



DOWN
TOWN
DIALOGUES

THE CHILDREN

BY LUCY KIRKWOOD
DIRECTED BY SUSAN V BOOTH

SEPTEMBER 24, 2020

THE CHILDREN was first performed at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, Sloane Square, London on November 17, 2016, and was produced on Broadway by the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) and the Royal Court Theatre on November 28, 2017

The Royal Court Theatre commissioned *THE CHILDREN* with a generous grant from the Berwin Lee New Play Commission.

THE CHILDREN is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING ONLINE
WITH THE HASHTAG #toDowntownDialogues

CAST

ROSE Ora Jones *

HAZEL Tess Malis Kincaid *

ROBIN Chris Kayser *

STAGE DIRECTIONS *Elisa Carlson* *

* *Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Theatrical Outfit, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

CREATIVE TEAM

PLAYWRIGHT Lucy Kirkwood

DIRECTOR Susan V Booth

DOWNTOWN DIALOGUES HOST Gail O'Neill

SOUND DESIGNER Chris Lane (*Multiband Studios*)

STAGE MANAGER Courtney Greever-Fries

STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Matt Torney

MANAGING DIRECTOR
Gretchen E Butler

MARKETING DIRECTOR
Ryan Oliveti

APPRENTICE COMPANY
Caroline Cook
Therecia Lang
Jessica McKeown
Jules Tollett

GENERAL MANAGER
Rochelle Shinn

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Courtney Greever-Fries

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Tess Malis Kincaid

BOX OFFICE ASSOCIATE
Abigail Dawkins

INTERN
Nicole Hart

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Welcome to the first “episode” of Downtown Dialogues, Theatrical Outfit’s series of digital readings and conversations.

When developing ideas for digital programming, we asked ourselves a simple question: How do we honor our mission to “start the conversations that matter” in a time when we can’t gather together? The answer was to produce digital readings of four excellent plays that resonate deeply with the current moment, have fascinating stories and compelling characters, and are performed by some of Atlanta’s top theatre artists. To deepen the conversation around the plays, we are pairing each of the readings with a live video podcast hosted by Gail O’Neill in which expert guests will dig into the big questions behind the play and what they mean for society, as well as addressing questions from you, the audience.

Tonight’s play, *The Children* was a huge hit when it opened at London’s Royal Court Theatre in 2016 and has since been performed in cities all over the world. The playwright, Lucy Kirkwood, is one the leading voices of her generation - her plays take an incisive look at issues of science, politics, morality, and humanity. *The Children* is about the aftermath of a nuclear disaster and is set in a small cottage on the British coast near the reactor. The three characters are all nuclear scientists, who are confronted by their duty to society, their responsibilities to one another and their decades of shared history, and ultimately, their sense of themselves and who they want to be in this precarious moment.

We have assembled an incredibly exciting team for you. Susan V Booth, Artistic Director of the Alliance Theatre, directed the reading at the helm of a terrific cast. Two outstanding Atlanta actors, Chris Kayser and Tess Malis Kincaid, are joined by Ora Jones, an ensemble member of Steppenwolf in Chicago who played the role of Rose in their production of *The Children* last year. Gail has assembled an equally impressive roster for the podcast. She will be joined by Susan V Booth, as well as Pam Longobardi, a visual artist and Georgia State University professor whose work deals directly with the impact of the global consumption of plastic, and Paul Root Wolpe, the director of Emory University’s Center for Ethics.

It’s going to be a rich evening, with some great art and great conversations, and we are so glad that you’re joining us for it!

Matt & Gretchen

SYNOPSIS

In their remote cottage on the British coast, a long-married pair of retired nuclear physicists live a modest life in the aftermath of a natural disaster, giving scrupulous care to energy rationing, their garden, and their yoga practice. When former colleague Rose reappears after 38 years, her presence upends the couple's equilibrium and trust. As the fallout from long-ago decisions comes hurtling into view, Rose unveils a proposal that threatens more than their marriage. A hit in London and New York, Lucy Kirkwood's latest is a taut thriller about responsibility and reparation—what one generation owes the next.

