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**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
ANNOUNCES  
LIVE-STREAMED WORLD PREMIERE PLAY  
*WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT?*  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29**

**Written and Directed by Richard Nelson**

**New Addition to the Acclaimed  
Rhinebeck Panorama to Benefit The Public Theater**

***The Apple Family Plays* and *The Gabriels*  
Streaming Now on  
THIRTEEN's Theater Close-Up Website**

April 22, 2020 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the world premiere of ***WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT? Conversations on Zoom***, a new play in the Rhinebeck Panorama, written and directed by Tony Award winner Richard Nelson, on **Wednesday, April 29 at 7:30 p.m. ET**. The live-streamed play will be available to watch for free via both YouTube Live and The Public's website. Commissioned by The Public Theater and written by Nelson from his home in Rhinebeck, New York, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this unique theatrical experience will be performed as a benefit for The Public Theater.

"Richard Nelson has spent the last decade chronicling the way we live now in his glorious plays set in Rhinebeck, N.Y. For *What Do We Need to Talk About?* he has not only turned out a beautiful new play in a matter of days, he has invented a new form: the dramatic Zoom call," said artistic director **Oskar Eustis**. "For the last time, the Apples are back, and what a wonderful thing it is to welcome them into our homes."

***WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT?*** will feature the return of the original Apple Family performing from their homes including **Jon DeVries** (*Benjamin*), **Stephen Kunken** (*Tim*), **Sally Murphy** (*Jane*), **Maryann Plunkett** (*Barbara*), **Laila Robins** (*Marian*), and **Jay O. Sanders** (*Richard*).

For the past 10 years, The Public has been presenting Richard Nelson's minimalist epic, The Rhinebeck Panorama, which includes *The Apple Family Plays*, *The Gabriels*, and *The Michaels*. Now, in the midst of our unsettled world, The Apple Family, last seen in 2013, returns, though not over the dinner table, but via Zoom. This hour-long play picks up with them during their now suspended and quarantined lives. They talk about grocery shopping, friends lost, new ventures on a hoped-for horizon—all at a time when human conversation (and theater) may be more needed than ever before.

"These plays have always been, in my mind, about the need to talk, and the need to listen. That is, at their heart, they are about our need for each other. Never in my life have I felt that need more than now," said playwright and director **Richard Nelson**. "I last wrote about *The Apples* in 2014. Recently, I began to think about what they would be going through today, in my hometown, Rhinebeck; thought about how close they live to each other, only a street or two apart. How they, like us, are now separated, isolated from each other. And how they, like us, would find ways to come together."

In advance of the live premiere, Richard Nelson's four original *Apple Family Plays* and *The Gabriels* trilogy are now available to stream for free in the New York Metro area on THIRTEEN's *Theater Close-Up* website: [thirteen.org/theatercloseup](http://thirteen.org/theatercloseup).

**RICHARD NELSON** (*Playwright and Director*)'s plays include *The Michaels*, *Illyria*, *The Gabriels*, *The Apple Family Plays*, *Nikolai and The Others*, *Farewell to the Theatre*, *Conversations in Tusculum*, *Goodnight Children Everywhere* (Olivier Award, Best Play), *Two Shakespearean Actors* (Tony nomination, Best Play), *Some Americans Abroad* (Olivier nomination, Best Comedy), and others. His musicals include *James Joyce's The Dead* (with Shaun Davey, Tony Award Best Book of a Musical); his screenplays include *Hyde Park on Hudson* (Roger Michell, director). With Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, he has co-translated plays by Chekhov, Gogol, Turgenev, and Bulgakov. He is an honorary associate artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company and recipient of the PEN/Laura Pels "Master Playwright" Award.

### **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 and *Girl From the North Country*. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 178 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 56 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

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