

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
ADDITIONAL CASTING FOR
FREE PUBLIC FORUM
AT THE DELACORTE THEATER
MONDAY, JUNE 30**

**Jessica Chastain, Annette Bening, Jackie Hoffman,
E.L. Doctorow, Bryan Stevenson,
Whitney Bashor, Justin Levine, Micah Stock
Join Free One-Night-Only Event**

June 24, 2014 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced additional casting today for the free one-night event, **PUBLIC FORUM: SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICA**, on **Monday, June 30 at 8:00 p.m.** at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. Whitney Bashor, Annette Bening, Jessica Chastain, author E.L. Doctorow, Jackie Hoffman, Justin Levine, Equal Justice Initiative founder Bryan Stevenson, and Micah Stock join this exciting evening which will celebrate Shakespeare and the newly released Library of America book, *Shakespeare in America*, edited by Public Theater Shakespeare Scholar in Residence James Shapiro.

The evening will also feature performances by Poet Elizabeth Alexander, Sarah Amengual, Alec Baldwin, former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, Brian Dennehy, Colman Domingo, Colin Donnell, Michael Friedman, Renée Elise Goldsberry, André Holland, Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer, James Earl Jones, singer/songwriter Stephin Merritt, Cynthia Nixon, Annie-B Parson, Steven Pasquale, Bryce Pinkham, Caesar Samoyoa, poet Vijay Seshadri, and Michael Stuhlbarg.

Highlights of the evening will include **James Earl Jones** reading a scene from *Othello*, marking his return to the Delacorte after a 40-year absence and celebrating the 50th anniversary of his playing Othello on the Delacorte stage; **Alec Baldwin** reading scenes from *Macbeth* and an account of Abraham Lincoln's Shakespearean dreams; **E.L. Doctorow** reading a landmark piece of American writing on Shakespeare; and **Steven Pasquale** singing Tony in the "Tonight" duet from *West Side Story*.

Free Public Forum tickets will be distributed two per person, at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, June 30 at the Delacorte Theater. Free tickets will also be available via the Virtual Ticketing lottery at www.publictheater.org on the day of the event. Public Forum Supporter tickets are also available for a tax-deductible donation of \$75.

Following the success of last summer's free Public Forum at the Delacorte, the acclaimed "theater-of-ideas" series returns to the alfresco venue to explore how Shakespeare has challenged and inspired the American people, from poets to presidents. This free one-night-only event will feature scenes from Shakespeare's greatest works performed by some of America's greatest actors, songs from musicals inspired by the Bard, as well as excerpts from the newly released Library of America book, *Shakespeare in America*, edited by Public Theater Shakespeare Scholar in Residence James Shapiro, which includes speeches, interviews, and other writings about Shakespeare's influence on American culture.

“Telling the story of Shakespeare in America means telling the story of America,” said **Public Forum Director Jeremy McCarter**. “It’s a thrill to have so many of the country’s greatest actors and leading cultural figures show us how Americans have been affected by Shakespeare – and how we have made him our own.”

PUBLIC FORUM presents the theater of ideas. Curated by Jeremy McCarter, this Public Theater series of conversations and performances features leading voices in politics, media, and the arts. Alec Baldwin, Anne Hathaway, Cynthia Nixon, Sam Waterston, and former NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman have hosted its programs, which have featured the insights of David Brooks, David Byrne, Mary Schmidt Campbell, Tony Kushner, Rachel Maddow, Wynton Marsalis, Darryl “DMC” McDaniels, Salman Rushdie, David Simon, Anna Deavere Smith, Stephen Sondheim, Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson, and young veterans of the war in Afghanistan - plus performances by Christine Baranski, Matt Damon, Holly Hunter, Audra McDonald, and Vanessa Redgrave, among others.

