**No Child... – Pre-Show Notes**

This preshow introduction to No Child... includes: An Overview with Descriptions of Character; Costumes and Set; Company Credits; and Program Notes.

Welcome to No Child..., written by Nilaja Sun. This production is directed by Omari Newton, and produced by The Arts Club Theatre. Vocal Eye’s description of this performance is made possible thanks to our partners at The Arts Club Theatre and the generous support of The Canada Council for The Arts, The Province of British Columbia and The City of Vancouver.

**OVERVIEW**NO CHILD takes place in a high school - in – to quote one of the characters in the play – “the poorest congressional district in the U.S.A. - in the Bronx, New York City, where metal detectors and academically challenged youth share the space equally.”

The school is significantly, Malcolm X high school, named for the African American human rights leader, who was an important figure in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

The action moves around the school, from the hallway, into Ms. Tam’s classroom, to the Janitor’s closet, the principal’s office, and the auditorium.

One actor plays 16 characters in this tour de force performance. In this production, two actors: Celia Aloma and Ali Watson will alternate performances, throughout its run. This performance stars Ali Watson.

No Child is 65 minutes long, and there is no intermission.

**THE CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES**

Ali is a Black woman, 5’4” tall, in her late 20s, with an open round face, apple cheeks, twinkly chocolate brown eyes and a wide, playful smile. Her face is very mobile and expressive. Her curly chestnut hair is worn in cornrow braids, which extend just past her shoulders. She has a generous, round body, and she moves rapidly from one character to the next, with the fluidity of a dancer.

She is dressed in a soft white cotton shirt, buttoned up to the neck, with the sleeves rolled to her forearms. The hem is left untucked, hanging out over loose fitting dark gray cotton trousers, with the cuffs rolled to her ankles. In contrast, her socks are bright turquoise, and are worn with black suede slip-on shoes.

She has a soft, bright orange and white swirled cotton scarf, which is stuffed into her trouser pocket for one character, then worn around her neck or wrapped around her head for others.

**The characters** are differentiated by vocal pitch, accents and speech patterns, which are aided by physical mannerisms such as posture and facial expressions. They are, in the order we meet them:

**Jackson Baron Copeford** – He is the janitor at Malcolm X High School. He introduces himself as the story's narrator. He is in his 80s.

**Ms. Sun** – She is a “teaching artist” (because she is an actor in her other life). She is the main character. She is in her 30s.

**Ms. Tam** - is a young, idealistic Grade 10 classroom teacher, in her 20s.

**Coca** – is a student in Ms. Tam’s class. She is 16 – the one to burst into the classroom with news

**Jerome** – is a student, 18 years old. Would be a great leader, in the right circumstances

**Brian** – is 16 years old, a student. Drinks way too much Red Bull, which doesn’t help his challenges with focusing

**(Zy-o-mara) Xiomara** – is a student. 16. A quiet, deep-voiced girl

**Jose** – is a student. 17. Puerto Rican. Devoted to his family

**Chris** – is a student. 15. Sweet, enthusiastic, science fiction loving kid, with a slight lisp

**Mrs. Kennedy** – is in her 50s. She is the no-nonsense but kind-hearted school principal.

**Security Guard** – is in his 40s. Trinidadian.

**Phillip** – is a shy student. 16. He is impossible to hear when he first speaks.

**Mrs. Projensky** – is a substitute teacher. Russian. In her 40s.

**Mr. Johnson** – is the new teacher. Australian. In his 30s.

**Dona Guzman** – is in her 70s. Grandmother to Jose.

**SET/LOCATION**

The play is set in a high school in an economically challenged district of New York City: Malcolm X High, named for the African American human rights leader, who was a significant figure in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

In the centre of the stage, and taking up most of the room, is Ms. Tam’s classroom. Its back wall is plastered in industrial green – the colour of mildew. There are missing patches of plaster, allowing brick to show through. Wood panel strips run along the bottom of the wall, There are wood laminate tiles on the floor.

In the middle of the back wall, there is a brown, wood-paneled classroom door, with several locks on it. To the left of the door is an old-fashioned radiator.

There are two overhead fluorescent lights, and three wood/metal stacking chairs are haphazardly spread about the classroom.

Leading from the swinging classroom door, along the back wall and turning a corner to run down the right side to the front edge, there is a 3-foot wide platform, raised slightly from the rest of the floor. This is the school hallway. It is tiled in worn grey linoleum. The walls are plastered in a dull grey. There is a metal waist-high stair railing running halfway along its edge.

Above this, on the back wall, hangs a large painted mural of Malcolm X. Under this mural is a bank of metal school lockers, with colourful Post-It notes on them. A fire extinguisher hangs to the right of the lockers, and an analogue clock hangs on the wall above it.

The grey walls of the hallway are covered in graffiti and on the right side wall are two large windows, the panes criss-crossed with iron bars.

The action moves from the hallway, to Ms. Tam’s classroom, to the Janitor’s closet, the principal’s office, and the auditorium, with shifts in light to identify the different locations.

**COMPANY CREDITS
Cast**Celia Aloma and Ali Watson
**Creative**Omari Newton, Director
Kimira Reddy and Vanka Salim, Set Designers
Carmen Alatorre, Costume Designer
Gerald King, Lighting Designer
Owen Belton, Sound Designer
Harika Xu, Lighting Assistant
Raugi Yu, Livestream Director
Jack Wallace, Accent Coach
Pamela Jakobs and Jenny Kim, Stage Managers
Duston Baranow-Watts and Jasmin Sandhu, Apprentice Stage Managers

**PROGRAM NOTES**

We are thrilled to be producing Nilaja Sun’s No Child, directed by Omari Newton and starring Celia Aloma and Ali Watson (in alternating performances). This examination of arts education is a powerful reminder of the transformative role of the performing arts in our lives and in our society. We are thrilled to have both of these incredibly talented women take us on a theatrical journey to Malcom X High School in the Bronx.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Arts Club Theatre Company would like to acknowledge that this production takes place on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, in particular the Musqueam, the Squamish, and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. We are honoured to live, work, and play on this land together.

NO CHILD runs approximately 65 minutes, and there is no intermission.

These pre-show and audio description notes have been prepared, and are read by, Eileen Barrett, for Vocal Eye in partnership with the Arts Club Theatre Company.

This Arts Club Theatre production of No Child... runs September 24 to November 8, 2020 at the BMO Theatre Centre and online.

Arts Club website: <https://artsclub.com>

VocalEye website: <http://www.vocaleye.ca/shows/>