message from the artistic director

Welcome to our first official production of our 20.21 Season, Navigating the Now.

Thank you so much for joining us. We’re so grateful to continue to be able to offer works to our communities and we are so glad that you are here with us, albeit in a virtual manner.

It has almost been a year since Theatre Passe Muraille had our last production. In the winter of 2020, we welcomed audiences in person for PIECE OF MINE’s production of *The Negroes are Congregating* by Natasha Adiyana Morris. Each night, the TPM Mainspace was filled with laughter, outrage and reflection. And at the end of the evening, a robust discussion ensued with actors and audience, inevitably creating intimacy and connectedness among those present - all led by a work of theatre.

In this past year, the world has been indelibly changed. Led by a persistent pandemic, and the murder of George Floyd, there can be no doubt that society is undergoing a self-examination and social reckoning. The world we aspire to live in rapidly came into focus in our mind’s eye, and now that it is known, we will fight to see it a reality.

Black lives have always mattered, but has society been listening?
We’re so thrilled to be producing *11:11* by Samson Bonkeabantu Brown. I first saw it in its workshop production and was utterly changed by that experience. *11:11* is about many things, but for me at its core, it is about the act of listening.

Listening is a complex action. It requires an openness. It requires surrender. It requires the ability to be uncomfortable. Samson’s story is one that begins with listening, and then through it all for him to emerge glorious and confident on the other side - transformed.

It is my deep desire that society’s transformation is just on the horizon. There is work that needs to happen before we get there but we can only get there if we collectively listen. Really listen. This is TPM’s offering.

Perhaps Samson’s light and spirit can show us the way.

We invite you to listen with us.

- Marjorie Chan | Artistic Director, TPM
11:11
by Samson Bonkeabantu Brown

a theatre passe muraille digital production
february 10 – 13, 2021 | 7:30pm | 60 min + Q&A

Where the spirit world and the real-world meet, lies a world unapologetically crafted and performed by critically acclaimed trans identified artist, Samson Bonkeabantu Brown. 11:11 explores the other side of fear through the eyes of a young, Black transman struggling to understand the ancestral messages saturating his dreams.

We want to take a moment to emphasize that this performance is sacred to the artists, and it is our sincere request to our audiences, to protect and care for the show you are about to see today.

However, we still want to encourage you to be social! You can visit passemuraille.ca/media-centre for pre-selected images that you are able to share on social media.
credits

Written & Performed by
Samson Bonkeabantu Brown

Directed by
Tsholo Khalema

Original Producer
Brett Haynes

Set & Costume Design by
Nalo Soyini Bruce

Assistant to Set & Costume Design
Lucy Wong

Choreographed by
Mafa Makhubalo

Lighting Design by
Sharmylae Taffe-Fletcher

Music by
Waleed Abdulahmid

Sound Design by
River Oliveira

Stage Manager
Laura Baxter

Dramaturgy by
d’bi young anitafrika

Digital Producer
Ulla Laidlaw

TPM Production Manager
Eric Read

Streaming Co-ordinator
David Fisher

Technicians
Joey Morin
John Cabanela

Camera Operators
Rinchen Dolma
Shavo Dorjee*

thank you

Samson Bonkeabantu Brown would like to extend full gratitude to Obsidian Theatre Company and Buddies In Bad Times Theatre for their generous recommendation of 11:11 and to the Ontario Arts Council for their support with the Recommender Grant. Thanks also, to Phumelele Khumalo for her song, On & On.

Special thanks to Jay Havens, Manidoons Collective, Tom Arthur Davis, and Why Not Theatre. This production was made possible with the assistance of Charles Street Video.

This production of 11:11 is sponsored by Jeff and Rita Rayman

*MADE IN EXILE Film Intensive participant
the team | theatre passe muraille

Leadership
Marjorie Chan | Artistic Director
Régine Cadet | Managing Director
Indrit Kasapi | Associate Artistic Director
Rinchen Dolma | Metcalf Artistic Director Intern

Production
Eric Read | Production & Facilities Manager
David Fisher | Mainspace Technician

Administration
Petra Chevrier | Financial Director
Jenn Sartor | Producer
Lada Darewych | Fundraising & Development Manager
Emily Jung | Interim Marketing & Communications Manager
Ceridwen Kingstone | Patron Services Manager
Angela Sun | Community Engagement Coordinator
Merlin Simard | Intern Dramaturge 20.21 Season*

visit www.passemuraille.ca
for more information

*Position made possible with the assistance of the Early Career Dramaturgy Fund from the Literary Managers and Dramaturges of the Americas
access

All performance in the run will be Relaxed Performances and Closed Captioning will be available.

