION	Mikaal Sulaiman
PROJECTION DESIGN	Tal Yarden
ORISHA MOVEMENT CONSULTING / CHOREOGRAPHY	Beatrice Capote
CASTING	The Telsey Office / Destiny Lilly, CSA
INTIMACY DIRECTOR	Ann James
VOICE & DIALECT DIRECTOR	Dawn-Elin Fraser
PRODUCTION SUPERVISION	Tinc Productions
STAGE MANAGER	Caroline Englander

CAST

Jason Bowen	Sàngó
Kelley Curran	Hera
Mister Fitzgerald	Demi
Patrice Johnson Chevannes	Osún
Michael Laurence	Zeus
Lizan Mitchell	Elegba
Jennifer Mogbock	Modúpé

A CO-PRODUCTION WITH

EXPERIENCE THE
art.

The Half-God of Rainfall is performed without an intermission.

The Half God of Rainfall by Inua Ellams was first presented as A Fuel and Kiln co-production in association with Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

This production is made possible with the generous support of Salman Al-Rashid.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Our theater lives on the island of Manhattan.

Manhattan has always been a gathering and trading place for many Indigenous peoples, where Nations intersected from all four directions since time immemorial. It was a place to gather and sometimes to seek refuge during times of conflict and struggle. The staff and trustees of New York Theatre Workshop pay respect to all of their ancestors past, present, to their future generations.

We acknowledge that our theatre, and our work, is situated on the island of Manhattan (*Menohhannet* —On the Island), traditional lands of the Munsee Lenape, the Canarsie, Unkechaug, Matinecock, Shinnecock, Reckgawanc and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

We respect that many Indigenous people continue to live and work on this island and acknowledge their ongoing contributions to this area.

We encourage each of you to honor the Indigenous communities that first inhabited the land on which you're now standing.

We would like to thank **Safe Harbors NYC** for contributing to this statement.

THE PROVENANCE

New York Theatre Workshop strives to be both an active producing theatre, engaging in an ongoing conversation with our audiences, and a nurturing workshop, providing off-stage support to a diverse community of artists. Our workshop activities are designed to provide artists a space to experiment and are not open to the public. However, the development of the work we share with our audiences is an important part of the conversation around each production. To that end, we include information on the piece's provenance, or beginnings, in our programs.

Growing up in a Christian and Muslim household in Nigeria, playwright Inua Ellams saw the religious stories of his upbringing as larger than life myths rather than dogma. When his family emigrated to Europe—first Dublin in the early '90's and then London—the basketball court was space of isolation and pain, community and triumph. Always a poet, he began writing about the game, pulling from the pantheon of mythologies of his upbringing, the work of Dante and conversations with friends who had survived sexual assault. Along the way, he saw YouTube footage of Denis O'Hare and Lisa Peterson's *An Iliad* at New York Theatre Workshop and was inspired to write an epic to be performed by one person.

The last of these poems about basketball became *The Half-God of Rainfall*, which premiered at London's Kiln Theatre in 2019 in a production directed by Nancy Medina. Shortly after, in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Inua began talking with NYTW about a New York production of the play. Taibi Magar joined the production as a director and assembled a team of collaborators with deep histories at NYTW. A text workshop in September 2022 was instrumental in shaping the text for seven performers and a movement workshop, led by Movement Director Orlando Pabotoy in March 2023 lay the ground work for some of the movement vocabularies used in this production. In spring 2023, American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) joined NYTW as a co-producer on the project. The production will be moving to Cambridge, MA to kick off their 2023/24 Season in September.

COLLABORATING ARTISTS

Inua Ellams

Playwright

Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a poet, playwright & performer, graphic artist & designer and founder of: The Midnight Run (an arts-filled, night-time, urban walking experience.), The Rhythm and Poetry Party (The R.A.P Party) which celebrates poetry & hip hop, and Poetry + Film / Hack (P+F/H) which celebrates Poetry and Film. Identity, Displacement & Destiny are reoccurring themes in his work, where he tries to mix the old with the new: traditional African oral storytelling with contemporary poetics, paint with pixel, texture with vector. His books are published by Flipped Eye, Akashic, Nine Arches, Penned in the Margins, Oberon & Methuen.

Orlando Pabotoy

Movement Direction

NYTW: *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*. Theatre: HVSF 2022 Season, Acting Company 2017/2018 Season, CSC (*The Cherry Orchard*) directed by the late Andrei Belgrader. Collaborations: NAATCO (*Henry VI, Parts 1-3*), Lars Jan (*Holoscenes*), David Neumann (Advanced Beginner Group). Direction (Selected Projects): *Serpent Woman*, *The World in the Moon*, *Scapin*, *Chalk Circle*, *Pericles*, *The Frogs* (The Juilliard School). *That Beautiful Laugh* (La Mama). Film: Alan Tudyk (*K2SO*, *Star Wars: Rogue One*). Performance: The Public, Yale Rep, Met Opera, Kirk Douglas, Guthrie. Ma-Yi Theater, American Airlines Theater, Salzburg Festpieler (Austria). Film/TV: Comedy Central, WB, NBC, ABC. Awards: Obie, TCG Fox Fellow.

