

PRESS RELEASE

STUDIO

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STUDIO: IN THE MOMENT
2020-2021 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

- Studio **produces audio plays for the first time**—*Kings*, by Alexandria, VA native **Sarah Burgess** and a Studio-commissioned world premiere from **Ike Holter**
- In digital streaming productions, Artistic Director **David Muse** revisits his Helen Hayes Award-winning production of *Cock*, while Associate Artistic Director **Reginald L. Douglas** makes his directorial debut at Studio with Dael Orlandersmith's *Until the Flood*
- The graphic novel becomes three dimensional in *Flight*, a moving theatrical installation about refugee brothers on an epic journey across Europe
- Series of summer solo performances in repertory from award-winning playwrights: **a world premiere by George Brant**, *2.5 Minute Ride* from **Lisa Kron**, *Flow* by **Will Power**, and *random* by distinguished British playwright **debbie tucker green** in her DC debut

Studio Theatre is meeting the moment with a **2020-2021 season** that is "In the Moment," with programming that translates the intimate theatre-going experience of its spaces into a variety of new formats. Audiences can experience Studio through audio plays, high-quality streaming productions, a breathtaking and innovative graphic-novel-meets-diorama in three dimensions, and solo plays—each representing a different performance series in the season. From **political gamesmanship to asylum seekers on a cross-continental journey** to various looks at the **historical and ongoing fight for racial justice**, Studio's 2020-2021 season **explores urgent issues on a human scale**, whether pioneering new works or revisiting past productions with new relevance.

"It's been hard to spend this long away from the theatre," says Studio Artistic Director **David Muse**, "and I'm pleased that we've found a season that is artistically adventurous, that keeps the intensity and immediacy of Studio's work, and that offers a way for every audience member to experience the work in their own comfort zone—you can join us in person later in the season, or experience the productions digitally wherever you would like. It remains a very Studio season: We are still dedicated to the kind of immediate connection between artist and audience, play and present moment, that has always animated our work. We're calling this season 'In the Moment'—which captures the livewire of performance, the unique frame that the pandemic gives this season, and the resonance each of these plays has with this unprecedented moment in history."

THE SEASON

Studio begins its subscription season in early 2021, with **Studio In Frame**, two plays filmed at Studio with multiple cameras and available for streaming that capture a high-quality, in-the-room experience and the crackling connection between actors on stage. Artistic Director **David Muse** will kick off the series by

remaking his Helen Hayes Award-winning production of *Cock*, **Mike Bartlett's** whip-smart comedy about identity, sexuality, and determining the path forward amidst uncertainty. Following is Pulitzer Prize finalist **Dael Orlandersmith's** *Until the Flood*. Studio's new Associate Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas makes his directorial debut, reimagining this solo performance about pain and resilience in Ferguson, MO with a multigenerational cast of three Black women.

Studio In-stalled marks the first opportunity for patrons to visit Studio during the 2020-2021 Season with the theatrical installation *Flight*, in spring 2021. Devised by Scottish theatre-company **Vox Motus** and designed by Jamie Harrison (magic effects, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*) the production merges graphic novel and exquisite diorama to tell a deeply affecting story of two Afghan brothers on an epic journey to London. Audience members watch from their own personal booths and with headphones as the young refugees brave lands unknown.

Studio In First Person features a slate of four powerful solo performances with particular resonance right now, presented in repertory. The series begins in summer 2021 with Studio Artist in Residence **Psalmayene 24** directing hip-hop theatre forebear **Will Power's** percussive *Flow*, a tribute to the power of stories and the importance of storytellers, with one actor embodying the characters, accompanied by a mix from a DJ spinning live. Tony Award winner **Lisa Kron's** autobiographical, Obie Award-winning *2.5 Minute Ride* tells intertwined stories of her father, a Holocaust survivor and roller coaster enthusiast. In the Washington, DC debut of celebrated playwright **debbie tucker green**, widely recognized as one of Britain's most innovative playwrights, a family's seemingly ordinary day and familiar routine is shattered by an inexplicable crime in *random*. Studio In First Person concludes with the world premiere of **George Brant's** *Tender Age*, about the moral reckoning of an ICE subcontractor who discovers he's guarding, not hardened criminals, but school-aged children. Written by the author of *Grounded* (Studio, 2014), *Tender Age* will be directed by Chicago's Henry Godinez, artistic associate at the Goodman Theatre. Audiences can enjoy these performances in person at Studio or stream them from the comfort of home.

