

Headlong



NOTTINGHAM  
PLAYHOUSE

# A Raisin in the Sun

**By Lorraine  
Hansberry**

**Directed by  
Tinuke Craig**

## EDUCATION PACK

For Drama GCSE, A Level &  
BTEC Performing Arts students



# OVERVIEW & CONTENTS

This education pack has been created in collaboration between Headlong Theatre and The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. We are committed to deepening and nurturing young people's understanding of theatre and the arts. We aim to raise the cultural aspirations of young people and make theatre accessible to all. With this in mind, this education pack is designed for teachers of Drama GCSE and BTEC Performing Arts students and is geared towards the live theatre review and practitioner study.

This pack is written from a theatre maker's perspective and we hope it provides some interesting insights into how a production like *A Raisin in the Sun* is created and performed. There is information about the social and historical context of the text along with specific design elements of the production. Additionally there are also some resources and ideas of how you might further explore the themes and issues raised within this innovative and thought provoking performance.

*A Raisin in the Sun* will be a set text for assessment, from 2027, for the WJEC Eduqas GCE A LEVEL in DRAMA and THEATRE syllabus.

**A Headlong, Leeds Playhouse, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse co-production.**

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## CONTENT WARNING & AGE GUIDANCE

Ages 14+. Please note this production contains racially explicit language, themes and content and reference to abortion.

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# ABOUT A RAISIN IN THE SUN

At Headlong our ambition is to make theatre with the power to move. We're interested in big, exhilarating productions that use the unexpected to connect everyone we reach as a national touring organisation.

Our Artistic Programming is focused on new plays which have at their core a central dramatic question which resonates with the political conversations of today but also to treat classic plays as new plays. We want to ask audiences and artists alike to consider new questions, new resonances, and new perspectives when meeting theatre history and legacy. Finally, we have to fall in love with a play and this work meets all of that criteria. We think it's a work ripe for exploration with British audiences at a time where there is a national and global conversation around personal belonging. In the midst of contemporary identity politics we find that so often the human story is not considered, and this play platforms micro and familial psychodramas and raw human interactions set against a panoramic backdrop of socio-economic politics. It is so superbly written and structured as a play, its dramatic roots can feel like that of the great Greek tragedians whilst its dialogue reaches across time periods and tugs at something we can recognise in ourselves today.

**'Never before, in the entire history of the American theatre, had so much of the truth of black people's lives been seen on the stage'**

**James Baldwin,  
Civil Rights Activist on 'A Raisin in the Sun'**

*A Raisin in the Sun* is an integral work in the American canon, and the first play by an African American woman to be produced and performed on Broadway. The play illuminates systemic and structural racism through the story of a Black family looking to move to a white neighbourhood, inspired by Lorraine Hansberry's father's own landmark Supreme Court case - wherein he challenged the covenant restricting African Americans moving into the white neighbourhood of Washington Park, Chicago. Lorraine was ten during this court case, the same age as Travis in the play.

Lorraine Hansberry was the first African American to win the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and at 29, the youngest playwright to do so for *A Raisin in the Sun*. It took producer Philip Rose 15 months to raise the money for *Raisin* as the backers 'didn't believe that a play featuring Black people "emoting" would draw crowds'. Broadway audiences hadn't seen a play with Black characters that was rooted in realism, and with a clear social message.

A *Raisin in the Sun* is a play about dreams, and aspirations - and moving forwards despite having a dangerous system built on white supremacy stacked against you. The title of the play comes from Langston Hughes 1951 poem Harlem:

**What happens to a dream deferred?**

*Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore –  
And then run?*

*Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over –  
like a syrupy sweet?*

*Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.*

*Or does it explode?*



# SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERS

*A Raisin in the Sun* is set in the Younger family's small apartment on the South Side of Chicago in the 1950s. The family is anticipating the arrival of a \$10,000 life insurance cheque following the death of Walter Younger Sr. Each family member has different ideas on how to spend the money: Lena Younger (Mama) wants to use it to buy a house and fulfil her late husband's dream, as well as a better life for her family, especially her grandson Travis. Her son Walter Lee Younger dreams of investing in a liquor store to achieve financial independence. Whilst Beneatha Younger, Walter's sister, hopes to use part of the money to pay for medical school. Walter currently works as a chauffeur, and his wife, Ruth, is expecting their second child, although she has yet to tell the rest of the family. Beneatha is being courted by two men: George, a wealthy young businessman, and Joseph Asagai, a Nigerian student who encourages her to embrace her heritage.

