

Arts Club Theatre Company's

NO CHILD...

By Nilaja Sun

September 24–November 8, 2020 (Media opening: September 30)

IN BRIEF The Arts Club presents *No Child...*, playing from **September 24 to November 8** at the **Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre**
Tickets from \$39 at artsclub.com

VANCOUVER, B.C. (September 8, 2020)—The Arts Club will return to live theatre with **Nilaja Sun's** *No Child...* A bold examination of arts education and the power of performance, the production will play the Newmont Stage at the BMO Theatre Centre from September 24 to November 8. *No Child...* will kick off the company's Fall Theatre Trio, a lineup of three one-person plays that will re-open two of the Arts Club's three venues following COVID-19 closures.

Winner of 21 awards, including an Obie Award, two Outer Critics Circle Awards, and a Lucille Lortel Award, the provocative and insightful *No Child...* transports the audience to the underfunded Malcolm X High School in the Bronx. There, an intrepid substitute drama teacher refuses to give up on a group of at-risk students—despite their hardened attitudes and tough-talking attempts to push her away. This play within a play, with 16 characters portrayed by one actor in a tour-de-force performance, is a powerful reminder of the transformative role of the arts in our lives.

Of the timeliness of this play in an uncertain year, Artistic Director **Ashlie Corcoran** said, "It's exactly what I believe artists and audience members are thirsting for right now—as *No Child...* explores how theatre uses imagination and empathy to connect with others. This is something that's become increasingly important to all of us in the recent months."

"2020 has once again highlighted the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism in North America and beyond," said Director **Omari Newton** in a statement about the play. "Black youth, in particular, are forced to navigate discriminatory laws and policies in an effort to simply live safe and productive lives. Nilaja Sun's moving one-woman play *No Child...* examines one such policy, and the devastating effect it can have on racialized youth in one of America's poorest school districts. Though the play debuted in 2006, it remains a timely exploration of systemic racism and the people most affected by it."

No Child... marks Newton's first time helming an Arts Club production. Newton said, "I'm thrilled to be making my directorial debut here with this piece, and encouraged by the company's decision to lead the relaunch of the season with a piece that speaks truth to power in ways that are honest, funny, and nuanced."

In addition to being an acclaimed director, Newton is a well-regarded actor, writer, and slam poet. His original Hip Hop theatre piece, *Sal Capone*, has received critical acclaim and multiple productions across Canada, including a presentation at Canada's National Arts Centre in 2018. Acting credits include a Best Supporting Actor nomination for Centaur Theatre's award-winning production of Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange* (2004) and Speakeasy Theatre's production



of Young Jean Lee's *The Shipment*, which earned him a 2017–2018 Jessie Award for Outstanding Performance and a nomination for Best Direction.

Newton is currently working on a commission from Black Theatre Workshop to write *Black & Blue Matters*, a companion piece to *Sal Capone*. His play *Redbone Coonhound*, which he is co-writing with his wife, Amy Lee Lavoie, received a Silver Commission from the Arts Club and is currently in development after two successful staged readings.

No Child... introduces a unique “bubble method” of theatre production in the wake of COVID-19. In a first for the Arts Club, this production will have two rotating casts and crews, led by stars **Celia Aloma** and **Ali Watson**, who will each perform seven times a week and rehearse in separate halls. Newton will move between the bubbles. The performance and rehearsal models are designed to be as safe as possible for artists, staff, and audience members.

In addition to the in-theatre experience, patrons will have the option to purchase tickets to [digital streams—both live and recorded](#)—of *No Child...*, which will be available to view for a limited time.

The Arts Club is taking [many precautions](#) to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and welfare of patrons, artists, and staff. Productions will be staged in adherence to safety guidelines established by the B.C. government.

STARRING

Celia Aloma and **Ali Watson**

CREATIVE TEAM

Omari Newton (Director), **Kimira Reddy** and **Vanka Salim** (Set Designers), **Carmen Alatorre** (Costume Designer), **Gerald King** (Lighting Designer), **Owen Belton** (Sound Designer), **Harika Xu** (Lighting Assistant), **Raugi Yu** (Livestream Director), **Jack Wallace** (Accent Coach), **Pamela Jakobs** and **Jenny Kim** (Stage Managers), **Jasmin Sandhu** and **Duston Baranow-Watts** (Apprentice Stage Managers)

SHOWTIMES

Weeks 1, 2, 4, 6: Mon–Fri, 4:30 and 8 PM; Sat & Sun, 2 and 7:30 PM

Weeks 3, 5, 7: Mon–Fri, 5 and 8:30 PM; Sat & Sun, 2 and 7:30 PM

Tuesday Talkback: Tue, Oct 13, 8 PM

ABOUT THE ARTS CLUB

The Arts Club, one of the largest not-for-profit theatre companies in the country, is the principal gathering place for the theatrical arts in British Columbia. Comprising three unique venues across Vancouver, the Arts Club welcomes more than a quarter million guests annually, tours provincially and nationally, and engages students and artists alike through educational and professional programs.

Above all, the Arts Club is dedicated to the advancement of local artists telling stories from around the globe and, in particular, those of our region. From this, we believe that culture expands, an understanding of differences is nurtured, and art bursts forth. The Arts Club was founded in 1964 and is currently led by Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran and Executive Director Peter Cathie White.