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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

Programme Text

House of Ife

by Beru Tessema

SAMUEL FRENCH

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Art Direction by Studio Dog
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HOUSE OF IFE was first produced at the Bush Theatre in London, England on 29 April, 2022. The cast was as follows:

SOLOMON ..... Jude Akuwudike
TSION ..... Yohanna Ephrem
MERON ..... Sarah Priddy
AIDA ..... Karla-Simone Spence
YOSI ..... Michael Workeye

The creative team was as follows:

DIRECTOR ..... Lynette Linton
SET & COSTUME DESIGNER ..... Frankie Bradshaw
LIGHTING DESIGNER ..... Jai Morjaria
SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER ..... Duramaney Kamara
MOVEMENT DIRECTOR ..... Kane Husbands
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ..... Monaé Robinson
DRAMATURG ..... Deirdre O'Halloran
CASTING DIRECTOR ..... Heather Basten CDG
CASTING ASSISTANT ..... Fran Cattaneo
FIGHT DIRECTOR ..... Kate Waters
COSTUME SUPERVISOR ..... Malena Arcucci
VOICE & DIALECT COACH ..... Joel Trill
PORTRAIT ARTIST ..... Florence Lee
PRODUCTION MANAGER ..... Pete Rickards
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ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER ..... Helen Potter

CAST

Jude Akuwudike – SOLOMON

Jude plays the titular role in the feature film *Eyimofe* which premiered at Berlin Film Festival. Other film credits include *Beasts Of No Nation* (dir. Cary Fukunaga), *The Tempest*, *Touched By A Stranger*, *Sahara* and *A World Apart* and the forthcoming Disney remake of *The Little Mermaid*.

Jude's television appearances include *Gangs of London* (Sky Atlantic), *Fortitude* (Amazon), *In The Long Run* (Sky One) and *The Crown* (Netflix). Other TV credits include *Manhunt*, *Chewing Gum*, *Friday Night Dinner*, *Cucumber* and the UK version of *Law & Order*.

Having trained at RADA, Jude has performed in productions including Inua Ellams' *Three Sisters* and *Moon On A Rainbow Shawl* (National), *The Convert* (Young Vic), *The Faith Machine* (Royal Court), *Great Expectations* (English Touring Theatre) and *Othello* (Glasgow Citizens). He most recently appeared at the Donmar in *Henry V* with Kit Harrington.

Yohanna Ephrem – TSION

Yohanna's theatre appearances include *Stacked* and *From The Ground Up* (Almeida Youth Company), *Homegrown* and *Skunk* (National Youth Theatre*), Scottsboro Boys Parallel Production* (Young Vic) and *Feather Boy* (National Youth Studio). On television she has appeared in *The Feed* (Amazon Studios), *The Rook* (Starz/Lionsgate) and *Damned* (Channel 4). Her film appearances include *Surge* and *Sweetness in the Belly*.

Sarah Priddy – MERON

Sarah Priddy was born in Britain and raised in the Bahamas by an English father and Sierra Leonean mother. She worked in the advertising industry before embarking on her professional acting career in 2015.

Sarah studied drama at City Lit and trained with Actors Studio, The Mono Box and at RADA. Her acting career began as a supporting artist on several BBC, ITV and Channel 4 TV productions. Her film debut was in Callum Crawford's *Degenerates*. Sarah's stage credits include *The Regina Monologues*, *Building the Wall*, *Poison* and *The Deep Blue Sea*. She performed in KatAlyst Productions' *Beginnings* festival in 2020 and is currently working with writer Andrew Sharpe for his new play *The House at the End of Empire*. She was Executive Producer on the short film, *I Am Your Sister*. Later this year she will appear as Mary Dawson in Warren Dudley's feature film *Six Years Gone*.

Karla-Simone Spence – AIDA

Karla-Simone has just filmed the titular role in ITV's *The Confessions of Frannie Langton* and played the lead female in the *Blue Story*, Rapman's feature film, in collaboration with Paramount and BBC Films. Prior to *Blue Story*, she appeared in *Gold Digger* (BBC1) and *Wannabe* (BBC3).