Without consulting the others, Mama spends some of the money on a down payment on a house in the white neighbourhood of Clybourne

Park, reserving the rest for Beneatha's school fees and a part investment in Walter's dream. She entrusts Walter with the money to bank, showing respect for him as the head of the household. Mr. Karl Lindner, a representative from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, visits and offers to buy the house back at a profit to keep the neighbourhood white. The family refuses his offer.

Walter's liquor store dream falls apart after his business partner runs off with the money. Devastated, Walter is forced to reveal that he included Beneatha's school money in his investment. He considers accepting Lindner's offer to recoup some of their losses. However, in a climactic moment, he decides against it, embracing his family's dignity and pride. Beneatha announces that she wants to move to Nigeria with Joseph.

The play ends on a tentatively hopeful note with the Youngers preparing to move into their new home, facing an uncertain future with renewed unity.





### **Lena Younger (Mama)**

The strong matriarch, head of the family. The life insurance cheque she receives after the death of her husband is the catalyst for change for the Younger family.



### **Walter Lee Younger**

Mama's son. He is employed as a chauffeur for a white man, and dreams of working for himself, and gaining the respect of his family.



### **Ruth Younger**

Walter's wife, who supports her husband but also shares Mama's dream of a better home and prospects for her children, including the latest one she is expecting.



### **Beneatha Younger**

Walter's sister, who is determined to become a doctor. Courted by George and Joseph.



### **George Murchinson**

A wealthy and well educated young man, pursuing Beneatha. He encourages her to assimilate, and dismissed her exploration of her heritage.



### **Joseph Asagai**

Beneatha's second suitor is a charming Nigerian student who encourages her to embrace her roots and introduces her to African dress, culture and music. Joseph speaks Yoruba.



### **Travis Younger**

Walter and Ruth's son.



### **Karl Linder**

Representative of Clybourne Park housing association. He visits the Younger's to cajole, bribe and threaten them not to move to the area.



### **Bobo**

A friend of Walter. He is also part of Walter's dream to invest money into a new 'liquor' store



In conversation with

Tinuke Craig, Director

**What drew you to the text of *A Raisin in the Sun*?**

I was drawn to *A Raisin in the Sun* partly because its reputation precedes it as one of the great classics of the 20th century and it has such incredible history attached to it, it was the first play on Broadway by a black woman and there is a lot of lore around Lorraine Hansberry, this extraordinary young woman, who burned extremely bright and was taken too soon. I think I was intrigued by all the theatre history around it, first of all, and it has had these amazing people who have taken on the roles in the play: Denzel Washington, Sidney Poitier, Phylicia Rashad, Ruby Dee, Anika Noni Rose, and Sophie Okonedo, these amazing people who have taken on the roles on, so that drew me to it. Then when I got into reading it I was reminded that, I always find family dramas really fascinating, I really love plays where people who wouldn't necessarily spend time together are thrown together through circumstance and you get that a lot in family dramas and workplace dramas. I think it's such an interesting and fascinating dynamic to see something so interpersonal that is also running alongside something so political, I think that marriage of micro and macro and people and politic is exciting and really fun to work on.

**Could you talk a little about your process as a director when working with classical plays?**

I think my process with directing classical plays in some ways is the same as it is for any kind of play which is, trying to work out how to create a world that lets the characters go where they need to go and do what they need to do. I think it can sometimes be a little bit of a trap to sort of find a way to do something new with it or do something different to how other people have done it and you end up thinking about your play in relation to all other productions of that play and that can be quite stifling.

A better thing to do is to really think about your personal response, or certainly for me that's the better thing for me to do, to think about my personal response and what this makes me feel like and what audience experience I would like to share and that is true regardless of the piece. There is maybe little more pressure on a classical piece but I think if anything you need to work against that and really follow your own line of enquiry and work out what it is you really want to say.

**What was the most rewarding and most challenging part of the process?**

The most rewarding part of the process is to watch the characters come to life, they are so vivid on the page and it's really exciting to work with a group of actors especially as generous as the ones we have, on making these people feel really real, and truthful, and layered, and contradictory. That's a really wonderful thing to see develop especially because it keeps going after you've opened the show over the course of the run and that's a real treat.

I think the most challenging part is really practical, and that is, it is really long and so managing time over the course of the process is really hard. There is a child in the show and that means you have lots of children playing that part. There is quite a lot of logistical things around it – we cook real food on stage and that's a whole thing. The logistics of a play that long and that dense can be a real challenge but the text itself is so beautiful that it's really fun.