Studio Theatre's 2020-2021 season is made possible through the generosity of Season Sponsors Susan and Dixon Butler; Mark Epstein and Amoretta Hoeber; Jean and David Grier; Robert and Arlene Kogod ; Albert Lauber and Craig Hoffman; Joan and David Maxwell; Teresa and Dan Schwartz; Linda and Steve Skalet; Bobbi and Ralph Terkowitz.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING

Studio will launch its **first foray into audio plays** under the moniker **Studio In Your Ears**, beginning in late October with an adaptation of *Kings*, the fast-talking political drama by Alexandria, VA native **Sarah Burgess** (*Impeachment: American Crime Story*, forthcoming on FX). Coinciding with the divisive 2020 presidential election, *Kings* is a lacerating comedy—a showdown between a first-year maverick congresswoman, the powers of money and political influence, and a lobbyist caught between conscience and the political machine.

This will be followed by the **world premiere of Ike Holter's** *I Hate it Here: Stories from the End of the Old World*, a COVID-informed piece that explores the precariousness of entering a new decade in a world full of uncertainty. Holter was one of four playwrights early this year commissioned by Studio to write audio plays in the largest round of commissioning in the Theatre's history. A resident playwright at Victory Gardens, Holter is also the recipient of the Windham-Campbell Prize, one of the most prestigious awards for playwriting.

Both audio plays will be **available to stream for free**.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

For the safety of its patrons, Studio Theatre is implementing social distancing precautions, limiting performance capacity, instituting a mandatory face mask policy, and upgrading its HVAC with hospital grade MERV 13 air filters. Streaming options will be made available for most productions, and subscribers are able to opt for a digital-only subscription. Performances of *Flight* will be capped at 25 persons and will be watched from individual booths, which will be cleaned after each performance. Performances in Studio In First Person will be capped at 45 persons, allowing for six feet of distance between audience members. Additional safety precautions are included on [Studio's website](#).

While Studio implements safety precautions to its building to create as safe an environment as possible for patrons in the 2020-2021 season, it has temporarily delayed the start of its dramatic Open Studio renovation project. Studio is working with its construction partner and architects to determine what aspects of the project, if any, can move forward in the 2020-2021 season, while maintaining the welfare of staff, patrons, and construction personnel.

ABOUT THE 2020-2021 SEASON (*listed chronologically*)

STUDIO IN YOUR EARS

Intimate and immediate, Studio's audio plays bring the thrill of great writing and great acting directly to theatregoers' headphones. Available beginning in Fall 2020.

Kings

by **Sarah Burgess**

directed by **Marti Lyons**

"Awfully funny...the pace is snappy and the intellect is sophisticated...[a] savvy process play about the sausage-making of politics."

—*The Washington Post*

Newly elected congresswoman Sydney Millsap arrives in DC armed with her ideals and sense of duty, and refuses to play by the rules of special interests—or her own party. Kate's a lobbyist who backs winners. The two collide in the audio adaptation of the lacerating comedy Studio produced just after the last midterms. With its snappy dialogue and shrewd look at where power really sits in our government, it's an audio play just in time for November.

I Hate it Here: Stories from the End of the Old World

written and directed by **Ike Holter**

World Premiere

Supported by **Studio R&D**, Studio Theatre's new works initiative

An anthem for our time, *I Hate it Here* looks at the ways people do (and don't) deal with a world on the brink of explosion. Commissioned by Studio to create an audio work, award-winning Chicago writer Ike Holter brings his sharp humor to the complexities of stepping into a new decade with the odds already stacked against you.

STUDIO IN FRAME

Two plays reconceived for our current moment, filmed with multiple cameras at Studio and broadcast digitally, these productions offer the chemistry and intensity of in-the-room performance while keeping artists and audiences safe. Available for streaming in early 2021.

Cock

by **Mike Bartlett**

directed by **David Muse**

"A sizzling seriocomedy... a crackling play, staged with acerbic brio at Studio Theatre."
—*The Washington Post*

John breaks up with his boyfriend of seven years. Two weeks later, he's desperate to be taken back—but can't stop sleeping with the woman he started seeing in their weeks off. In a world with so many ways to be happy, how do you know the right thing when you have it? A sexy, conflicted look at attraction, ambivalence, and commitment. David Muse remakes his 2014 Helen Hayes Award-winning production for the camera.

Until the Flood

by **Dael Orlandersmith**

directed by **Reginald L. Douglas**

"Orlandersmith gives expression to America's racial stalemate with lyrical flow. Written with as much empathy as outrage...*Until the Flood* assures that the struggle lives on."
—*Los Angeles Times*

When Michael Brown was shot by a police officer in Ferguson in 2014, the outrage and protests that followed were a wake-up call to some and familiar, exhausting news to others. Dael Orlandersmith draws from dozens of interviews across Ferguson's communities in *Until the Flood*, using one specific flashpoint of race and power to look at the ongoing pain of a litany of Black deaths at the hands of police. Studio Associate Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas reimagines Orlandersmith's solo play with a cross-generational ensemble of three Black women, celebrating the resolve for justice that remains as urgent today as it was six years ago.

