



ACTORS TOURING COMPANY
YOUNG VIC &
FESTIVAL.ORG
present

FAMILY TREE

By MOJISOLA ADEBAYO
Directed by Matthew Xia
Designed by Sandra Falase
Music by Fran Rivers
Movement by Vicki Igbokwe

CASTING ANNOUNCED

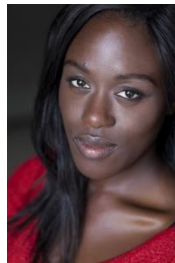
A work-in-development for outdoor performance as part of

GREENWICH+DOCKLANDS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

(Charlton House and Gardens)

August 27 to 30 2021

Press Performance August 28, 7.30pm



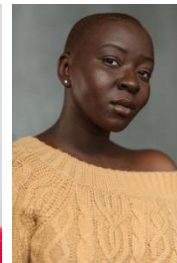
Michelle Asante



Natasha Cottrill



Keziah Joseph



Diana Yekinni

Actors Touring Company today announces the casting for *Family Tree* by **Mojisola Adebayo**. The work in development piece, which promises to be one of the highlights of **Greenwich+Docklands International Festival (GDIF)**, will be staged over seven outdoor performances at **Charlton House and Gardens** from **August 27 to 30**. It is presented by **ATC, FESTIVAL.ORG** and **Young Vic** from a co-commission by **ATC** and **Young Vic** as part of a development process for a full theatre run in 2022.

The cast comprises **Michelle Asante** (*Our Lady of Kibeho* - Theatre Royal Stratford East, *Eclipsed* - The Gate Theatre), **Natasha Cottrill** (*Future Conditional* - The Old Vic, *Into the Woods* - Royal Exchange, Manchester), **Keziah Joseph** (*The Language of Kindness* - UK Tour, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* - Bridge Theatre) and **Diana Yekinni** (*Three Sisters* - National Theatre, *I'll Take You to Mrs Cole* - Complicité).

Family Tree takes as its inspiration the story of Henrietta Lacks, an African American woman, whose cells were harvested and cultivated without her consent after her death from cervical cancer in the 1950s. The so-called HeLa cells have been vital to studying disease and have even contributed to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines. Using the Lacks story as a springboard, the work is a powerful exploration around the themes of ethics in healthcare, racism, the environment and a woman's right to autonomy over her own body.

Directed by ATC's Artistic Director **Matthew Xia**, this site-responsive outdoor production is designed by **Sandra Falase** (*J'Ouvert*, Sonia Friedman Prods., *Romeo and Juliet* - Orange Tree), with music by **Fran Rivers** (Evening Standard Future Theatre Fund Award winner, 2021; *Othello*, NYT) and movement by **Vicki Igbokwe** (founder and creative director of Uchenna Dance, Mass Movement Choreographer, Olympic & Paralympic Ceremonies).

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Actors Touring Company Artistic Director MATTHEW XIA says:

"Mojisola Adebayo has created a play which responds to the present moment whilst holding historical malpractice to account. It's fearless, brutally honest, at turns hilarious, and ultimately transformative. This ritualistic celebration is our way of uplifting, remembering, and learning from these women who were used in the name of medical advancement."

LISTINGS

ACTORS TOURING COMPANY

YOUNG VIC &

FESTIVAL.ORG

Present

FAMILY TREE

By Mojisola Adebayo

Greenwich+Docklands International Festival

VENUE

Charlton House and Gardens, Charlton Road, SE7 8RE (outdoor)

DATES

27 August to 30 August

PERFORMANCES

27 August – 7.30pm

28 – 30 August – 2pm & 7.30pm

PRESS NIGHT

28 August 7.30pm

RUNNING TIME

1h 10 mins (TBC)

TICKETS

£15

BOOKING

<https://festival.org/whats-on/gdif-familytree/>

NOTES TO EDITORS

CAST

MICHELLE ASANTE (Henrietta Lacks)

Michelle Asante is an award-nominated actress who has received critical praise for her wide-ranging performances across film, television and theatre.

Michelle played a lead role in the critically acclaimed *Our Lady of Kibeho* at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in late 2019. Her other theatre credits include the UK premieres of Danai Guriras multi award winning play *Eclipsed* (The Gate Theatre) and Tony Award Winning *Vanya Sonya Masha and Spike* (Theatre Royal Bath), as well as *Welcome Home Captain Fox* (The Donmar Warehouse) *Things Of Dry Hours* (The Young Vic) and *Wendy and Peter Pan* (RSC)

In 2020, Michelle could be seen in the role of Officer Dooshima in the hit BBC adaptation of Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses*. Other recent Film and TV credits include *Lucky Man* (SKY), *Monroe Series 1 & 2* (ITV) *Father Brown* (BBC), *Some Dogs Bite* (Kindle Entertainment), *Brand New-U* (Hot property Films), *London Boulevard* (GK Films) *Moving On*, *Doctor Who* and *Our Girl* (BBC).

