

## YOUNG VIC REOPENS DOORS TO AUDIENCES WITH NEW SEASON OF WORK FOR 2021 *WELCOME BACK AND WELCOME HOME*

Young Vic Artistic Director **Kwame Kwei-Armah** announces a new season of work, welcoming theatre-makers and audiences back through the doors to create and experience live performance for the first time since the Young Vic's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations in October 2020.

### AT A GLANCE....

#### LEGENDARY TALES, REIMAGINED

- The season opens with *Changing Destiny*, Booker Prize-winner Ben Okri's stunning new adaptation of the 4,000-year-old Egyptian poem of Sinuhe the Warrior King, directed by Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah and designed by award-winning architect Sir David Adjaye
- The complete creative team announced for the highly-anticipated *Hamlet*, with Cush Jumbo in the title role, directed by her long-time collaborator Greg Hersov

#### PLAYS THAT EXPLORE OUR PAST AND SPEAK TO OUR PRESENT

- *Best of Enemies*, a new play by Olivier Award-winner James Graham, follows the debates that changed politics and television forever, directed by Jeremy Herrin in a co-production with Headlong
- *Klippies*, the acclaimed debut by Jessica Siân, a coming-of-age drama set in the twentieth year of South Africa's democracy about the intensity of first love, directed by Genesis Future Directors Award recipient Diyan Zora

#### PLAYING WITH DIGITAL

- A unique collaboration between human and computer minds, *AI* is a play developed by Chinonyerem Odimba and Nina Segal, written alongside GPT-3 OpenAI technology. Using this advanced deep-learning artificial intelligence system to generate human-like script and dialogue, Genesis Fellow and Associate Director Jennifer Tang and Company will create a new play for the stage. In this unique hybrid of research and performance, the script will be brought to life over a series of evenings by the writers, actors and company, alongside insights into how the artists collaborated with the AI
- *Best Seat in Your House*, an innovative multi-camera immersive broadcast experience inviting audiences to play with the broadcast form. Viewers choose between taking The Director's Chair - with the possibility to cut live to any camera in the theatre at any time throughout a show - or relax and enjoy the live edit of a show with The Director's Cut

#### FOR AND WITH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

- Young Vic Taking Part present the third YV Unpacked tour, taking a professional production to venues such as elderly care homes, homeless shelters and rehabilitation centres. *Love Reign*, an eclectic piece of new writing about friendship, is Written by Shereen Jasmin Phillips and Directed by Stef O'Driscoll
- Taking Part also bring the world of theatre and ballroom together in an explosive evening of music, dance, walking and partying with *Sundown Kiki*, a bold celebration of Queer South London in all its glory, with Creative Direction by Jay Jay Revlon, Directed by Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu

**Kwame Kwei-Armah**, Young Vic Artistic Director, said: "This pandemic has wielded an unquantifiable wound to theatre-makers and theatres, the repercussions of which we will continue to feel for a long time. We have seen a year of racial reckoning reverberate through our sector, a cry of pain and a call to do better. To announce a new season of work fills my heart with optimism, as it comes with the hope that artists can return to their craft, and as we rebuild, we improve on what was good, and take time to undo the broken systems and structures.

My message with this new season is **Welcome Back and Welcome Home**. The Young Vic is a civic centre and a home-away-from-home for our community. It is a space for us to hear extraordinary stories told by the world's finest artists that help us see the world through someone else's eyes.

With Ben Okri's *Changing Destiny* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* we bring you the **tales you thought you knew, and present them afresh**. These stories have withstood the test of time because they continue speak to what it means to be human, and I believe now, more than ever, they deliver messages we need to hear. We also bring you **bold work to illuminate our present**. Our co-production with *Headlong*, *Best of Enemies* is a new play from James Graham that places its fingers on the political pulse of 1960s America, but could not feel more current today.

Emerging from the pandemic into a world which feels more digitalised than ever before, **our ambitious experiment with technology continues**. With AI, we ask great human and computer minds to come together, to see how each may inform the other in the creation of art. With *Best Seat in Your House* - our offer of multi-camera broadcasts - we invite audiences to play with technology, redefining the live streaming experience for ultimate flexibility and choice.

Our Directors Program, which for the last twelve months has served over 4,000 artists, will continue adapting to meet the needs of its members, including finding ways to interrogate the structures that limit our future generations of theatre-makers. They continue helping artists develop their craft; in this season we see a new version of *Klippies*, directed by Genesis Future Directors Award recipient Diyan Zora.

