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PRESS CONTACT:

Alexandria Moreland, 848.482.0462

amoreland@roundhousetheatre.org

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE CONCLUDES SEASON
WITH JOYOUS ROMANTIC COMEDY & REGIONAL PREMIERE

NOLLYWOOD DREAMS

BY JOCELYN BIOH

June 8 – July 3

Bethesda, Md. (May 9, 2022) – Round House Theatre concludes its 2021-2022 Season with the regional premiere of Jocelyn Bioh’s *Nollywood Dreams*, directed by **Raymond O. Caldwell**.

Nollywood Dreams runs June 8 – July 3, 2022. Press night is Monday, June 13, 2022. **Please see below for complete program details and ticket information.**

It’s the ‘90s in Lagos, Nigeria, and Ayamma has big dreams. Despite working in her parents’ travel agency, she spends every spare minute imagining her big break. When she lands an audition with the hottest director in Nigeria’s booming film industry, Ayamma finds herself at odds with his former leading lady—and relishing the charms of Nollywood's biggest dreamboat. Hot on the heels of its New York world premiere, the author of the beloved, Helen Hayes Award-winning *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* returns to Round House with a warm, hilarious new romantic comedy about following your instincts and your heart.

Director **Raymond O. Caldwell** looks forward to discovering moments of joy and grace during

the rehearsal process for *Nollywood Dreams*. “I never get to direct a fairytale. For the next few weeks, we get to gather to do just that! This is the type of process that will ultimately become infectious and create joy. I am excited for audiences to be introduced to Nigerian culture, and for us to be reminded that there’s more to the Black experience apart from trauma and racism.”

A show that ignites laughter and love, *Nollywood Dreams* is a remedy for the soul that everyone will appreciate. “We are thrilled to bring Jocelyn Bioh back to the DC area after our incredibly successful run of *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* in 2019,” says **Artistic Director Ryan Rilette**. “*Nollywood Dreams* is an incredibly funny, joyful play, and that’s something we all need right now.”

The cast includes **Joel Ashur** (*A Fiddler's Tale* at Fulton Theatre; *Friend of a Friend* at Capital Repertory Theatre), **Renea Brown** (*Change Agent* at Arena Stage; *The Tempest* at Shakespeare Theatre Company), **Ernaisha Curry** (*The Play That Goes Wrong* at Broadway Playhouse; *The Skeleton Crew* at Ensemble Theatre), **Yao Dogbe** (*Ohio State Murders* at Round House Theatre; *Nollywood Dreams* at MCC Theater), **Yetunde Felix-Ukwu** (*School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre; *Babel* at Unicorn Theatre), and **Jacqueline Youm** (*A Doll's House Part 2* at Silver Spring Stage; *Die, Mr. Darcy, Die* at Best Medicine Rep).

The cast is joined by an elite creative team that includes Scenic Designer **Jonathan Dahm Robertson**, Costume Designer **Brandee Mathies**, Lighting Designer **Harold F. Burgess II**, Sound Designer **Nick Hernandez**, Projections Designer **Kelly Colburn**, Properties Coordinator **Chelsea Dean**, Vocal and Dialect Coach **Dawn-Elin Fraser**, Dramaturg and Round House Theatre Associate Artist for New Plays **Naysan Mojjani**, Casting Director **Sarah Cooney**, and Resident Stage Manager **Che Wernsman**.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org. Round House Theatre is located at 4545 East-West Highway, one

block from Wisconsin Avenue and the Bethesda station on Metro's Red Line.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Jocelyn Bioh (Playwright) is an award-winning Ghanaian American writer and performer from New York City. Her written works for theatre include: *Merry Wives* (adapted from Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* for The Public Theater / Shakespeare in the Park); *Nollywood Dreams* (MCC Theater); *Goddess* the musical, which will have its world premiere at Berkeley Rep in August 2022; and the multi-award-winning *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*, which was originally produced at MCC Theater in 2017/2018 and has gone on to have over 20 regional productions. She is a former TOW playwriting fellow (2017) and has been commissioned by Manhattan Theatre Club, Atlantic Theater Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and Second Stage. Jocelyn has also written for TV on *Russian Doll* and Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* and is also writing the live screen adaptation of the hit Broadway musical *Once on This Island* for Disney.

