

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
CONTINUES
56 YEARS OF
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
AT THE DELACORTE THEATER**

OTHELLO

**Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson
May 29-June 24**

**Public Works Musical Adaptation of Shakespeare's
*TWELFTH NIGHT***

Conceived by Kwame Kwei-Armah and Shaina Taub

Music and Lyrics by Shaina Taub

Choreography by Lorin Latarro

Directed by Oskar Eustis and Kwame Kwei-Armah

July 17-August 19

**Nikki M. James, Andrew Kober, Jacob Ming-Trent, Shaina Taub
Reprise their Roles, Alongside 100 Community Members in
Public Works Musical Adaptation of *TWELFTH NIGHT***

**BANK OF AMERICA & THE JEROME L. GREENE FOUNDATION
RETURN AS SEASON SPONSORS OF FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK**

January 22, 2018 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the line-up today for the 2018 Free Shakespeare in the Park season, continuing a 56-year tradition of free theater in Central Park. 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 Joseph 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. This summer, Free Shakespeare in the Park will feature the great tragedy ***OTHELLO*** (May 29-June 24), directed by Tony Award winner **Ruben Santiago-Hudson**; and a reimagined staging of the critically-acclaimed Public Works musical adaptation of Shakespeare's ***TWELFTH NIGHT*** (July 17-August 19), conceived by **Kwame Kwei-Armah** and **Shaina Taub**, with music and lyrics by Shaina Taub, choreography by **Lorin Latarro**, and directed by **Oskar Eustis** and Kwame Kwei-Armah.

"Public Works has been the most exciting new program The Public has created in a generation," said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. "Our Labor Day weekend pageants for the past five years have been

greeted with rapture and imitation, having spawned sister projects in Dallas, Detroit, Seattle and the National Theatre in London. This summer, we are making a huge leap forward by presenting a full-length run of a Public Works show: Shaina Taub and Kwame Kwei-Armah's delightful and intoxicating musical version of *Twelfth Night*. Surrounded by a huge ensemble of community members, *Twelfth Night* will reach an enormously expanded audience with the deep Public Works message that everyone is an artist, and we are all in this together."

"The Public has not presented *Othello* in the Park since 1991," Eustis continued. "In a moment in America where issues of race, racism, and violence are engaging us all, the time is right to explore Shakespeare's great tragedy in America's most public theater in the middle of Central Park. We are also proud to present the Delacorte directorial debut of Ruben Santiago-Hudson, long one of the most beloved members of our family as actor and playwright, whose career as a director has soared in the past few seasons."

The cast of **TWELFTH NIGHT** will include **Nikki M. James** (*Viola*), **Andrew Kober** (*Malvolio*), **Jacob Ming-Trent** (*Sir Toby Belch*), and **Shaina Taub** (*Feste*) reprising their roles from the original Public Works production. Five Equity actors and two rotating ensembles of community members from all five boroughs will perform together on the Delacorte stage in this enchanting comedy.

Tony winner **Ruben Santiago-Hudson** returns to Free Shakespeare in the Park to direct a sumptuous new production of **OTHELLO**. Set amid war and palace intrigue in the 17th-century Mediterranean, this classic drama about a noble Black Venetian general whose marriage is sabotaged by theater's most infamous villain, Iago, remains Shakespeare's most urgent and relevant tragedy today. A lush, romantic vision gives way to the violent tangle of love and jealousy, race and revenge in this must-see production of Shakespeare's great tragedy, **OTHELLO**.

OTHELLO was first staged at the Delacorte in 1964, directed by Gladys Vaughan and featuring James Earl Jones in the title role. It was later staged in 1979, directed by Wilford Leach, and featuring Raúl Julia as the titular character, Richard Dreyfuss as Iago, and Frances Conroy as Desdemona. The most recent production in 1991 was directed by Joe Dowling and featured Raúl Julia reprising his role as Othello and Christopher Walken as Iago.

