

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
BEGINS PREVIEWS FOR
THE MOBILE UNIT'S
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28**

DIRECTED BY JENNY KOONS

**Free Performances at The Public
Continue Tradition of Access
to Shakespeare for All**

October 24, 2018 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will begin previews for the **MOBILE UNIT's** production of Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* on Sunday, October 28. Directed by **Jenny Koons**, the free sit-down run of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* follows a three-week tour to five boroughs bringing Shakespeare to audiences who have limited or no access to the arts. *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* will run through Saturday, November 17 with an official press opening on Friday, November 2.

The complete cast of *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* features **Marinda Anderson** (*Hippolyta/Titania*), **Leland Fowler** (*Demetrius/Flute*), **Christopher Ryan Grant** (*Bottom*), **Merritt Janson** (*Theseus/Oberon*), **Carolyn Kettig** (*Hermia/Starveling*), **Jasai Chase Owens** (*Lysander/Snug*), **David Ryan Smith** (*Egeus/Quince/Fairy*), **Natalie Woolams-Torres** (*Puck*), and **Rosanny Zayas** (*Helena/Snout*).

This fall, a classic New York City block party becomes the enchanted setting where fairies work their mischief in Shakespeare's beloved play *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*. Acclaimed director **Jenny Koons** takes you to the royal wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta, where a celebratory play is being rehearsed. But the real drama is unfolding in the concrete jungle of fairy King Oberon. There, four young New Yorkers discover the course of true love runs anything but smooth, as supernatural sprites and the lovable Puck conspire to reveal what fools we mortals be, and draw us all into the collective dream of romance and merriment.

Furthering the mission of making great theater accessible to all, tickets to the **MOBILE UNIT's** run at The Public are **FREE** and are available via TodayTix mobile Lottery and in-person distribution downtown at The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Street at Astor Place. On each public performance date, free tickets will be distributed in-person beginning 90 minutes prior to curtain, and via mobile lottery on the TodayTix app. Download the TodayTix app to enter or visit publictheater.org for more information.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM features scenic design by Kimie Nishikawa, costume design by Hahnji Jang and fight direction by Lisa Kopitsky.

In 2018, **THE MOBILE UNIT** celebrated the 61st 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 *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. This modern reimagining of The Public Theater's original Mobile Theater is inspired by Ten Thousand Things Theater in Minneapolis, MN. In August 2018, **THE MOBILE UNIT** announced the national expansion of its programming with a Midwest Mobile Unit National Tour of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-Winning play *Sweat*. The tour extends beyond performances with community engagement activities on the issues and conversations most alive in their communities.

Recent **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*. This program reinforces The Public's commitment to the ongoing exploration of Shakespeare's canon, along with the Public Shakespeare Initiative; the recent Public Works production of *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* staged at the Delacorte Theater for free; Free Shakespeare in the Park; and The Public's other affordable productions at its downtown home at Astor Place.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY ON THE PUBLIC'S MOBILE UNIT

"I do not know if I have ever been so moved by a theatrical work in my life."

– Highbridge Recreation Center Audience Member

"I will bring my family to see future plays. I have been coming to these plays for the three years that I was in MDC. My release is Thursday and I would like to continue to watch The Mobile Unit Plays."

– Metropolitan Detention Center Audience Member

"You took an everyday space and made it something more, something special."

– Queens Public Library Audience Member

"I love that you came to my neighborhood! The same room where I vote!"

– Pelham Fritz Recreation Center Audience Member

The Mobile Unit is made possible with the support of **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, **The Rockefeller Foundation**, **Stavros Niarchos Foundation**, **The Tow Foundation**, **The McLaughlin Children's Trust**, and **Bloomberg Philanthropies**. Additional support provided by **JetBlue Airways**, **Open Society Foundations**, **Susan & David Edelstein**, **The MAE Private Foundation**, 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.

JENNY KOONS (*Director*). Her directing projects include *Burn All Night* at American Repertory Theater; *Airness* at Humana and the Actors Theatre of Louisville; *Theatre for One: In This Moment* at Pershing Square Signature Center; a SPKRBOX Festival commission, *Instant SPKRBOX*, in Norway; *Bars and Measures* at B Street Theatre; a Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games commission, *Gimme Shelter*; *Theatre for One: I'm Not the Stranger You Think I Am* at Arts Brookfield; *A Sucker Emcee* at the National Black Theatre and LAByrinth Theater Company; *Queen of the Night* at the Diamond Horseshoe Nightclub; and *The Odyssey Project 2012*. Koons has developed new work at Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Joe's Pub, Lark Play Development Center, and the Roundabout Theatre Company. She is also a 2017 Lilly Award recipient.

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 Critics' Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

TICKET INFORMATION

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM will run at The Public Theater from Sunday, October 28 through Saturday, November 17 in the Shiva Theater, with an official press opening on Friday, November 2.

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The performance schedule at The Public will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday and Saturday at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (*There are no 1:00 p.m. performances on Wednesday, October 31 and there are no performances at 1:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 3.*)

The Library at The Public is open nightly for food and drink, beginning at 5:30 p.m., and Joe's Pub at The Public continues to offer some of the best music in the city. For more information, visit www.publictheater.org.

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