Raymond O. Caldwell (Director) is thrilled to be back at Round House Theatre directing *Nollywood Dreams*. Previous Round House credits include *Sleep Deprivation Chamber*. Raymond is the Producing Artistic Director at Theater Alliance in Southeast DC. Theater Alliance credits include *Poetry for the People: The June Jordan Experience*; *The Blackest Battle*; *City in Transition: The Quadrant Series*; *Strategize, Organize, Mobilize: A Protest in 8*; *Day of Absence*; and *Blood at the Root* (Helen Hayes Award). Other DC credits include *The Cartography Project* at the Kennedy Center; *The Thanksgiving Play* at Olney Theatre Center; *Zomo the Rabbit* at Imagination Stage; *The Diary of Anne Frank* with National Players; *Les Deux Noirs* at Mosaic Theater Company; *The Frederick Douglass Project* at Solas Nua; and *All the Way Live!* at the Kennedy Center. For more information, visit RaymondOCaldwell.com.

CAST INFORMATION (ALPHABETICAL)

Joel Ashur (Wale Owusu) is thankful to be making a Round House Theatre debut with *Nollywood Dreams*. Regional credits include *A Fiddler's Tale* at Fulton Theatre; *Friend of a Friend*

at Capital Repertory Theatre; *Lombardi* at Actors Theatre of Indiana; and *Ben Butler* at Chenango River Theatre.

Renea Brown (Dede Okafor) is thrilled to make her Round House Theatre debut! DC credits include *Change Agent* at Arena Stage; *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* at Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Love Actually* at the Kennedy Center; *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* at Chesapeake Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline* at Theatre Prometheus; and *The Tempest* and *As You Like It* at Prince George's Shakespeare Festival. Regional credits include *Othello*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Twelfth Night* at Island Shakespeare Festival (first Black woman to perform); *Wedding Band* and *The Little Princess* at Quintessence Theatre; and *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A King and No King*, and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* at American Shakespeare Center. MFA: Academy of Classical Acting. Instagram: @TheDarkLady and @Boxothbard

Ernaisja Curry (Ayamma Okafor) is so excited to make her Round House Theatre (and DC area) debut with *Nollywood Dreams*. Broadway (in Chicago) credits include *The Play That Goes Wrong* at Broadway Playhouse. Regional credits include *Skeleton Crew* and *This Random World* at Ensemble Theatre; *Lawbreakers* at StageOne Theatre; *Neverwhere* and *Susan Swayne...* at Know Theatre; *The Comedy of Errors* and *Othello* at Kentucky Shakespeare; and *A Prayer for Owen Meany* at Cincinnati Playhouse. Film credits include the upcoming *The Coming*. Instagram: @ErnaisjaCurry. ErnaisjaCurry.com

Yao Dogbe (Gbenga Ezie) is excited to be returning to Round House Theatre with *Nollywood Dreams*. Previous Round House Theatre credits include *Ohio State Murders* and *Homebound*. Off-Broadway credits include *Nollywood Dreams* at MCC Theatre. Regional credits include *Intimate Apparel* at Northlight Theatre; *Cymbeline* at Utah Shakespeare Festival; *Fences* at American Players Theatre; *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Twelfth Night* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; *Richard III* and *Twelfth Night* at Houston Shakespeare Festival; and *Othello* and *Love's Labour's Lost* at Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Awards: listed as

one of Houston's best actors in 2017 for his performance as "Booth" in Suzan-Lori Parks's *Topdog/Underdog*; recently received an honorary membership into Alpha Psi Omega (the National Theatre Honor Society) from his alma mater, Norfolk State University. Education: MFA in acting from University of Houston. Professional affiliations: Member of AEA (Actor's Equity Association). Instagram: @Yaonation

Yetunde Felix-Ukwu (Fayola Ogyneleye) is excited to make her hometown debut in *Nollywood Dreams* at Round House Theatre. Pre-pandemic regional credits include *Babel*, *The Wolves*, and *Men on Boats* at Unicorn Theatre; and *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* at Kansas City Repertory Theatre. Yetunde is an emerging actor, director, African dialect coach, and voiceover actor. Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter: @YetundeLive. YetundeLive.com

Jacqueline Youm (Adenikeh) is ecstatic to be a part of *Nollywood Dreams* at Round House Theatre. She is a Senegalese American actor and lawyer, and a French, English, Spanish, mediation, and negotiation teacher. Some DC credits include *Die, Mr. Darcy, Die* at Best Medicine Rep; *The Actor's Nightmare* at Laurel Mill Playhouse; *A Black and White Cookie* and *A Doll's House, Part 2* at Silver Spring Stage; *The Revolutionists* at Globe Openstage; *An Ideal Husband* at Sandy Spring Theatre Group; and *Doctor Faustus* at The Rude Mechanicals. Other credits include *Mary Stuart* at Zenith Players and *Edward II* at The Show Must Go Online. You can find her virtual productions on YouTube (CestJackie): Youtube.com/c/CestJackie/featured. Instagram: @jy_artiste

