

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES NATIONAL EXPANSION OF THE MOBILE UNIT

MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL TO LAUNCH IN SEPTEMBER
WITH FREE MIDWEST TOUR OF
THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAY
SWEAT
BY LYNN NOTTAGE
DIRECTED BY KATE WHORISKEY
SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 23

Four-Week Tour to Partner with Community Organizations
in 18 Counties of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
Minnesota, and Wisconsin

August 2, 2018 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today that the Mobile Unit, originally founded by Joe Papp in 1957 and currently touring to the five boroughs biannually, will expand in September to launch **MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL** with a free, four-week tour of Lynn Nottage’s powerful Pulitzer Prize-winning play, **SWEAT**, directed by Kate Whoriskey. **SWEAT**, staged in its entirety, will tour to 18 Midwest cities across Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Wisconsin beginning Thursday, September 27 through Tuesday, October 23, 2018.

“The *Sweat* Mobile National Tour is our most dramatic attempt to break out of our New York bubble and speak to those who the non-profit theater has largely ignored: the rural communities of the upper Midwest,” said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. “If the culture belongs to everyone, it belongs to the citizens of Kenosha, Erie, and Saginaw as much as it belongs to Manhattan. We are thrilled to be bringing Lynn Nottage’s brilliant Pulitzer Prize-winning play across America.”

SWEAT tells the story of a group of friends who have spent their lives sharing drinks, secrets, and laughs while working together on a factory floor. But when layoffs and picket lines begin to chip away at their trust, the friends find themselves pitted against each other in the hard fight to stay afloat.

“*Sweat* tells the story of Reading, Pennsylvania, but it could be any post-industrial city across the landscape,” said **playwright Lynn Nottage**. “One of the beautiful things about what we’re trying to do with the Mobile Unit National Tour is to link narratives and bring people not just in the communities into dialogue, but people across communities into dialogue and figure out how can we strategize and shift the national conversation.”

SWEAT premiered in New York at The Public Theater in 2016 and was extended three times, with critics writing about the play's breathtaking timeliness, compassion, and power. The play opened on Broadway on March 26, 2017 at Studio 54, won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play. The **SWEAT MOBILE NATIONAL TOUR** performances in Minnesota are produced in collaboration with the Guthrie Theater.

Initial casting for the **SWEAT MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL TOUR** includes **Carlo Albán** (*Oscar*), **Benton Greene** (*Brucie*), **Hunter Hoffman** (*Jason*), **Steve Key** (*Stan*), and **Lance Coadie Willams** (*Evan*).

SWEAT will feature scenic design by Wilson Chin, costume design by Christopher Metzger, and sound design by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen.

With its inaugural production of **SWEAT**, The Public's **MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL** will increase the reach of the current Mobile Unit program in New York and strengthen The Public's commitment to belief that theater belongs to all by producing world-class productions in partnership with community partners nationwide.

In addition to performances, the **MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL TOUR** will engage with communities before and after the performance through a variety of interrelated programming in each community, coordinated by both local partners and The Public, on the issues and conversations most alive in their communities. Activities will range from story circles—a small group of individuals sitting in a circle, sharing stories from their own experience or imagination, focusing on a common theme—to community art projects and theater-driven workshops where they will explore an issue, like opioid addiction, through an interactive experience with teaching artists and local experts.

In 2017, **THE MOBILE UNIT** celebrated the 60th anniversary of its inaugural mobile tour in 1957 which began with a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by Joseph Papp with Bryarly Lee and Stephen Joyce in the titular roles. The 1957 Mobile Unit tour received early support from New York City authorities. Stanley Lowell, then deputy mayor, was an early champion for free theater and mobilized city resources and departments to support Papp's production. The first Mobile Unit rolled up to performance venues across the city in borrowed Department of Sanitation vehicles with a wooden folding stage mounted to a truck bed and portable seating risers to accommodate 700 people per venue. The city's Parks Department permitted performances in local parks across all five boroughs. Subsequent productions included *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*, *Take One Step*, *Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land While a Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage*, and *Volpone*, among many others. Currently, The Public's Mobile Unit brings Shakespeare and other works to audiences biannually who have limited or no access to the arts by visiting correctional facilities, homeless shelters, social service organizations, and other community venues. Recent New York Mobile Unit productions include *Henry V*; *The Winter's Tale*; *Twelfth Night*; *Hamlet*; *Romeo & Juliet*; *The Comedy of Errors*; *Measure for Measure*; *Richard III*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; and *Macbeth*.

