

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
COMPLETE CASTING FOR
NEW YORK PREMIERE OF
ECLIPSED
BY DANAI GURIRA**

**Directed by Liesl Tommy
Pascale Armand, Akosua Busia,
Zainab Jah, and Saycon Sengbloh
Join Lupita Nyong'o
For This Strictly Limited Engagement**

Performances Begin Tuesday, September 29

August 17, 2015 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced complete casting today for the New York premiere of *ECLIPSED*, written by **Danai Gurira**. Directed by Obie Award winner **Liesl Tommy** and featuring Academy Award winner **Lupita Nyong'o** in her New York stage debut, this powerful story of survival and resilience begins previews at The Public Theater Tuesday, September 29 and runs through Sunday, November 8, with an official press opening on Wednesday, October 14.

Public Theater Member tickets can be accessed now. Single tickets, starting at \$80, can be accessed now by calling **(212) 967-7555**, www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at Astor Place at 425 Lafayette Street. The Library at The Public is open nightly for food and drinks, beginning at 5:30 p.m., and Joe's Pub at The Public continues to offer some of the best music in the city.

Making her New York stage debut, Academy Award winner **Lupita Nyong'o** will play "The Girl" in this powerful story of survival and resilience, directed by Obie Award winner **Liesl Tommy**. The complete cast of *ECLIPSED* includes **Pascale Armand** (*Bessie*), **Akosua Busia** (*Rita*), **Zainab Jah** (*Maimi*), **Lupita Nyong'o** (*Girl*), and **Saycon Sengbloh** (*Helena*).

Academy Award winner **Lupita Nyong'o** (*12 Years a Slave*) comes to The Public in the New York premiere of *ECLIPSED*, the stunning, deeply moving play by award-winning Zimbabwean-American Playwright/Actress, **Danai Gurira** (co-author of *In the Continuum* and Michonne on AMC's hit series "The Walking Dead"). Amid the chaos of the Liberian Civil War, the captive wives of a rebel officer band together to form a fragile community – until the balance of their lives is upset by the arrival of a new girl. Drawing on reserves of wit and compassion, *ECLIPSED* reveals distinct women who must discover their own means of survival in this deeply felt portrait of women finding and testing their own strength in a hostile world of horrors not of their own making. South African born **Liesl Tommy** (*Appropriate* and The Public's *The Good Negro*) directs this magnificent story of survival and resilience.

ECLIPSED features scenic and costume design by Clint Ramos, lighting design by Jen Schriever, original music and sound design by Broken Chord, and voice and dialect by Beth McGuire.

DANAI GURIRA (*Playwright*) is an award-winning playwright and actress. As a playwright, her works include *In the Continuum* (Obie Award, Outer Critics Award, Helen Hayes Award), *Eclipsed* (NAACP Award; Helen Hayes Award: Best New Play; Connecticut Critics Circle Award: Outstanding Production of a Play), and *The Convert* (six Ovation Awards, Los Angeles Outer Critics Award). Gurira's newest play *Familiar* received its world premiere at Yale Rep in 2015 and will premiere in New York at Playwrights Horizons in February 2016. She is a recipient of the Whiting Award, a Hodder Fellow, and has been commissioned by Yale Rep, Center Theatre Group, Playwrights Horizons, and the Royal Court. She is currently developing a pilot for HBO. As an actor, she has appeared in the films *The Visitor*, *Mother of George*, she also played Isabella in *The Public's Measure for Measure* (Actor's Equity Callaway Award). She currently plays "Michonne" on AMC's *The Walking Dead*. She holds an MFA from Tisch, NYU. She is the co-founder of Almasi Arts, which works to give access and opportunity to the African Dramatic Artist.

LIESL TOMMY (*Director*) is an award winning international theater director whose work for The Public includes *The Good Negro* and *The Urban Retreat* (Public Studio). Her world premieres include *A Melancholy Play* by Sarah Ruhl and Todd Almond; *Kid Victory* by John Kander and Greg Pierce; *Appropriate* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins; *Party People* by Universes, *The White Man – A Complex Declaration of Love* by Joan Rang; *Peggy Picket Sees the Face of God* by Roland Schimmelpfennig; *Eclipsed* by Danai Gurira; *A History of Light* by Eisa Davis; *Angela's Mixtape* by Eisa Davis; *Bus and Family Ties*. Tommy's additional credits include award-winning re-interpretations of *Les Miserables*, *Hamlet*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Piano Lesson*, and *Ma Raney's Black Bottom* as well as a four-city tour of *Ruined*. She has worked at DTC, California Shakespeare Theater, Centerstage, Sundance East Africa, Berkeley Rep., Oregon Shakespeare Festival, La Jolla Playhouse, and Huntington Theatre Company, among others. Tommy is Associate Director at Berkeley Rep, serves as a Program Associate at Sundance Institute Theatre Program and as an Artist Trustee with the Sundance Institute's Board of Trustees. Tommy facilitated the inaugural Sundance East Africa Theater Director's Lab in In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She's earned an Obie award, Pioneer of the Arts Award, Lillian Hellman award, Alan Schneider award, the inaugural Susan Stroman Award, an NEA/TCG Directors Grant, and NYTW Casting/Directing Fellowship. She has taught or guest directed at Yale Rep, Juilliard, NYU, and Brown University. Tommy is an alum of Trinity Rep Conservatory and a native of Cape Town, South Africa.

