



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Company One Theatre, in partnership with the City of Boston, announces

## ***The Boy Who Kissed The Sky***

by **Idris Goodwin**

music by **Divinity Roxx** and **Eugene H. Russell IV**

directed by **Summer L. Williams**

music directed by **David Freeman Coleman**

dramaturgy by **afrikah selah**

**All tickets are Pay-What-You-Want! (\$0 minimum)**

July 14 - August 12, 2023 at The Strand Theatre

(543 Columbia Road, Dorchester)

**Boston, MA** — Company One Theatre (C1) announces the New England premiere of ***The Boy Who Kissed The Sky*** by Idris Goodwin, with music by Divinity Roxx and Eugene H. Russell IV, directed by C1 Associate Artistic Director and Co-Founder Summer L. Williams, music directed by David Freeman Coleman, and produced in partnership with the City Of Boston's Office of Arts and Culture. Press opening will be Saturday, July 15, 2022 with a preview performance on Friday, July 14. Performances continue through August 12 at Dorchester's historic Strand Theatre. Tickets are available now at [companyone.org](http://companyone.org). As part of C1's ongoing commitment to uplifting Theatre As Public Art, **all tickets are Pay-What-You-Want with \$0 minimum.**

Goodwin says, "I'm very excited, chuffed, and over the moon that Company One is bringing my show *The Boy Who Kissed The Sky* to Boston. The show first premiered at Seattle Children's Theatre, where I serve as artistic director, last fall. It was also in Atlanta recently, and multigenerational audiences are loving it. And I'm really excited to see it with multigenerational Company One audiences because Company One audiences are the best, period."

"Every time we get to work with Idris, something magical happens," adds Williams. "*The Boy Who Kissed The Sky* in particular has been such a wonderful experience. He's poured so much love and affection into this play, and his care for music history really shines through. The story is something we all can relate to; it sparks your imagination with one hand and plucks at your

heartstrings with the other. And working with Divinity Roxx, who played bass with Beyoncé, is just the cherry on top of it all.”

Goodwin’s artistic collaboration with Company One began with the 2013 production of his play *How We Got On*. Since then, C1 produced the world premiere of Goodwin’s Elliot Norton award-winning *HYPE MAN: a break beat play* in 2018, as well as its limited return engagement in 2020 and film adaptation in 2021. Goodwin is currently a member of the C1 Season 24 PlayLab Circuit Flux Lab, where he’s developing *Quotables*, a new break beat play.

*The Boy Who Kissed The Sky* draws inspiration from the upbringing of rock music icon Jimi Hendrix. It follows The Boy, an aspiring musician and dreamer, as he conjures the spirit of a bandleader named J Sonic. The two go on a journey through time and space as The Boy learns to ignite the creativity and confidence within him and chase a dream that has been passed down from generation to generation.

By producing *The Boy Who Kissed The Sky*, C1 hopes to amplify how young people can harness their creativity to develop and actualize their personal goals, the vital role of community care and mutual aid in our neighborhoods, and the importance of cultivating a practice of experimentation and persistence.

“The play started with an investigation of Jimi’s story,” notes Goodwin. But as I dug further and further and began to write it, it took on a more mythical, almost fable-like quality. Really, it’s my ode to all young dreamers and artists who always find a way to ‘play through it.’”

As with Company One’s previous residencies at the Strand during their world premiere productions of Francisca Da Silveira’s *can i touch it?* and Josh Wilder’s *Leftovers*, C1 hopes to bring professional, boundary-breaking theatrical programming to the Upham’s Corner community while amplifying the work of local artists and community organizations through partnerships with ZUMIX, Upham’s Corner Main Street, Boston Music Project, Vital CxN, Leela Yoga & Wellness, Wee the People, and more. C1 will also collaborate with partners on the event series Branch Out With C1, featuring local community gatherings across the city.

“I am so excited to be back in Uphams Corner this summer to continue deepening our connection to that neighborhood with *The Boy Who Kissed the Sky*,” says C1 Artistic Director and Co-Founder Shawn LaCount. “This play celebrates the power of imagination, creativity, and human connection as forces for individual and communal change. And it’s an Idris play, so you know that while the obstacles these characters encounter are deep, like poverty, addiction, and systemic racism, these heavy topics are met with unbridled hope for the future and a beat that won’t quit.”

## >> About the Production

With just a broom, a pencil, and a dream for a better life, a budding guitarist — unsure of his place in the cosmos — invokes the past, present & future of rhythm ‘n’ blues as his guide. Rocking and rolling with the hippest ancestral spirit, our young hero must set aside his fears and dig deep to discover his own voice.