THE PUBLIC'S MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL SWEAT TOUR WILL PERFORM IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES FROM SEPTEMBER 27 THROUGH OCTOBER 23, 2018:

Erie County, Pennsylvania | September 27

Crawford County, Pennsylvania | September 28

Ashtabula County, Ohio | September 29

Summit County, Ohio | October 2

Portage County, Ohio | October 3

Macomb County, Michigan | October 5

Saginaw County, Michigan | October 6

Eaton County, Michigan | October 8

Calhoun County, Michigan | October 9

Blue Earth County, Minnesota | October 11

Stearns County, Minnesota | October 12

Olmstead County, Minnesota | October 13

Kenosha County, Wisconsin | October 16

Rock County, Wisconsin | October 17

Columbia County, Wisconsin | October 18

Sauk County, Wisconsin | October 19

Vernon County, Wisconsin | October 21

Sawyer County, Wisconsin | October 23

For more information, please visit thepublic.nyc/mobilenational.

MOBILE UNIT NATIONAL is made possible by the **Ford Foundation** and **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**. Additional support provided by the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**.

THE MOBILE UNIT is made possible with the support of **Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Tow Foundation, The McLaughlin Children's Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and JetBlue Airways**. Additional support provided by **Open Society Foundation, Susan & David Edelstein** and **The Estée Lauder Companies Inc**. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the **New York City Department of Cultural Affairs** in partnership with the City Council. **The Luesther T. Mertz Charitable Trust** provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

BIOS

LYNN NOTTAGE (*Playwright*) is a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and a screenwriter whose work has been produced widely in the U.S. and throughout the world. Most recently, her play *Sweat* (Susan Smith Blackburn Award, OSF American Revolution Cycle Commission) appeared at The Public Theater and on Broadway, winning the Pulitzer Prize. Her other plays include *Mlima's Tale; By The Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Lilly Award, Drama Desk nom.); *Ruined* (Pulitzer Prize, Obie, Lortel, NY Drama Critics' Circle, Audelco, Drama Desk, and OCC Award); *Intimate Apparel* (American Theatre Critics and NYDCC Awards); *Fabulation, or The Re-Education of Undine* (Obie); *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*. She recently produced and conceived of *This Is Reading*, a multi-media performance installation at the Franklin Street Railroad Station in Reading, PA. Nottage was a producer/director on the Netflix series "She's Gotta Have It" and co-founder of Market Road Films. Nottage is the recipient of a PEN/Laura Pels Master Dramatist Award, Doris Duke Artist Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship, Steinberg "Mimi" Distinguished Playwright Award, Dramatists Guild Hull-Warriner Award, the inaugural Horton Foote Prize, and Lee Reynolds Award. Her other honors include the National Black Theatre Fest's August Wilson Playwriting Award, a Guggenheim Grant, Lucille Lortel Fellowship, and

Visiting Research Fellowship at Princeton University. She is an Associate Professor at Columbia School of the Arts. She is an artist-in-residence at the Park Avenue Armory, a member of the Dramatists Guild and The American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

KATE WHORISKEY (*Director*). Her New York credits include The Public and Broadway productions of *Sweat*, *Ping Pong*, and *Manhatta* at The Public's Public Studio, *Tales from Red Vienna* and *Ruined* at MTC (Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel nominations), *The Miracle Worker* (Broadway's Circle in the Square), *How I Learned to Drive* (Second Stage), *The Piano Teacher* (Vineyard Theatre), *Oroonoko* (Theatre for A New Audience), world premieres of *Fabulation* and *Inked Baby* (Playwrights Horizons), and *Massacre* at the Labyrinth Theatre. Internationally she has directed *Magdalena* at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris and Teatro Municipal de Sao Paulo. Regionally she has directed at The Goodman, The Geffen, American Repertory Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre, The Huntington, South Coast Rep, Baltimore Center Stage, Sundance Theatre Lab, New York Stage and Film, among others.

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 Desk Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

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