ABOUT THE LIBRARY OF AMERICA

Now in its fourth decade, The Library of America is a nonprofit institution that celebrates America’s literary heritage by publishing authoritative new editions of the nation’s best and most significant writing and providing resources to foster appreciation for these classic works. For the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare’s birth, The Library of America and internationally-acclaimed Shakespeare scholar James Shapiro present *Shakespeare in America: An Anthology from the Revolution to Now*, a first-of-its-kind anthology that gathers poetry, fiction, plays, memoirs, songs, speeches, letters, movie reviews, and comedy routines to trace the rich and surprising story of how Americans made the great playwright their own. Including a remarkable roster of writers from Poe, Lincoln, Twain, and Henry James to Pauline Kael, Isaac Asimov, Jane Smiley, and Cynthia Ozick, the anthology features a foreword by President Bill Clinton. *Shakespeare in America* is also available as an e-book. <http://www.loa.org/shakespeare>

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER AT ASTOR PLACE

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public Theater is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. 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 its beloved, 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, a new initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community each; new and experimental stagings at The Public at Astor Place, including Public Lab and Public Studio; and a range of artist and audience development initiatives including its Public Forum series, which brings together theater artists and professionals from a variety of disciplines for discussions that shed light on social issues of the day. The Public also serves as a home for other New York City cultural programs that include The Shakespeare Society, The PEN World Voice Festival and City Center’s Fall For Dance. The Public Theater is located on property owned by the City of New York and receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. In October 2012 the landmark building 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. Key elements of the revitalization included an expanded and refurbished lobby and the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library, designed by the Rockwell Group. The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater’s year-round activities. www.publictheater.org

THE DELACORTE THEATER, home of free Shakespeare in the Park, was conceived by founder Joseph Papp as a way to make great theater accessible to all. It officially opened in Central Park on June 18, 1962, with *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Papp and Gladys Vaughan and featuring George C. Scott as Shylock. *The Merchant of Venice* was followed that summer by a production of *The Tempest*, directed by Gerald Freedman and featuring Paul Stevens as Prospero and James Earl Jones as Caliban. The first Delacorte summer season concluded with *King Lear*, directed by Papp and Vaughan and featuring Frank Silvera as Lear. Since then more than 150 productions have been presented for free at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park. Highlights of past Delacorte productions include *Othello* in 1964 with James Earl Jones; *Hamlet* in 1975 with Sam Waterston; *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1978 with Raul Julia and Meryl Streep; *The Pirates of Penzance* in 1980 with Kevin Kline and Linda Ronstadt; *Henry V* in 1984 with Kevin Kline; *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1988 with Kevin Kline and Blythe Danner; *Richard III* in 1990 with Denzel Washington; *Othello* in 1991 with Raul Julia and Christopher Walken; *The Tempest* in 1995 with Patrick Stewart; *The Seagull* in 2001 with Natalie Portman, Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline and Philip Seymour Hoffman; *Mother Courage* in 2006 with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline; *Macbeth* in 2006 with Liev Schreiber; *HAIR* in 2008 with Jonathan Groff and Will Swenson; *Twelfth Night* in 2009 with Anne Hathaway; *The Merchant of Venice* in 2010 with Al Pacino and Lily Rabe; Stephen Sondheim's *Into The Woods* with Amy Adams, Denis O'Hare, and Donna Murphy in 2012; and most recently, last summer's acclaimed productions of *The Comedy of Errors* with Jesse Tyler Ferguson and Hamish Linklater, and Alex Timbers and Michael Friedman's world premiere musical adaptation of *Love's Labour's Lost*. This summer's Shakespeare in the Park productions feature *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Jack O'Brien, and *King Lear*, directed by Daniel Sullivan.

FREE TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **PUBLIC FORUM: SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICA** on **Monday, June 30 at 8:00 p.m.** are **FREE** and will be distributed, two per person, at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park at 12:00 p.m. on the day of the event. (*Please note that the line-up of actors participating in the Public Forum is subject to change.*) For more information, visit www.publictheater.org.

Free tickets will also be available via the Virtual Ticketing lottery at www.publictheater.org on the day of the Public Forum. Public Forum Supporter tickets are also available for a tax-deductible donation of \$75. For information and to donate, visit www.publictheater.org or call 212-967-7555.

The Public's Delacorte Theater is accessible by entering at 81st Street and Central Park West, or 79th Street and Fifth Avenue.

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