

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
THREE NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERS
TO JOIN
PUBLIC WORKS 2016**

**NATIONAL AFFILIATES ALSO ANNOUNCED WITH
DALLAS THEATER CENTER
IN ASSOCIATION WITH SMU MEADOWS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS,
SEATTLE REPERTORY THEATRE,
MOSAIC YOUTH THEATRE OF DETROIT**

**Kwame Kwei-Armah & Shaina Taub To Conceive and Compose
Next Public Works Pageant at The Delacorte
Directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah**

December 10, 2015 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today that after three years of successful programming and community engagement, **PUBLIC WORKS** will grow on both a local and national level. Three new community partners join **PUBLIC WORKS 2016**, which will include **Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education** (Bronx), **Military Resilience Project** (all boroughs), and **Center for Family Life in Sunset Park** (Brooklyn), who join Public Works partners **Brownsville Recreation Center** (Brooklyn), **DreamYard Project** (Bronx), and **The Fortune Society** (Queens), in addition to alumni partners **Domestic Workers United** (all boroughs, including Staten Island) and **Children’s Aid Society** (Manhattan), as additional community partner organizations.

The Public Theater is also proud to announce that it will be working with three affiliated theaters throughout the U.S. to create community-based inspired productions in the Public Works model for more national impact. The theaters are **Dallas Theater Center in collaboration with SMU Meadows School of the Arts; Seattle Repertory Theatre**, and **Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit**. The Public Works productions of *The Tempest*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Odyssey* are available to be produced now through Theatrical Rights Worldwide.

The Odyssey, which ran for four nights for free at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park this past September, marks the end of the current collaboration of Resident Director and Director of Public Works **Lea deBessonnet** and **Todd Almond**, who also worked together on the *The Winter’s Tale* (2014) and *The Tempest* (2013). Helming the next Public Works production, to be staged again for free at the Delacorte Theater in 2016, will be **Kwame Kwei-Armah**, Artistic Director of Baltimore’s CenterStage, and acclaimed songwriter **Shaina Taub**. They will work together to conceive the upcoming Shakespeare production (not yet announced), with music and lyrics by Taub, directed by Kwei-Armah. DeBessonnet will continue to oversee the initiative’s year-round activities as the Director of Public Works.

“The Public Works program has been a brilliant success here in New York, modeling what can happen when a theater sets out to radically expand its relationship to the city which it serves,” said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. “I am thrilled that the idea of Public Works has proven infectious, and that we are working with superb organizations like Mosaic Youth Theatre, Dallas Theater Center, SMU Meadows School of the Arts, and Seattle Rep to create a national impact for this work.”

“We have had a tremendous first three years with Public Works, and its ripple effects are beyond my wildest imaginings,” said **Resident Director and Director of Public Works Lear deBessonet**. “As the Public Works model takes root across the country and as we expand and deepen our partnerships here in New York, the next three years promise to be full of new joy and discovery. Everyone is invited to this party.”

“Art for art’s sake is sometimes a diet too rich to maintain, yet art that sets out single-mindedly to feed a political agenda almost always fails to satisfy. The Public Theater, whose mission is, in essence, to search for ways of resolving that paradox, never succeeds better than in its Public Works program: a year-round collaboration with community groups in all five boroughs that culminates in a work of participatory theater in Central Park.” – Jesse Green, *New York Magazine*

PUBLIC WORKS is an ongoing initiative of The Public Theater that seeks to engage the people of New York by making them creators and not just spectators. It deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members, creating theater that is not only for the people, but by, and of, the people as well. Working deeply with partner organizations in all five boroughs, **PUBLIC WORKS** invites members of diverse communities to participate in workshops, take classes, attend performances at The Public, and, most importantly, to join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater.

KWAME KWEI-ARMAH OBE (*Conceiver and Director of Public Works 2016*) is an award-winning British playwright, director, actor, and broadcaster. At The Public, he has directed the Mobile Shakespeare Unit productions of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and the Public Lab production of *Detroit '67*. He is currently the Artistic Director of Baltimore’s CenterStage and most recently he wrote and directed the world premiere of *Marley*, a musical based on the life and legacy of Bob Marley. At CenterStage he also directed *One Night in Miami*; *Amadeus*; *dance of the holy ghosts* (City Paper Top Ten Productions, 2013); *The Mountaintop*; *An Enemy of the People*; *The Whipping Man*, for which he was named Best Director; and Naomi Wallace’s *Things of Dry Hours*. In 2014, he was named Best Director in City Paper’s Best of Baltimore, and was a finalist for SDC’s Zelda Fichandler Award for Best Theater Director. Among his works as playwright are *Elmina’s Kitchen* and *Let There Be Love*, as well as *A Bitter Herb*, *Statement of Regret*, and *Seize the Day*. *Beneatha’s Place* debuted at CenterStage in 2013 as part of the groundbreaking *Raisin Cycle*. His other directorial credits include Dominique Morisseau’s *Skeleton Crew* at the Lark Play Development Center and the world premiere of *The Liquid Plain* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and its New York premiere at Signature Theater. He has served on the boards of The National Theatre and The Tricycle Theatre, both in London, and as Artistic Director for the World Arts Festival in Senegal. He was named the Chancellor of the University of the Arts London, and in 2012 was named an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