This Summer, Idris Goodwin returns to Company One with *The Boy Who Kissed The Sky*, a groovy ride through space, time, and imagination for dreamers of all ages. Inspired by the early life of Jimi Hendrix, this intergenerational hero’s journey is a celebration of reaching for the stars, finding community, and embracing the creative legacy that lives inside us all.

### >> Company One Theatre is producing *can i touch it?* to AMPLIFY:

- public Art for Public Good in Uphams Corner.
- powerful reverberations of community care, where neighbors show up for one another in the face of adversity.
- visionary artists, activists, and musicians, whose work heals us, propels us, and helps us imagine ourselves into a better future.
- resilient, nurturing intergenerational spaces, supported by partner organizations across Boston who empower our young people to achieve their dreams, and become impactful changemakers.
- communal joy, creativity, and relentless optimism as essential tools for social justice.

## >> Cast

**Errol Service Jr.** — The Boy

**Martinez Napoleon** — J. Sonic

**Cedric Lilly** — Mel/Feedback #1

**Yasmeen Duncan** — Donna/Feedback #2

**Kiera “Kee” Prusmack** — Mrs. Newton/Feedback #3

**James Turner** — Person with Clipboard/Feedback #4

**Adriana Alvarez** — Person with Clipboard/Feedback #5

**David W. Prout** — Guitar

**Sahil Warsi** — Bass

**Hector Saint-Hilaire** — Drums

## >> Production, Artistic, and Design Team

Playwright: **Idris Goodwin**

Composer: **Divinity Roxx**

Composer: **Eugene H. Russell IV**

Director: **Summer L. Williams**

Music Director: **David Freeman Coleman**

Dramaturg: **afrikah salah**

Director of New Work: **Ilana M. Brownstein**

Choreographer: **Victoria Lynn Awkward**  
Production Stage Manager: **Carmen Catherine Alfaro**  
Rehearsal Stage Manager/Production Assistant Stage Manager: **Becca Cottrell**  
Assistant Stage Manager: **Ethan Hewlett**  
Scenic Designer: **Danielle DeLaFuente**  
Costume Designer: **Danielle Dominique Sumi**  
Lighting Designer: **Chris Brusberg**  
Sound Designer: **Nok Kanchanabanca**  
Projections Designer: **Rasean Davonté Johnson**  
Wardrobe Supervisor: **E. Rosser**  
Technical Director: **Ben Lieberman**  
Assistant Technical Director: **Elliott Purcell**  
Audio Engineer: **Nick Walwer**  
Props Master: **Arielle Greenspan**  
Artistic Producer & Casting Director: **Josh Glenn-Kayden**  
Artistic & Producing Intern: **Kimmi Merisma**

Scenery constructed by Wooden Kiwi Productions, Waltham, MA

## >> Performance Schedule

Friday, July 14 @ 7:30PM - Preview Performance  
Saturday, July 15 @ 7:30PM - Press Performance  
Sunday, July 16 @ 2PM  
Thursday, July 20 @ 7:30PM  
Friday, July 21 @ 10AM - Youth Matinee  
Friday, July 21 @ 7:30PM  
Saturday, July 22 @ 7:30PM  
Sunday, July 23 @ 2PM  
Thursday, July 27 @ 7:30PM  
Friday, July 28 @ 7:30PM  
Saturday, July 29 @ 7:30PM  
Sunday, July 30 @ 2PM  
Thursday, August 3 @ 7:30PM  
Friday, August 4 @ 7:30PM  
Saturday, August 5 @ 7:30PM  
Sunday, August 6 @ 2PM  
Thursday, August 10 @ 7:30PM  
Friday, August 11 @ 10AM - Youth Matinee  
Friday, August 11 @ 7:30PM  
Saturday, August 12 @ 2PM  
Saturday, August 12 @ 7:30PM

**How to purchase tickets:**

- Online at CompanyOne.org
- In-person at the Strand Theatre within 45 minutes prior to performance
- A digital streaming version of the production will also be made available for on-demand viewing during the run, details to come.

## >> Production Covid Protocols

In order to keep our artists and audiences safe, all audiences and staff are required to wear a well-fitted mask that fully covers their nose and mouth at all times while at the Strand. We strongly recommend wearing an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask, or double-masking. The only exception to this requirement is for performers while performing.

Protocols are subject to change.