Relaxed Performances are designed to welcome audience members and their families who could benefit from a more relaxed environment, including those who are neurodiverse and Autistic patrons. The digital set-up includes: access to a visual story for the play which includes clear instructions on accessing the performance link, a pre-show introduction to the play, the ability to access the performance for 36 hours after the performance, a digital Front of House Manager to provide answers to any questions via phone, email, or in the chat, and a zoom meeting after the show where you can talk with an active listener.

Closed Captioning will be available at the bottom of the screen for audience members who are Deaf or hard of hearing providing the audio in text form on all performances.

Our Pay-What-You-Can-Afford (PWYCA) model offers single tickets at different price points. The ticket prices this season are: $5, $25, and $50. All tickets are the same. In order to remove barriers in our pricing, we are offering three price points so that a wide range of audiences are able to attend our 20.21 Season.

We encourage audiences to make their own choices about what they can afford in order to experience theatre. Those purchasing at the $50 price point are helping to subsidize the $5 ticket price, and by doing so, making theatre more accessible for others.

*Our Access Initiatives are made possible with the support of
Black Out is a performance exclusively for Black audiences, inspired by the event of the same name in the Fall of 2019 for Jeremy O’Harris’ Slave Play on Broadway. The spirit behind this evening is to provide a space for Black theatre-goers to experience a show for them, by them.

The Black Out event also facilitates a safe environment for a personal and intimate discussion on the work made and performed by Black artists.

We are committed to continue offering Black Out performances for all Black playwrights and artists in future seasons. We thank you in advance for supporting these artists and Theatre Passe Muraille as we facilitate an opportunity for the Black community to celebrate and enjoy a performance made for Black audiences.
We'd like to take a moment to thank our supporters, sponsors, and donors—especially during these challenging times—for helping us #NavigateTheNow.

Your generosity makes it possible for us to plan ahead with confidence and support the exciting artists who are part of our season.
Thokozani,

I’d like to begin these notes by introducing myself in the same style that we introduce ourselves in my culture, by stating my lineage, and I do this by sharing my clan name and the clan names of my maternal ancestors.

We introduce ourselves in this way to honor izinyanya zethu:

“My name is Samson Bonkeabantu Thulani Keyi Brown. My clan name is Ngxongo and the rest of my lineage includes Ntsundu; Yem-yem; Sophitsho, vele'bembhentsele; Zondwa, zintshaba zingazubenza nto; Madiba; Ngqolomsila; Dlomo; Mthikakra; Mthembu. Ndizalwa ngu MamNgxongo oka MaNdlovo, oka MaMholi, oka MaKhumalo, oka MaDlamini…”

I’m not going to write all of my clan names because it would take forever, but what I will say is that all of my clan names are important because these are the ancestors who collectively decide and gift me the stories I must tell. They guide and protect me.

“What does 11:11 mean?” Initially, I understood 11:11 to be
how my ancestors got my attention in dreams. Later I understood it to be an Awakening Code... a Growth Code, if you will, that signified that my spiritual gifts were growing and getting stronger.

Currently, I understand it to represent both the 22 bones of the skull which protect our thoughts, and the 22 autosomes in DNA which govern the ancestral characteristics that we inherit.

None of these understandings are incorrect or untrue, in fact, these understandings are connected.

Like my ancestors and I, these understandings fold and open into themselves and each other. As such, the meaning is constantly evolving.

I never wanted to write 11:11 and I approached it much like I approached being out about my transition, begrudgingly. Because I was operating from a place of ego and convinced that I was the one guiding my journey, I decided that 11:11 was supposed to be a story about my coming out in my own words.

Writing it was going to heal my relationship to my transition and help me understand why I was trans. None of that happened.

The healing I assured myself I was going to experience never came. Instead, the first iteration of 11:11 hurt to write and perform because my ancestors meant for it to be a catalyst for my healing. It was shadow work. The journey of 11:11 has been less about my transition and more so one of healing myself and consequently healing my ancestors. By humbling myself and submitting to them,
I am able to understand that now.

Spiritually, this iteration of 11:11 finds me still healing myself and my ancestors and discovering more of our story. It isn’t mine alone because I am not alone. Artistically, it is a ritual of celebrating all that I have healed and discovered thus far.

11:11 is a prayer and a theatrical altar through which I venerate my ancestors and give thanks for their love, guidance and protection.

