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**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
FREE WORLD PREMIERE DIGITAL PLAY
WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT?
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
THROUGH SUNDAY, JUNE 28**

Written and Directed by Richard Nelson

Free For All on The Public's YouTube and Website

May 13, 2020 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today the return of ***WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT? Conversations on Zoom***, written and directed by Tony Award winner Richard Nelson. First performed live on Zoom on Wednesday, April 29 to a livestream audience of over 5,000, the world premiere play was then viewed more than 47,000 times across 30 countries during the limited four-day run and is being brought back online for more than a month after an overwhelmingly positive response. ***WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT?*** is available to watch now for free via both YouTube and The Public's website through **Sunday, June 28**. 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 was performed as a benefit for The Public Theater.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT? features the return of the original Apple Family 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.

*"It's a kind of theatrical intimacy that is unique to this experience.
It's almost like you are watching a new art form being born."*

– Stuart Emmrich, Vogue

*"Nelson and his team have given me hope that the real thing is still there,
nurturing its singular strength and agility, eager to come out of quarantine and meet us face to face."*

– Ben Brantley, The New York Times

“Nelson creates the first original internet play that deftly responds to the form, this family and the times.”

– Frank Rizzo, Variety

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, 58 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

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