**How do you refract contemporary politics through a seminal piece of theatre which holds such a rich theatrical legacy in order to build resonance with an audience today?**

I suppose in some ways my first port of call is to tell the story as clearly and truthfully as possible and because the play is so loaded with politics that are relevant now as it ever was, we have to trust it is going to refract a contemporary politics through it anyway. It's something really interesting where it's a classic and people know about it, and it's famous but when you hear it for the first time it feels really fresh, it feels like it could have been written this year and that allows us to live in the present and the past at the same time.





# DESIGN ELEMENTS

Set Designer

Cécile Trémolières

Here we explore the work of Cécile Trémolières and their work creating the world of this production of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

The set design for this production of *A Raisin in the Sun* is hugely important when it comes to communicating the themes and issues of the play. Cécile Trémolières, along with the director Tinueke Craig, discussed the need for the set to feel quite naturalistic to match the dialogue of the text, but to also have the ability to transform into a more abstract and 'expressionistic' environments when needed. An artist that Cecile Trémolières took inspiration from initially during her research was that of Charles W White, a painter that was a contemporary of Lorraine Hansberry. He combined images within his work or naturalistic depictions of people within his community, post war

Chicago, but with the 'sublimation of dreams and hope', framing them with backgrounds and colours that revealed the 'inner life' of the subjects, juxtaposing with the naturalism. This was an aspect of design that Cecile Trémolières was interested in utilising for her vision for the set design.

In addition to artwork, inspiration was also taken through sourcing photographic images of homes in 1950's Chicago . These images depicted how larger properties were divided up into smaller, cramped dwellings by 'greedy landlords' at the time. The small rooms and partitions within these properties was interesting from the perspective of a set for this play as places of intimacy can be created along with dramatic tension of the frustration of a family living in such close proximity.

Part of the tension within the world of the play is due to the 'claustrophobic' nature of the environment with three generations of one family literally living on top of each other. As Tinuke explains with regards to the set 'it felt important that the room that most of the drama happens in is small and cramped, that you really get a sense of the kind of close confines and the pressure on the house and the desire to leave it.'

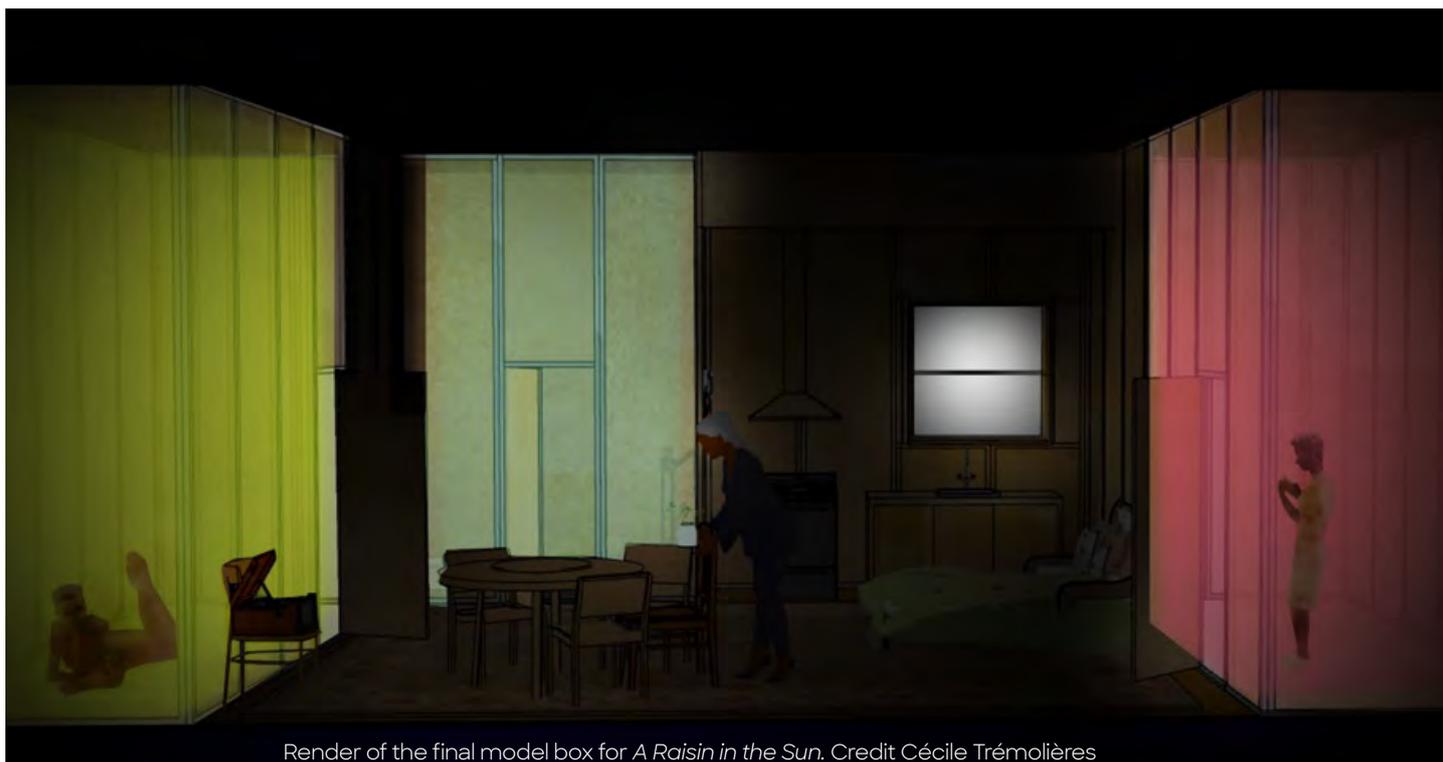
The initial idea was to create a naturalistic room centre stage where most of the action takes place with outer boxes where more surreal 'dreamlike' sequences take place. These side boxes are bright, non naturalistic lighting.

