

THE PUBLIC THEATER AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN LONDON TO PARTNER ON COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE PUBLIC ACTS

Public Works Inspired Production of *Pericles* To Be Staged in London August 2018

October 3, 2017 - New York's Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) and London's National Theatre (Artistic Director Rufus Norris) will partner on a community-based initiative, PUBLIC ACTS, inspired by The Public's successful Public Works model of participatory theater that has expanded nationally and internationally since its creation five years ago. PUBLIC ACTS is a nationwide initiative in the UK to create extraordinary acts of theatre and community. The partnership launches with a new staging of *Pericles* performed on the National Theatre's Olivier stage in August 2018.

"The National Theatre is one of the greatest companies on the planet and we are honored to be working with a theater that shares so many of our values," said **Public Theater Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. "Under Rufus Norris' brilliant leadership, the National is breaking new ground in making theater of, by and for the people. Together, the National and The Public will be able to inspire each other, learn from each other, and work together to build an inclusive culture where theater belongs to everyone."

"We are excited to be announcing Public Acts today, the National Theatre's new partnership with The Public Theater in New York," said **Director of the National Theatre Rufus Norris**. "We have admired Oskar and the brilliant projects delivered by The Public in New York for many years and we have long respected the ambitious works of participatory theatre that Oskar, Lear DeBessonnet and their team brilliantly deliver. The program we are announcing today builds on our combined experience creating award-winning community projects."

Pericles will be directed by National Theatre resident director Emily Lim and will feature a small cast of professional actors together with a large number of non-professional actors who will be cast through their connection with the National's community partner organizations. The National has commissioned Chris Bush, a writer with extensive experience working with large community ensembles, to adapt members of London's diverse communities to take part in regular creative activity and join them in the creation of theatre productions. *Pericles* will also feature cameo performances from a diverse range of local performance groups with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch acting as their first theatre partner.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE'S PUBLIC ACTS

PUBLIC ACTS is a nationwide initiative to create extraordinary acts of theatre and community. The program builds on the National's experience of creating the award-winning *we're here because we're here* with volunteer performers and theatres across the UK. Public Acts will be built on sustained partnerships with organizations that share their vision for theatre as a force for change. Over the next two years the National will work with the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch and a number of community organizations across

Greater London. Through those partnerships they will invite members of London's diverse communities to take part in regular creative activity and join us in the creation of theatre productions.

The National Theatre's community partners for Public Acts over the next two years will include: Body & Soul, a charity dedicated to transforming the impact of childhood adversity; Open Age, a charity that works with older Londoners to create opportunities for them to connect, learn new skills and combat isolation; Thames Reach a London-based charity helping homeless and vulnerable people to find decent homes, build supportive relationships and lead fulfilling lives; The Havering Asian Social Welfare Association (HASWA) works with all sections of the local Havering community, particularly of Asian origin with specific emphasis on isolated and disadvantaged individuals; Bromley by Bow Centre supports vulnerable young people, adults and families to help create a cohesive, healthy, successful and vibrant east London community, Coram, the UK children's charity that helps children and young people develop their skills and emotional health, finds adoptive parents and upholds children's rights, creating a change that lasts a lifetime and Three Faiths Forum (3FF) who work to build good relations between people of different faiths, beliefs and identities. Future Public Acts productions will be developed in partnership with theatres and community groups outside London.

THE PUBLIC THEATER'S PUBLIC WORKS

Launched in 2013, **PUBLIC WORKS** is a major initiative of The Public Theater that seeks to engage the people of New York by making them creators and not just spectators. Working with community partner organizations in all five boroughs, Public Works invites members of diverse communities to participate in theater workshops, to attend classes, to attend productions, and to become involved in the daily life of The Public. Founded by Resident Director Lear deBessonet, Public Works 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.

Public Works exemplifies The Public Theater's long-standing commitment to community engagement that is at the core of the award-winning theater's mission. It is animated by the idea that theater is a place of possibility, where the boundaries that separate us from each other in the rest of life can fall away. It seeks to create a space where we can not only reflect on the world as is, but where we can actually propose new possibilities for what our society might be.

Public Works is also a national and international program with three affiliated theaters throughout the U.S. to create community-based inspired productions in the Public Works model for an impact across the country and the world. The U.S. theaters are Dallas Theater Center in collaboration with SMU Meadows School of the Arts; Seattle Repertory Theatre; and Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. In March 2017, Dallas Theater Center presented their inaugural Public Works Dallas production, *The Tempest*, directed by DTC Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and featuring 200 Dallasites. In September 2017, Seattle Repertory Theater presented their inaugural Public Works Seattle production, *The Tempest*, directed by Marya Sea Kaminski and featuring 100 local community members.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL THEATRE:

At the National Theatre, we make world-class theatre that is entertaining, challenging and inspiring, and we make it for everyone. In 2016-2017, the NT staged 26 productions and gave 2,585 performances at our home on the South Bank. The NT's award-winning programme had a UK paying audience of 1.8 million, 400,000 of which were NT Live audiences. The work the National Theatre produces appeals to the widest possible audiences with new plays, musicals, re-imagined classics and new work for young audiences. The NT's work is seen in the West End, on tour throughout the UK and internationally, and in collaborations and co-productions with partners across the country. Through NT Live, we broadcast some of the best of British theatre to over 2,000 venues in 60 countries around the world. Our extensive Learning programme offers talks, events and workshops for people of all ages, and reaches nationwide through programmes such as Connections, our annual festival of new plays for schools and youth theatres. In 2016-2017 there

were 196,826 participations through the NT Learning events programme. Over 3,000 schools have signed up to the free streaming service, On Demand. In Schools, since its launch in September 2015.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

THE PUBLIC THEATER 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 has continued to create the canon of 21st century 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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