And *Taking Part*, our creative engagement department, will continue **extending its arms as wide as possible to our local boroughs**, touring a brand new play *Love Reign* to venues like hospitals, prisons, and residential homes, and with *Sundown Kiki*, they welcome *Queer South London* to our space to tell their stories.

Both the Young Vic Directors Program and *Taking Part*, supported by the wider YV team, have overcome the hurdles of this pandemic year to reach their networks and connect them to art. I feel **this moment is a celebration of their achievements, as much as it is anticipating the excellence to come**.

So, we can't wait to welcome you back into our theatre. Some elements, such as the measures we have in place to ensure your safety, might feel slightly different as protecting our staff and audiences is – and always will be - our priority. But much will feel exactly like the Young Vic home you remember. We are committed to keeping ticket prices low, starting at £10. We continue with our £5 first previews. We will keep giving 10% of our tickets free to those who experience barriers to accessing the arts, our local communities, and early-career artists - irrespective of box office demand. **So join us to participate in the magic of live theatre**, as we take you from Ancient Egypt to Artificial Intelligence, and everything in between.

**Welcome back and welcome home."**

**Tickets go on sale to Friends of the Young Vic on Thursday 20 May, 12noon.**

**Public booking opens Thursday 27 May, 12noon.**

**Young Vic £5 First Previews across the whole house released 48 hrs before performance.**

**Tickets for all other performances start at £10.**

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### ***Changing Destiny***

**By Ben Okri**

**Directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah**

**Main House**

**From 9 July - 21 August 2021**

**Press Night 16 July**

*Two actors, a thousand characters, and the story of how a kingdom is changed...*

The YV welcomes audiences back in 2021 with *Changing Destiny*, **Ben Okri's** epic new stage adaptation of the 4,000-year-old Egyptian poem about the Warrior King, Sinuhe.

This radical in-the-round staging of one of the earliest known literary texts explores the essence of humanity and the complexities of immigration. Vividly brought to life with design by acclaimed architect **Sir David Adjaye**, *Changing Destiny* is directed by Young Vic Artistic Director **Kwame Kwei-Armah**.

*Changing Destiny* is Written by **Ben Okri** and Directed by **Kwame Kwei-Armah**, with Set and Costume Design by **Sir David Adjaye** and **Adjaye Associates**, Lighting Design by **Jackie Shemesh**, Sound Design by **XANA**, Projection Design by **Duncan McLean**, Composition by **Tunde Jegede** and Movement Direction by **Rachael Nanyonjo**.

Cast to be announced.

Captioned performance: 29 July, 7.30pm

Relaxed performance: 17 August, 7.30pm

Audio Described performance: 19 August, 7.30pm

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**AI**  
**Created by Genesis Fellow and YV Associate Director Jennifer Tang and Company**  
**Developed by Chinonyerem Odimba and Nina Segal, written alongside GPT-3 OpenAI technology**  
**Main House**  
**23 - 25 August 2021**

A unique collaboration between human and computer minds, *AI* is a play developed by **Chinonyerem Odimba** and **Nina Segal** alongside artificial intelligence (AI). Using the deep-learning system **GPT-3** to generate human-like dialogue and script, Genesis Fellow and Associate Director **Jennifer Tang** collaborates with a company of writers and actors to create a new work for the stage.

Recently heralded by David Chalmers, Professor of Philosophy and Neural Science at New York University, as 'one of the most interesting and important AI systems ever produced', GPT-3 has already demonstrated its ability to generate prose and news articles indistinguishable from those written by a human. *AI* will see a new work written for the stage, as the writers and artists prompt and challenge GPT-3 systems to produce a script.

In this unique hybrid of research and performance, the script, together with insights into how the artists collaborated with the system, will be brought to life by the writers, actors and company across a series of evenings. As artists and intelligent systems collide, *AI* asks us to consider the algorithms at work in the world around us, and what technology can teach us about ourselves.

*AI* is Created by Genesis Fellow and YV Associate Director **Jennifer Tang** and **Company**, and Developed by **Chinonyerem Odimba** and **Nina Segal**, written alongside **GPT-3 OpenAI technology**.

Cast and further creative team to be announced.

