CAP UCLA Presents
Barber Shop Chronicles
A co-production of Fuel, National Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse
Written by Inua Ellams

West Coast Premiere

October 18–20 at Freud Playhouse, UCLA

“Ellams isn’t just sharing the experiences of people we seldom see on our stages, he does so with a color, force and boundlessness of intellectual inquiry.” —The Telegraph

UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance (CAP UCLA) presents the West Coast premiere of Nigerian-born, UK-based poet, playwright and performer Inua Ellams’ celebrated play Barber Shop Chronicles, a co-production of Fuel, National Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse, from Thursday, Oct. 18 to Saturday, Oct. 20 at 8 p.m. at the Freud Playhouse, UCLA. Tickets for $29–$59 are available now at cap.ucla.edu, 310-825-2101, Ticketmaster and the UCLA Central Ticket Office.
A sold-out sensation in multiple London runs, Barber Shop Chronicles explores the diversity of black male identity through the intimate community of the urban barbershop, where African men have gathered for generations to discuss the world and their lives. These are places where the banter can be barbed but the truth is always telling. The cast riffs on topics both personal and political — from family to race relations to views about fatherhood and masculinity — as we eavesdrop on conversations in six different barbershops in London, Lagos, Johannesburg, Accra, Kampala and Harare over the course of a single day.

Ellams has described his plays as “failed poems”: “The voices in my head just began to grow bigger, louder and in numbers. When this happens, the poems become multi-voiced and turn into dialogue. Eventually this dialogue breaks away from the poetic form altogether. There were several voices feeding into the conversations within the sacred spaces that barbershops seemed to be.”

A “joyous, surprising, moving production” (Times of London), Barber Shop Chronicles resonates with audiences and critics alike for its deeply engaging sense of humor and humanity.

The cast for the United States and Canada fall tour of Barber Shop Chronicles is Tuwaine Barrett, Elliot Edusah, Maynard Eziashi, Alhaji Fofana, Bayo Gbadomsi, Solomon Israel, Patrice Naiambana, Anthony Ofoegbu, Kenneth Omole, Ekow Quartey, Jo Servi and David Webber. The production is directed by Bijan Sheibani, designed by Rae Smith, with lighting design by Jack Knowles, movement direction by Aline David and sound design by Gareth Fry.

The tour will visit Gammage Theatre at Arizona State University, CAP UCLA at Freud Playhouse, Zellerbach Hall at University of Berkeley California, Seattle Moore Theatre, The Roble Theatre at Stanford University, The Grand Theatre in London Canada, Kennedy Center in Washington, ART in Boston and The Moore Theatre at Dartmouth College Hanover.

Kate McGrath, Director of Fuel, and Inua Ellams met in 2008, after Kate saw what became Inua’s first theatre show, The 14th Tale, at BAC. Fuel helped Inua develop his debut play and produced it, premiering it at the Edinburgh Festival, winning a Fringe First, touring it in the UK and internationally and presenting it at the National Theatre. Since that first meeting, Fuel has worked closely with Inua, producing Untitled, Knight Watch, Long Song Goodbye, Black T-shirt Collection, The Spalding Suite, An Evening with an Immigrant, and Barber Shop Chronicles. Fuel is also currently co-producing Inua’s latest play, The Half God of Rainfall with Kiln Theatre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Funds for this performance provided by Deborah Irmas, Diane Levine and the Royce Center Circle Endowment Fund and the George C. Perkins Fund.

Co-commissioned by Fuel and the National Theatre. Development funded by Arts Council England with the support of Fuel, National Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Binks Trust, British Council ZA, Òran Mór and A Play, a Pie and a Pint.
This event was made possible by support from the British Council.

Barber Shop Chronicles opens CAP UCLA’s Theater series, which continues in 2019 with CAP UCLA in association with the Music Center presents Dimitris Papaioannou’s The Great Tamer (Jan. 11, Royce Hall), Quote Unquote Collective in association with Why Not Theatre MOUTHPIECE (Feb. 9, Royce Hall Rehearsal Room), Andrew Dawson: Space Panorama and Spirit of the Ring (Feb. 21-22, Royce Hall Rehearsal Room), Carrie Mae Weems: Past Tense (March 8, The Theatre at Ace Hotel), CAP UCLA in association with Center Theatre Group presents The White Album by Joan Didion by Lars Jan/Early Morning Opera (April 5-7, Freud Playhouse).

**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**
CAP UCLA presents

**Barber Shop Chronicles**
A co-production of Fuel, National Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse
Written by Inua Ellams
West Coast Premiere

Thursday, Oct. 18 at 8 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 19 at 8 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 20 at 8 p.m.
CAP UCLA at Freud Playhouse
Macgowan Hall, UCLA
245 Charles E. Young Dr. East, Los Angeles, CA 90095

**Program:** One day. Six cities. A thousand stories. Barber Shop Chronicles is a funny, joyous and equally poignant new play by Nigerian playwright and poet Inua Ellams which leaps from a barber shop in London to Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos and Accra exploring the African immigrant experience. For generations, African men have gathered in barber shops to share gossip, bare their souls, announce births, deaths, marriages and other family news and to discuss politics. Throughout the play, the importance of a good trim is emphasized often, but Barber Shop Chronicles is about more than hair — it’s about the politics of being part of the African diaspora and of being a man.

