

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

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[Press Room](#)



Images of *Barber Shop Chronicles* are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
INUA ELLAMS' *BARBER SHOP CHRONICLES*
A FUEL, NATIONAL THEATRE, AND
WEST YORKSHIRE PLAYHOUSE CO-PRODUCTION
BAY AREA PREMIERE
FRIDAY–SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26–28**

Part of the Berkeley RADICAL 2018–19 *Citizenship* thematic strand, in which artists spotlight the human side of the current debate on immigration and nationalism

Public programs include an Artist Talk with playwright Inua Ellams and Fuel Theatre director Kate McGrath, a Community Forum with artists and community members at an Oakland barber shop, and post-performance Catharsis Café discussions

Berkeley, October 1, 2018 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents *Barber Shop Chronicles*, the acclaimed play by Nigerian-born, UK-based poet and playwright **Inua Ellams** that explores male identity and the challenges of citizenship, in its Bay Area premiere Friday–Sunday, October 26–28. The wholly original story inspired by the playwright’s own experiences as an immigrant follows the conversations and concerns of a group of African men as they interact in six different barbershops in London, Lagos, Johannesburg, Accra, Kampala, and Harare. The work is a co-production of **Britain’s Fuel Theatre, National Theatre, and West Yorkshire Playhouse**, and was originally commissioned by the National Theatre, an institution that shares Cal Performances’ interest in stimulating, socially relevant works. *Barber Shop Chronicles* is the second program in the 2018–19 Berkeley RADICAL *Citizenship* thematic strand, which explores the human need for belonging, and connects the performing arts to our society’s current sense of urgency around issues of immigration and nationalism. The artists in this strand share their unique perspectives on the responsibilities of citizenship and the forces that threaten it.

Directed by **Bijan Sheibani**, *Barber Shop Chronicles* explores the diversity of black male identity and the legacy of colonialism through the rituals and verbal banter of the urban barbershop. A mastery of humor, pace, and wit, the story takes place over a single day as characters, jokes, and plotlines traverse continents and cultures. The all-male cast riffs on both personal and political topics, from family dynamics and race relations, to views about fatherhood and masculinity. Music and dance knit together the individual episodes in this fast-paced production. The play tours the US for the first time this season after a series of sold-out, critically acclaimed runs in London.

Public programs are planned in coordination with the performances, presented in cooperation with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. An Artist Talk with creator Inua Ellams and Fuel Theatre director Kate McGrath will take place on Tuesday, October 16 at 12pm in the Multicultural Community Center located in the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Union on the UC Berkeley campus. Ellams and McGrath will discuss *Barber Shop Chronicles* and their experience participating in the Berkeley RADICAL *Citizenship* programming strand. The Artist Talk is presented in association with the UC Berkeley Multicultural Community Center and is free and open to the public. On Thursday, October 25 at 7pm, artists of *Barber Shop Chronicles* will gather at Benny Adem Grooming Parlor at 408 14th Street in Oakland for a Community Forum, where they will share stories and common experiences with community members in an event that is free and open to the public.

Finally, each performance will be followed by a post-performance Catharsis Café discussion and reception in the Lobby Mezzanine of Zellerbach Hall, free to ticket holders.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Barber Shop Chronicles* on Friday and Saturday, October 26-27 at 8pm, and Sunday October 28 at 2pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$30–\$78 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, October 26, 8pm
Saturday, October 27, 8pm
Sunday, October 28, 2pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Theater

Barber Shop Chronicles

A Fuel, National Theatre, and West Yorkshire Playhouse Co-Production

by Inua Ellams

Directed by Bijan Sheibani

Designed by Rae Smith

Program: *Barber Shop Chronicles*, created by Nigerian-born, UK-based poet and playwright Inua Ellams, explores the diversity of black male identity through the rituals and verbal banter of the urban barbershop. The cast riffs energetically on topics both personal and political—from sports and race relations to views about fatherhood and masculinity—as we eavesdrop on conversations in six different barbershops in London, Lagos, Johannesburg, Accra, Kampala, and Harare seamlessly over the course of a single day.

Berkeley RADICAL: This performance is part of the *Citizenship* thematic strand, which spotlights the human side of the current debate on immigration and nationalism. By sharing unique perspectives on the threats to—and responsibilities of—citizenship, the artists included here illustrate the universal need for belonging and home, and invoke the very real sense of urgency and peril that pervades the world today.

Tickets: \$30–78 (prices subject to change)

Residency

Artist Talk

Tuesday, October 16, 12pm

Multicultural Community Center, 220 ASUC Student Union: Martin Luther King, Jr. Building, UC Berkeley campus

Nigerian-born, UK-based poet and playwright Inua Ellams and Fuel Theatre director Kate McGrath will talk about Ellams' work *Barber Shop Chronicles* and their experience participating in Cal Performances' Berkeley RADICAL season-long *Citizenship* programming strand. Presented in association with the UC Berkeley Multicultural Community Center and in cooperation with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. Free and open to the public.

Community Forum

Thursday, October 25, 7pm

Benny Adem Grooming Parlor, 408 14th Street, Oakland

The artists of *Barber Shop Chronicles* share stories and common experiences with community members at a gathering at a barber shop in Oakland. Presented in cooperation with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. Free and open to the public.

Catharsis Café

Post-performance Discussion

Friday–Sunday, October 26–28

Zellerbach Hall Lobby Mezzanine

Ticket holders are invited to a (free) post-performance discussion and reception.

Refreshments will be served. Presented in cooperation with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society.