

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES JOSEPH PAPP WAY STREET CO-NAMING CEREMONY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

Intersection of Lafayette Street and Astor Place To Be Co-Named in Honor of Joseph Papp and The Public's 50 Years at 425 Lafayette Street

November 28, 2017 - The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today that in honor of Joseph Papp's extraordinary contributions to the City of New York and the East Village, the intersection of Lafayette Street and Astor Place has been co-named **Joseph Papp Way**. The Public, celebrating the 50th anniversary of its landmark home at 425 Lafayette Street, will host the naming ceremony celebrating the distinguished honor on Friday, December 1 at 8:30 a.m. at the Astor Place Plaza and is open to the public. The ceremony will include remarks by Oskar Eustis, Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs Tom Finkelpearl, District 2 City Councilwoman Rosie Mendez, and Public Theater Board Member Gail Papp, who will unveil the commemorative sign.

"Joe Papp changed the life of New Yorkers forever, creating a beloved institution devoted to making the life of our culture inclusive," said Artistic Director **Oskar Eustis**. "It is thrilling that the city of New York will recognize him forever by co-naming this street for him."

The proposal to co-name the street was approved by Community Board 2 and the City Council. The application was brought forward by Alexandra Shiva with the support of Gail Papp as well as residents and organizations from the neighborhood.

The Public Theater was founded in 1954 (then known as the New York Shakespeare Festival) but its permanent home in the East Village at 425 Lafayette Street opened its doors for the first time in October 1967 with the groundbreaking new musical *HAIR*. In addition to founding the New York Shakespeare Festival and saving the landmark building (the former Astor Library) from planned demolition, Joe Papp also lived in the East Village and was an outstanding member of the community until his death in 1991.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

THE PUBLIC is theater of, by, and for the people. Artist-driven, radically inclusive, and fundamentally democratic, The Public continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, The Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Public Forum, Under the Radar, Public Studio, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the

canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda and John Leguizamo's *Latin History for Morons*. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 169 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 32 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Desk Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

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