Post-show discussion with the cast of Barber Shop Chronicles on Thursday, Oct. 18, immediately following the performance.

**Tickets:**
Single tickets: $29–$59
Online: cap.ucla.edu
UCLA Central Ticket Office: 310-825-2101, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Box office: open 90 minutes prior to the event start time.

**Art In Action:** The Black Barber Shop
Thursday, Oct. 18 and Friday, October 19 at 7 p.m.
Little Theatre, Macgowan Hall (across from the Freud Playhouse)
No reservations necessary, seating is limited.
Pre-performance discussion with Quincy T. Mills, author of Cutting Along the Color Line: Black Barbers and Black Barber Shops in America. On Thursday, Professor Mills will be joined by playwright Inua Ellams, author of Barber Shop Chronicles, and Scot Brown, associate professor of African American Studies and History at UCLA. Both talks will have an opportunity for audience discussion. Signed copies of Cutting Along the Color Line will be available for sale.

**Artist websites:** [Inua Ellams](#) | [Fuel](#) | [National Theatre](#) | [West Yorkshire Playhouse](#) 

**Credits:**
A Fuel, National Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse co-production

**Barber Shop Chronicles**

**Writer** Inua Ellams  
**Director** Bijan Sheibani  
**Designer** Rae Smith  
**Lighting Designer** Jack Knowles  
**Movement Director** Aline David  
**Sound Designer** Gareth Fry  
**Music Director** Michael Henry  
** fight Director** Kev McCurdy  
**Associate Director** Stella Odunlami  
**Barber Consultant** Peter Atakpo  
**Company Voice Work** Charmian Hoare  
**Dialect Coach** Hazel Holder  
**Tour Casting Director** Lotte Hines

Wallace / Timothy / Mohammed / Tinashe Tuwaine Barrett  
Tanaka / Fifi Elliot Edusah  
Musa / Andile / Mensah Maynard Eziashi  
Ethan Alhaji Fofana  
Samuel Bayo Gbadoms  
Winston / Shoni Solomon Israel  
Tokunbo / Paul / Simphiwe Patrice Naiambana  
Emmanuel Anthony Ofoegbu  
Kwame / Fabrice / Brian Kenneth Omole  
Olawale / Wole / Kwabena / Simon Ekow Quartey  
El Nathan / Benjamin / Dwain Jo Servi  
Abram / Ohene / Sizwe David Webber

**Design Associate** Catherine Morgan  
Re-lighter and Production Electrician Rachel Bowen  
**Lighting Associate** Laura Howells  
**Sound Associate** Laura Hammond  
**Wardrobe Supervisor** Louise Marchand-Paris

**Pre-Production Manager** Richard Eustace
Production Manager Sarah Cowan
Company Stage Manager Julia Reid
Deputy Stage Manager Fiona Bardsley
Assistant Stage Manager Sylvia Darkwa-Ohemeng
Costume Supervisor Lydia Crimp
Costume and Buying Supervisor Jessica Dixon

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Inua Ellams, writer
Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a cross art form practitioner, a poet, playwright and performer, graphic artist and designer and founder of the Midnight Run — an international, arts-filled, nighttime, playful, urban, walking experience. He is a Complete Works poet alumni and a designer at White Space Creative Agency. Across his work, Identity, Displacement and Destiny are reoccurring themes in which he also tries to mix the old with the new: traditional African storytelling with contemporary poetry, pencil with pixel, texture with vector images. His poetry is published by Flipped Eye, Akashic, Nine Arches & several plays by Oberon.

Bijan Sheibani, director
Bijan was Artistic Director of the Actors Touring Company (2007-2010) and Associate Director of the National Theatre (2010–2015), where he directed A Taste of Honey, Emil and the Detectives, Romeo and Juliet, Damned by Despair, The Kitchen, War Horse (US tour), Greenland and Our Class. His other theatre credits include: Dance Nation (Almeida); Circle Mirror Transformation (Home, Manchester); The Brothers Size and Eurydice (Young Vic/Actors Touring Company); Barber Shop Chronicles (National Theatre/Fuel/West Yorkshire Playhouse); and Romeo and Juliet (National Theatre). Opera credits include Nothing (Glyndebourne); and Tell Me The Truth About Love (Streetwise Opera).

Fuel, co-producer
Fuel produces an adventurous, playful and significant program of work — live, digital, and across art forms — for a large and representative audience across the UK and beyond. We collaborate with outstanding artists with fresh perspectives and approaches who seek to explore our place in the world, expose our fears, understand our hopes for the future, create experiences which change us and in turn empower us to make change in the world around us.