## >> About the Creative Team

**Idris Goodwin** (he/him) – Playwright

Idris an award-winning breakbeat poet, playwright, filmmaker, educator and arts champion. He's created original content for and/or appeared on Nickelodeon, HBO Def Poetry, Sesame Street, NPR, BBC Radio, and the Discovery Channel. *Your House is Not Just A House*, his first picture book, will be published by HarperCollins in Spring 2024. Idris is the author of over 60 original plays ranging from his Hip Hop inspired breakbeat series to historical dramas to works for young audiences. Titles such as *And In This Corner Cassius Clay*, *How We Got On*, *Hype Man: A Break Beat Play*, and the ground breaking *Free Play: open source scripts for an antiracist tomorrow*, are widely produced across the country by a diverse mix of professional and academic venues. Driven by a passion for cultural impact and civic engagement, Idris currently serves as Artistic Director of Seattle Children's Theater. Find him at [www.idrisgoodwin.com](http://www.idrisgoodwin.com) and on across all the social

**Divinity Roxx** (she/her) – Composer

Divinity Roxx is a multi-hyphenate Grammy-nominated musician, recording artist, author, and composer from Atlanta, GA who is celebrated for her empowering lyrics and infectious bass grooves. Her career as a bass player skyrocketed after touring with 5-time Grammy award-winning virtuoso, Victor Wooten. She toured and performed with Beyoncé as her bassist and Musical Director, and was a featured soloist and composer for the *I Am...Sasha Fierce* tour. Her newly formed production company, Divi Roxx Kids aims to inspire and empower young people through music, edutainment and storytelling. In 2021, Scholastic Inc. released two picture books based on songs from her debut, full-length Family Music album, *Ready Set Go!* The album was nominated for Best Children's Music Album in 2022. She was invited to perform at The White House Easter Egg Roll in 2023. She is excited to share her love for hip-hop and rock in the music she co-composed for *The Boy Who Kissed The Sky*, and hopes that everyone feels inspired by the power of imagination so eloquently portrayed in this work. @diviroxxkids @diviroxx

**Eugene H. Russell IV** (he/him) – Composer

Eugene H. Russell IV, born and raised in southwest Atlanta, is a multi-talented vocalist, musician, songwriter, and award-winning actor. He's served as both a vocalist and saxophonist for countless bands who've opened for the likes of George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic, Boyz II Men, KC & the Sunshine Band, Brand New Heavies, and Mother's Finest. Among his regional theatre acting credits are East Texas Hotlinks (True Colors Theatre Company), Dutchman (Nebraska Repertory Theatre), and Before It Hits Home (St. Louis Black Rep), for which he received the prestigious Woodie King, Jr. Award. Eugene's film/TV appearances include Disney's Secrets of Sulphur Springs and the upcoming Netflix film Six Triple Eight. In addition to co-writing the music for *The Boy Who Kissed the Sky*, he's been quite busy composing for many other regional theatres looking to produce new works that extend beyond the "traditional" musical theatre sound. No stranger to the studio, Eugene IV is also a solo recording artist whose representative catalog can be found on all music streaming platforms.

**Summer L. Williams** (she/her) – Director

Summer L. Williams is an award-winning director and Co-Founder/Associate Artistic Director of Company One Theatre in Boston. Her most recent directing credits include *Jump* by Charly Evon Simpson at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore, MD, *can i touch it?*, a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere by Francisca Da Silvera at Company One Theatre, *sandblasted* by Charly Evon Simpson with Vineyard Theatre and WP Theater, Off-Broadway. Local/Regional credits: *The Arboretum Experience* at American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), *Daddy Issues* at Salt Lake City Acting Company New Play Sounding Series, the Digital World Premiere of *Downtown Crossing* at Company One Theatre, *Wolf Play* at Company One Theatre, *School Girls, or The African Mean Girls Play* at SpeakEasy Stage Company, *Miss You Like Hell* with Company One Theatre and OBERON at American Repertory Theater, the World Premiere of *Leftovers* at Company One Theatre, *Wig Out!* with Company One and OBERON at A.R.T.; *Smart People* at Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY and Geva Theater in Rochester, NY; *Barbecue* at Lyric Stage Company of Boston—Winner of the 2018 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director; *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.* at Company One Theatre; *Bootycandy* at SpeakEasy Stage Company; *An Octoroon* and *Colossal* with Company One Theatre—Winner of the 2016 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director for both productions. *Intimate Apparel* at Lyric Stage Company of Boston; *Shiv* as a part of *The Displaced Hindu Gods Trilogy*; *Shelter of Last Resort* by Miranda Craigwell as a part of XX PlayLab 2014; the New England Premiere of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *We Are Proud To Present A Presentation About The Herero Of Namibia, Formerly Known As Southwest Africa From The German Sudwestafrika Between The Years 1884-1915*; Idris Goodwin's *How We Got On*; Lynn Nottage's *By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston; *The Brothers Size* and *Marcus; Or The Secret Of Sweet* as part of The Brother/Sister Plays (2012 Elliot Norton Award nominated for Outstanding Production and winner of the 2012 IRNE Award for Best Play); *Neighbors, Grimm; The Good Negro; Voyeurs De Venus* (Winner of 2009 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director); *The Bluest Eye* (IRNE and Elliot Norton Award nominated); *The Last Days Of Judas Iscariot*; *Spell*