STUDIO IN-STALLED

A heart wrenching story told in a deeply personalized, immersive format, Studio In-Installed brings the unique theatrical installation *Flight* to DC for the first time. Beginning in Spring 2021.

Flight

by **Vox Motus**

based on the novel *Hinterland* by **Caroline Brothers**

adapted by **Oliver Emanuel**

directed by **Jamie Harrison** and **Candice Edmunds**

"Pulse-pounding, immersive storytelling. Strange and exquisite and intensely affecting."
—*The New York Times*

With their small inheritance stitched into their clothes, two children set off on an epic journey across Europe— orphaned brothers on a desperate odyssey to freedom and safety. Wearing headphones and viewing a handcrafted diorama from a personal booth, audience members are plunged into the brothers' story of hope and survival, playing out in breathtaking, intimate miniature. *Flight* is an immersive installation created by Scottish innovators Vox Motus and designed by Jamie Harrison (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* magic effects and illusions designer). An invitation to bear witness to the personal stories of two of the 300,000 displaced children who make unaccompanied journeys every year.

STUDIO IN FIRST PERSON

Four plays in repertory, one actor each, in four unique encounters with history on a personal scale. Beginning in summer 2021, join Studio in person—with limited seating and strict mask requirements—or stream from home.

Flow

by **Will Power**

directed by Studio Theatre Artist in Residence **Psalmayene 24**

"Power catches the distinctive rhythms of these street singers' individualized idioms and finds the pulse that makes them come alive."

—*Variety*

Will Power's percussive look at one urban community and its seven storytellers, who gossip and riff, declare and reveal, showing off their neighborhood through its stories, from trivial to tragic. Backed by a live DJ and unfolding in rhythm and rhyme, *Flow* is a call and response through history, from the griot tradition to the next artists who will make the tradition for their times. Will Power toured the piece to Studio in 2004 and Doris Duke Artist in Residence Psalmayene 24 directs a new production for a new generation.

2.5 Minute Ride

by **Lisa Kron**

"An unexpectedly powerful evening... hilarious...clever...and moving."

—*The Times* (London)

Lisa's father is 74, nearly blind, a Holocaust survivor, and addicted to roller coasters. *2.5 Minute Ride* follows two very different father-daughter trips: the annual Kron family pilgrimage to roller-coaster heaven in Sandusky, Ohio and Lisa's once-in-a-lifetime trip to Auschwitz with her father. A travelogue through thrill and loss, Lisa Kron (book and lyrics, *Fun Home*) tracks her father's enthusiasm, physical frailty, and ambivalence about the lives he might have lived with humor and unsentimental compassion.

random

by **debbie tucker green**

"A vibrantly energized, life-full and, ultimately, a profound expression of the shock of sudden death."

—*The Guardian*

It's a strictly ordinary day for a strictly ordinary young woman: alarm at 7:37am, dogs and birds and up at 7:41, a fight with her brother, a half-breakfast with her mum, and then out into the world, with its gossip and distractions. Until one moment—wrong place, wrong time, a seemingly random crime—shatters everything. debbie tucker green captures the strangeness of grief and catastrophe in piercing, poetic detail. The DC debut of a major British talent and one of the 50 Best Plays of the 21st Century (*The Guardian*).

Tender Age

by **George Brant**

directed by **Henry Godinez**

World Premiere

Supported by **Studio R&D**, Studio Theatre's new works initiative

When Martín applies for a position at the local Walmart-turned-Detention Center, he expects to be supervising hardened criminals facing deportation. But he soon discovers he's guarding a warehouse full of children, as young as his own, separated from their families at the nearby Texan border. Still, jobs are scarce, the graveyard shift pays well, and Martín is in no position to turn down a steady paycheck. But when a strange epidemic reaches the facility, he faces a moral reckoning. Stark and propulsive, *Tender Age* joins Brant's *Grounded* (Studio, 2014) as a play about living at the edge of your ethics.

ABOUT STUDIO THEATRE

Studio Theatre is Washington's premier venue for contemporary theatre, "where local audiences will find today's edgiest playwrights" (*Variety*). One of the most respected midsized theatres in the country, Studio produces exceptional contemporary drama in deliberately intimate spaces. Drawing inspiration from great ensembles—where people work together with a spirit of generosity and professional rigor—Studio brings characteristic thoughtfulness and daring to its work onstage and off, through its new work incubator and engagement, education, and workforce training initiatives. Studio serves nearly 75,000 people each year, including more than 1,000 youth and young adults through community engagement initiatives. Founded in 1978, the quality of Studio's work has been recognized by sustained community support, as well as 72 Helen Hayes Awards for excellence in professional theatre.

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