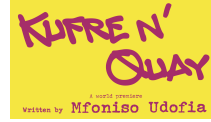




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**CONTACT:**

*Regan Communications Group:*

Doug Haslam – [dhaslam@regancomm.com](mailto:dhaslam@regancomm.com) ; ( c ) 352-256-1210

Erin Gourley – [egourley@regancomm.com](mailto:egourley@regancomm.com) ; ( c ) 646-357-2293

Gabrielle Jaques, Huntington Publicist - [gjaques@huntingtontheatre.org](mailto:gjaques@huntingtontheatre.org) ; ( o ) 617-273-1520

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**BOSTON ARTS ACADEMY AND WHEELOCK  
FAMILY THEATRE ANNOUNCE THE CAST AND  
CREATIVE TEAM OF THE WORLD PREMIERE OF  
MFONISO UDOFIA'S *KUFRE N' QUAY***

*Boston's citywide Ufot Family Cycle continues with the fifth installment  
at Boston's only public school for the performing arts*

***July 10 – 26, 2025***

Boston Arts Academy Main Stage Theatre

Directed by Boston Arts Academy's John Oluwole ADEkoje

(BOSTON) – June 6, 2025 - **The Boston Arts Academy** and **Wheelock Family Theatre** are excited to continue the sweeping nine-play **Ufot Family Cycle** with the world premiere of, *Kufre n' Quay*, at the Boston Arts Academy this summer. The play is written by Emmy-nominated playwright **Mfoniso Udofia** and will be directed by BAA's award-winning Nigerian filmmaker, actor, and playwright **John Oluwole ADEkoje** (*Street Soldiers*; *Hype Man*), who is also a faculty member at BAA. *Kufre n' Quay* runs **Thursday, July 10 – Saturday, July**

**26, 2025 at the Boston Arts Academy Main Stage Theatre (174 Ipswich St. Boston, MA 02215).**

In her fifth installment of the Ufot Family Cycle, *Kufre n' Quay*, playwright Mfoniso Udofia tells the coming of age story of a 12-year-old African boy who arrives in New York's Little Senegal and joins a youth center. Set in Harlem in 2019, Kufre, son of Iniabiasi and grandson of Abasiama, forms a friendship with an African American girl. The play explores the ways in which we navigate the contrast between African and Black American culture.

"Each play in the cycle has demanded a lot — heart, labor, and deep care," says playwright **Mfoniso Udofia**. "But this one has me over the moon, precisely because of the youth involved. Their hearts, their presence, their power. This project is being produced by the Boston Arts Academy, and the ensemble is primarily made up of high school students hailing from the Greater Boston area — all Black and Brown youth, stepping into their first professional production. They are bold. Ready. Present. And deeply committed. I am floored by what they are building."

The Ufot Family Cycle is a festival marked by radical collaboration with an unprecedented scale and scope across Boston. After two years of planning and leadership from The Huntington, all nine of the Ufot Family Cycle plays by Mfoniso Udofia are being produced in their intended order in Greater Boston by 35+ partners over two seasons. *The Boston Globe* has lauded Udofia's Cycle saying, "In terms of concept, scope, and execution, Mfoniso Udofia's nine-play cycle about three generations of a Nigerian American family has proven to be one of the most exciting things to happen in Boston theatre in a long time."

As the producer of *Kufre n' Quay*, Boston Arts Academy, with support from the Boston Arts Academy Foundation, is thrilled to welcome local actors to the BAA stage under the direction of BAA's ADEkoje. Twelve BAA students are involved in the production, in addition to local and regional youth and adult actors.

"We are honored to produce this poignant play, *Kufre n' Quay*, with the Wheelock Family Theatre in collaboration with The Huntington, and the incredible Ms. Udofia. The project is an opportunity for our students to engage in high level art-making and explore work that is culturally relevant to their lives," says **Maura Tighe**, Boston Arts Academy Artistic Director. "The experience is going to be phenomenal for our kids and our extended community."