In celebration of five extraordinary years of Public Works, a Public Theater initiative that invites diverse communities across New York to create ambitious works of participatory theater, Free Shakespeare in the Park presents a re-imagining of Public Works' 2016 musical adaptation of **TWELFTH NIGHT** for a full five-week run in Central Park. Professional artists and two rotating ensembles of community members from all five boroughs will perform together on the Delacorte stage in this enchanting comedy about Viola (**Nikki M. James**), a young heroine who washes up on the shores of Illyria, disguises herself as a man, is sent to court a countess, and falls in love with a Duke. Featuring music and lyrics by critically-acclaimed songwriter **Shaina Taub**, this very special **TWELFTH NIGHT** is a unique partnership between two Public Theater programs that exemplify The Public's commitment to radical inclusion. **Oskar Eustis**, The Public's Artistic Director, and **Kwame Kwei-Armah**, incoming Artistic Director of London's Young Vic, helm this unforgettable musical about love in all its many disguises.

TWELFTH NIGHT was first staged at the Delacorte Theater in 1969, directed by Joseph Papp, featuring Barbara Barrie as Viola and Charles Durning as Feste. It was then staged in 1986, directed by Wilford Leach, and featuring F. Murray Abraham as Malvolio. In 1989, Harold Guskin directed a production with Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio as Viola, Michelle Pfeiffer as Olivia, Jeff Goldblum as Malvolio, and Gregory Hines as Feste. It was staged again in 2002, directed by Brian Kulick, with music by Duncan Sheik, and Julia Stiles as Viola, Jimmy Smits as Orsino, Christopher Lloyd as Malvolio, Zach Braff as Sebastian, Sterling K. Brown as Antonio, and Kristen Johnston as Maria. In 2009, Daniel Sullivan directed a production featuring Anne Hathaway as Viola, Audra McDonald as Olivia, and Raúl Esparza as Orsino. *Twelfth Night* was most recently seen at the Delacorte in the September 2016 Public Works pageant, directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah, with music and lyrics by Shaina Taub, and featuring Nikki M. James as Viola, Andrew Kober as Malvolio, Jose Llana as Orsino, Jacob Ming-Trent as Sir Toby Belch, and Shaina Taub as Feste, alongside community ensemble members from all five boroughs.

Public Works is a national and international initiative currently affiliated with four theaters throughout the U.S. and Europe to create ambitious works of participatory theater in the Public Works model. The current

theaters are **Dallas Theater Center in collaboration with SMU Meadows School of the Arts; Seattle Repertory Theatre; Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit; and The National Theatre in London.** In March 2017, Dallas Theater Center presented their inaugural Public Works Dallas production, *The Tempest*, directed by DTC Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and featuring 200 Dallasites. Seattle Repertory Theater presented their inaugural Public Works Seattle production of *The Odyssey* in September 2017, directed by Marya Sea Kaminski. In October 2017, London's National Theatre announced a new partnership with The Public, **PUBLIC ACTS**, inspired by The Public's successful Public Works model. The partnership launches with a new staging of *Pericles* performed on the National Theatre's Olivier stage in August 2018, directed by National Theatre resident director Emily Lim. The Public Works productions of *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Odyssey* are also available to be produced through Theatrical Rights Worldwide.

The Public Works Shakespeare in the Park musical adaptation of **TWELFTH NIGHT** will run for five weeks during the summer in an expansion of the model that has been presenting Public Works pageant shows for limited performances in early September over the past five years at the Delacorte. The expanded five-week run this summer will allow 50,000 more New Yorkers to see this inspiring community initiative.

This season, The Public proudly welcomes the return of **The Jerome L. Greene Foundation** and **Bank of America** as season sponsors. The generous support of **Bank of America** and **The Jerome L. Greene Foundation** helps to sustain The Public's mission of inclusion, creating great theater, boldly conceived, and free for all.

"We are thrilled to fund Shakespeare in the Park," said **Chris McInerney, President and CEO of the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.** "The Public is a truly unique theater which, thanks to the pioneering vision of Joe Papp and now Oskar Eustis, ensures that Shakespeare is free for all."

"Bank of America is pleased to continue our twelve-year sponsorship of Shakespeare in the Park, and to be part of this important tradition of gathering New Yorkers and visitors in a shared cultural experience," said **Rena De Sisto, Global Arts & Culture Executive for Bank of America.** "Our partnership with The Public Theater is part of our unwavering commitment to help nonprofit institutions throughout the world educate, inspire, and play their very important role in contributing to the economic health of the communities they serve."

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 mobile lottery on the TodayTix app each date that there is a public performance at the Delacorte Theater. On each public performance date, a limited number of vouchers for that night's performance will also be distributed via an in-person lottery at The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street at Astor Place.