Michael Workeye – YOSI

Since graduating from Arts Educational drama school, Michael's television appearances have included *Sitting in Limbo* (BBC), *Big Age* (Channel 4) and *This is Going To Hurt* (BBC).

CREATIVE TEAM

Beru Tessema – WRITER

Beru Tessema is a film and theatre maker based in London. He trained as an actor at RADA and as a screenwriter at the London Film School. *House of Ife* is his debut work for the stage.

Lynette Linton – DIRECTOR

Director Lynette Linton took over as Artistic Director of the Bush Theatre in 2019.

She directed the UK premiere of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Sweat* (Donmar Warehouse, Gielgud Theatre) for which she won 'Best Director' at the inaugural Black British Theatre awards. *Sweat* also won the Evening Standard award for 'Best Play' and was nominated for an Oliver award for 'Best New Play'. Her production of *Richard II* (Shakespeare's Globe) which she directed with Adjoa Andoh, marked the first ever company of women of colour in a Shakespeare play on a major UK stage.

Lynette will make her National Theatre debut directing a new production of American writer Pearl Cleage's *Blues for an Alabama Sky* in the Lyttelton from September 2022. *My Name is Leon*, her directorial film debut, will be released on BBC in May 2022. She is co-founder of theatre and film production company, Black Apron Entertainment.

As a writer, her credits include *Look at Me* (ITV), *Hashtag Lightie* (Arcola), *Chicken Palace* and *Step* (Theatre Royal Stratford East).

Her other directing credits include an adaptation of Jackie Kay's *Chiaroscuro* (Bush Theatre), world premiere productions of *Assata Taught Me* (Gate), *Function* (National Youth Theatre), *This Is* (Arts Ed), *Indenture* (Dark Horse Festival), *Naked* (VAULT Festival), and a revival of *This Wide Night* (Albany). She was also co-director on Chicken Palace (Theatre Royal Stratford East).

Frankie Bradshaw – SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Frankie Bradshaw is an award winning set and costume designer for theatre and performance. She won the Best Creative West End Debut at the Stage Debut Awards 2019 jointly with director Lynette Linton for *Sweat* at the Gielgud Theatre. She was a Jerwood Young Designer in 2017, she won the Off West-End Best Set Design award in 2016, and was a Linbury prize finalist in 2015. Frankie's recent design credits for theatre include: *Sweat* (West End/Donmar Warehouse), *Two Trains Running* (Royal & Derngate/UK Tour), *Cinderella* (Lyric Hammersmith), *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre Clwyd), *Napoli Brooklyn* (UK Tour/Park Theatre), *Skellig* (Nottingham Playhouse), *Trying It On* (UK Tour/RSC/ Royal Court), *Kiss Me Kate, Jerusalem, Nesting, Robin Hood* (Watermill Theatre), *Cookies* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *On The Exhale* (Traverse), *Hansel* (Salisbury Playhouse). For opera she has designed: *Macbeth, Idomeneo* and *Elizabetta* for English Touring Opera.

Jai Morjaria – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jai Morjaria trained at RADA and won the 2016 Association of Lighting Designer's ETC Award.

Recent designs include *Wuthering Heights* (Bristol Old Vic/National Theatre); *Cherry Jezebel* (Liverpool Everyman); *Lava, Pawn/Limbo* (Bush Theatre); *Cruise* (Duchess Theatre); *Big Big Sky, The Hoes* (Hampstead Theatre); *My Son's A Queer (But What Can You Do?)* (Turbine Theatre. WhatsOnStage Award for Best Off West End Production); *Hushabye Mountai*n (Hope Mill); *Out of the Dark* (Rose Theatre Kingston); *Shuck'n'Jive, Whitewash* (Soho Theatre); *Anansi the Spider, Aesop's Fables* (Unicorn Theatre); *I'll Take You To Mrs. Cole* (Complicite); *Mapping Brent* (Kiln Theatre); *Glory* (Duke's Theatre/Red Ladder); *Cuzco* (Theatre503); *Losing Venice* (Orange Tree Theatre); *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (Northern Stage); *A Lie of the Mind* (Southwark Playhouse); *46 Beacon* (Trafalgar Studios with Rick Fisher); *Out There on Fried Meat Ridge Road* (White Bear Theatre/Trafalgar Studios 2); *Acorn* (Courtyard Theatre, Off-West End Award nomination for Best Lighting).

