Inua Ellams Pit Party

**Key information**

Running times:

Poetry + Film / Hack: approximately 2 hours

R.A.P Party: approximately 3 hours

Digital freesheets

In an effort to be more sustainable, and in the spirit of The Art of Change, this digital programme is part of a trial we are conducting to discontinue printed freesheets.

Welcome to the Barbican and another of our highly anticipated Pit Parties. This time sees a double bill of hip-hop, dance, poetry and readings, curated by prolific poet-playwright Inua Ellams, whom we are very excited to be working with for the first time. Set to the backdrop of Walter Hill’s cult action film *The Warriors*, this is a special day-long two-part programme of events. We warmly welcome all the artists who are part of today’s line-up. We hope you have a good time.

Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre

The R.A.P Party has grown to become one of the most inclusive events in the live literature calendar, and its founding ethos of conversation, music and poetry was taught to me by Jacob Sam-La Rose (leader of the Barbican Young Poets) who tutored me through my first years as an artist. I am excited to introduce audiences to the first-ever Poetry + Film / Hack, an experiment in which, much as I add poetry to music in R.A.P parties, I add poetry to film. Accompanying the events respectively will be long-time collaborators of mine, DJ Sid Mercutio and VJ Zayna Daze. Also making its debut is the addition of dance to the R.A.P Party, for which award-winning company Avant Garde, led by Tony Adigun, will interpret the poet’s song choices.

This Pit Party promises to be an unforgettable, incredible culmination to a year of exceptional events. On behalf of the incredible poets and artists on the bill, I would like to thank you for spending the day with us.

Inua Ellams

Artists

Performance 1: Poetry + Film / Hack

Bohdan Piasecki

Caleb Femi

Ella Frears

Inua Ellams

Caroline Bird

VJ Zayna Daze

Performance 2: Open Lab Rhythm and Poetry Party

Tobi Kyeremateng

Polarbear

Laurie Ogden

Jeremiah ‘SugarJ’ Brown

Hibaq Osman

Paul Cree

DJ Sid Mercutio

S K Perry

Bohdan Piasecki

Indigo Williams

Inua Ellams

The Firm: Chaldon J. Williams, Dani J. Harris-Walters, Keanu Simms, James Gallego Olivo, Muti Musafiri, Taylor-Kae Knott, Toby Jackman, Tony Adigun, Sasha Shadid, Stefano A. Addae

R.A.P Party Co-Producer Theresa Lola

With thanks to Tuyet Huynh & VJ Zayna Daze (for Poetry + Film / Hack) and DJ Sid Mercutio (for R.A.P Party)

*The Warriors (1979)*

Directed by Walter Hill, based on the 1965 novel by Sol Yurick

The Warriors: a gang from Coney Island. The Gramercy Riffs: the biggest gang in New York. A truce is called between the main gangs of the city, and they are called to The Bronx to hear Cyrus, leader of Gramercy Riffs, call for unity against the police.

But then Cyrus is shot by Luther of The Rogues – and The Warriors are put in the frame.

Unarmed and fleeing from the police, The Warriors try to make their way back to Coney Island. Incited by the new leader of The Gramercy Riffs in vengeance for Cyrus’ death, the city’s gangs gather to round on The Warriors and capture – or waste them. The film follows their tumultuous journey home.

Released by Paramount in 1979, the film was initially met with negative feedback for its violence; but over time has become a cult classic, inspiring work in other media and artforms.

Poetry + Film / Hack

Bohdan Piasecki is a poet from Poland based in Birmingham. A committed performer, he has taken his poems from the upstairs room of an Eastbourne pub to the main stage of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre; from underground Tokyo clubs to tramways in Paris; from a bookshop in Beijing to an airfield in Germany; from niche podcasts to BBC Radio. In the UK, he regularly features at the country’s most exciting spoken-word nights, festivals and readings. He enjoys the creative chaos of big field festivals just as much as the composed concentration of literary events.

Caleb Femi was the first Young People's Laureate for London. He is also a director, photographer and English Literature teacher. He is featured in the *Dazed* 100 list of the next generation shaping youth culture. He has written and directed short films commissioned by the BBC and Channel 4 and poems by the Tate Modern, The Royal Society for Literature, and others. He has also won the Roundhouse Poetry Slam and is currently working on a debut collection.

Ella Frears is a poet and visual artist based in London. She has had poems published or forthcoming in the *LRB, Poetry London, Ambit, The Rialto, Poetry Daily, POEM*, and *The Moth*, among others. She is a trustee and editor for Magma poetry magazine, was a Jerwood/Arvon mentee and was shortlisted for the Manchester Poetry Prize. She has completed residencies for Tate Britain, Tate St. Ives, the National Trust, Royal Holloway University and K6 Gallery. Her debut pamphlet, *Passivity, Electricity, Acclivity* is out with Goldsmiths Press.

Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a poet, playwright and performer, a Complete Works poet alumni and a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Across his work, identity, displacement and destiny are recurring themes in which he also tries to mix the old with the new; traditional African storytelling with contemporary poetry. His poetry is published by Flipped Eye, Akashic, Nine Arches and several plays by Oberon.

Caroline Bird is a poet and playwright. She has five collections of poetry published by Carcanet. Her most recent collection, *In These Days of Prohibition*, was shortlisted for the 2017 TS Eliot Prize and The Ted Hughes Award. A two-time winner of the Foyles Young Poets Award, her first collection *Looking Through Letterboxes* was published in 2002 when she was 15. She won a major Eric Gregory Award in 2002 and was shortlisted for the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize in 2001 and the Dylan Thomas Prize in 2008 and 2010. She was one of the five official poets at the 2012 London Olympics.

Vj Zayna Daze is a Nigerian Independent filmmaker and photographer.

Open Lab R.A.P Party  
Tobi Kyeremateng is a theatre, poetry and festival producer. She has worked with organisations such as Apples and Snakes, Bush Theatre, Roundhouse, Brainchild Festival, and others. She is founder of the Black Ticket Project, increasing access to theatre for black people.

Birmingham born Steven Camden (Polarbear) is one of the most respected spoken-word artists in the UK. He was co-writer and script mentor on the Akram Khan Company's Olivier Award-winning production *DESH*. He has written three novels for HarperCollins: *TAPE* (2013), *It's About Love* (2015) and *Nobody Real* (2018).

Laurie Ogden is a poet and playwright born in Liverpool – emerging from Roundhouse’s ‘Spit the Atom’ Collective to become an unforgettable young voice in UnFOLD. Her poetry is captivating, subtle and acutely observed. Her work has featured on Sofar Sounds and national TV campaigns.

Jeremiah ‘SugarJ’ Brown is a Black British-Jamaican writer and performer based in Croydon. He is a Barbican Young Poet alumnus and former Roundhouse resident artist. His debut show *Likkle Rum with Grandma* sold out at the Roundhouse as part of the Last Word festival, and at Bernie Grants Arts Centre as part of SKFEST.

Hibaq Osman is a Somali writer born and based in London. Her work largely centres on women, identity and the healing process with a focus on the often hidden, nuanced aspects of our experiences. Her debut poetry collection *A Silence You Can Carry* was published with Out-Spoken Press in 2015. She is a member of OCTAVIA poetry collective.

Paul Cree is a storyteller, theatre maker, rapper and poet. He has performed at festivals and events such as The Edinburgh Fringe, Latitude, and Bestival, as well as having his work showcased on BBC 1Xtra. He has an EP of stories entitled *The* *90 Sick E.P* and in 2018 published his debut collection of poems and stories, entitled *The Suburban,* with Burning Eye Books.

DJ Sid Mercutio a.k.a. Roland Idehen started as a DJ in 2000 and moved to music production, first practicing on a playstation, to a PC, and eventually learning Sound Recording Technology at London Metropolitan University. Further study at the prestigious Alchemea Studios led to the ever expanding knowledge of his craft and musical mind. His style deals with melodies, grooves, a touch of soul, not too hot or too cold for the human soul.

S K Perry’s debut *Let Me Be Like Water* was published in 2018 by Melville House. She has delivered creative writing workshops for PEN International in Honduras and Scotland, for the Roundhouse in Bulgaria, and all across the UK with different schools and organisations.

Bohdan Piasecki is a poet from Poland based in Birmingham. He has worked as Director of Education on the Spoken Word in Education MA course at Goldsmiths University and was the Midlands producer for Apples and Snakes between 2010 and 2017. He is currently General Manager at Free Radical, a Birmingham-based company creating opportunities for young artists with an activist practice.

Indigo Williams is a British Nigerian poet and Spoken Word Educator from South London. She uses her poetry to explore themes of race, gender and spirituality. She has performed at TedxBrixton, BBC Radio 4’s *Bespoken Word*, Glastonbury Festival and has spoken at Oxford and Cambridge University.

Born in Nigeria, Inua Ellams is a poet, playwright and performer, a Complete Works poet alumni and a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Across his work, identity, displacement and destiny are recurring themes in which he also tries to mix the old with the new; traditional African storytelling with contemporary poetry. His poetry is published by Flipped Eye, Akashic, Nine Arches and several plays by Oberon.

Tony Adigun, Artistic Director of Avant Garde Dance, brings together a unique collective of multi-disciplinary dance artists in The Firm. Ranging from a fusion of various dance styles such as b-boying, hip hop, krump, poppin’ and contemporary dance they will display explosive and intimate performances giving an insight into the world of the 80s cult classic *The Warriors*.