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

RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON (*Othello Director*) has appeared on The Public's stage in *Lackawanna Blues* (Obie, Helen Hayes), *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VIII*, *Measure for Measure*, and *East Texas Hot Links*. His directing credits include *Jitney* (Tony Award, Drama Desk, Drama League, NY Drama Critics, Outer Critics Circle), *The Piano Lesson* (Lucille Lortel, OBIE, Audelco), *The Happiest Song Plays Last*, *My Children My Africa*, *The First Breeze Of Summer*, *Seven Guitars*, *Your Blues Ain't Sweet Like Mine*, *Two Trains Running*, *Jitney*, *Things Of Dry Hours*, *Gem Of The Ocean*, and *Radio Golf*. As an actor, he has appeared on Broadway in *Seven Guitars* (Tony Award), *Stick Fly*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Jelly's Last Jam*. His additional Off-Broadway credits include *How I Learned What I Learned* and *Ceremonies in Dark Old Men*.

SHAINA TAUB (*Twelfth Night Conceiver and Music & Lyrics, Feste*) is a Vermont-raised, New York-based songwriter and performer. Taub created last September's musical adaptation of Public Works' *As You Like*

It with director Laurie Woolery at the Delacorte, in which she played Jaques. In 2016, she created the Public Works production of *Twelfth Night* at the Delacorte, also appearing as Feste. She is a winner of the Fred Ebb Award, the Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award, and a Jonathan Larson Grant. Taub's work was featured in Lincoln Center's American Songbook concert series and she recently made her Carnegie Hall debut performing her music with the New York Pops. She wrote the score for and co-starred in Bill Irwin and David Shiner's *Old Hats*, directed by Tina Landau at the Signature Theatre and A.C.T. She earned a Lucille Lortel Award nomination as Mary in the Off-Broadway run of *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, and appeared in the original cast of *Hadestown* at New York Theatre Workshop. Her songs have been performed by Audra McDonald and Sutton Foster, and she wrote the theme song for Julie Andrews' Netflix series *Julie's Greenroom*, performed on the show by Sara Bareilles. She is an artist-in-residence at Joe's Pub where she plays a monthly concert. Her album *Visitors* is available now and her new record will be released this spring. She's currently writing a new musical about Alice Paul and the American women's suffrage movement. www.shainataub.com

OSKAR EUSTIS (*Twelfth Night Co-Director*) has served as the Artistic Director of The Public Theater since 2005. In the last three years, he has produced two Tony Award-winning Best Musicals (*Fun Home* and *Hamilton*), and back to back winners of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Hamilton* and *Sweat*. 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. At The Public, Eustis directed the New York premieres of Rinne Groff's *Compulsion* and *The Ruby Sunrise*; Larry Wright's *The Human Scale*; and most recently *Julius Caesar* at Shakespeare in the Park. He has founded numerous groundbreaking programs at The Public, from Public Works and Public Forum to the Emerging Writers Group and the Mobile Unit. 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.

KWAME KWEI-ARMAH (*Twelfth Night Conceiver and Co-Director*) is the incoming Artistic Director of the Young Vic in London. He is also the outgoing Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage where he has directed Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, *Marley*, *One Night in Miami*, *Amadeus*, *dance of the holy ghosts*, *The Mountaintop*; *An Enemy of the People*, *The Whipping Man*, and *Things of Dry Hours*. At The Public, he has directed *Twelfth Night*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Detroit '67*. His other credits include *The Liquid Plain*, *Porgy and Bess*, *One Night in Miami*, *Lady from the Sea*, *One Love*, and the upcoming *Soul: The Stax Musical* at Baltimore Center Stage. Kwei-Armah was Artistic Director for the *Festival of Black Arts and Culture: Senegal*, 2010. His works as playwright include *Marley*, *Beneatha's Place*, *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Fix Up*, *Statement of Regret*, *Let There Be Love*, *Seize the Day*. He is an Associate Director of The Donmar Warehouse and has served on the boards of The National Theatre, The Tricycle Theatre and T.C.G. He was Chancellor of the University of the Arts London (2010-15), and in 2012 was awarded an OBE for services to drama. In 2012-2013 and 2014, Kwei-Armah was named Best Director in City Paper's "Best of Baltimore," and nominated for the Stage Directors and Choreographers' Zelda Fichandler Award for Best Regional Artistic Director. In 2016 he was awarded the Urban Visionary Award alongside House Representative Elijah Cummings by the Center for Urban Families for his work in the Baltimore community. His production of *One Night in Miami* was nominated for the Oliver Award for "Best New Play of 2016."