Taibi Magar

Director

NYTW debut. Co-Artistic Director, Philadelphia Theatre Company. Off-Broadway: *Help* (The Shed); *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* (Signature Theatre, Lortel Award); *Capsule* (Under the Radar Festival/The Public Theater); *Blue Ridge*, *The Great Leap* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Is God Is* (Soho Rep, 2018 Obie Award); *Master* (The Foundry); *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova, 2017 Obie Award). International: Hamburg Festival, Edinburgh Festival, Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne), and Soho Theatre (London). MFA: Brown University.

Jason Bowen

Sángó

NYTW debut. Broadway: *The Play That Goes Wrong*. Off-Broadway: *Crumbs From The Table Of Joy* (Keen Theater), *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Audible Theater), *Native Son* (The Acting Co.), *If Pretty Hurts...* (Playwrights Horizons). TV/Film: "Blue Bloods," "Madam Secretary," "Elementary," (CBS), "Law & Order: SVU" (NBC), "The Good Fight" (Paramount Plus), *Mother/Android*, *The Upside*.

Kelley Curran

Hera

NYTW debut. Broadway: *Present Laughter*. Off-Broadway: *Mother of the Maid* (The Public), *Dracula* (CSC), *The Winter's Tale* (TFANA), *Sense & Sensibility* (Bedlam), *Angels In America* (Signature) and work with Red Bull, LAByrnith, The Acting Company. World Premiere Adaptation: *The Oresteia* (Shakespeare Theatre of DC). Film/TV: *The Man Who Killed Hitler...* "The Blacklist," and currently HBO's "The Gilded Age." Awards: Emery Battis Award, Joe Callaway Award, NTC Emerging Professional Award, Drama League and Princess Grace Award nominations.

Mister Fitzgerald

Demi

NYTW: *On Sugarland*. Broadway: *Ohio State Murders* (James Earl Jones Theater). Off-Broadway: *A Raisin in the Sun* (Public Theater), *Exception to the Rule* (Roundabout). Film: *The Last Deal*, *Boogie*, *30 Weeks*. TV: "Power," "FBI," "The Blacklist," "Godfather of Harlem." Awards: Best Duo Performance (DTLAFF). BFA, FSC. Hails from Baltimore, MD.

Patrice Johnson Chevannes

Osún

NYTW: *runboyrun/In Old Age* (Drama Desk nomination). Broadway: *Racing Demon*; *The Crucible*. Off-Broadway/Regional: *Endgame* (Irish Rep, Lortel nomination); *Othello* (Desdemona); *Pericles*, *Tamburlaine* (TFANA); *I'm Revolting*, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Good Grief* (Vineyard). TV: "Chambers," "POSE," "SHRILL," "EVIL," "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," "The First Lady," "The Good Fight."

Michael Laurence

Zeus

NYTW debut. Select credits: *Coal Country* (Public), *Appropriate* (Signature), *Talk Radio* (Broadway), *Hamlet in Bed* (Rattlestick, playwright-performer), *Krapp, 39* (Drama Desk nomination), *Opus* (Primary

Stages), *Splendid's* (LaColline/Paris). "Shades of Blue," "Blacklist," "Damages," "Prodigal Son," "Evil," "The Good Wife," "Law & Order: SVU," "Hit & Run," "Elementary," "Person of Interest," "Dexter: New Blood."

Lizan Mitchell

Elegba

NYTW: *On Sugarland*. Broadway: *Ohio State Murders*, *Electra*, *Having Our Say*, *So Long on Lonely Street*. Off-Broadway: *shadow/land*, *Cullud Wattah*, *Passage*, *Brownsville Song*, *Trojan Women*, *Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death*. Regional: *Our Daughters*, *Like Pillars*, *Skeleton Crew*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Richard III*, *The Tempest*, *Gem of the Ocean*. Film/TV: "Detroit," "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt," "The Good Wife," "The Preacher's Wife," "The Wire," "Human Stain," "Law & Order."

Jennifer Mogbock

Modúpé & Dance Captain

NYTW debut. Theatre: *Merry Wives* (The Public Theater); *Yemanjá* (Kennedy Center); *BDOTJ* (Society Theatre); *King John*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Hamlet* (Stratford Festival). TV: "The Good Fight" (Paramount+), "Evil" (CBS), "Designated Survivor" (Netflix), "Golden City" (Marvel/ Disney +). Upcoming: "Lady In The Lake" starring Natalie Portman (Apple TV). SUNY Purchase (BFA) and NYU Grad Acting (MFA).