Duramaney Kamara – SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER

Duramaney Kamara was the composer, sound designer and resident DJ for *Dismantle*, a festival of work by Project 2036 at the Bush Theatre.

As music and sound designer, his credits for the Royal Court include: *My Mum's a Twat* and *Instructions For Correct Assembly*. As composer and sound designer, for the Royal Court: *Katzenmusik* (Young Court); *Tottenham Symphony* (Beyond the Court).

As performer, his theatre credits include: *Boy* (Almeida); *The Response* (Seagull/Mercury). As performer, film credits include: *Yardie*, *What Happened to Evie*.

Kane Husbands – MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Kane Husbands is the founder and artistic director of The PappyShow and a lecturer at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. His work is all about community and bringing people together to move, share practice and play. He is a facilitator, director, performer and maker specialising in movement, dance, ensemble and physical theatre. An associate of the National Youth Theatre, Squint Theatre and The North Wall (Oxford). He choreographed the Welcoming Ceremonies of the London Olympics, Paralympics, and the Glasgow Commonwealth Team.

He has worked across National Theatre, Chichester Festival Theatre, Nottingham Playhouse, Sheffield Crucible Theatre, the Old Vic, the Midlands Arts Centre (Birmingham), the SCOOP Outdoor Theatre, Rose Bruford College (London), the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (London), University of West London, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Cardiff), the National Youth Theatre, the King Abdulaziz Centre for World Culture (Saudi Arabia), the National Theatre of Scotland and the Kiln Theatre (London) and Fran Wen, among other companies and venues.

For The PappyShow, Kane has directed *BOYS*; *Boy, Fly, Girls (2018), Care, Shine Black, Our House* and *What Do You See?* and continues to lead and curate The PappyShow's works and training in collaboration with the full core team.

Monaé Robinson – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Monaé Robinson is the recipient of the Resident Director Bursary programme at the Bush Theatre, working closely with the Artistic team to bring to life their creative visions. She started her career as a community and cultural arts leader. She was recently Assistant Director on *Red Pitch* (Bush Theatre) and *For Black Boys…* (Royal Court).

Monaé holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre & Performance from Goldsmiths University, and is a performance maker that typically focuses on Afrofuturism. In October 2021, Monaé directed *OJA* as part of Theatre Peckham's Young, Gifted and Black festival.

Deirdre O'Halloran – DRAMATURG

Deirdre O'Halloran is the Literary Manager at the Bush Theatre, working to identify and build relationships with new writers, commission new work and guide plays to the stage. At the Bush she's dramaturged plays including Olivier Award winner *Baby Reindeer* by Richard Gadd, *The High Table* by Temi Wilkey and *An Adventure* by Vinay Patel. Deirdre was previously Literary Associate at Soho Theatre, where she worked as a dramaturg on plays including *Girls* by Theresa Ikoko and *Fury* by Phoebe Eclair-Powell. She led on Soho Theatre's Writers' Lab programme and the biennial Verity Bargate Award. As a freelancer, Deirdre has also been a reader for Out of Joint, Sonia Friedman Productions and Papatango.

Heather Basten CDG – CASTING DIRECTOR

Heather Basten is an English casting director based in London, and a member of the Casting Directors Guild (UK), and the Casting Society of America (USA). In 2021 she was recognised as a Screen International 'Star of Tomorrow', and in 2022 named a BAFTA Breakthrough member.