NIKKI M. JAMES (*Viola in Twelfth Night*) has appeared at The Public in *Julius Caesar* and Public Works' 2016 production of *Twelfth Night*. James originated the role of Nabalungi in Broadway's *Book of Mormon*, for which she won a Tony Award. After her award-winning performance, she went on to star as

Éponine in the 2014 Broadway revival of *Les Misérables*. Her additional theater credits include *All Shook Up* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* on Broadway; as well as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Caesar and Cleopatra* alongside Christopher Plummer; *The Wiz*, *Bernarda Alba*; *House of Flowers*; *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*; *Preludes*; and *Fetch Clay, Make Man*. James has appeared in numerous films and TV shows including *Lucky Stiff*, *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby*, "Braindead," "The Good Wife," "30 Rock," "The Blacklist," "Instinct," "Escape At Dannemora," "Law & Order: Criminal Intent" and more.

ANDREW KOBER (*Malvolio in Twelfth Night*) has appeared on Broadway in *School of Rock*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *She Loves Me*, *Les Misérables*, and *Hair* and in the West End production of *Hair*. He has toured nationally in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and appeared regionally at Shakespeare in the Park, Roundabout Theatre Company, New York Theatre Workshop, The Old Globe, Yale Rep, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Bucks County Playhouse, The Denver Center Theater, and Barrington Stage Company. His television credits include "House of Cards," "Boardwalk Empire," "Blue Bloods," "Pan Am," and the "PBS Great Performances" presentation of *She Loves Me*. Recordings include *Hair* (2009 Revival Cast Recording), *She Loves Me* (2016 Revival Cast Recording), and *Sunday in the Park with George* (2017 Revival Cast Recording).

JACOB MING-TRENT (*Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night*) can be seen in the upcoming Sony feature *Super Fly* as well as the films *Cadaver* and *The Bygone*. He received raves for his performance as Ron Balls in the Showtime series "White Famous." Other film and TV credits include Mose on AMC's "Feed the Beast," *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Forbidden Love*, *Fort Greene*, "Law & Order," "Bored to Death," "30 Rock," "Unforgettable," and "high maintenance." On Broadway, Ming-Trent was seen in *Hands on a Hardbody* and *Shrek the Musical*. His Off-Broadway credits include Public Works' *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*, *Father Comes Home from the Wars* (Lortel Award for Best Supporting Actor), and *The Tempest* (The Public); Julie Taymor's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice* (TFANA); *On the Levee* (Lincoln Center); *Mother Courage* (CSC); *Dispatches from (A)mended America*, *Widowers' Houses*, (Epic Theatre Ensemble). He has appeared regionally at American Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Long Wharf Theater, Dallas Theater Center, A.C.T., Williamstown Theatre Festival, New York Stage and Film, The O'Neil, and the Acting Company.

ABOUT PUBLIC WORKS:

PUBLIC WORKS is a major initiative of The Public Theater that seeks to engage the people of New York by making them creators and not just spectators. Working with community partner organizations in all five boroughs, Public Works invites members of diverse communities to participate in theater workshops, attend classes, attend productions, and become involved in the daily life of The Public. Founded by Resident Director Lear deBessonet and currently led by Public Works Director Laurie Woolery, Public Works deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members creating theater that is not only for the people, but *by* and *of* the people as well. Public Works exemplifies The Public's long-standing commitment to community engagement that is at the core of the theater's mission. It is animated by the idea that theater is a place of possibility, where the boundaries that separate us from each other in the rest of life can fall away. It seeks to create a space where we can not only reflect on the world as is, but where we can actually propose new possibilities for what our society might be.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

THE PUBLIC is theater of, by, and for the 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 and John Leguizamo's *Latin History for Morons*. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 169 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 54 Lortel Awards, 32 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Desk Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

ABOUT BANK OF AMERICA:

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ABOUT THE JEROME L. GREENE FOUNDATION:

For almost four decades The Jerome L. Greene Foundation has supported leading New York City institutions that advance education, healthcare, the arts and social justice. The Foundation invests in organizations that are transformative to the life of New York City and beyond, with a particular focus on providing access to the arts and education.

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