SHAINA TAUB (*Conceiver, Music, and Lyrics of Public Works 2016*) is a songwriter and performer. Winner of a Jonathan Larson Grant and Ars Nova’s 2012 Composer-in-Residence, she wrote songs for and co-starred in the West Coast premiere of Bill Irwin and David Shiner’s *Old Hats* which will run at the Signature Theatre in 2016. She earned a Lucille Lortel Award nomination as Princess Mary in *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, and performed and arranged the songs of Tom Waits in A.R.T.’s production of *The Tempest*. Her musical, *The Daughters*, has been developed by CAP21 Theatre Company and the Yale Institute of Music Theatre. Audra McDonald performs Taub’s song, *Bear & Otter*, in concert. A songwriter for *Sesame Street*, and a fellow of MacDowell, Yaddo, and Sundance, she was featured in Lincoln Center’s American Songbook series this year, and her concert work has been featured on NPR/WNYC’s Best of the Year list. Her first full-length album will be released in 2016.

Following the third successful year of **PUBLIC WORKS** in New York, The Public will be working with affiliated theaters throughout the U.S. to shape a working model for national and international use. The

three affiliate theaters are **Dallas Theater Center in collaboration with SMU Meadows School of the Arts; Seattle Repertory Theatre, and Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit.**

In recognition of her artistry and innovative approach to theater, the Meadows School awarded Lear deBessonnet the 2015 Meadows Prize which will allow her to support a collaborative production of *The Tempest*, being developed by Meadows and Dallas Theater Center.

"Sparking dynamic conversations in our community through the art of theater is DTC's primary goal," said **Dallas Theater Center's Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty**. "Through our collaboration with the SMU Meadows Ignite/Arts Dallas initiative, which brought this project to Dallas, and my longtime friend and colleague, Lear deBessonnet, we now have the opportunity to more fully engage in direct dialogue with an even broader spectrum of citizens throughout this great city, culminating in the powerful and joyful act of creating theater together. This will radically deepen DTC's level of authentic engagement within our entire community, and it will change Dallas forever. By reaching out to every corner of our city, listening to the community and welcoming them as collaborators, partners and friends into our home at the Wyly Theater, DTC will more fully live up to its ideals: to use theater to provide a center for our North Texas community to gather."

Seattle Repertory Theatre in Washington has been developing a program inspired by Public Works and Associate Artistic Director Marya Sea Kaminski has spent the last eight months building partnerships with communities across the Pacific Northwest region, before coming to New York this past summer where she observed The Public's *The Odyssey* take shape. Seattle Rep will continue developing this program over the next year and hopes to premiere its first city-wide production in 2017.

"Lear has been so generous sharing her vision for this work with the other artists from around the country," said **Seattle Rep's Associate Artistic Director Marya Sea Kaminski**. "The passion and energy intrinsic to this program is contagious; I am so excited at the prospect of sharing it with our artists, audiences, and communities in Seattle."

In May 2015, Oskar Eustis, Lear deBessonnet, Todd Almond, and Dr. Shirley Bryce Heath all travelled to Detroit to support Mosaic Youth Theatre, an affiliate that was presenting the Public Works production of *The Tempest* at the Detroit Institute of Arts with a cast of over 100 young people from more than 50 different schools. Mosaic, which has toured past productions to Africa, Asia, Europe, and throughout the U.S., has begun a tour of Public Works' *The Tempest*, which started with an outdoor performance in downtown Detroit this past summer. In addition, inspired by Public Works, Mosaic is creating its own Shakespeare adaptation in May of 2016, *A Midsummer SOULstice*, blending Shakespeare with soul hits of the 60s and 70s. Mosaic is also strongly considering producing another Public Works production in 2017.

"Mosaic was honored to be chosen to be the first theatre nationally to produce Public Works *The Tempest*, in affiliation with The Public," said **Mosaic President and Founding Artistic Director Rick Sperling**. "There is something truly magical about Public Works. Through art it beautifully brought together young artists and community members from every corner of Metro Detroit – just as it did for the five boroughs of New York."

ABOUT DALLAS THEATER CENTER

One of the leading regional theaters in the country, Dallas Theater Center (DTC) performs to an audience of more than 120,000 North Texas residents annually. Founded in 1959, DTC is now a resident company of the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents its Mainstage season at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre, designed by REX/OMA, Joshua Prince-Ramus and Rem Koolhaas and at its original home, the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the only freestanding theater designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and Managing Director Jeff Woodward, DTC produces a seven-play subscription series of classics, musicals, and new plays and an annual production of *Christmas Carol*; extensive education programs, partnerships with SMU Meadows School of the Arts and Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; and community outreach efforts including leading the DFW Foote Festival and recent collaborations with the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas

Public Library, Dallas Holocaust Museum, North Texas Food Bank, Dallas Opera, and Dallas Black Dance Theater.