**Tickets for *AI* will go on sale at a later date.**

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**Hamlet**  
**By William Shakespeare**  
**Directed by Greg Hersov**  
**Main House**  
**From 25 September - 13 November 2021**  
**Press Night 4 October**

This new version of Shakespeare's great tragedy will see **Cush Jumbo** (*The Good Wife, The Good Fight*) make her YV debut as a new kind of Hamlet, reuniting with her long-time collaborator **Greg Hersov**, to bring us this tale of power, politics and desire.

*Hamlet* is Directed by **Greg Hersov**, with Set and Costume Design by **Anna Fleischle**, Lighting Design by **Aideen Malone**, Sound Design by **Emma Laxton**, Video Design by **Nina Dunn**, Movement Direction by **Lucy Hind**, Casting by **Sophie Holland CDG**, Voice and Text by **Barbara Houseman** and Fight Direction by **Kev McCurdy**. Further cast to be announced.

Audio Described performance: 19 October, 7.30pm

Relaxed performance: 2 November, 7.30pm

Captioned performance: 4 November, 7.30pm

***Hamlet* is currently sold out.**

To be the first to hear about future ticket releases, [sign up to receive email alerts here.](#)

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**A Young Vic / Headlong co-production**

***Best of Enemies***

**A new play by James Graham**

**Directed by Jeremy Herrin**

**Inspired by the documentary by Morgan Neville and Robert Gordon**

**Main House**

**From 2 December 2021 - 22 January 2022**

**Press Night TBA**

*"A man should never turn down two things. Sex, and appearing on television."*

**1968 – a year of protest that divided America.** As two men fight to become the next President, all eyes are on the battle between two others: the cunningly conservative William F Buckley Jr., and the iconoclastic liberal Gore Vidal.

Beliefs are challenged and slurs slung as these political idols feud nightly in a new television format, debating the moral landscape of a shattered nation. Little do they know they're about to open up a new frontier in American politics, and transform television news forever...

*Best of Enemies* is the bold new play by James Graham (*Quiz, Labour of Love*), directed by Jeremy Herrin (*This House, People, Places and Things*).

*Best of Enemies* is Written by **James Graham** and Directed by **Jeremy Herrin**, with Design by **Bunny Christie**, Lighting Design by **Paule Constable**, Video Design by **Luke Halls** and Casting by **Charlotte Sutton CDG**.

Cast and further creative team to be announced.

Audio Described performance: 17 December, 7.30pm

Captioned performance: 6 January, 7.30pm

Relaxed performance: 13 January, 7.30pm

*Best of Enemies* is generously supported by The Charlotte Aitken Trust.

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***Klippies***

**By Jessica Siân**

**Directed by Genesis Future Directors Award recipient Diyan Zora**

**Maria Theatre**

**From 4 - 13 August 2021**

*I slip into Thandi's bed in the night.*

*I crack her ribs and climb deep inside her chest*

*So I never have to leave.*

*Klippies* is a coming-of-age drama about an unlikely friendship and the intensity of first love. Set in the twentieth year of South Africa's democracy, two girls struggle to navigate their troubled past.

Yolandi is the rebel, Thandi the school swot. In the scorching heat of a Johannesburg summer, an unexpected bond is formed. Two girls battle their way through unfamiliar feelings and the guilt of their country's legacy. As they wait for the rains to come, their worlds come crashing together and we're asked - are we ever really free from the scars of the past?

*Klippies* is Written by **Jessica Siân** and Directed by **Diyan Zora**, with Set and Costume Design by **Georgia Lowe**, Lighting Design by **Jess Bernberg**, Sound Design by **Tingying Dong** and Casting by **Isabella Odoffin CDG**.

The Genesis Future Directors Award provides an emerging director with an opportunity to explore and develop their craft by creating their first fully resourced production at the Young Vic, as part of the artistic programme. The Award will provide Diyan Zora with mentoring and support from the theatre's unique creative network, which includes Artistic Director Kwame Kwei-Armah, Associate Artistic Director Sue Emmas and Genesis Fellow and Associate Director Jennifer Tang. Established in 2021, previous Genesis Future Director Award recipients include Dadiow Lin, Caitriona Shoobridge, Lekan Lawal, Debbie Hannan, John R. Wilkinson, Nancy Medina, Leo J. Skilbeck, Bryony Shanahan, Ola Ince, Rikki Henry, Tinuke Craig, Finn Beames, Matthew Xia and Ben Kidd.

**Tickets for *Klippies* will go on sale at a later date.**

**Due to the nature of the Genesis Future Directors Award, there will be no press night.**

The Genesis Future Directors Award program is made possible by the Genesis Foundation.

