

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES COMPLETE CASTING FOR THE WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE*

Book by Itamar Moses
Music and Lyrics by Michael Friedman
Conceived and Directed by Daniel Aukin

Performances Begin Tuesday, September 30

August 18, 2014 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced complete casting today for *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE*, a world premiere musical with a book by **Itamar Moses**, and music and lyrics by **Michael Friedman**. Conceived and directed by **Daniel Aukin** and based on the nationally best-selling novel of the same name by **Jonathan Lethem**, *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE* begins performances on Tuesday, September 30 and runs through Sunday, November 2, with an official press opening on Wednesday, October 22.

Single tickets, starting at \$80, are on sale now and can be purchased by calling **(212) 967-7555**, www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street. The Library at The Public is open nightly for food and drinks, beginning at 5:30 p.m., and Joe's Pub at The Public continues to offer some of the best music in the city.

The complete cast of *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE* features **Ken Barnett** (*Abraham Ebdus*); **Kyle Beltran** (*Mingus*); **Adam Chanler-Berat** (*Dylan*); **André de Shields** (*Senior*); **Carla Duren** (*Marilla*); **Rebecca Naomi Jones** (*Lala, Abby*); **Jahi Kears** (*Raf, Henry, Desmond, Jared*); **Kevin Mambo** (*Junior*); **Malaiyka Reid** (*Swing*); **Noah Ricketts** (*Swing*); **David Rossmer** (*Arthur*); **Conor Ryan** (*Radio Guy, Mike, Gabe*); **Kristen Sieh** (*Rachel Ebdus*); **Britton Smith** (*Subtle Distinction*); **Brian Tyree Henry** (*Robert Akron Watson*); **Alison Whitehurst** (*Skater Girl, Liza*); and **Jason Williams** (*Subtle Distinction*).

Based on the nationally best-selling novel of the same name by 2005 MacArthur Fellow Jonathan Lethem, this soaring new musical *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE* will open in October with a dynamite creative team including composer/lyricist Michael Friedman (*Love's Labour's Lost, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*) and bookwriter Itamar Moses. *THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE* is the extraordinary coming-of-age story about 1970s Brooklyn and beyond — of black and white, soul and rap, block parties and blackouts, friendship and betrayal, comic books and 45s. And the story of what would happen if two teenagers obsessed with superheroes believed that maybe, just maybe, they could fly. Co-production with Dallas Theater Center.

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE will feature scenic design by **Eugene Lee**, costume design by **Jessica Pabst**, lighting design by **Tyler Micoleau**, sound design by **Robert Kaplowitz**, projection design by **Jeff Sugg**, hair and wig design by **Leah Loukas**, and choreography by **Camille A. Brown**.

DANIEL AUKIN (*Conceiver and Director*) is a three-time OBIE Award-winning New York-based director. Recent work includes Sam Shepard's *Fool For Love* (Williamstown) and *The Fortress of Solitude* (Dallas Theater Center). Also, the world premieres of Josh Harmon's *Bad Jews* (Roundabout), Marco Ramirez' *The Royale* (Center Theater Group), Melissa James Gibson's *What Rhymes with America* (The Atlantic), *Heartless* by Sam Shepard (Signature), *4000 Miles* by Amy Herzog (Lincoln Center Theatre), *The Bad and the Better* by Derek Ahonen (The Amoralists), *The Ugly One* by Marius von Mayenburg (Soho Rep) and *This* by Melissa James Gibson (Playwrights Horizons & Center Theater Group). Other credits include *Back Back Back* by Itamar Moses (MTC), Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* (Arena Stage), Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine* (La Jolla Playhouse). As Artistic Director of Soho Rep (1998-2006), Mark Schultz's *Everything Will Be Different*, Melissa James Gibson's *[sic]* (OBIE Award), Melissa James Gibson's *Suitcase*, Quincy Long's *The Year of the Baby*, Mac Wellman's *Cat's-Paw* and Marie Irene Fornes' *Molly's Dream* (OBIE Award).

ITAMAR MOSES (*Book*) is the author of the full-length plays *Outrage; Bach at Leipzig; Celebrity Row; The Four of Us; Yellowjackets; Back Back Back;* and *Completeness*; the musical *Nobody Loves You* with Gaby Alter; and the evening of short plays *Love/Stories (or, But You Will Get Used to It)*. His work has appeared Off-Broadway, across the country, and in Canada, Israel, and Hong Kong, and is published by Faber and Faber and Samuel French. He has received commissions from the McCarter Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Berkeley Rep, Wilma Theater, South Coast Rep, Manhattan Theatre Club, Lincoln Center, and Goodman Theatre. On television, Itamar has written for both TNT's "Men of a Certain Age" and HBO's "Boardwalk Empire."