ABOUT SMU MEADOWS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Meadows School of the Arts, formally established at SMU in 1969 and named in honor of benefactor Algur H. Meadows, is one of the foremost arts education institutions in the United States. The Meadows School offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in advertising, art, art history, arts management and arts entrepreneurship, communication studies, creative computation, dance, film and media arts, journalism, music and theatre. The goal of SMU Meadows School of the Arts, as a comprehensive educational institution, is to prepare students to meet the demands of professional careers. The Meadows School is a leader in developing innovative outreach and community engagement programs, challenging its students to make a difference locally and globally by developing connections between art, entrepreneurship and change. Meadows is also a convener for the arts in North Texas, serving as a catalyst for new collaborations and providing critical industry research. For more information, visit www.smu.edu/meadows.

Inaugurated in October 2009, the Meadows Prize is presented annually to up to two pioneering artists. It includes support for a residency in Dallas, in addition to a \$25,000 stipend. In return, recipients are expected to interact in a substantive way with Meadows students and collaborating arts organizations, and to leave a lasting legacy in Dallas, such as a work of art that reminds in the community, a composition or piece of dramatic writing that would be performed locally, or a new way of teaching in a particular discipline.

ABOUT SEATTLE REPERTORY THEATRE

In 1963, a group of theatre lovers created Seattle Rep as a foundation for a thriving arts-rich community. More than 50 years later, Seattle Rep remains a vital source for creative thought and conversation, a place where the audience brings life to the stories we tell. One of the largest and most renowned regional theatres in the country, Seattle Repertory Theatre produces a mix of classics, recent Broadway hits and contemporary works, along with several world premieres by esteemed playwrights such as August Wilson, John Patrick Shanley, and Cheryl L. West. Seattle Rep employs some 300 professional artists, technicians, and administrative personnel each year and produces programs and events in three spaces—the 842-seat Bagley Wright Theatre, the 282-seat Leo Krielsheimer Theatre, and the PONCHO Forum rehearsal hall. All three theatres, shops, and offices are within the same building, which resides in the heart of the Seattle Center campus.

ABOUT MOSAIC YOUTH THEATRE OF DETROIT

Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit is an award-winning national model for Creative Youth Development. Founded in 1992, Mosaic annually provides accessible acting and singing training for hundreds of youth from more than 50 Metro Detroit schools. Mosaic's mission is to empower young people to maximize their potential through professional performing arts training and the creation of theatrical and musical art that engages, transforms and inspires. The organization has toured their critically-acclaimed all-teen performances to Europe, Asia, Africa, 25 states throughout the U.S., the White House and The Kennedy Center. At the 2014 World Choir Games in Latvia, Mosaic brought home two gold and two silver medals. Mosaic is proud to report that 95% of their performers have gone on to college. To learn more about Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit, visit us online at www.mosaicdetroit.org

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

The Public Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. Celebrating his 10th anniversary season at The Public, Eustis has created new community-based initiatives designed to engage audiences like Public Lab, Public Studio, Public Forum, Public Works, and a remount of the Mobile Shakespeare Unit. The Public continues the work of its visionary founder, Joe Papp, by acting as an advocate for the theater as an essential cultural force, and leading and framing dialogue on some of the most important issues of our day. Creating theater for one of the largest and most diverse audience bases in New York City for nearly 60 years, today the Company engages audiences in a variety of venues—including its landmark downtown

home at Astor Place, which houses five theaters and Joe's Pub; the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, home to free Shakespeare in the Park; and the Mobile Shakespeare Unit, which tours Shakespearean productions for underserved audiences throughout New York City's five boroughs. The Public's wide range of programming includes free Shakespeare in the Park, the bedrock of the Company's dedication to making theater accessible to all; Public Works, an expanding initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; and audience and artist development initiatives that range from Emerging Writers Group and to the Public Forum series. The Public is located on property owned by the City of New York and receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; and in October 2012 the landmark building downtown at Astor Place was revitalized to physically manifest the Company's core mission of sparking new dialogues and increasing accessibility for artists and audiences, by dramatically opening up the building to the street and community, and transforming the lobby into a public piazza for artists, students, and audiences. The Public is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning *Fun Home* and Lin-Manuel Miranda's acclaimed American musical *Hamilton*. The Public has received 47 Tony Awards, 167 Obie Awards, 52 Drama Desk Awards, 48 Lortel Awards, 31 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics Awards, and four Pulitzer Prizes. www.publictheater.org

The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities; Bank of America, Proud Season Sponsor of Shakespeare in the Park; The Harold & Mimi Steinberg New Play Development Fund at The Public Theater Supports the Creation and Development of New Plays; The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation - Lead Supporter of The Public's Access and Engagement Programming; The Time Warner Foundation, Founding Sponsor of The Emerging Writers Group; Delta Air Lines, Official Airline of The Public Theater; *New York Magazine* is the official print sponsor of The Public Theater's 2015-2016 downtown season; Public support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent federal agency.

#