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Press Opening: January 27, 2018 ([RSVP](#))
[Publicity Photos & Digital Press Kit](#)

Company One Theatre presents

HYPE MAN: a break beat play

a world premiere by Idris Goodwin
directed by Shawn LaCount

January 26-February 24, 2018 | Plaza Theatre at the Boston Center for the Arts
75 min, no intermission | [#MicDropWithC1](#)

Boston, MA — Company One Theatre (C1) kicks off its bold 19th season, AMPLIFY, which explores the prism of the black male experience in America, with **the world premiere of Idris Goodwin's *HYPE MAN: a break beat play***. Performances begin Friday, January 26, 2018 and continue through February 24 at the Plaza Theatre at the Boston Center for the Arts. It marks C1's second collaboration with Goodwin, following 2013's *How We Got On*, which was nominated for three Elliot Norton Awards.

"*HYPE MAN* is the third in my series of Break Beat Plays," says playwright Idris Goodwin, "which are about Hip-Hop in America and the way Hip-Hop has affected our personal relationships, our dreams and aspirations, our politics, everything."

While *How We Got On* looked back at Hip-Hop in the 80s, ***HYPE MAN* is very much about the here and now: this is the story of an interracial Hip-Hop trio on the verge of fame that's shaken by the police shooting of an unarmed black teenager**. Verb, the hype man, wants to use the group's big break as a platform for protest, while Pinnacle, the front man, wants to keep politics out of the music.

"At C1, our goal is to be at the intersection of art and social change," says C1 Artistic Director Shawn LaCount, "and the characters of *HYPE MAN* are navigating questions that are core to our own mission. Do artists have a responsibility to take action against injustice? At C1, we believe the answer is yes."

"This is a play about what happens in a friendship when things like politics don't align," says Goodwin. "What are the negotiations that you make? What are the requirements for us to have a real relationship—is it a requirement that you think like I think?"

“We’re thrilled to welcome back three of our favorite collaborators to bring this Hip-Hop trio to life,” says LaCount. “Kadahj Bennett, Rachel Cognata, and Michael Knowlton are all incredibly dynamic performers. They’re also all graduates of Boston Arts Academy, one of our closest partner organizations.”

“We are very proud of our partnership with Company One and how we, together, have helped nurture the development of Boston's next generation of artists,” says Boston Arts Academy Headmaster Anne Clark. “Company One shares our commitment to equity and access through the arts and to expanding Boston's artistic scene to reflect the diversity of our communities.”

>>ABOUT *HYPE MAN*

Frontman Pinnacle and his hype man Verb have been making Hip-Hop together since they were kids. Now that they’ve got top-notch beatmaker Peep One in the mix, the group is finally on the verge of making it big—until the police shooting of an unarmed black teenager shakes the trio to its core, and forces them to navigate issues of friendship, race, and privilege. The latest from break beat poet and playwright Idris Goodwin (*How We Got On*), HYPE MAN asks us: who has the responsibility to speak up in the face of social injustice?

>>TICKETS AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Friday, January 26 at 8pm – PREVIEW
Saturday, January 27 at 8pm – OPENING NIGHT
Sunday, January 28 at 2pm
Wednesday, January 31 at 7:30pm
Thursday, February 1 at 7:30pm
Friday, February 2 at 10am – STUDENT MATINEE
Friday, February 2 at 8pm
Saturday, February 3 at 8pm
Sunday, February 4 at 2pm
Wednesday, February 7 at 7:30pm
Thursday, February 8 at 7:30pm
Friday, February 9 at 10am – STUDENT MATINEE
Friday, February 9 at 8pm
Saturday, February 10 at 8pm
Sunday, February 11 at 2pm
Wednesday, February 14 at 7:30pm
Thursday, February 15 at 7:30pm
Friday, February 16 at 8pm
Saturday, February 17 at 8pm
Sunday, February 18 at 2pm
Wednesday, February 21 at 7:30pm
Thursday, February 22 at 7:30pm
Friday, February 23 at 8pm
Saturday, February 24 at 4pm
Saturday, February 24 at 8pm – CLOSING NIGHT

Please note: *HYPE MAN* performance dates have shifted since their initial announcement in our season press release.

****Press Performance: Saturday, January 27, 2018 at 8pm ([CLICK TO RSVP](#))**

- Online at BostonTheatreScene.com
- Walk-up Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts, 527 Tremont St.

