

**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
BEGINS PREVIEWS FOR  
2017 FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK  
*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*  
TUESDAY, JULY 11  
DIRECTED BY LEAR deBESSONET**

**BANK OF AMERICA CONTINUES  
WITH AN ASTOUNDING 11<sup>TH</sup> SEASON OF SUPPORT  
AS PROUD PRESENTING SPONSOR OF  
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK  
AND  
THE JEROME L. GREENE FOUNDATION JOINS  
AS LEAD FOUNDATION SPONSOR**

July 5, 2017 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will begin previews for the second Free Shakespeare in the Park production of the season, ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***, on Tuesday, July 11. Directed by Obie Award winner and The Public's Founder of Public Works and Resident Director **Lear deBessonnet**, and choreography by **Chase Brock**, the show will run through Sunday, August 13 and officially open on Monday, July 31.

The complete cast of ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*** features **Annaleigh Ashford** (*Helena*); **De'Adre Aziza** (*Hippolyta*); **Kyle Beltran** (*Lysander*); **Min Borack** (*Fifth Fairy*); **Vinie Burrows** (*First Fairy, Peaseblossom*); **Danny Burstein** (*Nick Bottom*); **Justin Cunningham** (*Philostrate*); **Marcelle Davies-Lashley** (*Fairy Singer*); **Austin Durant** (*Snug*); **Shalita Grant** (*Hermia*); **Keith Hart** (*Third Fairy*); **Alex Hernandez** (*Demetrius*); **Jeff Hiller** (*Francis Flute*); **Robert Joy** (*Peter Quince*); **Patricia Lewis** (*Fourth Fairy*); **David Manis** (*Egeus, Cobweb*); **Pamela McPherson-Cornelius** (*Second Fairy*); **Patrena Murray** (*Snout*); **Kristine Nielsen** (*Puck*); **Bhavesh Patel** (*Theseus*); **Richard Poe** (*Oberon*); **Phylicia Rashad** (*Titania*); **Joe Tapper** (*Robin Starveling*); **Judith Wagner** (*Mote*); **Warren Wyss** (*Mustardseed*); **Benjamin Ye** (*Changeling Boy*); and **Rosanny Zayas** (*Understudy*).

The Delacorte Theater will transform into the most enchanted forest in all of theater in Shakespeare's beloved comedy, ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***. When the merry sprite Puck meddles with a magical love potion, young lovers lost in the woods mysteriously find themselves infatuated with the wrong person in this hilarious, fairytale fantasia that proves the course of true love never did run smooth. **Lear deBessonnet**, founder of The Public Theater's groundbreaking Public Works program, brings her electric theatrical vision to the classic romance about the supernatural nature of love.

***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*** will feature scenic design by David Rockwell; costume design by Clint Ramos; lighting design by Tyler Micoleau; sound design by Jessica Paz; hair, wig, and make-up design by Cookie Jordan; original music, music supervision, and orchestrations by Justin Levine, additional orchestrations by Charlie Rosen; additional music supervision by Dean Sharenow; and music direction by Jon Spurney.

**Bank of America** continues its longstanding support of Free Shakespeare in the Park as the proud presenting sponsor for an astounding 11 seasons. Bank of America continues to exemplify philanthropic partnership at its best. Their support has made Shakespeare in the Park free for over one million people.

The **Jerome L. Greene Foundation** joins The Public's family of supporters as the lead foundation sponsor for Free Shakespeare in the Park. The Greene Foundation's generous commitment will help keep this celebrated summer tradition free for thousands of New Yorkers and visitors alike.

Together, Bank of America and the Jerome L. Greene Foundation are instrumental in sustaining The Public's mission of inclusion, creating great theater, boldly conceived, and free for all.

Since 1962, over five million people have enjoyed more than 150 free productions of Shakespeare and other classical works and musicals at the Delacorte Theater. Conceived by founder Joe Papp as a way to make great theater accessible to all, The Public's Free Shakespeare in the Park continues to be the bedrock of the Company's mission to increase access and engage the community.

FREE tickets to ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*** are distributed, two per person (age 5+), at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park beginning at 12:00 p.m. on the day of each public performance. In order to allow as many different people as possible to attend Free Shakespeare in the Park this summer, visitors will be limited to receiving free tickets to two performances only of each production. There will continue to be a separate line for accessible tickets for senior citizens (65+) and patrons with disabilities. For more ticket information please visit [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

The Public continues its partnership with **TodayTix**, who will be offering the exclusive Mobile Ticket Lottery for Free Shakespeare in the Park. Tickets will be distributed by random mobile lottery on the TodayTix app each date that there is a public performance at the Delacorte Theater.

The Delacorte Theater is accessible by entering at 81<sup>st</sup> Street and Central Park West, or 79<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue.

