

At the Traverse this spring – seeds

Shortlisted for the Alfred Fagon Award, seeds embarks on a UK tour in 2020. Sensitive written by Mel Pennant, it tells the story of two mothers united in sorrow, unable to escape the tragedy and violence of knife crime. Together, they try to face the hardship of protecting their sons – one in life, and one in death.

On Michael Thomas' birthday, his cake sits in his mother's living room, its candles burning undisturbed. Jackie wants to clear her conscience, while Evelyn's got a big speech to deliver on the 15th anniversary of Michael's fatal stabbing. Are some things better left unsaid?

In our divided Britain, crimes fuelled by racism still happen; according to figures released in October 2019, knife crime offences in England and Wales have reached a record high. Hate crimes have more than doubled over a seven-year period with a spike following the EU referendum; racial hate crimes make up more than three-quarters of offences.

Directed by Anastasia Osei-Kuffour (Typical, Soho Theatre), seeds looks to tell the, often unexplored, stories of those who fight to keep their children safe from the world in which they grow up. This compelling piece is about motherhood, loss, the lengths that a parent may go to protect their child and what is left after tragedy hits. It brings insidious issues of race and gang mentality to the fore provoking dialogue in the

hope they aren't allowed to fester and infect a new generation.

Osei-Kuffour comments, Finding, developing and directing ground-breaking new plays is my passion. I'm interested in how new writing can respond to current events and resonate with audiences, the way they explore the human story behind injustices in the hope of bringing about change, or at least starting a dialogue to kickstart action. I want to bring the people the world doesn't see or care about to the centre of a story where they can be engaged with. I feel that seeds by Mel Pennant is a play very much in line with the work I want to create.

seeds is generously supported by Arts Council England, The Foyle Foundation and The Carne Trust.

At the Traverse Theatre 10 Cambridge Street, EH1 2ED 20-21 March 2020 www.traverse.co.uk



PHOTO Wasi Daniju