

**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
ANNOUNCES  
INITIAL CASTING FOR  
2017 FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK  
AT THE DELACORTE THEATER**

***JULIUS CAESAR***

Directed by Oskar Eustis

May 23-June 18

***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***

Directed by Lear deBessonet

July 11-August 13

**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  
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April 4, 2017 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced initial casting today for the 2017 Free Shakespeare in the Park season, beginning Tuesday, May 23 at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, continuing a 55-year tradition of free theater in Central Park. This summer, Free Shakespeare in the Park will feature the rarely seen ***JULIUS CAESAR*** (May 23-June 18), directed by The Public's Artistic Director **Oskar Eustis**; and ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*** (July 11-August 13), directed by Obie Award winner and The Public's Founder of Public Works and Resident Director **Lear deBessonet**.

Initial casting for ***JULIUS CAESAR*** will feature **Tina Benko** (*Calpurnia*); **Teagle F. Bougere** (*Casca*); **Eisa Davis** (*Decius Brutus*); **Robert Gilbert** (*Octavius*); **Stephen Adly Guirgis** (*Cinna the Poet*); **Gregg Henry** (*Caesar*); **Edward James Hyland** (*Lepidus, Popilius*); **Nikki M. James** (*Portia*); **Christopher Livingston** (*Titinius, Cinna*); **Elizabeth Marvel** (*Antony*); **Chris Myers** (*Flavius, Messala, Ligarius*); **Corey Stoll** (*Marcus Brutus*); **John Douglas Thompson** (*Caius Cassius*); and **Natalie Woolams-Torres** (*Marullus*).

Initial casting for ***A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*** will feature **Annaleigh Ashford** (*Helena*); **De'Adre Aziza** (*Hippolyta*); **Kyle Beltran** (*Lysander*); **Danny Burstein** (*Nick Bottom*); **Shalita Grant** (*Hermia*); **Alex Hernandez** (*Demetrius*); **Jeff Hiller** (*Francis Flute*); **Robert Joy** (*Peter Quince*); **David Manis** (*Egeus, Fairy*); **Patrena Murray** (*Tom Snout*); **Kristine Nielsen** (*Puck*); and **Joe Tapper** (*Robin Starveling*).

The Public Theater's Artistic Director Oskar Eustis directs ***JULIUS CAESAR***, Shakespeare's play of politics and power, last seen in the Park 17 years ago. Rome's leader, Julius Caesar, is a force unlike any

the city has seen. Magnetic, populist, irreverent, he seems bent on absolute power. A small band of patriots, devoted to the country's democratic traditions, must decide how to oppose him. Shakespeare's political masterpiece has never felt more contemporary.

**JULIUS CAESAR** will feature scenic design by David Rockwell, costume design by Paul Tazewell, lighting design by Kenneth Posner, sound design by Jessica Paz, and original music and soundscapes by Bray Poor.

In July, 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, original music by Justin Levine, and choreography by Danny Mefford.

**JULIUS CAESAR**, only staged at the Delacorte Theater once before in 2000, was directed by Barry Edelstein and featured David McCallum in the title role, Jeffrey Wright as Mark Antony, and Jamey Sheridan as Brutus.

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** was first staged at the Delacorte Theater in 1982, directed by James Lapine with music by Allen Shawn, featuring Christine Baranski as Helena, Kevin Conroy as Lysander, and Paul Bates as Flute. It was later staged in 1991, directed by Cacá Rosset, and featuring Augusto Pompeo as Puck, Carolina N. Ribeiro as Helena, and Rubens Caribé as Lysander. It was last staged at the Delacorte in 2007 directed by Daniel Sullivan, featuring Martha Plimpton as Helena, Laila Robins as Titania, Jesse Tyler Ferguson as Flute, and Jay O. Sanders as Bottom.

On **Monday, June 5**, The Public's Annual Gala at the Delacorte will present **Hair to Hamilton**, a star-studded one-night-only event celebrating 50 years of revolutionary musicals from The Public Theater.

**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.

Tickets to The Public Theater's Free Shakespeare in the Park are distributed, two per person, at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park on the day of the show. The Public continues its partnership with **TodayTix**, who will again 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. Borough distribution information, as well as information about ADA accessible performances, will be available at a later date.

The Delacorte Theater in Central Park is accessible by entering at 81<sup>st</sup> Street and Central Park West or at 79<sup>th</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue. To learn more, or to make a contribution, call (212) 967-7555, or visit [www.publictheater.org](http://www.publictheater.org).

**OSKAR EUSTIS** (*Julius Caesar Director*) has served as the Artistic Director of The Public Theater since 2005. He came to The Public from Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, RI where he served as Artistic Director from 1994 to 2005. Eustis served as Associate Artistic Director at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum from 1989 to 1994, and prior to that he was with the Eureka Theatre Company in San Francisco, serving as Resident Director and Dramaturg from 1981 to 1986 and Artistic Director from 1986 to 1989. Eustis is currently a Professor of Dramatic Writing and Arts and Public Policy at New York University, and has held professorships at UCLA, Middlebury College, and Brown University, where he founded and chaired the Trinity Rep/Brown University Consortium for professional theater training. Throughout his career, Eustis has been dedicated to the development of new plays as a director, dramaturg, and producer. At The Public, Eustis directed the New York premieres of Rinne Groff's *Compulsion* and *The Ruby Sunrise*, and Larry Wright's *The Human Scale*. At Trinity Rep, he directed the world premiere of Paula Vogel's *The Long Christmas Ride Home* and Tony Kushner's *Homebody/Kabul*, both recipients of the Elliot Norton Award for Outstanding Production. While at the Eureka Theatre, he commissioned Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, and directed its world premiere at the Mark Taper Forum. Eustis has also directed the world premieres of plays by Philip Kan Gotanda, David Henry Hwang, Emily Mann, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ellen McLaughlin, and Eduardo Machado, among many others.

**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 Emerging Writers Group and 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 and Lynn Nottage's acclaimed new play *Sweat*. 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 five 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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