

**A RAW AND TIMELY EXPLORATION OF QUEER BLACKNESS,
BLACK BOYS PREMIERES AT BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES THEATRE,
NOVEMBER 19 – DECEMBER 11**

Saga Collectif and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre present

BLACK BOYS

by Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'Carthy, Thomas Olajide with Virgilia Griffith and Jonathan Seinen



In a society where the Black male body is both vilified and sexualized, *Black Boys* offers a raw and timely exploration of queer male blackness. *Black Boys* is created from the lives of three Black men seeking a deeper understanding of themselves, of each other, and of how they encounter the world. As they explore their unique identities on stage, they subvert the ways in which gender, sexuality, and race are performed. Theatrical and intimate, *Black Boys* weaves together the ensemble's own personal stories in search of a radical imagination.

Saga Collectif began developing *Black Boys* in 2012, and joined the Buddies Residency Program the following year. With this production, Saga Collectif and Buddies continue to inject vital queer perspectives into the broader social conversation. At a time of heightened awareness and action around the lives of Black people, this show adds a new voice to those already engaged in important discussions of Blackness.

At the heart of the piece is an impressive ensemble of skilled young artists. The three performers – **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff**, **Tawiah Ben M'Carthy**, and **Thomas Olajide** – have been seen on the stages of the Shaw Festival, the National Arts Centre, Canadian Stage, and the Stratford Festival. Jackman-Torkoff recently appeared in the Dora Award-winning double bill *Botticelli in the Fire & Sunday in Sodom* (Canadian Stage) and Olajide received the Peter Donaldson Award at the Stratford Festival. Buddies audiences will remember M'Carthy from his Dora Award-winning show *Obaaberima*. Director **Jonathan Seinen** has been the creative force behind such innovative indie productions as *Unknown Soldier* (lemonTree creations) and *Like There's No Tomorrow* (Architect Theatre), while Dora Award-nominee **Virgilia Griffith** choreographs after establishing herself as a formidable performer in her own right, most recently in Obsidian Theatre's production of *Up the Garden Path*. The creative team is rounded out by dramaturge **Mel Hague** and designers **Rachel Forbes** (set and costume), **Stephen Surlin** (sound and video) and **Jareth Li** (lighting).

Accessible Performances

Saga Collectif and Buddies will be offering **ASL-interpreted** and **Audio-described** performances of *Black Boys*:

ASL-interpreted performance:

Sunday, December 4, 2:30 PM

Pay-what-you-can tickets available at the door.

Audio-described performance:

Tuesday, December 6, 8:00 PM

Pay-what-you-can tickets available for patrons wishing to access audio-description services. Please call the box office at 416-975-8555 to reserve a headset.

Symposium & Community Engagement

In addition to our outreach initiatives focusing on Black queer youth, Saga Collectif and Buddies will present a one-day symposium. On November 26, *Black On Black Loving: A Symposium on Blackness, Queerness & Masculinity* will feature a panel discussion with artists, academics, and activists, as well as workshops led by members of the *Black Boys* team on creation with critical thinking. All are welcome; those who self-identify as Black and queer (cis, trans, and gender non-conforming) are especially encouraged to attend. The lineup of panelists and full symposium schedule will be announced soon.

MEDIA INFO

INTERVIEWS – Listed artists are available for interviews in English (Olajide has limited availability for interviews in French). Contact 416-975-9130 x35 or aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com to arrange.

OPENING NIGHT – Opening night is **Thursday, November 24**. Contact Aidan Morishita-Miki at 416-975-9130 x35 or aidan@buddiesinbadtimes.com for accreditation.

ON-LINE RESOURCE – The Buddies website includes a Media Centre that houses press releases, images and other pertinent information for easy download. www.buddiesinbadtimes.com/media

PLEASE ADD TO YOUR LISTINGS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and **Saga Collectif** present

Black Boys

created by **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'Carthy, Thomas Olajide** with **Virgilia Griffith + Jonathan Seinen**

directed by **Jonathan Seinen**

starring **Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'Carthy, + Thomas Olajide**

choreography by **Virgilia Griffith**

set + costume design **Rachel Forbes**

sound + video design **Stephen Surlin**

lighting design **Jareth Li**

dramaturge **Mel Hague**

Previews: November 19, 20, 22, and 23

Opening Night: November 24

Closing Performance: December 11

Runs: Tues-Sat 8pm, Sun 2:30pm

Tickets: PWYC - \$39

Box Office 416-975-8555 or buddiesinbadtimes.com

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander Street, Toronto ON

Established in 1979, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre is Toronto's leading destination for artistically rigorous, alternative theatre and a world leader in developing queer voices and stories for the stage. Over the course of its history, it has evolved into the largest facility-based queer theatre company in the world and has made an unparalleled contribution to the recognition and acceptance of queer lives in Canada.

Saga Collectif, founded in 2012, is a new theatre company that brings to the stage underrepresented bodies and voices in a fashion that is risky, honest, and new. As we create and perform, we are dissecting and dismantling, posing questions to unravel identity, ancestry and place in society. We bravely challenge ourselves to move into the unknown to discover personal truths, and hope to offer ourselves as examples of those who see limits and choose to transcend them. With diversity at the heart of our collaborative decision-making structure, Saga Collectif founding members are Virgilia Griffith, Stephen Jackman-Torkoff, Tawiah Ben M'Carthy, Thomas Olajide and Jonathan Seinen.