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Nollywood Dreams

By Jocelyn Bioh

Directed by Raymond O. Caldwell

CAST LIST:

Ernaisja Curry as Ayamama Okafor*

Renea Brown as Dede Okafor*

Yao Dogbe as Gbenga Ezie

Joel Ashur as Wale Owusu*

Yetunde Felix-Ukwu as Fayola Ogyneleye*
Jacqueline Youm as Adenikeh*
* - *Round House Theatre debut*

WHERE:

Round House Theatre, 4545 East-West Highway in Bethesda (one block from Wisconsin Avenue and Metro's Bethesda station). For directions, parking, and public transportation info, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/Visit-Us/.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

It's the '90s in Lagos, Nigeria, and Ayamma has big dreams. Despite working in her parents' travel agency, she spends every spare minute imagining her big break. When she lands an audition with the hottest director in Nigeria's booming film industry, Ayamma finds herself at odds with his former leading lady—and relishing the charms of Nollywood's biggest dreamboat. Hot on the heels of its New York world premiere, the author of the beloved, Helen Hayes Award-winning *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* brings to Round House a warm, hilarious new romantic comedy about following your instincts and your heart.

DATES AND TIMES:

Nollywood Dreams runs from June 8 to July 3, 2022. Performances are Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 pm, Friday and Saturdays at 8:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2:00 pm.

Socially distanced seating will be available for the Saturday, June 18 at 2:00 pm and Tuesday, June 28 at 7:30 pm performances, with at least two open seats between parties on both levels of the theatre.

TICKETS:

Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100, ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org, or visiting the box office. Available ticket discounts include:

- Free Play – free tickets for students ages 13 through college: Round House Theatre’s Free Play initiative ties into our greater strategy to develop theatre audiences of tomorrow by providing rich, meaningful arts experiences today. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/FreePlay or email Education@RoundHouseTheatre.org
- On the House – community ticket access program: Round House’s next step to remove barriers that can make it difficult for some members of our community to experience our work is On the House, which provides complimentary group tickets to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and community-serving organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/On-The-House or email Community@RoundHouseTheatre.org.
- Pay-What-You-Can performances: Wednesday, June 8 at 7:30 pm, and Saturday, June 11 at 2 pm. PWYC tickets go on sale online or by phone only (no walk-up sales) beginning one week before the first performance of each show. The patron decides the admission price. Limit of two tickets per order. PWYC tickets are subject to availability.
- Blue Star Theatre Program: Active-duty military personnel, veterans, and their immediate family qualify for a \$10 discount off the single ticket price. Learn more at RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/Tickets.
- 2-For-1 Tuesday: For our Tuesday, June 21 and 28 performances, all seats are buy one, get one free. 2-for-1 Tuesday tickets are available online or by phone 9240.644.1100 with promo code TWOFORONE beginning one week before the first performance of each show. Discounts may not be combined. Not valid on previously purchased tickets.
- Group Sales: Groups of 10 or more can save 10% off the single ticket price and are exempt from single ticket fees. These tickets must be reserved and purchased in advance by calling 240.644.1100 or emailing GroupSales@RoundHouseTheatre.org.

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE VACCINE AND MASK REQUIREMENTS (as of May 9, 2022)

Patrons must present a photo ID and show proof that they meet the CDC definition of being fully vaccinated* at the time of entry to into the theatre. Patrons may display proof of vaccination with a physical or digital copy of their vaccination card. (Round House is currently investigating additional digital options for providing proof of vaccination and will communicate any updates with patrons).

Masks will also be required for all guests, regardless of vaccination status, except while eating or drinking in the lobby café area.

Guests who are exempt from vaccination (including children under 5, people with certain medical conditions preventing vaccination, or those with closely held religious beliefs that prevent vaccination) must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 48 hours of the performance start time.

NOTE: This policy is currently in effect through May 2022. We will continue to review current circumstances and CDC and local government recommendations to determine whether the mandate may be lifted or extended.

**"Fully vaccinated" means that either 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of FDA or WHO authorized double-dose vaccines or that 14 days have passed since receiving the sole dose of FDA or WHO authorized single-dose vaccines.*

ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 197 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 37, including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles

MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. Cornerstone programs include Free Play, which provides free tickets for students age 13-college, the Teen Performance Company, which culminates in the student-produced Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Summer Camp for students in grades K-12, and a full slate of classes for adults and youth.

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