>>ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Idris Goodwin (Playwright)

Idris Goodwin is an award winning playwright, poet, performer and essayist. His play *How We Got On*, developed at the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, premiered in Actors Theater's 2012 Humana Festival, and is being produced at theatres across the country. It is the first in his "break beat play" series which includes *The REALNESS* and *Hype Man*, winner of the 2017 Blue Ink Playwriting Award. His play *And In This Corner Cassius Clay* received the 2017 Distinguished Play Award from The American Association of Theater and Education. Other widely produced plays include *Blackademics*, *This Is Modern Art* co-written with Kevin Coval, and *Bars and Measures*. Goodwin is one of seven playwrights featured in the widely presented *HANDS UP!*, an anthology commissioned by The New Black Fest and published by Samuel French. His one act *Black Flag* was produced Off Broadway. *The Way The Mountain Moved*, commissioned as part of Oregon Shakespeare's groundbreaking American Revolutions Series, will world premiere in 2018. He's had work commissioned by or in development with The Public Theatre, Steppenwolf Theater, The Kennedy Center, Seattle Children's Theater, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Program, La Jolla Playhouse, The Lark Playwriting Center, The Playwrights' Center and New Harmony Project. Idris's work has received support from the NEA, Mellon and Ford Foundations, and is the recipient of InterAct Theater's 20/20 Prize. *These Are The Breaks* (Write Bloody, 2011), his debut collection of essays and poetry, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Goodwin's poetry has featured on HBO, The Discovery Channel, Sesame Street and National Public Radio. Goodwin is an assistant professor in The Department of Theatre and Dance at Colorado College.

Shawn LaCount (Director)

Shawn is a proud co-founder of Company One Theatre. Recent directorial credits include the regional premieres of Jackie Sibblies Drury's *Really*; Young Jean Lee's *We're Gonna Die* (The American Repertory Theatre /Company One Theatre); A. Rey Pamatmat's *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them* (Elliot Norton Award Nominee for Outstanding Director and Outstanding Production); Annie Baker's *The Flick* (Elliot Norton Award, Outstanding Production); the world premiere of Kirsten Greenidge's *Splendor* (IRNE Award nominee, Best New Play); the Boston premieres of *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* by Rajiv Joseph; *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* by Kristoffer Diaz (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director and Outstanding Production); Annie Baker's *The Aliens* (Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Director and Outstanding Production); the world premiere of *Grimm* (IRNE Award nominee for Best New Play); the Boston premiere of *The Overwhelming* by JT Rogers (Elliot Norton Award Nominee, Outstanding Production); the Boston premiere of Haruki Murakami's *After the Quake* (Elliot Norton Award Nominee, Outstanding Production); Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* (IRNE nomination for Best Director and Best Musical); and the Boston premiere of Noah Haidle's *Mr.*

Marmalade (Elliot Norton Award Nominee, Outstanding Director/Outstanding Drama). Shawn holds an MA Ed. in theatre Education from Clark University and an MFA in Directing from The University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has taught at Emerson College, Boston Arts Academy, Huntington Theatre Company, Tufts University, Stage One and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Cast:

Kadahj Bennett (Verb)

Kadahj's psyched to reunite with Goodwin for another C1 experience. Recent credits include *peerless*, *The T Party*, *An Octoroon*, *Dry Land*, *How We Got On* (Company One), *Akeelah and the Bee* (Wheelock Family Theatre) and a feature in *The Halls* web series (Beyond Measure Productions). Hamilton College & the Boston Arts Academy grad; Kadahj is a Teaching Artist in the Boston Area. Bennett serves as the writer/lyricist/vocalist for Dancelujah (hiphop/fusion). Luminary Artist for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Rachel Cognata (Peep One)

A returned Boston native, Rachel is excited to be working with Company One in their 19th season. She is a graduate of Boston Arts Academy, a longtime collaborating organization of C1 and a recent graduate of Tufts University. She most recently played Girlfriend in Company One's production of *Really* and is currently working on an ensemble devised play with Liars and Believers theater company. Favorite past projects also include *Inner City Blues* and *The Laramie Project*. Rachel is thrilled and honored to be working with C1 again on the world premiere of Idris Goodwin's *HYPE MAN*.

Michael Knowlton* (Pinnacle)

Michael is thrilled to return to Company One. Past C1 credits include *Splendor and Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. Other recent credits *Come Back Little Sheba* and *Our Town* (Huntington Theatre Company); *Distant Neighbors* (Fresh Ink); *Coriolanus* (Commonwealth Shakespeare); *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot* (Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theatre); and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Wax Wings). Michael currently resides and grew up in Boston and has been a regular cast member of Boston's *Shear Madness* since 2015.

*appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

Designers

Laurence Moten (Scenic Designer)

Cassandra Cacoq (Costume Designer)

Jen Rock (Lighting Designer)

Lee Schuna (Sound Designer)

>>ABOUT COMPANY ONE THEATRE

For just under two decades, Company One Theatre has situated itself as a home for social and artistic liberation by working to unite the city's diverse communities through socially provocative performance and by facilitating the emergence of civically engaged artists.

By establishing a dedicated space for marginalized and alternative narratives to thrive, Company One has become a leader in the ongoing conversations that continue to define the era of social change in contemporary America. Consistently recognized for groundbreaking artistic excellence and for championing >>What's Next in American theatre, Company One has been instrumental in attracting audiences that reflect the ever-evolving face and rich diversity of our society.

“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*

>> *What's Next*

Tyler Prendergast

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