“What does 11:11 mean?”

11:11 means healing and discovering. It means ritual and celebration. It means humbling myself and submitting. It means ancestral inheritance.

This is what 11:11 means to me. What does it mean to you?

- Samson Bonkeabantu Brown | Playwright & Performer, 11:11

photo credit | Hoffworks
from the director

I’m a theatre veteran and also a continuous student. I’ve been studying the art of acting for the past 20+ years, and now I am a first time emerging director who is learning new ways in which art is made possible. Every day, I am swept away by the power of community.

We are in chaotic times where our industry continues to face challenges. Challenges of closures and lockdowns that change how we make theatre. Incorporating the digital into this production of 11:11 was not a compromise. The digital experience is an extension of how we can still share stories with one another. As I have a deep love for both filmmaking and theatre, this opportunity allowed me to pour all my knowledge and skill set as a filmmaker, theatre artist and visual artist.

Stories of Blackness and stories of queer empowerment need to be told, now more than ever in this time of revolutions and revelations. Trans people continued to be
harmed and murdered in insidious ways. We are taught to not love “Blackness” and “queerness”, and we do not see enough Black queer stories, especially not on mainstream theatre stages. Being a South African man of trans experience, living in Canada has been truly a unique experience.

South Africans have a particular way of existing in the world which surpasses the apartheid. We have stories of love and joy, comedies, tragedies, stories of tribes and betrays that exist above the colonizers lens.

I’m ecstatic to contribute as director of 11:11, a Theatre Passe Muraille digital production written and performed by Samson Bonkeabantu Brown. A beautiful and touching story of self discovery and ancestral connecting, my visions for the production was a re-imagination of the world each character is living in, connecting especially the protagonist’s world to South Africa visually.

There’s a unique lens in this show that we don’t often witness in theatre: A lens that celebrates and honours African culture, specifically South African healing practices and connection to ancestors lands. In directing 11:11 I was able to experiment with visual ideas I’ve had for years. I’m honoured to be part of this team as director working together to bring this unique story and theatrical experience to life.

Appreciation for my Mentor Audrey Dwyer for her guidance and for the expertise you have offered. TPM & 11:11 team, all designers and Samson for trusting Tsholvisions as I weave together the new concepts with the atmosphere that support this already touching story
of self discovery and honouring the ancestors. Glory be to my Mom and Dad for loving their trans son unconditionally. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

11:11 is about transformation, growth and evolution. It is a new way of offering our audience “art medicine”. I hope you will feel inspired to tell your stories and find new ways to share them too.

I hope that you strive to continuously transform and that this performance inspires you to dream bigger than ever, know your worth and recognize the gifts you possess.

Trans Is Beautiful.

- Tsholo Visions Khalema | Director, 11:11
Samson Bonkeabantu Brown
Playwright & Performer

Samson Bonkeabantu Brown is a Sangoma, ngaka, inyanga, hoodoo, traditional healer, multidisciplinary artist and playwright. His primary focus is on spiritual healing, ancestral veneration, trans advocacy and the arts. He uses the arts (primarily as an actor and playwright) to create and educate the general public on trans issues. He has been tasked by his ancestors to shed light on how ancestral veneration can assist with healing the self and living in our purpose.

Spiritfelt gratitude to my ancestors, my parents, family (chosen and blood), d’bi.young anitafrika, the entire TPM and creative team, and my family edlozini at Impande Ka Mkhwanazi. Camagu.

Tsholo Visions Khalema
Director

Tsholo Visions Khalema is a proud AmaHlubi warrior, a storyteller braving the elements. Guided by elders and ancestors as He continues to embark on a journey of creating stories that enhance the Black and Transgender voice(s) showing the many diverse intersectionalities of blackness.

An Indigenous Black South Africa man of trans experience, the Sun, Tsholovisions is inspired by his culture, his life story and his people. He is a visionary, actor, director and visual artist who wears many hats well. Visit tsholovisions.com
Sharmyala Taffe-Fletcher
Lighting Design

Sharmyala Taffe-Fletcher is an emerging Black theatre artist with a passion for lighting and performance that spans her entire life. She is looking forward to bringing the Magic to more projects in the future. An alum of Obsidian's Mentor/Apprentice program, she is thankful for Obsidian Theatre's continuing support. Recent credits include: Jingle Belles (Smile Theatre); Welcome to My Underworld (Rare Theatre), Addicted (Watah Theatre), Alex the Artist (Fringe 2017), Bleeders (Watah Theatre), She, Mami Wata, & the Pussy WitchHunt (Watah Theatre).