PASCALE ARMAND (*Bessie*) has appeared on Broadway in *The Trip to Bountiful* as well as Off-Broadway in Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' *An Octoroon*. She has originated roles in premieres of contemporary pieces including Jupiter in Kia Corthron's *Breath, Boom*; Jekesai/Ester in Danai Gurira's *The Convert*; and Amina in *Belleville* by Amy Herzog. Her additional credits include *Pericles*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Jitney*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Ruined*. Her television credits include "American Odyssey"; "The Blacklist"; "Marvel Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D."; "Law & Order: Criminal Intent"; and "Strangers with Candy." She is an alumna of NYU's Graduate Acting Program.

AKOSUA BUSIA (*Rita*) made her Broadway debut starring as Daisy in *Mule Bone* and her London, West End debut as Edna in *Gloo Joo* (Evening Standard Award); Tanya in *The Talented* at Manhattan Theater Club; Veronica in the West Coast premiere of *Valley Song* by Athol Fugard at La Jolla Playhouse; Annetta in *Eden* at Los Angeles Theater Center; and Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* at Klaxon Theater, Oxford, England. Her film and television credits include in Nettie *The Color Purple*; Bessie in *Native Son*; "A Special Friendship", and "Babies Having Babies," earning her a Youth in Film Award. Her writing credits include the screenplay *Beloved*; and the best-selling novel "The Seasons of Beento Blackbird." She is the also the lyricist of "Moon Blue," sung by Stevie Wonder. Born in Ghana and trained in England at the Central School of Speech and Drama, Busia is a Women in Film International Award recipient.

ZAINAB JAH (*Maimi*) has appeared in The Public Theater's *In Darfur* and her recent credits include the title role in *Hamlet* at The Wilma Theatre; *Antony & Cleopatra*; *Romeo N Juliet*; *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*; the roles of Titania and Hippolyta in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Prudence in *The Convert* (Los Angeles Stage Alliance Ovation Award and Philadelphia Critics Award for Best Featured Actress); Josephine in *Ruined* (San Francisco Bay Area Critics' Circle – Outstanding Performance Female Featured Role); *A Doll's House* at Williamstown Theatre Festival; *Eclipsed*; Helen of Troy in *Trojan Women* at the Classical Theatre of Harlem); and Peter Sellars' European tour of *Children of Herakles*. Her film and

television credits include *Outliving Emily* with Andre Braugher and Phylicia Rashad; *Along Game Love*; and “Law & Order SVU.”

LUPITA NYONG’O (*The Girl*) will next be seen in J.J. Abrams’ highly anticipated *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, as the motion capture character “Maz Kanata.” The film will be released by Disney on December 18, 2015. She additionally just wrapped production in Uganda on Mira Nair’s *The Queen of Katwe* opposite David Oyelowo, and lends her voice to Jon Favreau’s upcoming *Jungle Book* as “Raksha,” set for release next April. Nyong’o made her feature debut in Steve McQueen’s *12 Years a Slave*, which earned her the Academy Award and SAG Award for “Best Supporting Actress”. A graduate of the Yale School of Drama’s acting program, Nyong’o’s stage credits include playing Perdita in *The Winter’s Tale* (Yale Repertory Theater), Sonya in *Uncle Vanya*, Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, as well as part of the cast in the original production of Michael Mitnick’s *Elijah*.

SAYCON SENGBLOH (*Helena*) appeared at The Public in *Hair* and most recently in *Marley* at Centerstage Theater in Baltimore. Her Broadway credits include *Holler if Ya Hear Me*; *Motown the Musical*; *Fela!*; *Hair*; *The Color Purple*; *Wicked*; *Aida* as well as the national tour of *Rent* and *Hurt Village* and *Once On This Island* Off-Broadway. She has been seen in film and television in *Finding Fela*; *American Gangster*; *Across the Universe*; *Funny Valentines*; “The Good Wife”; “Criminal Justice”; and “Law & Order.”

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

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 year; new and experimental stagings at The Public at Astor Place, including Public Lab; 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 explored in Public productions. 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; 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. Key elements of the revitalization an expanded and refurbished lobby; the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library, designed by the Rockwell Group. www.publictheater.org

The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities; Bank of America, Proud Season Sponsor of Shakespeare in the Park; The Harold & Mimi Steinberg New Play Development Fund at The Public Theater Supports the Creation and Development of New Plays; The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation - Lead Supporter of The Public's Access and Engagement Programming; The Time Warner Foundation, Founding Sponsor of The Emerging Writers Group; Delta Air Lines, Official Airline of The Public Theater; *New York Magazine* is the official print sponsor of The Public Theater's 2014-2015 downtown season; Public support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent federal agency.

TICKET INFORMATION

ECLIPSED will begin previews in The Public's LuEsther Theater on Tuesday, September 29 and will run through Sunday, November 8, with an official press opening on Wednesday, October 14.

Public Theater Member tickets can be accessed now. Single tickets, starting at \$80, will be available beginning on Thursday, August 6 and can be accessed by calling **(212) 967-7555**, www.publictheater.org, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

Free tickets to the first preview on Tuesday, September 29 will be available via **TodayTix** mobile lottery, launching Tuesday, September 22. Winners will be notified by email and push notifications between 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on the day of the first preview. Winners must confirm their winning tickets in the TodayTix app within one hour of being notified. A limited number of tickets will also be distributed, beginning at 12:00 p.m., via lottery in the lobby of The Public Theater at Astor Place at 425 Lafayette Street.

The performance schedule is Tuesdays through Fridays at 8:00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00p.m. (*There is an additional performance on Monday, October 19 and the performance on Thursday, October 8 is at 7:00 p.m. There is no performance on Tuesday, October 20 and no 2:00 p.m. performance on Saturday, October 3*).

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