

## THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES NEW YORK PREMIERE OF **JOHN LEGUIZAMO:** **LATIN HISTORY FOR DUMMIES** FOR 2016-2017 SEASON

March 8, 2016 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today that it will present the New York premiere of **JOHN LEGUIZAMO: LATIN HISTORY FOR DUMMIES** as part of The Public's 2016-17 season. Directed by **Tony Taccone**, this fiercely funny, satirical one-man show created and performed by **John Leguizamo** was inspired by Leguizamo's observation that Latinos are essentially invisible in the standard American history curriculum. This insightful and hilarious, often over-looked version of American history, will premiere at The Public in spring 2017.

"Just imagine you're a white kid and all of a sudden everybody's Latin and everything they're teaching you is Latin and you don't hear anything about yourself or about your contributions," explained **Leguizamo**. "And it's really weird and unfair because we had huge contributions."

John Leguizamo was last seen at The Public in the 1987 productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *La Puta Vida Trilogy*. His up close and personal solo shows about growing up in Queens and climbing to the top of the Hollywood ladder earned him scores of fans and accolades – and an Emmy and Obie Award. In **LATIN HISTORY FOR DUMMIES**, the outrageous, multifaceted performer schools his son – and the rest of us – on the marginalization of Latinos in U.S. history and the vital roles they played in building this country. From a satirical recap of Aztec and Incan history to stories of Latin patriots in the Revolutionary and Civil War and beyond, Leguizamo breaks down 3,000 years into 90 irreverent and uncensored minutes in his trademark comedic style. **LATIN HISTORY FOR DUMMIES** is a co-production with Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

"John Leguizamo is one of the great talents of his generation, a comedian and actor who has pushed the boundaries of theater and performance to new heights and depths," said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. "Tony Taccone has been my comrade, friend, and colleague for more than 35 years, a leader in our field and a fiercely gifted director. What a joy to welcome them back to The Public."

Tickets to **LATIN HISTORY FOR DUMMIES** will go on sale later in the year. Public Theater memberships are currently available for a tax-deductible donation of \$65 and can be accessed by calling **(212) 967-7555**, [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org), or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at Astor Place at 425 Lafayette Street; Public Theater members get early access to tickets before they go on sale to the general public as well as other benefits.

**JOHN LEGUIZAMO** (*Creator and Performer*) is a multi-faceted performer and Emmy Award winner, and has a notable career that defies categorization. Possessing boundless energy and creativity, his work spans the genres of film, theatre, television, literature, and beyond. As writer and performer, Leguizamo created the Off-Broadway sensation *Mambo Mouth* (1991), in which he portrayed seven different characters (Obie, Outer Critics Circle, Vanguardia Awards). His second one-man show, *Spic-O-Rama* (1993) enjoyed extended sold-out runs in Chicago and New York (Dramatists' Guild Hull-Warriner Award for Best American Play, Lucille Lortel Outstanding Achievement Award for Best Broadway Performance, Drama Desk Award for Best Solo Performance). His third solo show, *Freak*, completed a successful run

on Broadway in 1998. A special presentation of *Freak*, directed by Spike Lee, aired on HBO (Emmy Award for Outstanding Performance in a Variety or Music Program and nomination for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special). In 2001 Leguizamo returned to Broadway with *Sexaholix...a Love Story*, directed by Peter Askin (Outer Critics Circle Award nomination for "Outstanding Solo Performance" and Tony Award nomination for Best Special Theatrical Performance). *Sexaholix* aired as an HBO Special in 2002 and toured widely. His most recent one-man show, *Ghetto Klown*, was performed at Berkeley Rep in 2010 and went on to a Broadway run in 2011. Presently, Leguizamo delights younger fans as the voice of "Sid" in *Ice Age 1, 2, 3*. He has been seen in countless films including *Love in the Time of Cholera* opposite Javier Bardem and Benjamin Bratt; *The Happening* opposite Mark Wahlberg; *Righteous Kill* opposite Robert DeNiro and Al Pacino; *The Babysitters* opposite Cynthia Nixon; and *The Take* opposite Rosie Perez; as well as *Miracle at St. Anna*; *Land of the Dead*; *The Groomsmen*; *Lies & Alibis*; *Assault on Precinct 13*; *Sueno*; *Spin*; *Moulin Rouge*; *Summer of Sam*; *King of the Jungle*; *Spawn*; *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*; *Dr. Doolittle*; *Carlito's Way*; and *Casualties of War*.

**TONY TACCONE** (*Director*) directed *Taking Over* at The Public in 2008. He is Artistic Director of Berkeley Rep, the Tony Award-winning nonprofit that has earned a reputation as an international leader in innovative theatre. In those 18 years, Berkeley Rep has presented more than 70 world, American, and West Coast premieres and sent 23 shows to New York, two to London, and one to Hong Kong. Taccone has staged more than 35 plays in Berkeley, including new work from Culture Clash, Rinde Eckert, David Edgar, Danny Hoch, Geoff Hoyle, Quincy Long, Itamar Moses, and Lemony Snicket. He directed the shows that transferred to London, *Continental Divide* and *Tiny Kushner*, and two that landed on Broadway as well: *Bridge & Tunnel* and *Wishful Drinking*. Prior to working at Berkeley Rep, Taccone served as artistic director of Eureka Theatre, which produced the American premieres of plays by Dario Fo, Caryl Churchill, and David Edgar before focusing on a new generation of American writers. While at the Eureka, Taccone commissioned Tony Kushner's legendary *Angels in America* and co-directed its world premiere. He has collaborated with Kushner on eight plays at Berkeley Rep, including *The Intelligent Homosexual's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures*. Taccone's regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Arena Stage, Center Theatre Group, the Eureka Theatre, the Guthrie Theater, the Huntington Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theater, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. As a playwright, he debuted *Ghost Light*, *Rita Moreno: Life Without Makeup*, and *Game On*, written with Dan Hoyle. In 2012, Taccone received the Margo Jones Award for "demonstrating a significant impact, understanding, and affirmation of playwriting, with a commitment to the living theatre."

### **ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:**

The Public Theater, under the leadership of 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. Celebrating his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season 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 Emerging Writers Group and to the Public Forum series. 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 *Fun Home* and Lin-Manuel Miranda's acclaimed American musical *Hamilton*, and Danai Gurira's *Eclipsed* featuring Lupita Nyong'o. The Public has received 47 Tony Awards, 167 Obie Awards, 52 Drama Desk Awards, 48 Lortel Awards, 31 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics Awards, and four Pulitzer Prizes. [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

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