She extends an abundance of gratitude to her supportive family and friends.

River Oliveira
Sound Designer

River Oliveira is a queer, trans, and disabled theatre artist and musician based in Toronto. He has been working and training with a variety of companies as a creator, performer, sound designer, and emerging producer. Highlights include the Paprika Festival, Nightwood Theatre, and VIBE Arts.

River’s work focuses on themes surrounding trans-ness, resilience, and community. They’re especially interested in the role art can serve in healing and celebrations of personal identity. River is thrilled to be working on 11:11, and would like to thank the team for welcoming him into this space. Additional thanks to Max Fearon, Miquelon Rodriguez, and Steph Raposo, for encouraging and guiding him. For more information, visit riveroliveira.com
Waleed Abdulhamid
Music

Waleed Abdulhamid is a Canadian Multiinstrumentalist; Composer; Vocalist; Music and Film Producer, and is known for his striking vocals, innovative bass technique, and his speed and precision on percussion.

He has been an active member of the Toronto music scene since his arrival from Sudan in 1992 and is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards. He demonstrates his versatility playing 20 instruments and is most proud of his role as a mentor to acclaimed artists such as d’bi.young, Ngozi Paul and Zaki Ibrahim to name a few. Waleed is also a professor and faculty member of the Music Degree Program at Humber College.

Mafa Makhubalo
Choreographer

Mafa Makhubalo is a movement poet trained in folk forms from the Regions of African tradition, African contemporary, and Western-Contemporary. “I have been influenced by my understanding of dance as an accumulation of memory and the history of my culture.” He has been actively involved in community engagement camps and arts education programs.

During 2020-21, Mafa has been a mentor for the Vibes Arts Cohort 2, a resident choreographer with Ballet Jorgen Canada, Theatre Passe Muraille’s 11:11 and TDT Pilot Episode 2021. Mafa was a participant of the Ontario-Quebec cohort program 2019-2021 presented by (La DSR) La danse sur les routes du Québec and Ontario Presents.
Nalo Soyini Bruce  
Set & Costume Designer

Nalo Soyini Bruce is a Montreal-based artist, set, costume and prop designer of Caribbean origin. Her designs evoke rich associations through vibrant colour relationships, textured surfaces and varied materials. She uses this vocabulary to express underlying historical, cultural and psychological dimensions of stories enacted on screen and stage.

As set elements are introduced or reoriented, or as outer and inner layers of costumes are revealed, the audience discovers the deeper layers of people, places and things.

Visit Nalo’s website: www.nalosoyini.com

Lucy Wong  
Assistant to Set & Costume Design

Lucy is an emerging costume designer for theatre and film. She is a recent graduate from the University of Guelph, majoring in Theatre Studies, where she was taught by Judith Thompson, and Sky Gilbert.

As a Student Member of Associated Designers of Canada, Lucy has assisted in designing shows for various plays across Toronto and is currently a member of Nightwood Theatre’s Young Innovators Program. Selected credits include: La Kid du COVID (directed by Katia Café-Fébrissy), Suburban Motel (University of Guelph Ensemble), A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Shakespeare in Action), After the Blackout (RARE Theatre/Soulpepper Theatre), Portia’s Julius Caesar (Shakespeare in the Ruff).

To see her work visit www.lucy-wong.com
Laura Baxter
Stage Manager


Laura is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada, 2005. Thank you to my amazing wife Shawn for all your love and support.

Ulla Laidlaw
Digital Producer

Ulla Laidlaw is a theatre director, dramaturg, writer and filmmaker. Formally trained in Drama at the University of Guelph, she carries this training and sensibility into her film work; often partnering with theatre companies and working to bridge the forms. Previous credits in this vein include *Confluence for Raven Spirit Dance* that showed at Dawson City International Short Film Festival, *Stray for Theatre Conspiracy* (in progress), *Waterfront* (editor) for Radix Theatre, and multiple pieces for CBC’s *Exhibitionists*. She is currently further exploring the boundaries of the film form with Canada Council funded project EXTINCTION with scenographer Margaret Krawecka.
We are working together with **Theatre Passe Muraille**. It’s just one way we are helping to open doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow.
TPM is Canada’s original alternative theatre company, dedicated to developing and producing new Canadian plays. TPM is striving to articulate a distinct Canadian voice that reflects the complexity of our intercultural society.

Visit us at www.passemuraille.ca