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NATSHA COTTRIAL'S (Lyn/Lucy) stage works include *Future Conditional* (The Old Vic), *Into the Woods* (Royal Exchange, Manchester), *The Buskers Opera* (Park Theatre), *Here Lie the Remains of Mercy* (Theatre Delicatessen), *Beautiful - The Carole King Musical* (Aldwych Theatre), *The Secret Garden* (Theatre by the Lake), *The Selfish Giant* (Vaudeville Theatre), *Oklahoma!* (Grange Park Opera), *The Lovely Bones* (adapted by Bryony Lavery, Tour), *Anna Bella Eema* (Arcola) and *The Welkin* by Lucy Kirkwood (The National Theatre).

Her screen work includes: *Grantchester* (ITV), *Doctors* (BBC1), *Aladdin* (Disney), *Vera* (ITV), *Moving On* (BBC) and *Canvas 5* (short film).

KEZIAH JOSEPH'S (Bibi/Betsey) theatre credits include *The Language of Kindness* (UK Tour), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Bridge Theatre), Olivier nominated *Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear* (The National Theatre) and *The Paper Man* (Soho Theatre).

Radio credits include: *Magic Mountain*, *The Thickness*, *The Mother*, (BBC Radio 4) and *Doctor Who - Cold Vengeance* (Big Finish).

Film credits include: *HUSH* (Genesis Child Productions).

DIANA YEKINNI (Ain/Anarcha/Oshun) trained at American Academy of Dramatic Arts & The Brit School. Her theatre credits Oyiri di ya in *Three Sisters* (National Theatre); Mum in *I'll Take You to Mrs Cole* (Complicité); Nurse in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (Arcola), Tituba in *The Crucible* (UK Tour); Molly in *Drafts* (Southwark Playhouse); *Expensive Shit* (Traverse Theatre / Royal Festival Hall); *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide* (Lagos, Nigeria); *London Life Lagos Living* (Lagos, Nigeria).

TV & Film Credits include Dolapo in *For Love* (BBC Films); *Skin The Documentary* (BeNaya/Netflix); *Medium* (CBS); Wonu in *The Mrs* (Africa Magic) *Lunch Time Heroes* (Netflix); *A New You*; *Mosa*; *Ije The Journey*; *Jenifa's Diary*; *Erase* and *When Love Happens Again*.

CREATIVES

MOJISOLA ADEBAYO is a British born, Nigerian / Danish performer, playwright, director, producer, workshop leader and teacher. She has worked in theatre, radio and television, over the past two decades, performing in over 50 productions, writing, devising and directing over 30 plays and leading countless workshops, worldwide, from Antarctica to Zimbabwe. Publications include her plays which include *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey*, *Muhammad Ali and Me* and *Matt Henson: North Star* in *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays One* (Oberon), *48 Minutes for Palestine* in *Theatre in Pieces* (Methuen), *The Theatre for Development Handbook* (with John Martin and Manisha Mehta, available through pan-arts.net) and several academic chapters. *Mojisola Adebayo: Plays Two* (Oberon) featuring *STARS*, *I Stand Corrected*, *Oranges and Stones* and *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland*, was published in 2019. Mojisola is an Associate Artist with Pan Arts, Black Lives, Black Words and Building the Anti-Racist Classroom, a Visiting Artist at Rose Bruford College and Goldsmiths and a Lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London. She recently completed her first commission for the National Theatre (Britain) entitled *Wind Rush Generation(s)*...

MATTHEW XIA one of the busiest and most exciting directors in the UK, has led Actors Touring since 2019. He is a former Associate Artistic Director of Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Director in Residence at Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse; and Associate Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East. He is currently an Associate Artist at Nottingham Playhouse. Matthew is a founding member of Act for Change, a trustee of Artistic Directors of the Future and Cardboard Citizens.

SANDRA FALASE is an interdisciplinary artist. Their theatre credits include *J'Ouvert* (Theatre503 & Sonia Friedman Productions); *This is Black* (Bunker Theatre); *Romeo & Juliet* (Orange Tree Theatre) and *Living Newspaper* (Royal Court). Film includes *Signs* and *Brain in Gear*. Sandra has worked on various exhibitions for the ICA, TATE and Afropunk 2018.