#7 (IRNE nominated); *Jesus Hopped The A Train* (2004 Elliot Norton Award for Best Fringe Production); and *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* (IRNE nominated).

**David Freeman Coleman** (he/him) – Music Director

David is excited to return to Company One after music directing *Wig Out* and *Miss You Like Hell*. Lecturer of Music at Tufts University, Director of Choral Music at Dana Hall School. Recent Music Direction: *The Little Mermaid* (Reagle Music Theatre), *Sister Act* (Lyric Stage), *Matilda* (Wheelock Family Theater), *Jelly's Last Jam* (Long Wharf Theatre), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Central Square Theater & Greater Boston Stage), *Once on This Island*, *Choir Boy* (SpeakEasy Stage), *The Bluest Eye* (Huntington Theater), *WILD: A Musical Becoming* (A.R.T.), *Passing Strange*, *Sister School* (Moonbox Productions). 4 Eliot Norton Award Nominations for Outstanding Music Direction and 1 win for 2023. Has worked with Idina Menzel, Audra McDonald, Mariah Carey, Bobby McFerrin, Ryan Gosling and the Boston Pops. Learn more at [www.davidfcoleman.com](http://www.davidfcoleman.com).

**afrikah salah** (they/them) – Dramaturg

afrikah salah is the 2022-23 NNPN New Work Producer in Residence at Company One Theatre, and a Boston-based cultural worker with a focus on producorial dramaturgy, new play development, and arts writing. Outside of producing, collaborating, and supporting new work in development, they are a freelance writer who has written for the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.), New England Theatre Geek, The Public Theater, and 3Views on Theater. As a cultural worker, their mission is to create intentional work that activates and bridges community action and dialogue at the intersections of identity, time and space, social change, and care-centered engagement for artists and audiences. You can learn more about their work at [itsafrikah.com](http://itsafrikah.com).

## >> About Company One Theatre (C1)

Founded in 1998, Company One has situated itself as a home for social justice and artistic excellence by connecting Boston's diverse communities through live performance, the development of new plays and playwrights, arts education, and public engagement programming. By establishing a dedicated space for marginalized and alternative narratives to thrive and working with partners and collaborators across the city, Company One has become a local leader in the ongoing conversations that continue to define the era of social change in contemporary America.

Company One Theatre's work falls into four main areas: Productions, Education, New Play Development, and Connectivity. Over its 20+ year history Company One has produced over 80 productions, employed over 1500 local artists, and has been awarded over 30 Boston theatre awards. We have served over 100,000 audience members and 15,000 students.

### MISSION

Company One Theatre builds community at the intersection of art and social change.

### VISION

A Boston defined by justice, equity, and artistic innovation.

## **MANIFESTO**

Welcome to our community, where every audience member, artist, student, and supporter has the opportunity to fight for social justice. At C1...

- We strive to create intentional, authentic theatrical experiences that uniquely integrate content, style, space, and community.
- We amplify new stories and adventurous theatrical forms to define what's next in the American theatre.
- We focus on growing our students' authority, voice, and point of view, while developing artists into the next generation of change-makers.
- Our work is responsive to what's happening in our city, nation, and world.
- We work towards justice by challenging inequity and oppressive systems.
- Innovation, forward thinking, and collaboration lead the way.
- We center our work on reciprocal relationships with community partners.
- Representation is an act of social justice.
- Our growth is motivated by questioning the status quo, internally and externally.
- We strive for artistic excellence as defined by our collective community.

**“To attend one of their performances is often to feel yourself immersed in exuberance, with waves of energy pouring from the stage, usually reciprocated by an avidly enthusiastic audience that is far younger and more diverse than the Boston theater norm.” — *The Boston Globe***

## **>> C1 Contact**

**Riley Greenstein**

Marketing & Communications Manager

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