The set also experiments with the use of gauze (thin fabric) that when transparent can reveal the naturalistic set behind of the kitchen but can also be used to project shadows and other images onto when in its opaque state.

At the very end of the play, as the family is preparing to move away to their new life, the set is stripped back and is very sparse. This symbolises that they are free of this cramped world, whilst also giving a sense of foreboding about the world they are about to enter with a gloomy and desolate feeling.



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library. (1941). Kitchen of apartment, South Side of Chicago, Illinois, April 1941.



Render of the final model box for *A Raisin in the Sun*. Credit Cécile Trémolières



## In Conversation with Cécile Trémolières, Set Designer

### Lighting and projection are important aspects of your design – how do they help to engage the audience and enhance their experience?

Lighting plays a crucial role in how we tell the story. The realistic room and the dream spaces are enhanced by the lighting. The set is made of different types of canvas that become opaque when lit from the inside and transparent when lit from the outside.

Parts of the house are revealed throughout the show, looking very different depending on the lighting. In the realistic room, the aesthetic is natural, domestic lighting, but in the dream space, where characters go on personal journeys, the lighting shifts to unexpected colours.

Lighting has a significant impact on how the story unfolds.

### Going back to the original text, what aspects of the play – its themes and historical context – have influenced your design?

The original text is set in Chicago, between the 1940s and 1950s. I looked at a lot of archival pictures from that time for inspiration, especially for the colours—there are a lot of brownish tones

in the set. The small, cramped apartment is vital because the characters are living in such poor conditions that they want to escape.

I studied flats from that period, particularly kitchens and apartments where larger spaces had been divided. Partitions, door frames, and a sense of confinement were key design influences.

The relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces is also essential. The characters live above, below, and around others, with limited escape routes. That confinement is a significant part of the design, contrasting the cramped indoor space with the more open outdoor space.

Without giving too much away, there's a sense of hearing the neighbours, and a staircase leads to the street. That dynamic between indoor and outdoor spaces shaped my decisions.

### Where else have you drawn inspiration from?

Outside of the historical references, the big challenge with the director was making the play relevant for a modern audience. The original is perfect as a naturalistic piece, so we had to decide how to make it resonate today.

Our production isn't the same as what would have been staged in the 1950s, but it also doesn't impose so much on the text that you can't follow the play. It's about balance.

We used subtle references to create a world where the period remains, but dream spaces lift the characters and audience out of their environment. We looked at James Turrell's installations for lighting inspiration and medieval paintings for the idea of connecting scenes side by side. There are a few moments where we tell the story in parallel ways.

Textures were also important. We transformed a mouldy wall, symbolising the characters' rundown flat, into something that feels artistic, almost like a painting. We moved away from strict realism while maintaining a believable space for the story.

**To what extent is the house itself a character in the play - in that it's the family home but also somewhere they are desperate to escape from?**

The house is definitely a character in the story, similar to *The Cherry Orchard*. It's the place the characters want to escape from, but it's also the family home where important life events—births, love stories—have occurred.