FRAN RIVERS is a British Ghanaian/Nigerian artist who was awarded the 2021 London Evening Standard Future Theatre Fund for Audio Design. Layering genres with experimental sounds, Fran combines her classical and jazz training with contemporary influences informed by her cultural heritage to create rich theatrical soundscapes.

VICKI IGBOKWE is a Choreographer, Movement Director, Facilitator, Coach and the Founder & Creative Director of Uchenna, a London based touring dance company. Her mission is to Empower, Entertain and Educate through dance and movement, enabling each person she engages with to Think Fierce, Be Fabulous and Live Free Spirited. Her work in theatre as a Movement Director & Choreographer includes *The Woods* and *A Kind Of People* for the Royal Court, *Princess and the Hustler* and *The Gift* for Eclipse Theatre, *Red Dust Road* for the National Theatre of Scotland, *Midlife* for Diverse City, *The Seven Ages of Patience* for The Kiln, *Provok'd* and *POD* (Co-Director) for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. As Choreographer for Uchenna, she has created their four touring shows *Our Mighty Groove*, *The Head Wrap Diaries*, *Hansel and Gretel – A Fearless Dance Adventure* and *The Head Wrap Diaries – Fierce*

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and Free. Internationally, she has worked as a Mass Movement Choreographer for Olympic and Paralympic Ceremonies including London 2012, Sochi 2014, Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 and the Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku, Azerbaijan 2017.

ACTORS TOURING COMPANY (ATC) creates dialogue between Britain and the rest of the world – and between the intersecting cultures within our country. It is the leading UK theatre company committed to producing plays that come from beyond our shores.

We are passionate about giving voice to the 'outsider within' – the cross-cultural nations within our own nation. We tour our plays right across Britain: creating, developing and sustaining a dialogue between those deemed 'the other' and UK audiences. In the last few years, we have produced first English language productions of plays from Iran, Norway, the US, Germany, Austria, Russia - bringing international voices to school and village halls, studio theatres and main houses: from Barcelona to Glasgow, from Hong Kong to Scarborough. Signature productions include: *The Brothers Size*, *Amsterdam*, the ATC debut of Artistic Director Matthew Xia, and *Dear Tomorrow* – letters of hope commissioned from writers around the globe.

ATC will co-produce the European premiere of *Rice* by Michele Lee, directed by Matthew Xia, with the Orange Tree Theatre in October this year.

<https://www.atctheatre.com>

FESTIVAL.ORG is one of the UK's most ambitious and prolific outdoor arts producing organisations. We set out to radically raise the ambition, quality and diversity of outdoor performance produced in the UK.

Beyond our flagship annual festival Greenwich+Docklands International Festival, we manage the nationwide Global Streets network and are a founding partner of the Without Walls and Stomping Ground consortia.

FESTIVAL.ORG plays a distinctive, strategic role within the wider outdoor arts sector by devising and producing large-scale work (including ceremony-scale spectacle), working with culturally diverse artists, introducing new artists into the outdoors who might previously have worked in building-based contexts, pioneering new approaches to access and audience engagement and developing new outdoor work with D/deaf and disabled artists.

Produced by FESTIVAL.ORG, **GREENWICH+DOCKLANDS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (GDIF)** is London's free, annual outdoor theatre and performing arts festival. Taking place from 27 August – 11 September 2021 across Greenwich, East London, Thamesmead and the City of London, GDIF is committed to co-creating, commissioning and presenting outdoor productions, which tell compelling stories in spectacular style, whilst bringing Londoners together.

GDIF 2020 saw over 150 live events take place safely to a socially distanced audience of over 20,000, and 55,000 reached digitally with streamed content and engagement projects. GDIF 2020's productions and commissions responded to the pandemic and events such as the Black Lives Matter movement, offering spaces for reflection, active participation, and celebration.

GDIF forms part of the Royal Greenwich Festivals, and is the flagship annual event produced by FESTIVAL.ORG. <http://FESTIVAL.ORG/gdif>

Based in London's Waterloo, the **YOUNG VIC** produces new plays, classics, musicals, adaptations, digital projects, and game-changing forms of theatre, creating world-class theatre at affordable prices and attracting large audiences from different backgrounds. The Young Vic give 10% of tickets free to those experiencing the biggest barriers to accessing art, irrespective of box office demand.

The theatre forges deep connections in its local boroughs through its Taking Part programme, and offer early-career artists opportunities to develop their craft through its Director's Program, the only scheme of its kind which has been running for nearly twenty years.

The Young Vic is synonymous with inclusivity, accessibility, and creativity. The theatre aims to catalyse debate, and channels its work into the digital world, reaching new audiences and continuing conversations outside of its four walls. <https://www.youngvic.org>

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