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## **Best Seat in Your House**

The Young Vic invites audiences to interact with a brand new way to stream live theatre, with **Best Seat in Your House**, an immersive, multi-camera live broadcast experience. Made in collaboration with YV Artistic Associate **Duncan McLean**, this innovative streaming platform offers two ways for audiences to experience live performances...

**The Director's Chair:** audiences at home take control of their view of the show, cutting live between any of the cameras placed around the theatre at any time throughout the performance. At any point, viewers can switch to a different view for a new perspective – almost as though they were able to move seats in the auditorium to continually find their favourite view.

**The Director's Cut:** viewers sit back and enjoy a more traditional live edit of the show from the theatre to the viewer's screen, created with the show's director, and mixed by the production team.

The Young Vic has famously one of the most flexible auditoriums in London, where artists are encouraged to design without barriers. In the theatre, the seating is never quite the same from one show to the next. Similarly, the broadcast experience for each show will be designed uniquely for the production, with cameras positioned to offer exciting perspectives of the live shows. A robo-camera rig with multiple cameras will be constructed around the auditorium to capture the performance. Camera operators will control the robo-cameras, continually ensuring every shot provides an exciting new perspective of the show.

Captions, audio description and British Sign Language will be available for every performance.

Ben Okri's *Changing Destiny* will be the first show available to experience via this innovative platform. Dates and further information, plus future productions as part of this offer, to be announced at a later date. For more information, [click here](#).

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## **Taking Part**

Taking Part, the Young Vic's creative engagement department, delivers an ambitious programme each year, collaborating with the UK's leading theatre artists to create work for and with our local community. Taking Part work with thousands of participants each year, helping them to develop their creative skills, build meaningful relationships and connections, and tell compelling stories about the world we live in.

### ***YV Unpacked: Love Reign***

**By Shereen Jasmin Phillips**

**Directed by Stef O'Driscoll**

**On tour to community venues in Lambeth and Southwark 4 - 15 October**

**Maria Theatre 18 - 23 October 2021**

Following the success of two *YV Unpacked* tours –which saw professionally performed productions of *Spring Awakening* and *She Ventures and He Wins* performed in community venues in Lambeth and Southwark including prisons, elderly care homes, homeless shelters and rehabilitation centres – Taking Part will tour *Love Reign* to similar locations in local boroughs where theatre is not usually performed. *YV Unpacked* was established in 2018 by Kwame Kwei-Armah when he became the Young Vic Artistic Director, developed with the intention of reaching audiences who may find it more difficult to access theatre by taking professional work to them.

This year marks the first time the department has toured an original piece of work as part of *YV Unpacked*, making work for new audiences that puts them at the centre. *Love Reign*, written by **Shereen Jasmin Phillips** and directed by **Stef O'Driscoll**, is an eclectic piece of new writing that centres a fusion of narrative & music to create a live storytelling experience. At its core *Love Reign* is a love letter to friendships, how we begin them, how we honour them and how preserve them against all odds in our lives. This exhilarating show encapsulates the joyful expression of friendship delicately underscored by a live soulful house soundtrack. This is *theatre you can vibe to*.

#TheatreYouCanVibeTo

*Love Reign* is Written by **Shereen Jasmin Phillips**, and Directed by **Stef O'Driscoll**, with cast and further creatives to be announced.

### ***Sundown Kiki***

**Creative Direction by Jay Jay Revlon**

**Directed by Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu**

**Maria Theatre**

**5 - 12 November 2021**

Filling the Maria with sequins, celebratory togetherness and a healthy dose of shade, *Sundown Kiki* will bring the world of theatre and ballroom together in an explosive evening of music, dance, walking and partying. Created with and performed by Queer young artists from the Global Majority, *Sundown Kiki* will be a bold celebration of Queer South London in all its' glory.

*Sundown Kiki* - Creative Direction from **Jay Jay Revlon** and Directed by **Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu**, with Sound Design and Composition by **XANA**. Further company to be announced.

**Tickets for Taking Part productions will be released at a later date.**

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### **The Cut Bar & Restaurant**

During lockdown, the Cut Bar & Restaurant continued to serve our local community in many ways, including providing daily free hot meals for people who are homeless in partnership with Webber Street Hostel and an anonymous donor.

Now reopen with more outdoor seating, patrons can enjoy an exciting new menu; from Allpress coffee and a hand-picked selection craft beers, to their famous frozen cocktails and fresh, seasonable dishes made from sustainable sources.

