

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES SPRING PUBLIC FORUM AND PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE INITIATIVE LINE-UP

One-Night-Only Events Include
a Collaboration with the Metropolitan Opera;
Conversations with
Black Lives Matter Co-Founder and artist Patrisse Cullors,
Activist Angela Davis,
Actress Yara Shahidi from “black-ish” and,
Pulitzer Prize-winning Playwright Suzan-Lori Parks;
and the Return of the Civic Salon Series

December 13, 2018 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) has announced the **Public Forum** and **Public Shakespeare Initiative** spring line-up that will explore the intersection of art, ideas, and action and illuminate the study and performance of Shakespeare’s works. Highlights of the upcoming season include a collaboration with The Metropolitan Opera; a conversation on the experiences of the Black Community with Black Lives Matter co-founder/artist Patrisse Cullors, Activist Angela Davis, and actress Yara Shahidi from “black-ish”; an in-depth discussion with Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks; the continuation of monthly Civic Salon gatherings, and more.

The spring season will kick off with the return of **CIVIC SALONS** on **Sunday, February 10 at 7:00 p.m.** in Joe’s Pub. In a climate of divisiveness and seclusion, Public Forum is opening its doors to invite audiences to join Public Forum every month for Civic Salons: a monthly gathering where everyone can come together in the spirit of community to nurture their minds and bodies. Each month will feature a different theme and different participants who will bring readings, songs, and a keynote address— all chosen in the hopes of inspiring civic engagement and social change. Past Civic Salon keynote speakers have included playwright Lisa Kron, NPR’s Maria Hinojosa, and Artistic Director of the Women’s March Paola Mendoza. Joe’s Pub will offer a full food menu available for purchase. Additional upcoming **CIVIC SALONS** will take place on **Sunday, March 24 at 12:00 p.m.**; **Saturday, April 20 at 12:00 p.m.**; and **Sunday, May 19 at 12:00 p.m.** Civic Salons are free and open to the public with an RSVP through The Public Theater’s website. RSVPs will open four weeks prior to the event date.

On **Monday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m.**, the Public Shakespeare Initiative will collaborate with the Metropolitan Opera on **PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS: FALSTAFF** at The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. In connection with the Metropolitan Opera’s critically acclaimed production of Verdi’s **FALSTAFF**, the Public Shakespeare Initiative hosts this song and laughter-filled evening of selections from Shakespeare’s domestic comedy *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and Verdi’s masterful adaptation, his last, and some would say his finest creation. The brilliant **Jay O. Sanders**, star of this season’s

heralded *Uncle Vanya*, and scholar **Dympna Callaghan**, the William Safire professor of English at Syracuse University, will join Met artists, who will perform excerpts from the opera.

Patrisse Cullors, Angela Davis, and Yara Shahidi join Public Forum for **PUBLIC FORUM: POWER** on **Sunday, February 24 at 7:00 p.m.** in Joe's Pub. When another Black life is lost to police brutality, the media often focuses on death and hashtags. But what about the stories of those who survived? Artist and activist **Patrisse Cullors** (co-founder of Black Lives Matter) had this in mind when she created *Power: From The Mouths Of The Occupied* in 2015. A documentary performance piece, *Power* focuses on the unseen and unheard experiences of those in the Black community facing criminalization and state violence on an every day basis. Join Public Forum as they frame excerpts from *Power* with a conversation between Cullors, legendary activist **Angela Davis**, and actor/youth organizer **Yara Shahidi** ("black-ish").

On **Monday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m.** the Public Shakespeare Initiative will welcome The Public's Master Writer Chair **Suzan-Lori Parks** for **PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE TALKS: SHAKESPEARE AS PLAYWRIGHT** in the Anspacher Theater. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks has a simple way of appraising Shakespeare: a "damn good writer." She sits down with the Public Shakespeare Initiative to discuss what makes Shakespeare's works so enduring, its role in her own artistic life, how its influence appears in her work, and why she believes his plays are vital to conversations about playwriting today.

Continuing last year's highly praised event surrounding Shakespeare in the Park, the Public Shakespeare Initiative will once again host a **PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS** with The Public Theater's Resident Shakespeare Scholar **James Shapiro** and the cast and creative team from one of the to-be-announced summer 2019 productions at Free Shakespeare in the Park. This event will be on **Monday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** at a to-be-announced location.