This production is particularly special in that it centers the youngest generation of the Ufot family. To date, Boston audiences have been introduced to Abasiama and her adult children; this is the first time her grandchildren (and child actors) will be involved in telling this multigenerational story. BAA students make up a majority of the cast and team, and three of the cast members are Huntington Education program alumni. **Ngolela Kamanampata**, playing

“Quay,” is the 2025 August Wilson New Voices Competition Boston Champion; **Jalyse Ware**, playing Ms. Ey Yo Miss is a Huntington Education Department teaching artist; and **Lala Cooks Beeks**, understudy for Ms. Ey Yo Miss, was a student performer in The Huntington’s production of *Nassim* last season and is an alum of the Next Narrative and August Wilson competitions and the Huntington Summer Theatre Institute.

*Kufre n’ Quay* can be enjoyed as a stand-alone experience, or as a new thread in the rich tapestry that is the Ufot Family Cycle. To date, Boston audiences have enjoyed the first four installments of the Ufot Family Cycle: The Huntington’s *Sojourners* and world premiere of *The Grove* [Winner of the 2025 Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding New Script], the podcast of *runboyrun* (Boston Public Library, GBH, The Huntington, and Next Chapter Podcasts), and *Her Portmanteau* (Central Square Theater and Front Porch Arts Collective).

“Wheelock Family Theatre is excited to partner on the Ufot Family Cycle! This historic initiative will provide audiences from Greater Boston and beyond with the opportunity to experience and celebrate the work of Mfoniso Udofia,” says **Nick Vargas**, Wheelock Family Theatre Executive Director.

The cast of *Kufre n’ Quay* includes:

**Levi Mngonezulu** as **Kufre Ekpeyong**, the son of Iniabiasi and grandson of Abasiama. Mngonezulu is from Newton, MA; this is his first professional acting role.

**Ngolela Kamanampata** as **Laquasha “Quay” Price**, a 13-year-old city girl. Credits include Origination Cultural Arts Center’s annual performances of *Tartufa* and *Our Story*. This past spring, she competed in the final season of the August Wilson New Voices Competition, earning the title of the 2025 Boston Regional Champion.

**Jackie Davis** as **Abasiama Ufot**, the Ufot family matriarch and Kufre’s grandmother. Credits include directing and acting work at Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence, RI where she is on staff as a teaching artist/master instructor, as well as numerous productions in many regional and national theatres.

**Ramona Lisa Alexander** as **Inibiasi Ekpeyong**, Kufre’s mom. Credits include current position as Associate Artistic Director at Portland Playhouse, *Notes from the Field: Doing time in Education* and *Pipeline* at Portland Playhouse, *The Bluest Eye* at The Huntington, and *Black Superhero Magic Mama* at Company One.

**Jalyse Ware** as **Ms. Ey Yo Miss**, Harlem Zone’s favorite staffer and theatre teacher. Credits include working with The Huntington as a teaching artist, as well as many credits in film and theatre in the New England area.

Boston Arts Academy Acting students round out the cast of ten young people: **Ja'mon Johnson, Ayanna Joseph, Londyn Lacy, Jedrian Latimore, Shai-Anne Neufville, Ezra Schwartz-Barts, Selah Thande, and Zay Williams.**

Understudies include: **Lala Cooks Beeks and Janelle Grace.**

The creative team of *Kufre n' Quay* includes scenic design by **Jenna McFarland Lord** (*In the Heights* at Wheelock Family Theatre), lighting design by **Karen Perlow** (*A Man of No Importance* at SpeakEasy Stage), projections design by **Justin Lahue** (*Pippin* at Boston Arts Academy), sound design by **Cliff Notez** (*Boston Magazine's* 2019 Best of Boston "Musician of the Year), and costume design by **Zoë Sundra** (*Don't Eat the Mangos* at The Huntington). Choreography is being directed by **Shaumba- Yandje Dibinga.**

This Cycle marks the first time all nine plays will be complete and performed in their intended order. In addition to producing the first three plays, The Huntington also serves as a motherboard of resources and connection to bolster the creative process and success of the remaining six productions that will be mounted through 2026 by and with arts organizations, universities, social organizations, non-profits, and a host of community activation partners.

Each of the productions will be professionally filmed by partner **Kligerman Productions** to expand the reach of the Ufot Family Cycle and preserve it in perpetuity, allowing the Ufot Family Cycle to be taught in educational settings as part of the American theatrical canon.