**PUBLIC SUPPORTERS** will be available for those who want to support Free Shakespeare in the Park by making a tax-deduction contribution (starting at \$500) and receiving a reserved seat for one production during the summer. The Partners Program also offers insider access through invitations to private backstage events, talks with artists, priority reserved seating at the Delacorte, and complimentary tickets to the downtown season at The Public and Joe's Pub. To learn more, or to make a contribution call 212-967-7555, or visit [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

In addition to the ticket line at the Delacorte Theater and the TodayTix online distribution, a limited number of vouchers for specific performances will be distributed, while supplies last, at locations throughout New York's five boroughs. This year's distributions will have more locations throughout the five boroughs and dates to provide New Yorkers more opportunities to obtain tickets. Each person in line is allowed two vouchers and each voucher is good for one ticket for that evening's performance. Vouchers must be exchanged for tickets at the Delacorte Theater Box Office that day from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

For ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***, ticket vouchers will be distributed, while supplies last, on Wednesday, July 12 in Staten Island at Snug Harbor (1000 Richmond Terrace); Thursday, July 13 in the Bronx at DreamYard (1085 Washington Avenue); Saturday, July 15 in Brooklyn at the Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Avenue); Friday, July 21 in Staten Island at Snug Harbor (1000 Richmond Terrace); Monday, July 24 in the Bronx at The Point (940 Garrison Avenue); Wednesday, August 2 in Brooklyn at The Center for Family Life (PS 503/PS 506 at 343 60<sup>th</sup> Street); Wednesday, August 9 in Queens at the New York Hall of Science (47-07 111<sup>th</sup> Street).

To allow as many New Yorkers the opportunity to experience Free Shakespeare in the Park there will be an open caption performance on Saturday, August 12; an ADA audio described performance on Saturday, July 22; and a Hands On performance on Thursday, August 3 for ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***. More information about these performances can be found at [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

**LEAR deBESSONET** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream Director*) is currently Resident Director at The Public Theater and Founder of Public Works, for which she has directed large-scale musical adaptations of *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Odyssey* at the Delacorte, each featuring a cast of 200. Also for The Public, she directed *Good Person of Szechwan*, produced by Foundry Theatre originally at La MaMa (Obie Award for Direction, Lortel Award for Best Revival, Drama Desk Nomination, Lilly Award); and the Mobile Unit production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Her upcoming projects include *Big River* for Encores and Suzan-Lori Parks' *Venus* for Signature Theatre in 2017. She has directed shows for La Jolla Playhouse; City Center Encores! Off-Center; LCT3; the Old Globe; the Intiman; the Guthrie; Women's Project; PS122; Ten Thousand Things; 13p; and Clubbed Thumb. Recipient of the Doris Duke Impact Award, the Meadow's Prize, and TCG's Peter Zeisler Award.

### **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. In over 10 years 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 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 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 the Emerging Writers Group to the Public Forum series. The Public's work is also seen on tour throughout the U.S. and internationally and in collaborations and co-productions with regional and international theaters. 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 acclaimed American musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 168 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 32 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics Awards, and six Pulitzer Prizes. [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

### **ABOUT BANK OF AMERICA:**

Bank of America is one of the world's leading financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle-market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving approximately 46 million consumer and small business relationships with approximately 4,600 retail financial centers, approximately 15,900 ATMs, and award-winning online banking with approximately 34 million active accounts and nearly 22 million mobile active users. Bank of America is a global leader in wealth management, corporate and investment banking and trading across a broad range of asset classes, serving corporations, governments, institutions and individuals around the world. Bank of America offers industry-leading support to approximately 3 million small business owners through a suite of innovative, easy-to-use online products and services. The company serves clients through operations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and more than 35 countries. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE: BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. [www.bankofamerica.com](http://www.bankofamerica.com)

**THE JEROME L. GREENE FOUNDATION** identifies and invests in opportunities that enrich and advance people's lives. Primarily focused on not-for-profit organizations based in New York City, the Foundation awards grants in the areas of Arts, Social Justice, Education and Health. It is an "invitation-only" program. Founded in 1978 by the successful real estate lawyer, Jerry Greene, he and his wife Dawn Greene were native New Yorkers and were committed to give back to the City that had given them so much. This ethos continues as the Foundation, now led by Christina McInerney, seeks to fund innovative and transformative programs that address the most critical social and cultural needs of today.

Lead support for Free Shakespeare in the Park provided by Bank of America and The Jerome L. Greene Foundation. Additional support provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Delta Air Lines, Penguin Random House, One57, TodayTix, The Kimberly, The New York Times, Outfront Media, WNYC, ABC7, Theatermania, NYC Parks, New York City Department Of Cultural Affairs, The New York State Council On The Arts, and Art Works. Special support provided by The New York Community Trust- The George T. Delacorte Fund for Performance at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation provides support for The Public's access and engagement programming. The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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