Finally, on **Friday, May 17** and **Sunday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m.**, The Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble will celebrate its 12th season with two invited performances of Shakespeare's magic-filled, storm-tossed tale about exile, family, community, and forgiveness, **THE TEMPEST**, with shows in the Bronx and in Manhattan. These performances will mark the culmination of a year of study and rehearsal by the 50 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders participating in the Ensemble program, which is offered by the Public Shakespeare Initiative in collaboration with its vital community partner, the Hunts Point Alliance for Children, which co-founded the Ensemble with The Shakespeare Society in 2007.

ONGOING PROGRAMMING:

Additional Public Forum programming includes Artist Talkbacks, Speaker Series Panels, Audience Conversations, and the online resource Digiturgy. In **Artist Talkbacks**, members of the cast and creative team will take questions from the audience about the show and their process following selected performances during the season. **Speaker Series** presents 20-to-30-minute panel discussions after the performance with experts discussing a topic from the show, and **Audience Conversations** feature a member of The Public's artistic staff leading the audience in a conversation with each other about the show and its themes and ideas. **Digiturgy** provides bite-sized digital content used to further explore the themes and ideas present in The Public Theater's plays. For the most up-to-date schedule of post-show programming, please visit www.publictheater.org.

Speaker Series dates for the spring include **Friday, March 15**, following the **7:00 p.m.** performance of *White Noise*; **Thursday, March 21** following the **7:00 p.m.** performance of *Ain't No Mo'*; and **Thursday, April 18** following the **7:30 p.m.** performance of *Socrates*.

The Public Shakespeare Initiative's educational programming will also include the continuation of **Teaching Teachers**, a series of free professional development workshops for teachers of all schools and grade levels in NYC. Recent workshops have focused on plays *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with sessions led by scholars from Barnard College, Northwestern University, and Columbia University. For the latest on upcoming workshops, visit thepublic.nyc/psi.

ABOUT PUBLIC FORUM AND PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE INITIATIVE:

The Public Theater's **Public Forum** is a space where art, ideas, and action collide. Public Forum creates exciting opportunities for communities to engage deeply with current events, exciting ideas, and the most pressing questions of our time. We energize civic responsibility by inviting people from all backgrounds to share, converse, and connect with each other in person and digitally.

Forum hosts one-night-only events, special performances, post-show conversations, digital dialogues and engagements, and town hall gatherings, as well as programming co-curated with the Public Shakespeare Initiative.

Public Shakespeare Initiative offers a wide range of programming which includes larger Public Shakespeare Presents evenings, blending incisive commentary by scholars and other thinkers with compelling live performances by artists of all disciplines; intimate Public Shakespeare Talks, giving audiences unique insight into the artistic and intellectual processes of leading Shakespeare practitioners; Artist Development Programs, with some of the most visionary artistic minds working on Shakespeare today; and Education Programs, including the Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble, which The Shakespeare Society co-founded with the Hunts Point Alliance for Children over a decade ago, and which has offered hundreds of elementary and middle school students the opportunity to develop their confidence, knowledge, and creativity through the transformative experience of bringing Shakespeare's words to life onstage in the 10 Shakespeare productions the Ensemble has presented.

Support for the collaboration of The Shakespeare Society and The Public Theater provided by the New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund.

The New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund (NYMAC) encourages and supports mergers, acquisitions, joint-ventures, and other types of formal, long-term collaborations between nonprofits in New York City. NYMAC's funders include Altman Foundation, The Booth Ferris Foundations, The Clark Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, The Lodestar Foundation, The New York Community Trust, SeaChange Capital Partners, and a number of philanthropic individuals.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

THE PUBLIC is theater of, by, and for all 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. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 170 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 32 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

PUBLIC FORUM AND PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE INITIATIVE TICKET INFORMATION

Public Theater Partner, Public Supporter and Member tickets for **PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS: FALSTAFF**, **PUBLIC FORUM: POWER**, and **PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE TALKS: SHAKESPEARE AS PLAYWRIGHT** are available now. Single tickets, starting at \$25, for the previously listed events, will be available on Tuesday, December 18 and can be accessed by calling **(212) 967-7555**, visiting www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

On-sale dates for all other Public Forum and Public Shakespeare Initiative events will be announced at a later date.

There is no food or drink minimum for Public Forum or Public Shakespeare Initiative in Joe's Pub. Please note the final line-up is subject to change. 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. For more information, visit www.publictheater.org

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