When I design, I think of the space as a way to tell the story. The design evolves alongside the characters. In this play, the space plays a huge role in their lives, and we've designed it to transform as the story progresses.

Without revealing too much, the space, which feels heavy at the start, gradually becomes lighter, eventually disappearing – but I won't say more!



## Costume Designer

### Maybelle Laye

Here we take a closer look at the costumes including design elements incorporated by Maybelle Laye for the clothing worn by the characters within this production.

Although there are naturalistic elements with regards to costume, it was also important that there was some playfulness incorporated into the clothing through colours and textures.

**RUTH is a domestic worker. I imagine from the pictures that I found, most domestic workers of the late 1950s would have been in uniform. But obviously that kind of fluctuated between sort of smarter attire, but obviously she's been a domestic worker for quite a while. So everything's kind of got this very worn, practical idea to it. So it's nothing flashy. It's nothing really that majorly colourful. But there's a lot of texture, a lot of wear and tear, comfortable clothing that she can work in.**



## WALTER

He is a limousine driver and through much of the play he will be wearing various forms of his uniform – he is embarrassed about his job and feels almost emasculated by it.



## TRAVIS

Ruth and Walter's ten year old son is quite cheeky and lively and Maybelle wanted to design a costume that indicated lots of outdoor play. Although he goes to school, he doesn't have a uniform, but will look more formal.



## BENEATHA

We wanted to represent that she is a bit more forward thinking and so chose to have her wear trousers.

She is also on a journey of self discovery and wanted to play with the idea of having different identities such as her exploration of her African heritage, her identity as an aspiring doctor but also being a part of the beatnik scene.



**Beatnik – a social movement in the mid-20th century, who subscribed to an anti-materialistic lifestyle.**



## MAMA / LENA

She is the head of the household and also a domestic worker. Tinuke (the director) and I were conscious that we did not want to use the usual trope of a larger, matronly look that we have seen before. Everything with Mama is old but looked after. There is practicality about her to reflect in the costume.

The characters of Beneatha's suitors GEORGE and ASAGAI are quite contrasting, symbolizing the pull each one has in her life. Creating a distinct difference between these characters was key for Maybelle with Asagai in a suit, compared to the more casual 'Americana' look of George in a sports jacket.





## Sound Design

### Max Pappenheim

Here Max Pappenheim outlines his thoughts and inspiration about his sound design for this production of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

From the outset, we knew we wanted to focus on the characters, atmosphere and emotion. The story is set at a time in history but the characters explain everything we need to know about that - this is a play about people and how they feel! So we decided not to use music from the period in a “documentary” style, but only as it would be heard by the characters: through the phonograph, through the neighbours’ phonograph through the floor and walls, or from outside the apartment. We also felt that the naturalistic sounds of the apartment - traffic, planes, voices and nature - would sometimes swell and take over, as in those moments when an innocuous sound outside can become captivating and distracting if you’re feeling tired or stressed. So the transitions when time passes between scenes are more of a “collage” than an interlude: time speeds up and slows, but we never quite “cut” in time.

At the end of the play, we want to express the terrible pressure that Mama feels, that eventually lightens as she finally leaves the

apartment. So we’re planning to combine all of the low, grating, oppressive sounds that we’ve heard throughout the play, many of them “real” in origin, layering them up very slowly so that the audience don’t quite realise it was happening but feel the tension building. Then at the final moment we’ll take that sound away quite rapidly to make it feel like all that tension has evaporated, and a great weight has lifted.

All of our conversations about the feel of the play are multi-way! The semi-see-through walls, where light can bleed slowly through (like the sun through clouds), suggests sound also changing slowly, that’s also often quite indistinct - so when a record goes on, it “crystallises” the vague echoes we were already hearing. At the time of writing we have just been looking at the moment when Travis is seen in the side room. We’re discussing what the light will be on him, what kind of sound might mirror that, and how these match up with the actor’s movement. We don’t know exactly what we’ll do in the end - there might be no sound at all in that moment! - but we are taking a lot of care that we are all aiming for the same overall effect. That’s the wonderful thing about making theatre: everything is collaborative.



## Voice and Dialect Coach

### Aundrea Fudge

One important aspect for the actors performing in this production is their use of voice and accent. Throughout the rehearsal process they were given the opportunity to work closet with voice and Dialect Coach Aundrea Fudge, Here we learn about the process in conversation with Aundrea Fudge:

#### **What is your role as a Voice and Dialect coach?**

My main job is to ensure that performers are heard and understood by the audience in a vocal capacity. Sometimes this involves coaching an accent, sometimes it means doing vocal exercises with them, but most of the time, it's about making sure performers feel confident and secure in their own voices so they can deliver their best performance.

