



**OBSIDIAN THEATRE AND CBC ANNOUNCE LINE-UP OF DIRECTORS &  
PERFORMERS FOR *21 BLACK FUTURES*,  
PREMIERING ON CBC GEM IN FEBRUARY 2021**

**21 playwrights, 21 directors, 21 actors  
21 visions of the future of Blackness**

Directed by **Dorothy A Atabong, Leah-Simone Bowen, Katia Café-Febrissy, Lucius Dechausay, Alison Duke, Lisa Karen Cox, Alicia K. Harris, Jerome Kruin, ahdri zhina mandiola, Weyni Mengesha, Jay Northcott, Charles Officer, Ngozi Paul, Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, Mike Payette, Kimberley Rampersad, Jamie Robinson, Tanisha Taitt, Sarah Waisvisz, Leighton Alexander Williams, and d’bi young anitafrika.**

Performed by **Philip Akin, Uche Ama, Akosua Amo-Adem, Prince Amponsah, Natasha “Courage” Bacchus, Lisa Berry, Adeline Bird, Amanda Cordner, Lovell Adams-Gray, Daniel Faraldo, Peter Fernandes, Avery Grant, Virgilia Griffith, Sheila Ingabire-Isaro, Dion Johnstone, Pablo Ogunlesi, Sabryn Rock, Chelsea Russell, Emerjade Simms, Alison Sealy-Smith, and Ravyn Wngz.**

**January 19, 2021** – Obsidian Theatre and the CBC are unveiling the full line-up of directors and performers who have joined the first major project announced under Artistic Director Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, **21 BLACK FUTURES**. First announced this past fall, **21 BLACK FUTURES** is an anthology of 21 filmed monodramas, commissioned from 21 multigenerational Black playwrights across the country, directed by 21 Black directors and performed by 21 Black actors. Premiering in February 2021, aligned with Black History Month and Obsidian Theatre’s 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary, **21 BLACK FUTURES** will respond to the question, ***“What is the future of Blackness?”***

In addition to announcing the full company of directors and performances joining the previously announced playwrights, Obsidian is thrilled to confirm that **21 BLACK FUTURES** will premiere exclusively on the free [CBC Gem](#) streaming service in three parts (3x70 minutes) on Friday, February 12, Friday February 19 and Friday, February 26.

Joining the 21 playwrights commissioned to write the filmed monodramas are an exceptional line up of directors and performers. The 21 directors - luminaries from both film and stage - are **Dorothy A Atabong, Leah-Simone Bowen, Katia Café-Febrissy, Lucius Dechausay, Alison Duke, Lisa Karen Cox, Alicia K. Harris, Jerome Kruin, ahdri zhina mandiola, Weyni Mengesha, Jay Northcott, Charles Officer,**

**Ngozi Paul, Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, Mike Payette, Kimberley Rampersad, Jamie Robinson, Tanisha Taitt, Sarah Waisvisz, Leighton Alexander Williams, and d’bi young anitafrika.**

The 21 performers of the dramas are **Uche Ama, Akosua Amo-Adem, Prince Amponsah, Natasha “Courage” Bacchus, Lisa Berry, Adeline Bird, Amanda Cordner, Lovell Adams-Gray, Daniel Faraldo, Peter Fernandes, Avery Grant, Virgilia Griffith, Sheila Ingabire-Isaro, Dion Johnstone, Pablo Ogunlesi, Sabryn Rock, Chelsea Russell, Emerjade Simms, Ravyn Wngz** and previous Obsidian Artistic Directors **Philip Akin** and **Alison Sealy-Smith**.

*“We are feeling truly honoured that this wide-ranging company of Black artists have joined us for this expansive project,” says Tindyebwa Otu. “As I look at these 63 names assembled on the page it takes my breath away. The excellence, the uniqueness of voice and vision, the diversity of backgrounds and experiences. It feels like there is a lot of trust from the community in what we have done and where we are going. The future of Black theatre is not one thing. It is not just an increase in ‘Black representation’, it is profoundly diverse and multifaceted, it is multigenerational, and it commands attention.”*

*“To also have the support of the CBC behind us bringing a national audience to 21 BLACK FUTURES and these 63 artists is the realization of one of our most deeply felt goals, to grow our organizational capacity and expand our reach across the country so that the ecology of thriving Black theatre artists in Canada continues to grow.”*

*“CBC is proud to be a part of 21 BLACK FUTURES - an incredible undertaking by Obsidian Theatre that brings Black artists’ experiences and voices to the forefront at a critical time,” says Sally Catto, General Manager, Entertainment, Factual and Sports, CBC. “We look forward to sharing these talented artists’ stories with Canadians across the country this February.”*

Presented by **CBC Arts**, 21 BLACK FUTURES is a project born of the current moment. Announced as the incoming Artistic Director for Obsidian in January of 2020, by the time Tindyebwa Otu began her tenure at the beginning of July, the coronavirus pandemic had effectively cancelled all forthcoming live theatre productions and a global outcry against anti-Black racism was at the forefront of cultural and political discussions. *“I felt an urgent need to respond to the moment we’re in and to create an opportunity for Black artists to respond,”* says Tindyebwa Otu.