Riccardo Hernández

Scenic Design

NYTW: *Dreaming Zenzile*, *Light Shining...*, *Red Speedo*, *The Invisible Hand*. Broadway: *Jagged Little Pill* (Tony nomination); *The Thanksgiving Play*; *Indecent*; *The Gin Game*; *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*; *The People in the Picture*; *Caroline, or Change* (National Theatre London); *Elaine Stritch: At Liberty* (Old Vic); *Topdog/Underdog* (Royal Court); *Bells Are Ringing*; *Parade* (dir. Hal Prince; Tony & Drama Desk nominations); *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*; *The Tempest*. Recipient: Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Design. Hernández is an Associate Professor and Co-Chair of the Yale School of Drama.

Linda Cho

Costume Design

NYTW: *Kristina Wong*, *Sweatshop Overlord*; *Endlings*. Broadway: *Doubt*; *Harmony*; *Summer, 1976*; *Take Me Out*; *Grand Horizons*; *Anastasia* (Tony nomination); *The Great Society*; *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* (Tony & Henry Hewes Awards, OCC nomination); *The Lifespan of a Fact*; *Velocity of Autumn*. Her extensive body of work includes productions at acclaimed theaters and opera companies across the country and around the world. Advisory Committee, American Theatre Wing. Education: MFA, Yale School of Drama.

Stacey Derosier

Lighting Design

NYTW: *How To Defend Yourself*. NYC: *Uncle Vanya* (OHenry); *The Cotillion* (New Georges & The Movement Theatre Company); *Regretfully, So the Birds Are* (Playwright's Horizons); *Cornelia Street* (Atlantic Theater Company); *Where the Mountain Meets the Sea* (Manhattan Theatre Club); *This Beautiful Future* (Cherry Lane); *Fat Ham* (Public Theater & National Black Theatre); *Wedding Band* (Theatre for a New Audience). 2018 Lilly Award Daryl Roth Prize recipient.

Mikaal Sulaiman

Sound Design & Music Composition

NYTW: *On Sugarland*, *Sanctuary City*, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*. Broadway: *Thanksgiving Play*, *Fat Ham*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Cost of Living*, *Macbeth*, *Thoughts of a Colored Man*. Off-Broadway: *Primary Trust* (Roundabout); *Fairview* (Soho Rep); *Rags Parkland*, *Underground Railroad Game* (Ars Nova). Recipient: Obie Award, Creative Capital Award and Henry Hewes Award.

Tal Yarden

Projection Design

NYTW: *Lazarus*, *Little Foxes*, *Liberty City*, *The Misanthrope*, *Beast*, *Kaos*. Broadway: *Network*, *The Waverly Gallery*, *Indecent*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *The Crucible*. Off-Broadway: *Hamlet*, *Antigone*, *The Damned*, *Kings of War*. London: *Get Up*, *Stand Up*, *Anna X*. Opera: *Exterminating Angel*, *Salome*, *Macbeth*. Awards & Nominations: Lucille Lortel, Tony.

Beatrice Capote

Orisha Movement Consulting / Choreography

NYTW debut. Performance Credits: Camille A. Brown & Dancers company. Recent Choreography Credits: Angelique Kidjo's *Yemandjá!* (The Public), *It's Fine, I'm Fine* and *Citrus* (Regional Theatre), *The Wedding Band* (Montclair State University), *International Dance Company* (TWU). Recent Choreographic Concerts: Jazz at Lincoln Center, 40th Anniversary Battery Dance Festival. Education: BA/MFA Montclair State University. Recent Teaching Credits: Associate Professor, Indiana University Contemporary Dance.

The Telsey Office / Destiny Lilly, CSA

Casting

With offices in both New York and Los Angeles, The Telsey Office casts for theatre, film, television, and commercials. The Telsey Office is dedicated to creating safe, equitable, and anti-racist spaces through collaboration artistry, heart, accountability and advocacy.

Ann James

Intimacy Director

NYTW: *How to Defend Yourself*. Broadway: *Pass Over*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Parade*, *White Girl in Danger*. Off-Broadway: *Parade* (NYCC), *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, *Confederates*, *My Broken Language*, *Evanston* *Salt Costs Climbing*, *Amani*. Regional: *Lempicka*, *The Outsiders*, *Trading Places*. Sensitivity Facilitator: Columbia University, Harvard University, Brown University.