Fuel Director Kate McGrath and Inua Ellams met in 2008, after Kate saw the beginnings of what became Inua’s first play, The 14th Tale, at BAC. Fuel helped Inua develop this debut and produced it, premiering it at the Edinburgh Festival, winning a Fringe First, touring it in the UK and internationally and presenting it at the National Theatre. Since that first meeting, Fuel has worked closely with Inua, producing Untitled, Knight Watch, The Long Song Goodbye, Black T-shirt Collection, The Spalding Suite, and Barber Shop Chronicles since its inception. Fuel is also currently touring Inua’s An Evening with an Immigrant where with poems, stories and extracts from his plays, he tells about his life through the lens of his experience of immigration.

Upcoming Fuel projects include: Touching the Void, adapted by David Greig and directed by Tom Morris, opening at the Bristol Old Vic in September 2018.

National Theatre, co-producer
The National Theatre makes world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring. And we make it for everyone.

We stage up to 30 productions at our South Bank home each year, ranging from reimagined classics — such as Greek tragedy and Shakespeare — to modern masterpieces and new work...
by contemporary writers and theatre-makers. The work we make strives to be as open, as
diverse, as collaborative and as national as possible. Much of that new work is researched and
developed at the New Work Department: we are committed to nurturing innovative work from
new writers, directors, creative artists and performers. Equally, we are committed to education,
with a wide-ranging learning program for all ages in our Clore Learning Centre and in schools
and communities across the UK.

The National’s work is also seen on tour throughout the UK and internationally, and in
collaborations and co-productions with regional theatres. Popular shows transfer to the West End
and occasionally to Broadway. Through National Theatre Live, we broadcast live performances
to cinemas around the world.

National Theatre: On Demand. In Schools makes acclaimed, curriculum-linked productions free
to stream on demand in every primary and secondary school in the country. Online, the NT
offers a rich variety of innovative digital content on every aspect of theatre.

We do all we can to keep ticket prices affordable and to reach a wide audience, and use our
public funding to maintain artistic risk-taking, accessibility and diversity.

**West Yorkshire Playhouse**, co-producer
Welcome to the home of incredible stories. There has been a Playhouse in Leeds for almost 50
years; from 1968 to 1990 as Leeds Playhouse and then with the opening of a brand new theatre
on its current Quarry Hill site it became West Yorkshire Playhouse.

West Yorkshire Playhouse is a leading UK producing theatre; a cultural hub, a place where
people gather to tell and share stories and to engage in world class theatre. We make work
which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create
inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire. From large scale spectacle, to intimate
performance we develop and make work for our stages, for found spaces, for touring, for
schools and community centers. Our 2015–16 production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* played to
over 500,000 people across the country — our production of *Beryl* played to 100 in a village hall
in Wickenby, Lincolnshire. We create work to entertain and inspire.

As dedicated collaborators, we work regularly with other theaters from across the UK,
independent producers, and some of the most distinctive, original voices in theatre today. We
develop work with established practitioners and find, nurture and support new voices that ought
to be heard. We cultivate new talent by providing creative space for new writers, emerging
directors, companies and individual theatre makers to refine their practice.

Alongside our work for the stage we are dedicated to providing creative engagement
opportunities that excite and stimulate. We build, run and sustain projects which reach out to
everyone from refugee communities, to young people and students, to older communities and
people with learning disabilities. At the Playhouse there is always a way to get involved.

**ABOUT CAP UCLA**
**UCLA’s Center for the Art of Performance** (CAP UCLA) is dedicated to the advancement of the
contemporary performing arts in all disciplines — dance, music, spoken word and theater, as
well as emerging digital, collaborative and cross-platforms — by leading artists from around the
globe. Part of UCLA’s School of the Arts and Architecture, CAP UCLA curates and facilitates
direct exposure to artists who are creating extraordinary works of art and fosters a vibrant
learning community both on and off the UCLA campus. The organization invests in the creative
process by providing artists with financial backing and time to experiment and expand their
practices through strategic partnerships and collaborations. As an influential voice within the local, national and global arts communities, CAP UCLA connects this generation to the next in order to preserve a living archive of our culture. CAP UCLA is also a safe harbor where cultural expression and artistic exploration can thrive, giving audiences the opportunity to experience real life through characters and stories on stage, and giving artists an avenue to challenge assumptions and advance new ways of seeing and understanding the world we live in now.

Like CAP UCLA on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram. #CAPUCLA

PRESS REVIEW TICKETS/PHOTO PASSES/INTERVIEW REQUESTS: Contact Holly Wallace at hawallace@arts.ucla.edu, 310-206-8744.

IMAGES: Available by request or register for download at cap.ucla.edu/pressimages. Photo by Dean Chalkley.