#### **How are you are working with the cast on this production of *A Raisin in the Sun*?**

For *A Raisin in the Sun*, every performer is working with an accent that differs from their own, and one that is rooted in a very specific period of American history. Here's the process I follow:

#### **Research and Planning**

Before beginning work with the actors, I thoroughly read the play, gather accent

samples for the cast, and create a list of sounds or key features that stand out to me. I aim to collect as much data about the accent as possible. I also meet with the director to discuss their vision for the play, how they intend to work in the rehearsal room, and to identify any performers who may need additional support or guidance. Additionally, I may attend creative meetings with other team members to align on the overall vision.

#### **Introductions**

Early in the process, typically in the first week, I introduce the accent to the performers. This introduction covers basic pronunciation rules, intonation patterns, and addresses any initial questions the performers may have about the accent.

#### **One-on-One Sessions (Rehearsal Process)**

*A Raisin in the Sun* presents a unique challenge due to its length, which limits the amount of one-on-one time I have with each actor. Consequently, much of the accent work happens in the room with the director and actors during the early weeks of rehearsal, particularly while blocking. I also conduct individual sessions with each performer,

where we explore their character's background and influences. Together, we develop a personalized guideline for the performer's accent and voice. For instance, I might remind them that all their "i" sounds should be pronounced like "e," or that the accent typically rises at the end of sentences.

### **Practice, Notes, and Performance**

During weeks three and four, I step back and allow the performers to apply what we've covered in rehearsals. I observe a run of the show before technical rehearsals and provide notes, focusing on our one-on-one work and addressing any new issues that arise. I also attend a dress rehearsal after tech to offer further feedback. Depending on the production, I may conduct additional sessions during tech, but this depends on the director, the performers, and the budget. I typically watch a preview performance and give final notes before my involvement ends. Occasionally, I'm called back for refresher sessions with performers who might have fallen ill or need a quick review of their accent.

What's unique about this production is that it will be performed at three different venues. Each time the show is staged in a new space, the way the voice carries changes. Therefore, I try to visit each venue to ensure that the performers can be heard clearly and to identify any "weak spots" or vocally challenging areas in the theatre. I'll also monitor the consistency of the accents to maintain the continuity of the show.

### **Why is it important that theatres work with Voice and Dialect coaches on productions?**

Accents are a crucial aspect of human interaction, influencing how we connect with one another. A poorly executed accent can disrupt the audience's immersion in a play, while a well-done accent can elevate the entire performance. Many people hesitate to hire a voice or dialect coach, either because they don't want their performers to feel inadequate or because they believe performers should be able to handle it on their own. However, mastering an accent involves much more than just getting the sounds right. Even if a performer is skilled in an accent, they also need to be able to perform effectively with it and sustain that vocal performance for the entire duration required. My role is to make the performer's job easier, supporting their process of discovering and bringing a character to life. Additionally, it's challenging for performers to hear themselves accurately while they're acting, so I provide an extra set of ears focused specifically on their voice.

### **How might a young person discover more about being a Voice and Dialect coach as a potential career?**

I think the easiest way is to contact a voice or dialect coach. We're normally listed in any of the productions we're apart of so you can easily google us and every drama school should have at least one voice person on staff. We're very accessible and most of us love talking about voice and accents!



## Sustainability within the theatre

### Production Manager

#### Kat Ellis

It is becoming more important that theatres and theatre companies are aware of the responsibilities to ensure that productions are as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. Here Kat Ellis, Production Manager, outlines how this production is making sure to be as green as possible.

#### **Why is it important that theatres and theatre makers consider sustainability and its impact on the environment?**

Global warming and climate change are in an emergent state and it is imperative the world does what it can do to reduce our carbon emissions in all walks of life and all businesses. This includes theatre, and many theatre organisations have declared a climate emergency and committed to working in a 'greener' manner. Every person has their part to play, and realistically we can make the biggest impact through our work, rather than through our personal lives (although that is still important!). Theatre also has the advantage of being an art that can teach people and have a clear 'message' which influences our community. It is important we use this circle of influence to spread the word and encourage everyone to be thinking about the environment.