MICHAEL FRIEDMAN (*Music and Lyrics*)'s recent work at The Public includes music and lyrics for The Civilians' *The Great Immensity* and the musicals *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* (both with Alex Timbers), as well as music for numerous plays. He is the co-author (with Steve Cosson) of *Paris Commune*, which played at The Public and at BAM's Next Wave Festival. As a founding associate artist of The Civilians, he has written music and lyrics for *This Beautiful City; In the Footprint; Gone Missing; (I Am) Nobody's Lunch; Canard Canard Goose?* and the upcoming *Pretty Filthy*, as well as music for Anne Washburn's *Mr. Burns*. He has been a MacDowell Fellow, Princeton Hodder Fellow, Barron Visiting Professor at the Princeton Environmental Institute, and an artist-in-residence at Spring Workshop Hong Kong. He performed in a Lincoln Center's American Songbook concert of his songs and received an Obie Award for Sustained Achievement.

KEN BARNETT (*Abraham Ebdus*) has appeared at The Public Theater in *February House*. His Broadway credits include *Wonderful Town* and *The Green Bird*. His additional Off-Broadway credits include *Imperfect Chemistry, Debbie Does Dallas, My Life with Albertine, Joy,* and *Too Much Sun*. His film and television credits include *Admission, People Like Us, Friends with Kids, Polar Opposites,* "In Plain Sight," "Mad Men," "Grey's Anatomy," and "How I Met Your Mother."

KYLE BELTRAN (*Mingus*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and appeared on Broadway and in the first national tour of *In The Heights*. His Off-Broadway credits include *Choir Boy, The Netflix Plays,* and *10 Things to Do Before I Die*. His regional credits include *Head of Passes, Good Goods,* and *Kingdom*. He has appeared on television in "The Big C" and "Unforgettable."

ADAM CHANLER-BERAT (*Dylan*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and recently appeared Off-Broadway in *Fly by Night*. His Broadway credits include *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Next to Normal*, and his additional Off-Broadway credits include *Rent, Peter and the Starcatcher,* and *Next to Normal*. His film and television credits include *Delivery Man, The Life Before Her Eyes, "VEEP," "The Good Wife," "The Corrections,"* and "Law and Order."

ANDRÉ DE SHIELDS (*Senior*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and has appeared in The Public Theater's production of *The Bacchae* and *Dancing on Moonlight*. He has appeared on Broadway in *Impressionism; Prymate; The Full Monty; Play On!; Ain't Misbehavin'; Stardust; André DeShields' Harlem Nocturne;* and *The Wiz*. His film and television credits include *Prison, Extreme Measures, The Good Heart, The Inheritance, The Backseat,* and "Rescue Me." He is the recipient of the

2012 Fox Foundation Fellowship/Distinguished Achievement, the 2009 National Black Theatre Festival's Living Legend Award, and the 2007 Village Voice OBIE Award for Sustained Excellence of Performance.

CARLA DUREN (*Marilla*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and has been seen on Broadway in *Hairspray* and *110 in the Shade*. She was featured in Robert Wilson's premiere of *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter*, and she has appeared regionally in *Ruined* and *It Shoulda Been You*.

REBECCA NAOMI JONES (*Lala, Abby*) has appeared in The Public Theater's productions of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Passing Strange*. She has been seen on Broadway in *American Idiot* and *Passing Strange*; and her additional Off-Broadway credits include *Wig Out!*; *This Beautiful City*; and *Murder Ballad*. Her film and television credits include *Lovesick*, *Passing Strange*, "NYC 22," "Smash," "Nurse Jackie," and "Fringe."

JAHI KEARSE (*Raf, Henry, Desmond, Jared*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and has appeared in Broadway in *Holler If Ya Hear Me* and *Baby It's You!* He has appeared regionally in *Hadestown*, *The Cost*, and *Ladykillers*.

KEVIN MAMBO (*Junior*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and has appeared on Broadway in *Fela!* His Off-Broadway credits include *Ruined*, *Hoodoo Love*, and *Once Around the Sun*, as well as the first national tour of *The Book of Mormon*. He has also appeared in Danai Gurira's *The Convert* and his film and television credits include *The Southside*, *Tooper*, *Cadillac Records*, "Mistresses," "Guiding Light," and "Any Day Now."

