

For Immediate Release

A SOULPEPPER AND OBSIDIAN THEATRE CO-PRODUCTION

THE CANADIAN PREMIERE OF

THREE SISTERS

BY INUA ELLAMS

AFTER CHEKHOV

DIRECTED BY MUMBI TINDYEBWA OTU

FEBRUARY 29 - MARCH 17, 2024 AT SOULPEPPER THEATRE

Toronto, ON (February 6, 2024) – Soulpepper and Obsidian Theatre proudly announce the highly anticipated Canadian premiere of the re-imagined **THREE SISTERS**, written by **Inua Ellams**, after Anton Chekhov, and directed by **Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu**. This collaboration brings together two of Canada's leading theatre companies to present a powerful and innovative adaptation of the beloved Chekhov play, set in Nigeria. **THREE SISTERS** is onstage from February 29 to March 17, 2024 at Soulpepper Theatre.

"This stunning adaptation, with an incredible cast of 12 African characters, sheds light on a marginalized and important part of African history, and human history - a history that few people in the west know about. It is a re-imagining of a story that is both familiar and yet completely new, in a thrilling and exciting way. I'm both honored and excited to be bringing this piece to life with this brilliant team." - **Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu, Director and Obsidian Theatre Artistic Director**

"I'm thrilled that this dream show is having its Canadian premiere at Soulpepper. This production is the culmination of years of dreaming with Obsidian Theatre and their artistic director, Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu who also directs the show. Inua Ellams' poignant and pressing retelling of this story was one that both Mumbi and I were incredibly energized and moved by. As the cast came together we knew we had the final ingredient for a truly extraordinary offering- I can't wait for audiences to experience it." - **Weyni Mengesha, Soulpepper Theatre Artistic Director**

A year has passed since their father died but the three sisters – Lolo, Nne Chukwu, and Udo – are still grappling with his loss. Moreover, they're stuck in a small village in Owerri, Nigeria, longing to return to the cosmopolitan city of their birth, Lagos. What they don't know is that the Biafran Civil War is about to erupt and change their lives and their country. Chekhov's classic play is reimagined to explore the devastation of colonialism and the fight for emancipation through the lens of family and love.

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*"I was drawn to adapting *Three Sisters* primarily because I have three sisters. We became immigrants in 1996 and moved to England, where attitude towards people of color became so toxic, Britain voted to leave the European Union believing they would gain control over their borders and keep us out. Such rhetoric exists because Britain colonized the world and conveniently forgot the conflicts it created - which displaced, and continues to displace, millions. The Nigerian civil war is one such conflict, it is part of British History, and by extension, part of Canadian history. Chekhov showed me how to tell this story and I'm excited for the Canadian premiere of this play." - Inua Ellams, Playwright*

Inua Ellams (*writer*) is a poet, playwright, performer, graphic artist, designer, and founder of The Midnight Run (an arts-filled, night-time, urban walking experience), The Rhythm and Poetry Party (The R.A.P Party) which celebrates poetry & hip hop, and Poetry + Film / Hack (P+F/H) which celebrates Poetry and Film. Identity, Displacement & Destiny are recurring themes in his work, where he tries to mix the old with the new: traditional African oral storytelling with contemporary poetics, paint with pixel, texture with vector. His books are published by Flipped Eye, Akashic, Nine Arches, Pinned In The Margins, Oberon & Methuen.

Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu (*director*) is the Artistic Director of Obsidian Theatre, and the founder and Artistic Director of IFT Theatre. Mumbi is the recipient of a Dora Award, Toronto Theatre Critics Award, Canadian Screen Award, Pauline McGibbon Award, amongst others. Recent director credits include *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (Soulpepper Theatre), *Is God Is* (Obsidian, Canadian Stage/Necessary Angel), *21 Black Futures* (Obsidian/CBC), *Post Democracy* (Tarragon), and *Trout Stanley* (Factory).

THREE SISTERS features phenomenal performances by a highly decorated cast that includes: **Akosua Amo-Adem, Virgilia Griffith, Daren A. Herbert, Sterling Jarvis, JD Leslie, Tawiah M'Carthy, Ngabo Nabea, Makambe K. Simamba, Tony Ofori, Oyin Oladejo, Ordena Stephens-Thompson and Amaka Umeh.**

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THREE SISTERS

Co-production by Soulpepper Theatre and Obsidian Theatre

Writer - Inua Ellams

Director - Mumbi Tindyebwa Otu

Assistant Director - Natasha Mumba

Set Designer - Joanna Yu

Costume Design - Ming Wong

Lighting Designer - Andre Du Toit

Sound Designer and Composer - John Gzowski

Vocal Coach and Arrangements - Kunle Olorundare

Fight and Intimacy Director - Anita Nittoly

Dialect Coach and Cultural Consultant - Dienne Waboso

Dialect Coach - Paul Dejong

Movement Director - Esie Mensah

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Historical Consultant - Ugochukwu Okoye
Stage Manager - Robert Harding
Assistant Stage Manager - Emilie Aubin
Apprentice Stage Manager - Keleshaye Christmas-Simpson

Starring - Akosua Amo-Adem, Virgilia Griffith, Daren A. Herbert, Sterling Jarvis, JD Leslie, Tawiah M'Carthy, Ngabo Nabea, Makambe K. Simamba, Tony Ofori, Oyin Oladejo, Ordena Stephens-Thompson and Amaka Umeh.

When: February 29, 2024, to March 17, 2024, at 7:30 pm (Mondays are dark). Weekend and Wednesday matinees at 1:30 pm and Pay What You Choose Tuesdays

Previews: February 29, March 1, 2, and 5, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Opening Night: Thursday, March 7, 2024, 2024 at 7:30 pm

Where: Baillie Theatre, Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 50 Tank House Lane

Approx. Runtime: 3 hours (including 20-minute intermission)

Price: Tickets range from \$36.00 to \$87.00 incl. fees and taxes

To purchase tickets: <https://www.soulpepper.ca/performances/threesisters>

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Media Gallery:

[soulpepper.ca/press/galleries](https://www.soulpepper.ca/press/galleries)

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