#### **In what ways is this specific production working towards being as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible?**

On this particular production, we are working with the Theatre Green Book standards, in particular we are aiming for Basic standard. This means we intend for 50% of the materials used in making the show (set, props, costume etc.) to have had a previous life, and 65% to have a future life. For example, the floor of the set has come from another show and we have sanded this down, repainted it and refinished it in order for it to suit our needs. This means we are minimising our use of virgin materials and thus working towards a circular economy. We also have sustainability on the agenda at all of our meetings and encourage



the full company to think about what changes they may want to make to the way the work in order to be as environmentally friendly as possible. As this production is touring, there are certain amounts of transport that we can't really get away from, however we are making an effort to reduce transport and combine transport runs as much as possible throughout rehearsals and the tour.

#### **In the future what can and should theatres be implementing in terms of actions to support suitability and lesson its negative impact on the environment?**

We would recommend that theatres look into the Theatre Green Book, which gives a clear framework for how we can lessen our impact and achievable methods for how we can do this. The aim is, of course, to eventually become a Net Zero industry but this is not something that can happen overnight and we need to gradually change our processes in order to get there. Practically, this looks like - using less virgin materials; finding second homes for materials; building things in a 'modular' fashion so that they have more of a chance to be used again; building a community to support this circular economy; using less energy and LED lighting; reducing use of harmful materials such as solvent based paints and polystyrene. The list could go on! It can be quite an overwhelming topic to start investigating, however do not let perfection be the enemy of progression. Any small step we can make now will eventually add up, and just by talking about it and making it part of the process you'd be surprised at how much naturally starts to change!

# EDUCATION RESOURCES

## Discussion Points

- The Narrative of *A Raisin in the Sun* ends with the Younger family moving out of their cramped apartment into their new home in a 'white neighbourhood'. What issues or challenges are the family likely to encounter when they arrive?
- Although *A Raisin in the Sun* was first performed in 1959, why is this play text still relevant to a modern day audience 65 years later?
- Lena Younger has decided the best way to support her family though use of her husband's life insurance is to purchase a house. What else could she have used the money for that would also have been a way to support them?



## In the rehearsal room

### Physical drama skills

- Facial Expressions
- Posture
- Gestures

### Space and Interaction

- Levels
- Eye contact
- Proxemics/distance
- Touch

Using the images to the right and below, practice using your analysis skills and use of precise details to be able to describe the way the performers are using their physicality and space and interaction to communicate meaning.

1. Describe how the performers in the images below are using physical theatrical skills along with space and interaction. Use precise details in your analysis.
2. Explain what the performers are communicating to the audience about their relationship and emotions they are feeling?



## In conversation with

### Haruka Kuroda, Fight and Intimacy Director

Haruka Kuroda is the fight and Intimacy Director for this production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Here she talks about her role:

**Please could you describe your role as an Intimacy and Fight Director in the context of your work specifically within the theatre?**

As an Intimacy and Fight Director, I work with the director and actors to create and choreograph any intimate and violent moments in the play. I need to make sure that all the movements can be performed safely and repeatable. I like to collaborate with actors as at the end of the day they are the ones that need to perform day after day! So I need to make sure that they feel authentic in any physical storytelling we set.

You might have heard the terms Intimacy Coordinator – Just to clarify, Intimacy Coordinators works for Film and TV and Intimacy Director works in theatre. For those of us who do both as well as education work, we call ourselves Intimacy Professional.

**Why is it important and necessary to have someone in your position working within a theatrical production?**

Actors often feel they are not allowed to say "NO" in fear of risking losing their jobs or reputation. As a result, they might agree to do something that they don't want to or don't feel

safe to do. In my role, I advocate for their rights to say "NO" and help them to fine tune their intimate / violent storytelling.

**What most excites you about your work with this cast for this specific production?**

I love working with Global Majority actors and creatives (as a person of colour myself!) and I look forward to finding out their specific culture in their expression of intimacy/ violent moments in the play.

**What are some of the challenges you face as an Intimacy and fight director?**

With some productions I may only be given one – two sessions to work with actors, so within a short space of time I need to understand their physical abilities and come up with the goods which can be quite challenging.

**How might a young person learn more about a career as an Intimacy and fight coordinator?**

Majority of Intimacy and fight directors have a performing background which is very helpful. You need to understand how to use your body to tell a story and I think you can only learn it by doing it yourself. Also it will be helpful if you like communicating with people!

Now you have read a little bit about the role of a Fight and Intimacy Director, have a discussion in pairs or a small group about:

Your thoughts on the importance of this role.

