

Visual Story for
the Relaxed Performance of
Obaaberima



Relaxed Performance:
Sunday, December 2, 2:30PM
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
12 Alexander St., Toronto, ON

About the Show

The show is 90 minutes long with no intermission break.

The show takes place in the Chamber space at Buddies. There is no assigned seating in the theatre, so you may sit in any unoccupied seat, unless it has a reserved sign on it.



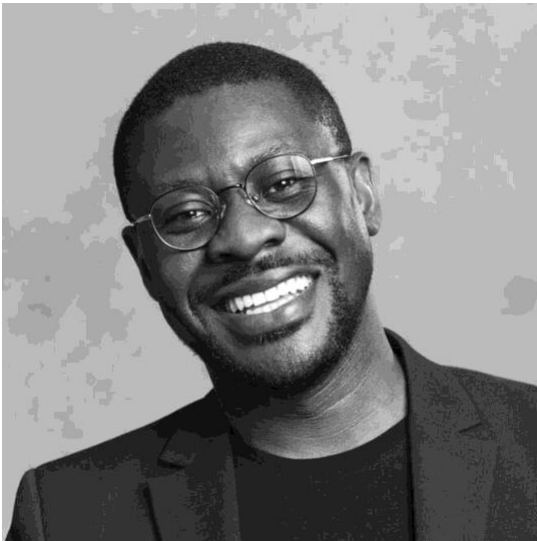
This is the audience seating area

When you enter, the stage will be empty looking. There are black curtains along the sides of the space, and at the back. In the centre of the back wall are two levels. On the lower level there is an opening with bars that may look like a jail cell. On the upper level, there is a musician seated with drums and many other musical instruments around them.



This is a photo of how the set will look before the show starts.

Meet the Performers



Tawiah Ben M'Carthy

Tawiah is the writer of *Obaaberima* and also the main performer. He plays Agyeman and Sibongile, and in telling their story, plays several other characters that Agyeman meets both in Ghana and in Canada.



Kobèna Aquaa-Harrison
Kobèna plays original music throughout the show. He is seated behind the bars on the second level of the set, so you may not see him up close.

What to Expect

Imprisoned in Canada for committing a violent crime, a young man from Ghana tells his cellmates a story on the eve of his release. Although there is great risk in sharing his tale, he must tell it to be truly free. Through storytelling, dance, and live music, Obaaberima chronicles a young African-Canadian's journey across continents, genders, races, and sexualities.

Characters

At the start of the play, we meet **Agyeman**, dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit. They tell us that it is their last night in prison, and that they are going to tell us their story.

In the first part of the play we meet Agyeman as a child growing up in Ghana (in West Africa). Agyeman is often teased by the other kids, who call him “*Obaaberima*” (girly-boy) – he has dreams of going abroad to study and becoming a lawyer. We follow Agyeman as he forms a relationship first with **Opayin**, a shopkeeper and

dressmaker, and later with **Nana Osei**, a boy who lives in town.

Later, Agyeman moves to Canada to study law. At first he finds it hard to meet people, but finds comfort in **Philippa**, a young woman from Ghana who he meets at a church group. Eventually, the two start dating. At the same time, Agyeman continues to explore his attraction to men, and begins dating a man named **Elijah**.

Music

There is music throughout the play, played live by **Kobèna**. Kobèna plays different instruments throughout the show, including marimba, atumpan, ashiko, shekere, aslatua, frikyewa, tama, acoustic & electric guitars, keyboard, and atenteben. Music is sometimes used to underscore scenes, or is played more loudly during dance sequences.



These are some of the instruments that Kobèna plays during the show.

Movement and Dance

Some scenes have no dialogue at all and use dance and movement set to music played by Kobèna. The music during

these scenes can get louder than at other times during the play and the lights on stage may get a bit darker.

Language

Some of the words and phrases in the play are in twi, a language spoken in Ghana. Here is a list, with translations, of some of the words that come up in *Obaaberima*:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>Abadinto</i> | Outdooring (a naming ceremony) |
| <i>Abroachi</i> | Abroad |
| <i>Akwaba</i> | Welcome |
| <i>Koti</i> | Penis |
| <i>Obaa</i> | Woman |
| <i>Oberima</i> | Man |
| <i>Obaaberima</i> | A derogatory term meaning girly boy or girlboy |
| <i>O’Nyame</i> | God |
| <i>Onipa</i> | Humankind |

Credits

These people created the show:

written + performed by **Tawiah Ben M'Carthy**

directed by **Evalyn Parry**

live music by **Kobèna Aquaa-Harrison**

assistant directed by **Virgilia Griffith**

set + costumes by **Camellia Koo**

lighting by **Michelle Ramsay**

vocal coaching by **Ausar Stewart**

associate lighting designer **André Du Toit**

The show is produced by **Buddies in Bad Times Theatre**

For more information about getting to Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, you can find the visual story for our theatre here:

<http://buddiesinbadtimes.com/wp-content/uploads/Visual-Story-Buddies-in-Bad-Times-Theatre.pdf>