Heather has cast the upcoming 6-Episode musical TV series, *Jungle* for Amazon Studios and *Dreaming Whilst Black* for the BBC. She has most recently cast the Stone Age-set film *The Origin*, which is the sophomore feature from UK producer Oliver Kassman (Saint Maud), *Red Pitch* and *Fair Play* (both Bush Theatre). Heather is currently casting a new exciting slate of green-lit film and TV series across the BFI, Film 4, BBC and more.

Kate Waters – FIGHT DIRECTOR

Kate Waters' theatre credits include: Regular work at the National Theatre, RSC, Donmar, The Globe and in the West End. She has also worked inmany of the country's regional theatres. Recent work includes *Macbeth* (Almeida), *Small Island* (National), *Henry V* (Donmar), *Cyrano de Bergerac* (West End, Glasgow & Brooklyn), *Tina, The Musical* (West End & Germany), *Sweat* (Donmar & West End).

Television & Film include: *Coronation Street, Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks* on all of which she is a regular fight director. She has recently filmed *My*

Policeman (Amazon Studios), *Death of England* (Sky Arts & National Theatre – BAFTA Nominee for Best Single Drama), *Romeo & Juliet* (Sky Arts, PBS America & National Theatre), *Gym* (RADA, Short Film). Other film work includes *Pondlife* and *Making Noises Quietly* (Open Palm Films).

She is also a qualified boxing coach and coaches at Rathbone Amateur Boxing Club.

Malena Arcucci – COSTUME SUPERVISOR

Born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Malena Arcucci is a performance maker currently based in London. She uses devised and physical theatre techniques, in combination with her background and interest in costume making and sculpture to explore new forms of storytelling. She currently works as a producer and theatre designer, and is co-artistic director of Mariana Malena Theatre Company.

Design credits include: *Friday Night Love Poem* (Zoo Venues Edinburgh); *Point of No Return* (Actor's Centre), *La Llorona* (Dance City Newcastle); *The Two of Us* (Theatre Deli); *Playing Latinx* (Camden's People's Theatre); and various productions in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Associate Designer credits include: *Dear Elizabeth* (Gate); *Chiaroscuro* (Bush Theatre); *Thebes Land* and *Tamburlaine* (Arcola).

Costume Supervisor and Maker credits include: *Moreno* and *Milk and Gall* (Theatre503); *The Phantom of the Opera* (Her Majesty's Theatre); *Raya* (Hampstead Theatre), amongst others.

Joel Trill – VOICE & DIALECT COACH

Joel Trill's recent work in theatre includes: *The 47th, A Number* and *Bagdad Cafe* (Old Vic); *All My Sons* and *As You Like It* (Queens Theatre Hornchurch); *Statements After An Arrest Under The Immorality Act* (Orange Tree); *Love Letters* (Queens Theatre); *J'Ouvert* (Harold Pinter); *Mirror Mirror, Master Harold and The Boys* (National); *Rockets & Blue Lights* (Royal Exchange); *Trojan Horse* (Battersea Arts Centre); *A Taste of Honey* (Trafalgar Studios); *Two Trains Runnin* (Royal & Derngate); *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Strange Fruit* (Bush Theatre); *One Night in Miami* (Nottingham Playhouse); *The Glass Menagerie* (Arcola).

Film & TV: *The White Lotus, Riches, The Confessions Of Frannie Langton, Gangs of London* (Season 2), *The Crown* (Season 5), *Citadel, My Name is Leon, Empire, The Ancestors, Queen & Slim, Mama Ks Team 4, There's Something About The Movies.*

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The Bush has won over 100 awards and developed an enviable reputation for touring its acclaimed productions nationally and internationally.

We are excited by exceptional new voices, stories and perspectives – particularly those with contemporary bite which reflect the vibrancy of British culture now.

Located in the newly renovated old library on Uxbridge Road in the heart of Shepherd's Bush, the theatre houses two performance spaces, a rehearsal room and the lively Library Café & Bar.

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CHARACTERS

AIDA – (28) Ife's twin sister
TSION – (23) her sister
YOSI – (19) their brother
MERON – (52) their mother
SOLOMON – (61) their father

SETTING

London

TIME

The action takes place in July, during a heatwave, in present day.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Pronunciation: Ife / [ai:f] / eyef

A slash (/) indicates overlapping dialogue.