Boston's Ufot Family Cycle is supported by The Huntington with funding from **Amy and David Abrams, the Barr Foundation, the Boston Foundation, the Richard K. Lubin Family Foundation, the Venturous Theater Fund of the Tides Foundation, and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.**

The Boston Arts Academy Foundation is proud to support the Ufot Family Cycle and this production of *Kufre n' Quay*. The BAAF is an independent 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization that raises essential funds from private philanthropic sources to augment the Boston Arts Academy school budget. The Boston Arts Academy Foundation helps bridge the gap between the school's allocation from the Boston Public Schools and the true cost of a high-quality education that is both art-intensive and college-preparatory. The BAAF *Take a Seat* campaign invites donors to play a starring role in the future of the school and the theatre by allowing families and patrons to inscribe their name - or the name of a loved one on a dedicated seat.

"This unique opportunity allows our generous donors to become an integral part of the school's cultural legacy," says **Denella J. Clark**, CEO and President of the Boston Arts Academy Foundation. "I can't think of a more fitting production to celebrate this program than the beautiful Ufot Family Cycle series and the story of *Kufre n' Quay*."

Partners in the Ufot Family Cycle include: AfroDesiaCity, ArtsEmerson, The Barr Foundation, Boston Arts Academy, The Boston Foundation, Boston Lyric Opera, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, Boston Public Art Triennial, Boston Public Library, Boston Public Schools, Boston University, Central Square Theater, Coolidge Corner Theatre, DiasporaMass, Embrace Boston, Facing History & Ourselves, Front Porch Arts Collective, GBH, The Huntington, Kligerman Productions, The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, Next Chapter Podcasts, Nigerian Professionals Group, Northeastern University, Prior Performing Arts Center, Reimagining Migration, Riverside Theatre Works, Roxbury Community College, Venturous Theater Fund of the Tides Foundation, Wellesley College, Wellesley Repertory Theatre, West End House, Wheelock Family Theatre, and ZUMIX.

More information about the Ufot Family Cycle, including the 35+ partners and funders involved in bringing the Ufot story to life, can be found at [bostontheatrescene.com/ufotboston](https://bostontheatrescene.com/ufotboston)

## INSPIRATION FOR THE UFOT FAMILY CYCLE

When nationally acclaimed playwright **Mfoniso Udofia** grew up in Southbridge, Massachusetts and attended Wellesley College, she rarely saw stories about Africans and African Americans that felt like her family. Inspired in part by August Wilson's Century Cycle, she set out to create an emotionally engrossing cycle of nine plays that follows one Nigerian American family through three generations: parents, children, grandchildren. Each play stands alone brilliantly, yet together forms a stunning tapestry that will resonate with everyone.

"I'm writing these plays for myself, for my immediate family, for my extended family, for the Ibibio community," says Udofia. "I'm writing us — so we can see us. I believe my work incites community action. When one cares about a character so much they are crying for them, they usually cannot meet a similar person in life and instantaneously judge them. A dramatic telling of an immigrant story, when done well, can cause an audience to change irrevocably in the moment. These audience members will then leave the building and enter their own communities with newfound empathy."

Mfoniso's own experience informs the Cycle as her parents immigrated to Texas from Nigeria in the 1970s, had children, and then moved to the Boston area because of the educational opportunities available. Mfoniso went to Wellesley College, during which time she had her first experience with The Huntington through her Africana Studies class when Professor Selwyn R. Cudjoe took students to see *Gem of the Ocean* and introduced her to playwright August Wilson (1945-2005). To see herself onstage, reflected in Wilson's ten-play American Century Cycle, with each set in a different decade of the 20th century about Black American life, was influential years before she would pursue her career in playwriting and return to Wellesley as a faculty member of the Albright Institute.

*The New York Times* states, “While building empathy is important to Ms. Udofia, as she continues to work on the rest of the ‘Ufot’ plays, she is also unapologetic about the fact that she isn’t writing the Cycle for a traditional theatre audience.” Mfoniso spoke about this during several Boston community meetings in 2023, stating her intentions to be an active participant in meeting community members where they are to inform the making of the remaining Cycle plays.

## PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR *Kufre n’ Quay*:

### WHEN



July 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Performances: July 10 – 26, 2025

Evenings: Thursdays through Saturdays at 7pm; select Tuesday and Wednesdays at 7pm

Matinee: Sunday, July 20, 2025 at 3pm

Days and times vary; please see details here: [ticketleap.events/tickets/bostonarts/kufre-n-quay](https://ticketleap.events/tickets/bostonarts/kufre-n-quay)

Press Opening Night: Friday, July 18 at 7pm ([RSVP here](#))

### WHERE

Boston Arts Academy Main Stage Theatre

(174 Ipswich St. Boston, MA)

### TICKETS

Tickets to in-person performances start at \$22 and are now on sale:

- online at [ticketleap.events/tickets/bostonarts/kufre-n-quay](https://ticketleap.events/tickets/bostonarts/kufre-n-quay)
- via phone at 617-635-6470

Please note that a digital recording of this production may be available for online viewing. More information to be shared online at a later date.

## **MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA**

Any members of the media who are interested in speaking with the artists of *Kufre n' Quay*, please contact Publicist Gabrielle Jaques at [gjaques@huntingtontheatre.org](mailto:gjaques@huntingtontheatre.org) or 617-273-1520.

Press night for critics is Friday, July 18, 2025 at 7pm. Please [RSVP here](#) for press night or other available performances.

Production photos will be available for download online.

## **About the Boston Arts Academy Foundation:**

Established in 1999, the Boston Arts Academy Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization that raises essential funds from private philanthropic sources to augment the Boston Arts Academy school budget. The Boston Arts Academy Foundation helps bridge the gap between the school's allocation from the Boston Public Schools and the true cost of a high-quality education that is both art-intensive and college-preparatory. Construction of the new BAA school building in 2022 does not change BPS's funding formula, which does not fully cover the cost of a college preparatory academic program and a competitive arts program.

The Boston Arts Academy Foundation aims to raise \$35 million through a multi-year, comprehensive Building Our Future campaign to augment BAA's school budget and ensure long-term sustainability. Building Our Future will ensure that as BAA's student body grows, students can become successful artists, scholars, and citizens. Visit our website to learn more: [bostonartsacademy.org/foundation](http://bostonartsacademy.org/foundation).

## **About the Boston Arts Academy:**

Founded in 1998 as the city's only public high school for the visual and performing arts, Boston Arts Academy (BAA) has distinguished itself among urban public high schools as a leader in innovative and effective student-centered education. Consistently recognized locally and nationally for its achievements, BAA exemplifies the power of an arts-rich education and many BAA graduates have found success in college through the arts. In fact, for the past ten straight years, at least 97 percent of BAA graduates have been accepted to college, with most being first-generation college attendees. BAA's dynamic program prepares graduates to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, collaborators, and creators. Students come from almost all of Boston's 23 neighborhoods to receive the formal arts training and academic instruction that will make them Boston's next generation of artists and cultural leaders.

In September 2022, the BAA community entered its new \$125 million, 153,500 square foot facility. Among many highlights, it includes new and much-needed enhanced theatres, career center, academic classrooms, dance studios, music practice rooms and fashion technology studios and workspace. With the new school building, the number of students enrolled has increased to over 500, and will continue to grow to over 600 in the coming years. Follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and visit our website to learn more: [bostonartsacademy.org](https://bostonartsacademy.org).

### **About The Huntington:**

The Huntington is Boston's theatrical commons and leading professional theatre company. On our stages and throughout our city, we share enduring stories that spark audience and artist imaginations and amplify our community's wide range of voices. Led by Artistic Director Loretta Greco and Executive Director Christopher Mannelli, The Huntington welcomes broad and diverse audiences, changes lives through education and community programs, develops playwrights and new plays, and serves the local arts community by operating The Huntington Calderwood/BCA. The Huntington is the "motherboard" of the 2-year, city-wide Ufot Family Cycle, bolstering our activation partners' creative process and success through resources and connection. [huntingtontheatre.org](https://huntingtontheatre.org)

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