

THE PUBLIC THEATER BEGINS PREVIEWS FOR NEW YORK PREMIERE OF STRAIGHT WHITE MEN ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY YOUNG JEAN LEE

Complete Cast Features Austin Pendleton, Pete Simpson, James Stanley, and Gary Wilmes

October 6, 2014 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will begin previews for the New York premiere of **STRAIGHT WHITE MEN** on Friday, November 7. Written and directed by **Young Jean Lee**, **STRAIGHT WHITE MEN** runs through Sunday, December 7 in the Martinson Theater with an official press opening on Monday, November 17.

Member tickets, priced at \$30, and single tickets, starting at \$35, are available now by calling (212) 967-7555, www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at Astor Place 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 **STRAIGHT WHITE MEN** features **Austin Pendleton** (*Ed*), **Pete Simpson** (*Drew*), **James Stanley** (*Matt*), and **Gary Wilmes** (*Jake*). Wilmes will be replacing the previously announced Scott Shepherd who will be shooting a Steven Spielberg film.

In the New York premiere of **STRAIGHT WHITE MEN**, unpredictable downtown writer/director **Young Jean Lee** presents a traditionally structured take on the classic American father-son drama. When Ed and his three adult sons come together to celebrate Christmas, they enjoy cheerful trash-talking, pranks, and takeout Chinese. Then they confront a problem that even being a happy family can't solve: when identity matters, and privilege is problematic, what is the value of being a straight white man?

The creative team includes David Evans Morris (*scenic design*); Christopher Kuhl (*lighting design*); Chris Giarmo and Jamie McElhinney (*sound design*); Enver Chakartash (*costume design*); Faye Driscoll (*fight choreography and movement*); and Mike Farry (*dramaturgy*).

STRAIGHT WHITE MEN is a production by Young Jean Lee's Theater Company and is commissioned by the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State University, Center Theatre Group (Los Angeles), Steirischer Herbst Festival (Graz), Les Spectacles Vivants – Centre Pompidou (Paris), Festival d'Automne à Paris, and The Public Theater (New York).

YOUNG JEAN LEE (*Writer and Director*). Her plays, *Church* and *We're Gonna Die*, have previously been staged at The Public Theater. Prior to *Straight White Men*, she has written and directed nine shows in New York with Young Jean Lee's Theater Company and toured her work to over 30 cities around the world. She is a resident filmmaker at the Wooster Group and has made an album, *We're Gonna Die*, with her band Future Wife. Her plays have been published by Theatre Communications Group (*Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven and Other Plays, The Shipment* and *Lear*) and by Samuel French (*Three Plays by Young*)

Jean Lee). She is currently under commission from Lincoln Center Theater and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and wrote a commissioned screenplay for Plan B/Paramount Pictures. She has received grants from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Creative Capital, NYFA, NEA, NYSCA, the Jerome Foundation, the Greenwall Foundation, and the Rockefeller MAP Foundation. She is also the recipient of two OBIE awards, the Festival Prize of the Zuercher Theater Spektakel, a 2010 Prize in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a 2011 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2012 Doris Duke Artist Award, and a 2013 Doris Duke Artist Residency. She is currently working on her second short film, A Meaning Full Life, starring Paul Lazar, Wallace Shawn, and Kate Valk.

AUSTIN PENDLETON (*Ed*) has appeared at The Public in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*. He has most recently been seen as an actor in New York in *Choir Boy*, at Manhattan Theatre Club; playing Sinatra at Theatre for the New City; and in two productions at Mississippi Mud, a company with which he frequently works: *Vieux Carre* and *SeaGull69*. His two most recent films, yet to be released, are *Squirrels to Nuts* (a Peter Bogdonavich film), and *The Mend*, with Josh Lucas. He is also a director, a playwright, and a teacher of acting at HB Studio, where he first studied with Uta Hagen and Herbert Berghof. He is a member of the Ensemble at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre, where he most recently directed *Tribes*, and most recently acted in Cormac McCarthy's play *The Sunset Limited*, which later appeared in New York at 59E59. He most recently directed the New York premiere of *Gidion's Knot*, by Johnna Adams, also at 59E59. He apprenticed at the Williamstown Theatre Festival, where he has acted and directed (and where all of his plays have been produced) for many years.

PETE SIMPSON (*Drew*) has been working and touring internationally with many of New York's most acclaimed experimental theater and dance artists, performing multiple principle roles with Young Jean Lee's Theater Company, Elevator Repair Service, Richard Maxwell, the Wooster Group, Big Dance Theater Company, Susan Marshall, Half Straddle, Will Eno, Ethan Lipton, Richard Foreman, Julia Jarcho, Christina Masciotti and others. In addition to direction, marketing, writing and training roles with the acclaimed Blue Man Group, Pete has also performed the Blue Man character over 3,500 times in six countries, including stage appearances or recordings with David Bowie, Moby, Alicia Keys, film score composer John Powell, the Kodo taiko group, and others. His film and television credits include *Morning Glory, Stefan*, "Law and Order," "Conan O'Brien," and regionally he has appeared at the Denver Center, Williamstown Theater Festival, Westport Country Playhouse and others.

JAMES STANLEY (*Matt*) is a New York based actor, writer, designer and performer who previously worked with Young Jean Lee on *The Appeal* (Soho Rep). As an actor, he has performed in work by Hal Hartley, Thomas Bradshaw, Yehuda Duenyas, Phil Soltanoff, Julie Atlas Muz and Richard Maxwell among others. James is also a founder and co-Artistic Director of the Obie Award winning NTUSA (National Theater of the United States of America) and has been a primary collaborator on all of their work. He was the writer of the NTUSA hits *Garvey & Superpant\$: Episode #23, Placebo Sunrise, ABSN:RJAB* and *Chautauqua!* and recently directed Normandy Raven Sherwood's *The Golden Veil* at the Kitchen, for which he also produced a record of the show's music. James is also a media scholar who teaches classes in media history and criticism at NYU, where he is pursuing his PhD in Media, Culture and Communication. From 2011-2012, James was an Assistant Editor for the interdisciplinary scholarly journal "Public Culture," where he helped launch the book review website Public Books.

GARY WILMES (*Jake*) has appeared on Broadway in *Chinglish*. His additional theater credits include *Gatz; Isolde; Cry Trojans!; Red Light Winter* (OBIE Award); and *August: Osage County*. His film and television credits include *A Mighty Heart, Salt, Ruth and Alex,* "Louie," "Homeland," "The Lottery," "Jon Benjamin has a van," "The Good Wife," and "Blue Bloods."

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER AT ASTOR PLACE

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; Free "First Preview Free For All" tickets; Public Works, an ongoing initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each year; new, developmental and experimental stagings at The Public, including Emerging Writers Group, Public Lab and Public Studio; 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 included the construction of new exterior entry stair and glass canopy; installation of ramps for improved accessibility; an expanded and refurbished lobby; the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library at The Public, 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

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TICKET INFORMATION

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Tickets to the first preview on Friday, November 7 are free and available by lottery in The Public Theater Lobby and by TodayTix mobile app. Rush tickets are available, subject to availability, beginning at 6:00 p.m. for all evening performances and one hour prior to matinee performances. Rush tickets are \$20, cash only, with a limit of two tickets per person.

The performance schedule is Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. and Sundays at 7:00 p.m. (*There is an added performance on Monday, November 24 and no performance on Thursday, November 27*).

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