Where there is no punctuation, it indicates a continuation of the character's thought, action or intention.

For the loved ones we lost along the way.
Home is always within us.

Love, Eyu.

1.

(A hot and humid Sunday afternoon in July. Kentish Town, North West London.)

(A ground floor council flat living room that leads to a partially open-plan kitchen and a hallway that leads to the front door. Light from the blazing day outside pours in through the recently installed double glazed windows. An extendable dining table occupies one side of the space near the kitchen. A large couch covered in see-through plastic is in front of the TV on the other side of the room. Framed Biblical quotes, Ethiopian ornaments and photographs of the family in happier times hang on the walls. We get the sense that the family has lived here for many years, the evidence of these years are apparent in the worn, faded, cluttered objects and details in the space.)

*(***AIDA***, dressed in black clothes that suggests a keen fashion sense, lights some frankincense and ritualistically spreads the smoke around the room. She places the frankincense on the windowsill then goes outside. Some moments later, she haphazardly carries a stack of chairs inside.* **TSION***, also in black clothing, but more ordinary than her sister, arranges a buffet of Ethiopian food on the dining table and returns to the kitchen. The sounds and aromas of Tsion's cooking spills out into the living room area.* **TSION** *brings more food out*

to the table. **AIDA** *glances at* **TSION** *as though she wants to say something.* **TSION** *notices and goes over to comfort her.)*

*(***YOSI** *enters the space. He is awkward in his body, not yet a man, but charismatic, with the air of invincibility of youth about him. He wears a designer pouch across his chest, an ironed black shirt, light grey jeans and box-fresh white trainers. His jeans and trainers both have grass stains on them.)*

YOSI. That was propa long man! Oi, is Dad here yet?

TSION. Fam, where are they?

YOSI. He's not here? Yo? Did Dad call? Has he called yet?

AIDA. Can't get through to / him.

YOSI. What?

AIDA. Dad.

YOSI. Swear down when Dad gets here yeah, that Preacher's gonna get it. Truss. Man was out there all tryin' ta hold people hostage with his faf / ya know.

TSION. Bruv?

YOSI. Yo, man was making a scene innit, you know one of dem ones there? Man juss misjudged the occasion ya get me, like, man thinks people wanna stay on their knees listening to him gassin' in this heat / bruv!

AIDA. What? He gave another / sermon?

YOSI. Oi, that brea was movin' like some false prophet out there fam!

TSION. Oi / bruv?

YOSI. Nah, we was on our way back innit – out of nowhere man like him starts wilin' out like he was touched by the Spirit! Made us all fuckin' kneel bruv! Fucked up

my garms ya know! Look at that! Fucking grass on my True Religions brevs! Propa fuckeries innit? Fucked up my creps too innit! Look at that! / Dickhead!

TSION. Are they coming / or what?

YOSI. That's why I don't go to Church ya get me! Since Dad left it's been full of man like that movin' off-key / fam!

TSION. This boy / man!

AIDA. What? Are they still / there?

YOSI. Mum couldn't even kneel like that ya get me, bare people trying to hold her up, and that brea was juss there wilin' out, thinkin' he can juss spit another sermon on road, swear down, pissing / me off!

TSION. So you just left Mum on her own?

YOSI. Like, man juss made the whole ting about him innit. Tone def. Propa tone def fam. His voice was juss grating on me. I had to bounce ca I weren't lookin' to switch ya get me. Then I mussa seen some hoodrats from Crescent. Dem man tried filming us innit. I was fuming bruv. Dem man all started creasing when we knelt down, like it was some joke ting. Swear down, next time I see dem wasteyuts, watch what happens! / Watch!

TSION. Wait. What? You left Mum coz some Crescent heads / saw you?

YOSI. Yo, that Preacher got shook when I juss bowled past him! He got prang innit!

TSION. Yosh man! / Fucking hell!