For more information including opening times, reservations and the measures in place to keep everyone safe, please visit [thecutbar.com](http://thecutbar.com).

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Public booking opens Thursday 27 May, 12noon.**

Young Vic £5 First Previews across the whole house released 48 hrs before performance.  
Tickets for every performance start at £10.



#BackOnStage

ENDS

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For images, click [here](#).

For more information, please contact Emma Hardy: [emmahardy@youngvic.org](mailto:emmahardy@youngvic.org)

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About The Charlotte Aitken Trust**

The Charlotte Aitken Trust is funded by the estate of the late Gillon Aitken (1938-2016), literary agent, publisher and translator, in memory of his daughter Charlotte, who died at the age of 27 in 2011. The trust aims to continue Gillon's work of encouraging literary talent in memory of his beloved daughter by promoting the creative arts for the public benefit, especially literature -- whether fiction, non-fiction, drama or poetry. For more information, visit [charlotteaitkentrust.org.uk](http://charlotteaitkentrust.org.uk)

THE CHARLOTTE  
 AITKEN TRUST

#### **About Genesis Foundation**

The Genesis Foundation has supported the Young Vic's Directors Program since its inception nearly twenty years ago and currently funds the Genesis Future Directors Awards, the Genesis Fellow and the Genesis Directors Network. Founded by John Studzinski CBE in 2001, the Foundation has donated more than £20 million to the arts over the past 20 years. Through its funding and partnership model, it has enabled opportunities for thousands of young artists in theatre and music, building both their experience and their resilience. Its main focus is on partnerships with leading arts organisations such as the Young Vic, National Theatre, Almeida Theatre, LAMDA and The Sixteen, and on training programmes that equip emerging artists for life as a creative professional. For more information, please visit [genesisfoundation.org.uk](http://genesisfoundation.org.uk)



#### **About Headlong**

Headlong is one of the most ambitious and exciting theatre companies in the UK, creating exhilarating contemporary theatre: a provocative mix of innovative new writing, reimagined classics and influential 20th century plays that illuminate our world. Headlong make bold, ground-breaking productions with some of the UK's finest artists. They take these industry-leading, award-winning shows around the country and beyond, in theatres and online, attracting new audiences of all ages and backgrounds. They engage as deeply as they can with these communities, and this helps them become better at what they do. Last year during an unparalleled period of global uncertainty, Headlong partnered with Century Films and BBC Arts to present *Unprecedented*, a series of critically acclaimed digital plays responding to the radical way that the world changed when the first lockdown was announced on the 23 March 2020. Previous Headlong productions include *People Places and*

*Things, Junkyard, The Nether, Pygmalion, This House, Richard III and Labour of Love.* For more information, visit [headlong.co.uk](http://headlong.co.uk)

# Headlong

## About the Young Vic

For fifty years, the Young Vic has produced new plays, classics, musicals, adaptations of books, short films, digital projects, and game-changing forms of theatre, attracting large audiences from many different backgrounds. Based in London's Waterloo, we forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our [Taking Part](#) programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping all ticket prices low.

Our [Directors Program](#), the only scheme of its kind, has been running for nearly twenty years and offers young directors a unique opportunity to develop their craft through skills workshops, peer-led projects, paid assistant directing roles through the [Genesis Fellow](#), the [Jerwood Assistant Director Program](#) and the [Boris Karloff Trainee Assistant Director Program](#), as well as access to the [Genesis Directors Network](#). Twice a year, the recipient of the [Genesis Future Directors Award](#) directs a show in The Clare theatre at the Young Vic with full support from the Young Vic's creative, administrative and production teams, enabling us to support and nurture an emerging director as a part of the Young Vic programme.

For many years, the Young Vic has been synonymous with inclusivity, accessibility, and creativity. We catalyse debate and channel our work into the digital world, to reach new audiences and continue conversations outside of our four walls. We foster emerging talent and collaborate with some of the world's finest directors, performers and creatives; creating award-winning productions which engage with the world we live in.

Artistic Director: **Kwame Kwei-Armah**

Executive Director: **Despina Tsatsas**

[youngvic.org](http://youngvic.org)

## The Young Vic's Supporters

### Public Support



Supported using public funding by  
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### Season Support



**Garfield Weston**  
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**The Young Vic's 2021-22 season is also supported by the Genesis Foundation and IHS Markit.**

**We gratefully acknowledge Ian Burford and Alec Cannell for generously supporting the Young Vic's mission.**