



**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
BEGINS FREE PERFORMANCES OF  
THE MOBILE UNIT'S  
*MEASURE FOR MEASURE*  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

**DIRECTED BY LA WILLIAMS**

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

November 15, 2019 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will begin previews for the **MOBILE UNIT**'s production of Shakespeare's *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* on Monday, November 18. Directed by **LA Williams**, the free sit-down run of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* follows a three-week tour to the five boroughs that brought Shakespeare to audiences who have limited or no access to the arts. *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* will run through Sunday, December 8 with an official press opening on Friday, November 22.

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](http://publictheater.org) for more information.

The all-black women cast of *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* features **Jasmine Batchelor** (*Isabella*), **Nora Carroll** (*Escalus/Juliet*), **Tocarra Cash** (*Lucio*), **Alfie Fuller** (*Pompey*), **Adrian Kiser** (*Angelo*), **Gabrielle Murphy** (*Provost*), **Jacqueline Nwabueze** (*Understudy*), **Latonia Phipps** (*Mariana/Overdone*), and **Grace Porter** (*Duke*). **Lily Santiago** joins the company as Claudio/Elbow beginning Tuesday, November 19, stepping in for **Phumzile Sitole** who is departing the production due to a scheduling conflict.

This season, The Public's acclaimed Mobile Unit transports communities of the five boroughs to the vibrant streets of New Orleans for a bold new production of Shakespeare's *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* directed by **LA Williams**. It's 1979, Mardi Gras has been officially cancelled, yet the community is still celebrating. Temporarily left in charge by the Duke, the upright and uptight Lord Angelo has decided to crack down on the city's debauchery, arresting young Claudio for impregnating his fiancée Juliet before their wedding. When virtuous Isabella, Claudio's sister, hears of his death sentence, she begs Lord Angelo for mercy. But hypocritical Angelo propositions her instead, leaving Isabella with an impossible choice: save her soul or her brother's life. In this timely production, lovers and leaders in disguise reveal how those in power take advantage of those without it – asking the question, can the law be both just and merciful?

**MEASURE FOR MEASURE** features scenic design by Yu-Hsuan Chen, costume design by Asa Benally, music composition by Jeffery Miller, choreography by Mayte Natalio, and fight and intimacy direction by Michael Rossmly and Kelsey Rainwater.

In 2019, the **MOBILE UNIT** celebrates the 62<sup>nd</sup> 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 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1964), *Henry V* (1965), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1965), *Macbeth* (1966), *Volpone* (1967), *Take One Step* (1968), *Ti-Jean and His Brothers* (1972), *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1973), and *Unfinished Women Cry in No Man's Land While a Bird Dies in a Gilded Cage* (1977), among many others.

This modern reimaging of The Public Theater's original Mobile Theater is inspired by Ten Thousand Things Theater in Minneapolis, MN. In the fall of 2018, the **MOBILE UNIT** toured nationally with a Mobile Unit National Tour of Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Sweat* to communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The tour extended beyond performances by actively interacting with audiences in community engagement activities on the issues and conversations most alive in their communities.

Recent **MOBILE UNIT** productions include *The Tempest* (2019); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018); *Henry V* (2018); *The Winter's Tale* (2017); *Twelfth Night* (2017); *Hamlet* (2016); *Romeo & Juliet* (2016); *The Comedy of Errors* (2015); *Macbeth* (2015); *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (2014); *Much Ado About Nothing* (2013); *Richard III* (2012); and *Measure for Measure* (2010). 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 productions 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 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

*"There are no better productions of Shakespeare in NYC.  
You make me think theater can actually change the world."*  
– New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Audience Member

*"Thank you for your mission, for these Mobile Unit performances,  
and for finding the actors you do, who so often do not look like other actors do, but rather like us."*  
– Pelham Fritz Recreation Center Audience Member

**LA WILLIAMS** (*Director*) is a New York-based director. He is currently an inaugural Old Globe Classical Directing Fellow. His recent credits include *Skeleton Crew* by Dominique Morriseau (Westport Country Playhouse); *Rated Black: An American Requiem* by Kareem M. Lucas (Next Door at New York Theatre Workshop); *Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)* by Suzan-Lori Parks (The Juilliard School); *Richard in 9 Poses* by Sarah DeLappe (Clubbed Thumb). He has developed and directed new work at The Public Theater, The New Group, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, La MaMa, and The Classical Theatre of Harlem. Williams has an MA from Emerson College and BA from Alabama State University.

### **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, 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)

The Mobile Unit is made possible with the support of **Stavros Niarchos Foundation, The Tow Foundation, The McLaughlin Children's Trust, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Abrams Foundation**. Additional support provided by **JetBlue Airways, Open Society Foundations, Robert & Mercedes Eicholz Foundation, Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel & Ambassador Carl Spielvogel, The MAE Private Foundation, Walt Disney Company, 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.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

**MEASURE FOR MEASURE** will run at The Public Theater from Monday, November 18 through Sunday, December 8 in the Shiva Theater, with an official press opening on Friday, November 22.

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The performance schedule at The Public will be Tuesday through Sunday at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. *(There is an additional performance on Monday, November 18 at 7:00 p.m. There are no performances on Saturday, November 23 and Thursday, November 28.)*

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. For more information, visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

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