MALAIYKA REID (*Swing*) has been seen in *Fela! Twist*, the Chinese tour of *Aida*, *Maafa*, and *Telling Our Stories*. She has appeared in multiple music videos including Madonna's "Gimme All Your Love," and Amaany's "Break Him Down."

NOAH RICKETTS (*Swing*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center. His additional regional credits include *Hello Dolly!*; *La Cage Aux Folles*; *Macbeth*; *High School Musical*; *Tarzan*; *Chicago*; *Legally Blonde*; *Hairspray*; and *Big River*.

DAVID ROSSMER (*Arthur*) has been seen on Broadway in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *Titanic*. His Off-Broadway credits include *The Other Josh Cohen*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Don't Quit Your Night Job*, *Authorial Intent*, *Spain*, *Blow Me*, and *That's Life*. His film and television credits include *End of the Line*, *Robots*, "Blue Bloods," "Loving Leah," "Law & Order," "Knights of Prosperity," and "As the World Turns."

CONOR RYAN (*Radio Guy, Mike, Gabe*) has been seen on Broadway in Rogers + Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. His film credits include *Boy Eats Girl* and *Hill 16*.

KRISTEN SIEH (*Rachel Ebdus*) has been seen at The Public in *February House*. She has performed in New York, nationally, and internationally with Elevator Repair Service's *GATZ*, *The Sound and the Fury* (*April Seventh, 1928*), and *Shuffle*. Her additional Off-Broadway credits include *an oak tree* and *The Women of Lockerbie*. Her television credits include "Orange is the New Black," Louise on HBO's "Boardwalk Empire," and "Law & Order."

BRITTON SMITH (*Subtle Distinction*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center. He has been seen on Broadway in *After Midnight* and in New York in *Cotton Club Parade* at New York City Center, *Company* at New York City Philharmonic, and *Dreamgirls* at the Fulton Opera House. His regional credits include *Hairspray*; *Ragtime*; *Damn Yankees*; *Lady Be Good*; *Kiss me, Kate*; *bare*; and *The Buddy Holly Story*.

BRIAN TYREE HENRY (*Robert*) has appeared at The Public Theater in *The Brother/Sister Plays* and

Romeo and Juliet. He has appeared on Broadway in *The Book of Mormon*. His television credits include “The Knick,” “Boardwalk Empire,” “The Good Wife,” and “Law and Order.”

AKRON WATSON (*Subtle Distinction*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center. His regional credits include *A Christmas Carol*; *The Full Monty*; *Ain’t Misbehavin’*; *Kismet*; *Once on this Island*; *Alice in Wonderland*; *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; *The Shipment*; *Lobby Zero*; and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. His film and television credits include *Seasons of Gray*, *Friday Night Lights*, and “Chase.”

ALISON WHITEHURST (*Skater Girl, Liza*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center. Her additional regional credits include *Big River*; *Grease!*; *She Loves Me*; *Company*; and *The Fantasticks*.

JUSON WILLIAMS (*Subtle Distinction*) appeared in *The Fortress of Solitude* at the Dallas Theater Center and is a two time AUDELCO award winner for his work in the Off-Broadway production *Black Man Rising*, which he also choreographed. His additional New York credits include *Scottsboro Boys*, *The Color Purple*, *The Wiz*, *Stormy Weather*, *Central Avenue Breakdown*, and *Smokey Joe’s Café*.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public Theater is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. 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 its beloved, 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, a new initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; new and experimental stagings at The Public at Astor Place, including Public Lab; and a range of artist and audience development initiatives including its Public Forum series, which brings together theater artists and professionals from a variety of disciplines for discussions that shed light on social issues explored in Public productions. The Public Theater 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. Key elements of the revitalization an expanded and refurbished lobby; the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library, designed by the Rockwell Group. The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater’s year-round activities. www.publictheater.org

TICKET INFORMATION

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Single tickets, starting at \$80, are on sale now and can be purchased by calling **(212) 967-7555**, www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

The performance schedule is Tuesdays through Sundays at 8:00 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. (There is no 2:00 p.m. performance on Saturday, October 4 and Saturday, October 11. There is no 8:00 p.m. performance on Sunday, October 19; and Sunday, November 2.

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