The 21 playwrights commissioned under the project (previously announced) are **Peace Akintade** (Saskatchewan), **Keshia Cheesman** (Calgary), **Lisa Codrington** (Toronto), **Miali Coley-Sudlovenick** (Nunavut), **K.P. Dennis**(Victoria), **Cheryl Foggo** (Calgary), **Shauntay Grant** (Halifax), **Lawrence Hill** (Hamilton), **Kaie Kellough** (Montreal), **Stephie Mazunya** (Montreal), **Tawiah Ben M’Carthy** (Toronto), **Motion** (Toronto), **Omari Newton** (Vancouver), **Amanda Parris** (Toronto), **Joseph Jomo Pierre** (Toronto), **Donna-Michelle St. Bernard** (Hamilton), **Jacob Sampson** (Halifax), **Djanet Sears** (Toronto), **Luke Reece** (Toronto), **Cherissa Richards** (Manitoba), and **Syrus Marcus Ware** (Toronto). One of the monodramas will be presented in French.

Following the initial announcement of the project this past fall, Obsidian received an overwhelming outpouring of support from the Canadian theatre community, enabling additional fundraising for the project.

As previously announced, **TO Live** is the Venue Production Partner for 21 BLACK FUTURES. Commenting on the partnership, **Vice President of Programming, Josephine Ridge** said *“The vision and ambition that shaped 21 BLACK FUTURES drives home once again the vital role that Obsidian plays in the development and promotion of the Black voice in Canadian theatre. TO Live is proud to have played a supporting role, and we congratulate Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, all the artists and the entire Obsidian team on the realization of this necessary and timely project.”*

In addition, Obsidian would like to gratefully acknowledge the following community supporters: **2b theatre, B&B Hamilton Fund, Canadian Stage, Centaur Theatre, Coal Mine Theatre, Crow’s Theatre, Eastern Front Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, The Musical Stage Company, Necessary Angel Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, Prairie Theatre Exchange, Royal Manitoba Theatre, Soupepper Theatre, Tarragon Theatre, and Why Not Theatre.** The project is also generously supported by the **Toronto Arts Council Strategic Initiative Program via the Open Door Grant.**

Obsidian also recognizes the year-round support of season sponsor TD Canada Trust.

*“TD is proud to support Obsidian Theatre and the 21 BLACK FUTURES project, in developing up-and-coming Black theatre makers and providing a platform through which Black artists can stage their work to a national audience,”* says **Naki Osutei, Associate Vice President, Social Impact (Canada), at TD Bank Group.** *“As part of the TD Ready Commitment to drive a more equitable tomorrow, we are thrilled to invest in programs that bring the multifaceted and multigenerational works of Black artists to the forefront of Canada’s theatrical mosaic.”*

Additional season sponsors include the Canada Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council, Hal Jackman Foundation, Metcalf Foundation and our individual donors.

For more information about Obsidian Theatre, visit [obsidiantheatre.com](http://obsidiantheatre.com)

### **About Obsidian Theatre**

Obsidian is Canada’s leading culturally specific theatre company. Our threefold mission is to produce plays, to develop playwrights and to train emerging theatre professionals. Obsidian is passionately dedicated to the exploration, development, and production of the Black voice. Obsidian produces plays from a world-wide canon focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the works of highly acclaimed Black playwrights. Obsidian provides artistic support, promoting the development of work by Black theatre makers and offering training opportunities through mentoring and apprenticeship programs for emerging Black artists.

Obsidian Theatre Company was born out of a passionate sense of artistic responsibility – a responsibility to bring the Black voice, in its many artistic dialects, to Canada’s cultural forefront. Obsidian encourages Black artists to expand their vision of what they perceive, create and present to a national audience. Obsidian continues to play a prominent role in Canada’s theatrical mosaic by showcasing the work of both emerging and established Black artists.

Since its inception, our development programs have led many artists to expand their professional development and create new Canadian works. Through our training programs, we produce plays, develop playwrights and train emerging theatre professionals.

### **About CBC/Radio-Canada**

CBC/Radio-Canada is Canada’s national public broadcaster. Through our mandate to inform, enlighten and entertain, we play a central role in strengthening Canadian culture. As Canada’s trusted news source, we offer a uniquely Canadian perspective on news, current affairs and world affairs. Our distinctively homegrown entertainment programming draws audiences from across the country. Deeply rooted in communities, CBC/Radio-Canada offers diverse content in English, French and eight Indigenous languages. We also deliver content in Spanish, Arabic and Chinese, as well as both official languages, through Radio Canada International (RCI). We are leading the transformation to meet the needs of Canadians in a digital world.

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