Dawn-Elin Fraser

Voice & Dialect Director

NYTW: *Sojourners*, *Her Portmanteau*, *An Ordinary Muslim*, *The House That Will Not Stand*, *american (tele)visions*, *How to Defend Yourself*. North American Dialect Coach: *Hamilton*. Broadway: *Parade*, *1776*, *Macbeth*, *Slave Play*, *What the Constitution Means to Me*, *Once on this Island*, *Waitress*. Off-Broadway: *Richard III*, *Merry Wives* (The Public Theater). MFA, American Conservatory Theater. NYTW Usual Suspect.

Tinc Productions

Production Supervision

A NYC-based theatrical and event production management firm, as well as a trusted labor provider. With locations in NYC, Texas and Florida, Tinc provides top-tier technical production for shows and events across the US. NYTW: *How to Defend Yourself*. Broadway: *Paradise Square*, *Slava's Snowshow*. Off-Broadway: *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Sandra*, *The Twenty-Sided Tavern*, *The Last Supper*, *American!*, *The Play That Goes Wrong*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Our Man in Santiago*. Regional: *His Story*. Tours: *On Your Feet!*. tincproductions.com

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NYTW: *runboyrun*, *In Old Age*. Broadway: *King Lear*. Off-Broadway: *The Jungle* (St. Ann's Warehouse, STC); *Becky Nurse of Salem* (LCT); *Hamlet & Oresteia* (Park Avenue Armory); *The Vagrant Trilogy*, *The Outer Space*, *The Apple Family Plays* (Public/NYSF); *sandblasted* (Vineyard); *The Courtroom*, *Hamlet* (Waterwell); *Sense & Sensibility* (Bedlam). BA: Barnard College.

Thea McRae

Assistant Stage Manager

NYTW debut. Broadway: *A Beautiful Noise*. Off-Broadway: *Cornelia Street*, *Shhhh* (Atlantic Theater Company). Regional: *It's Only a Play* (George Street Playhouse), *West Side Story* (Paper Mill Playhouse), *The Royal Family* (The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey). Stage Management MFA Candidate at Columbia University.

American Repertory Theater

Co-Producer

American Repertory Theater at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work driven by risk-taking and passionate inquiry. Led by Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., Tony Award-winning and nominated productions include *Jagged Little Pill*; *Waitress*; *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*; *All the Way*; *The Glass Menagerie*; *Pippin*; *Once*; The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. International: *Waitress*, *Nice Fish*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Once* (West End); *Waitress*, *Pippin* (Japan); *JLP*, *Pippin* (Australia); *Sleep No More* (China). Currently: *1776* National Tour (following 2022/23 Broadway run); *JLP* North American tour; *Sleep No More* in New York City.

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The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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SPECIAL THANKS

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NEW YORK THEATRE WORKSHOP

New York Theatre Workshop empowers visionary theatre-makers and brings their work to adventurous audiences through productions, artist workshops and educational programs. We nurture pioneering new writers alongside powerhouse playwrights, engage inimitable genre-shaping directors, and support emerging artists in the earliest days of their careers. We've mounted over 150 productions from artists whose work has shaped our very idea of what theatre can be, including Jonathan Larson's *Rent*; Tony Kushner's *Slavs!* and *Homebody/Kabul*; Doug Wright's *Quills*; Claudia Shear's *Blown Sideways Through Life* and *Dirty Blonde*; Paul Rudnick's *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* and *Valhalla*; Martha Clarke's *Vienna: Lusthaus*; Will Power's *The Seven* and *Fetch Clay, Make Man*; Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*, *Far Away*, *A Number* and *Love and Information*; Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen's *Aftermath*; Rick Elice's *Peter and the Starcatcher*; Glen Hansard, Markéta Irglová and Enda Walsh's *Once*; David Bowie and Enda Walsh's *Lazarus*; Dael Orlandersmith's *The Gimmick* and *Forever*; Heidi Schreck's *What the Constitution Means to Me*; Jeremy O. Harris's *Slave Play*; and eight acclaimed productions directed by Ivo van Hove. NYTW's productions have received a Pulitzer Prize, 25 Tony Awards, 2 Grammy Awards and assorted Obie, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel Awards. NYTW is represented on Broadway with Anaïs Mitchell's *Hadestown* developed with and directed by Rachel Chavkin and the upcoming *Merrily We Roll Along*, directed by Maria Friedman.

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We honor the life of our dear Barbara Warner Howard (1934–2022). A dedicated patron of the arts, Barbara became a founding member of New York Theatre Workshop, serving on the Board of Trustees and as Board Chair, and remained an integral figure in our community for more than 40 years. Barbara will be remembered as a tireless force for good in the New York theatre scene—someone who actively eschewed attention and thanks, always redirecting the spotlight to the theatre-makers she so believed in. Generous, gracious, loyal and fun, she loved deeply and was deeply loved in return.

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