YOSI. What?

TSION. You were supposed to be with her! That was all. One thing, that's all you had to do fam!

YOSI. Shut up / man!

TSION. Seriously bruv! You need to fix up ya know!

AIDA. You don't need to be getting caught up in all that hood shit Yosi. Don't be an idiot.

YOSI. Idiot?

AIDA. It's not what I / mean

YOSI. *(Like a Yard Man.)* What? Fam, if I'm an "idiot", yuh ah eediat! Yah seh meh?

TSION. Oi, you two, don't start, / yeah!

AIDA. I'm juss saying forget all this roadman bullshit and go be with her. We got it covered / here.

YOSI. Bare people are with her. She told me to come give you lot a hand / innit.

TSION. So you didn't "bowl past" no one then did you?

YOSI. Shut up man! Oi, where's Dad man? Shall we bell him?

AIDA. Yosh, we have to get the place ready / yeah!

YOSI. "We"? Brevs, I don't see you doing no cooking so hol' it down yeah.

TSION. Yosh, you're not / helping!

AIDA. Bruv, don't try chatting to me like you're some badman when you're the one running from Crescent heads! Allow / it!

YOSI. Look at you tryin' to talk road!

AIDA. Whatever Yosi / man.

YOSI. Yo, when's Dad / reaching?

TSION. We don't know bruv!

*(**AIDA** checks her phone and goes to check outside the front door that has been left open.)*

YOSI. Oi T, that smells good man!

(He goes to fix himself a plate, **TSION** *smacks his arm and takes away his plate.* **YOSI** *kisses his teeth.)*

What you doing?!

TSION. You can eat when they get here bruv.

YOSI. Pagan! *(Checks his phone.)*

TSION. *(To both* **YOSI** *and* **AIDA.***)* We're gonna need more chairs than that ya know. Did you see how many of them there were?

YOSI. He told me he was gonna touch down this morning / fam.

TSION. He'll get here when he gets here innit. A plane has already landed from Addis this morning. I don't know what's happened to him.

YOSI. Nah, fuckeries man.

*(***YOSI** *goes into the the kitchen and pours himself some cereal and starts munching.)*

TSION. *(To* **AIDA.***)* Is that all the neighbours had? *(To* **YOSI.***)* How far are / they?

AIDA. Yeah, this was all their chairs.

YOSI. Oi, do you lot reckon Dad got caught up in the madness out / there?

TSION. How about the garden ones? You know the old ones in the shed?

YOSI. Auntie Genet was there, did you lot see her? She landed this morning and still reached on time so where is he fam?

TSION. Yosh man, can't you see we're trying to sort this place out before they get here? Why you juss standing / there?

YOSI. What? Yo! Who you chattin' / to?

TSION. Can you at least get the chairs from the shed?!

YOSI. Why they even comin' in here? They should all juss cotch outside. It's a nice day / innit.

TSION. *(To* **YOSI.***)* Fam can you juss get the garden chairs from the shed and clean them up / a bit.

YOSI. Hangers on innit. I ain't even seen half of them before.

TSION. Yeah, it's coz you don't go to Church bruv.

YOSI. Why we stressing about where they sit? Let them perch out there or whatever.

TSION. That's not our culture bruv, ya get me, I don't want to embarrass her again. It was bad enough this morning.

YOSI. It's them dusty ass garden chairs thass gonna embarrass her. We don't even have no garden but somehow all that bruck-up garden furniture been taking up bare space in that shed from day dot.

TSION. What do you call that out there?

YOSI. Bruv, that ain't no / garden!

TSION. That's still a garden to Mum.

AIDA. We used to have them garden chairs around the dining table.

YOSI. Rah! Fam, you lot were on some broke nigga shit then innit!

AIDA. Ridiculous!

YOSI. What?

AIDA. You.

YOSI. Nah, I ain't about that broke life, ya feel / me?

AIDA. But you're still living at yard and working at Sainsbury's, so don't be chatting like you're Nipsey Hussle coz you / ain't!

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