How you might consider the issues raised by Haruka in your own work.



## Devising Theatre

### Charles W White

As part of her initial research when design the set for this production of *A Raisin in the Sun*, Cécile Trémolières was inspired by the work of artist Charles W White, a contemporary of Lorraine Handsberry. Choose one of the images below as a stimulus for devising a piece of drama. Here are a few tasks that you could use to support you:

### Task one

Create a spider diagram around the images and include the following headings:

- What can I see, hear, touch and smell?
- What themes or issues can I see within the image?
- What relationships can I see within the image?
- What symbolism or imagery can I see within the image?



## Credits and Acknowledgments

This education pack was co-written and produced by Iskandar Sharazuddin, Communities Associate, Headlong and Natalie Jim, Education Producer, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. Designer Hannah Yates.

## Cast

### Lena

Doreene Blackstock

### Beneatha

Joséphine-Fransilja Brookman

### Ruth

Cash Holland

### Walter Lee

Solomon Israel

### George

Gilbert Kyem Jnr

### Joseph / Bobo

Kenneth Omole

### Karl

Jonah Russell

### Travis (Leeds & Oxford)

Adiel Magagi

Josh Ndlovu

Jayden Jhermaine Candala

Seidel Dias

### Travis (London & Nottingham)

Oliver Dunkley

Jeriah Kibusi

## Creative and Production Team

### Director

Tinuke Craig

### Set Designer

Cécile Trémolières

### Costume Designer

Maybelle Laye

### Composer & Sound Designer

Max Pappenheim

### Lighting Designer

Joshua Pharo

### Movement Director

Sarita Piotrowski

### Fight & Intimacy Director

Haruka Kuroda

### Voice & Dialect Coach

Aundrea Fudge

### Associate Director

Phillippe Cato

### Design Associate

Ruta Irbite

### Lighting Associate

Luke Haywood

### Casting Director

Lotte Hines

### Production Manager

Kat Ellis

### Company Stage Manager

Grace Pattinson

### Deputy Stage Manager

Emma Currie

### Assistant Stage Manager

Catherine Mizrahi

### Head Of Wardrobe

Becky Swindells

### Head Of Wigs, Hair & Make-Up

Chase Phoebe Hayden

### Literary Trustee

Joi Gresham

### Rehearsal Photography

Marc Brenner

### Production Photography

Ikin Yum

### Literary Trustee

Joi Gresham



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Take a look at some of our previous Education Packs:



Headlong



Lyric

NOTTINGHAM  
PLAYHOUSE

### **About Headlong**

We're Headlong.

We make theatre with the power to move.

Big, exhilarating productions that use the unexpected to connect everyone we reach, right across the nation.

### **About Leeds Playhouse**

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for more than 50 years.

As an award-winning theatre and a cultural hub, we are a place where people gather to tell and share stories and engage in world-class performances. As an organisation and a charity that is built by and for the people of Leeds, our house is – and will always be – your house. So please join us as we share our stories, and our warm and welcoming theatre with you.

### **About The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre**

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre produces bold and relevant world-class theatre from the heart of Hammersmith, the theatre's home for nearly 130 years. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Rachel O'Riordan and Executive Director Amy Belson, it is committed to being vital to, and representative of, the local community. A major force in London and UK theatre, the Lyric produces adventurous and acclaimed theatrical work that tells the stories that matter.

### **About Nottingham Playhouse**

Awarded UK's Most Welcoming Theatre in 2023 by the UK Theatre Awards, Nottingham Playhouse is one of the country's leading producing theatres and creates a range of productions throughout the year, from timeless classics to innovative family shows and adventurous new commissions.

We want our theatre to be a space where everyone feels they belong, and we use our stage to tell diverse stories that reflect our city. Our wide-reaching participation programmes create life-changing experiences for our community and we also support the next generation of theatre-makers in the East Midlands through our extensive Amplify programme.

### **About Oxford Playhouse**

Oxford Playhouse is one of the country's leading regional theatres and the only not-for-profit mid-scale venue in Oxfordshire. The theatre is at the heart of cultural life in the city and region, with a wonderfully rich heritage of live performance, drama, dance, music and comedy. It also produces mid-scale and studio productions, including a hugely popular pantomime which plays to audiences of over 40,000 each year.

As well as being a home for inspirational performance, The Playhouse is an active charity with artistic, social and educational aims. Through its Open House programme, a dynamic and wide-ranging outreach project, The Playhouse opens access for theatregoing and creative learning opportunities for thousands of people every year.



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