HISTORY OF THE CHILDREN

- Premieres in London at the Royal Court Theatre in November 2016
- Transfers to Broadway with the London cast & creative, produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club in November 2017 where it is nominated for 2 Tony Awards for Best Play and Best Featured Actress in a Play
- Premieres internationally produced by Canadian Stage Theatre in Toronto in 2017 and Melbourne Theatre Company and Sydney Theatre Company in 2018
- Returns to the US regionally produced by Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago and Studio Theatre in Washington D.C. in 2019
- Premieres in Atlanta as part of Theatrical Outfit's Downtown Dialogues in September 2020
- The Guardian placed *The Children* third on a list of the greatest theatrical works since 2000

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Lucy Kirkwood, a native of east London, has written several well received plays including *NSFW* for Royal Court Theatre, *Beauty and the Beast* for The National Theatre, and *Chimerica* for the West End.



ORA JONES* (*Rose*) is a member of Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company ensemble. She was most recently seen as Rose in *The Children* at Steppenwolf. She also appeared in *Familiar*, *The Roommate*, and *The Doppelganger* in the past few seasons there. Other Steppenwolf productions include *The Wheel*, *Middletown*, *The Brother/Sister Plays*, *Three Sisters*, *The Unmentionables*, *The Violet Hour*, *Carter's Way*, and *Morning Star*. Her Broadway roles include Madame de Volanges in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at the Booth, and Mrs. Phelps in *Matilda the Musical*, both at the Shubert and in the first national tour. Some Chicago roles include Katherine of Aragon in *Henry VIII*, Queen Charlotte in *The Madness of George III*, Maria in *Twelfth Night*, Lucienne in *A Flea in Her Ear*, and the Nurse in *Sunday in the Park with George*, for Chicago Shakespeare Theater; Essie Miller in *Ah, Wilderness*, Mrs. Rittenhouse in *Animal Crackers*, Claire in *Proof*, C Ana in *Seeking the Genesis*, and Elizabeth I in *The Beard of Avon*, for the Goodman Theatre; Jaclyn in Joel Drake Johnson's *Rasheeda Speaking* for Rivendell Theatre; Rita Jeffries in *My Kind of Town* for Timeline Theatre; the Stage Manager in *Our Town* for Writers Theatre; and Gwen in *Execution of Justice* for About Face Theatre. Regional and other New York credits include performances at Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Repertory, Manhattan Theatre Club, Public Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory, Next Act, and a particular favorite, the role of Mrs. Muller in *Doubt* for The Weston Playhouse in Weston, VT, directed by Malcolm Ewen. Some film and television appearances include *Consumed*, *Were the World Mine*, *Stranger than Fiction*, "Betrayal," and "Chicago Fire." Awards: Chicago Magazine 2011, Best Actress; Black Theatre Alliance Award, *Seeking the Genesis*; After Dark Award, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Our Town*.



CHRIS KAYSER* (*Robin*) is so happy to be working with TO again! Everything we do now is hopeful --hopeful that we will one day be back in the theater with our audiences to entertain, educate, and enlighten--telling stories that start the important conversations.



TESS MALIS KINCAID* (*Hazel*) most recently appeared at Theatrical Outfit in *The Pitmen Painters*; past productions include *Dividing the Estate* (actor) and *The Savannah Disputation* (director). At the Alliance, past credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *August: Osage County* (both directed by Susan V Booth), *Broke*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Tess was an associate artist at the late great Georgia Shakespeare. Other area work includes acting/directing at Actor's Express, Aurora Theatre, GET, Horizon Theatre Company, True Colors, and Theater Buford. Regional: Arena Stage, Marin Theatre, NC Shakespeare, People's Light & Theatre. She is a three-time Suzi Bass Award recipient for Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role. TV/Film: "Ozark," "Bluff City Law," "Homeland," "Greenleaf," "The Have and Have Nots," "The Gifted," "Dead Silent," *The Mule*, *Hillbilly Elegy* (Fall 2020).

LUCY KIRKWOOD (*Playwright*) is an acclaimed playwright and screenwriter. In 2009, Lucy's play *It Felt Empty When The Heart Went At First But It Is Alright Now* was produced by Clean Break Theatre Company at the Arcola Theatre. The play was nominated for an Evening Standard Award for Best Newcomer and made Lucy joint winner of the 2010 John Whiting Award. *NSFW* premiered at the Royal Court Theatre in 2012, starring Janie Dee and Julian Barratt. *Chimerica* premiered at the Almeida Theatre in 2013 and subsequently transferred to the West End, earning Best New Play at the 2014 Olivier and Evening Standard Awards, as well as the Critics Circle Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Recent work includes *Mosquitoes* (presented by special arrangement with Manhattan Theatre Club), which opened at the National Theatre, London, in summer 2017; and *The Children*, which premiered at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in 2016. *The Children* opened on Broadway in December 2017. Lucy also writes for screen: She has written for "Skins" (Company Pictures); created and wrote "The Smoke" (Kudos/Sky 1); wrote and directed the short film "The Briny"; and is developing projects with Raw TV, Cowboy Films, Clio Barnard, and Lenny Abrahamson. Her new six-part season "Adult Material" (Tiger Aspect Productions) and the mini-series of her play *Chimerica* (Playground Productions) have both recently been greenlit.

SUSAN V BOOTH (*Director*) joined the Alliance Theatre as Jennings Hertz Artistic Director in 2001 and has initiated the Palefsky Collision Project for teens, the Alliance/Kendeda National Graduate Playwriting Competition, and the Reiser Atlanta Artists Lab, as well as commercial partnerships on such projects as *The Prom*; *Tuck Everlasting*; *Ghost Brothers of Darkland County*; *The Color Purple*; *Bring It On: The Musical*; *Twyla Tharp's Come Fly Away*; *Sister Act: The Musical*; *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*; and *Jesus Christ Superstar GOSPEL*. She has directed nationally at The Goodman Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, New York Stage and Film,

Actors Theatre of Louisville, Northlight Theatre, Victory Gardens, Court Theatre and many others. She holds degrees from Denison and Northwestern universities and was a fellow of the National Critics Institute and the Kemper Foundation. She has held teaching positions at Northwestern, DePaul and Emory universities and is a past president of the board of directors for the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the field. Booth's leadership is underwritten by the BOLD Theater Women's Leadership Circle, an initiative to support and promote women's theater leadership funded by the Pussycat Foundation. She is married to Max Leventhal and is the proud mother of Moira Rose Leventhal.

GAIL O'NEILL (*Host*) is a writer for ArtsATL.org, where she covers arts and culture in Atlanta. She is the host and co-producer of Collective Knowledge— a weekly series of conversations with artists, entrepreneurs and thought-leaders— which can be viewed on YouTube, Facebook and The A Network. Most recognizable for her work in fashion, Gail spent 10 years circling the globe as a model before joining CBS News in New York City as a features reporter. After relocating to Atlanta in 2000, she hosted a travel show for CNN, and subsequently hosted several series and specials for HGTV— including *Mission: Organization*, *Christmas at the White House* and *Behind the Design of HGTV's Dream Home*.

COURTNEY GREEVER-FRIES (*Production Manager & Stage Manager*) has spent the last decade working in various production roles in and around Atlanta. A proud graduate of Emory University, she came to Atlanta for school and fell in love with this city. Her work as a stage manager, sound designer, and props master has been seen at Dad's Garage, Actor's Express, Georgia Aquarium, Georgia Ensemble, Theater Emory, and Synchronicity to name a few, but she is happy to have found a home at Theatrical Outfit. A homebody at heart, when not working, she prefers being on her couch with a glass of wine, her husband Jonathan, and her dogs.

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