

THE PUBLIC.

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RELEASE
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Ato Blankson-Wood



Liam Craig



Brandon Gill



Safiya Kaijya Harris



Tyrone Mitchell
Henderson



Greg Hildreth



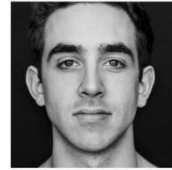
Jaylon Jamal



Tri Lê



Colby Lewis



Cornelius McMoyler



Warner Miller



Daniel Pearce



Solea Pfeiffer



Nick Rehberger



Laughton Royce



Lance Alexander
Smith



John Douglas
Thompson



Lorraine Toussaint



Myxolydia Tyler



William Oliver Watkins



Lark White



Mitchell Winter



Bryce Michael Wood

PHOTOS: DELACORTE THEATER
PHOTOS: CAST AND CREATIVE HEADSHOTS

**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
ADDITIONAL CASTING FOR
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
PRODUCTION OF
*HAMLET***

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Kenny Leon

June 8–August 6

Cast Includes Ato Blankson-Wood, Liam Craig, Brandon Gill, Safiya Kaijya Harris, Tyrone Mitchell Henderson, Greg Hildreth, Jaylon Jamal, Trí Lê, Colby Lewis, Cornelius McMoyler, Warner Miller, Daniel Pearce, Solea Pfeiffer, Nick Rehberger, Laughton Royce, Lance Alexander Smith, John Douglas Thompson, Lorraine Toussaint, Myxolydia Tyler, William Oliver Watkins, Lark White, Mitchell Winter, and Bryce Michael Wood

March 28, 2023 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced additional casting today for the Free Shakespeare in the Park production of Shakespeare’s classic drama **HAMLET**, directed by Tony Award winner **Kenny Leon**. **HAMLET** will have an extended run of nine weeks, beginning at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park on Thursday, June 8 and running through Sunday, August 6 with an official press opening on Wednesday, June 28.

In 2019, director Kenny Leon’s entrancing production of *Much Ado About Nothing* was widely adored and heralded as “delicious & powerful” by *The New York Times*. Returning once again to Free Shakespeare in the Park, Leon commands The Delacorte stage with a nine-week, tour-de-force production of the Bard’s masterpiece, **HAMLET**, a riveting, contemporary take on Shakespeare’s classic tale of family and betrayal, as enduring as the stars above Central Park.

The cast of **HAMLET** will include **Ato Blankson-Wood** (*Hamlet*), **Liam Craig** (*Understudy*), **Brandon Gill** (*Guiltenstern*), **Safiya Kaijya Harris** (*Ensemble*), **Tyrone Mitchell Henderson** (*Osrice/Priest*), **Greg Hildreth** (*Gravedigger*), **Jaylon Jamal** (*Ensemble*), **Trí Lê** (*Ensemble*), **Colby Lewis** (*First Player*), **Cornelius McMoyler** (*Ensemble*), **Warner Miller** (*Horatio*), **Daniel Pearce** (*Polonius*), **Solea Pfeiffer** (*Ophelia*), **Nick Rehberger** (*Laertes*), **Laughton Royce** (*Ensemble*), **Lance Alexander Smith** (*Ensemble*), **John Douglas Thompson** (*Claudius*), **Lorraine Toussaint** (*Gertrude*), **Myxolydia Tyler** (*Understudy*), **William Oliver Watkins** (*Understudy*), **Lark White** (*Ensemble*), **Mitchell Winter** (*Rosencrantz*), and **Bryce Michael Wood** (*Understudy*).

“I’m so happy to be at The Delacorte once again and to share something that binds us to one another,” said director **Kenny Leon**. “A 400-year-old play exploring the need for a strong foundation of family, with music and words, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* has much to say about humanity and the importance of our connectedness to each other. We set this production in 2021, filled with all of the challenges we face as Americans as we explore our need to love more profoundly both nature and its people.”

HAMLET will feature scenic design by Beowulf Boritt; costume design by Jessica Jahn; lighting design by Allen Lee Hughes; sound design by Justin Ellington; projection design by Jeff Sugg; music composition by Jason Michael Webb; hair, wig, and makeup design by Earon Chew Nealey; fight direction by Tom Schall; and choreography by Camille A. Brown. Karyn Meek will serve as production stage manager and Rachel Zucker will serve as stage manager.

In Free Shakespeare in the Park’s 61-year history, **HAMLET** has been staged at The Delacorte four times. It was last seen 15 years ago in a 2008 production featuring Michael Stuhlbarg in the title role and Lauren Ambrose as Ophelia, Andre Braugher as Claudius, and David Harbour as Laertes, directed by Artistic Director Oskar Eustis. Thirty-three years before, Michael Rudman directed Sam Waterston as Hamlet in 1975, also featuring Ruby Dee as Gertrude and John Lithgow as Laertes. In 1972, the production was directed by Gerald Freedman, featuring Stacy Keach as Hamlet, James Earl Jones as Claudius, Sam Waterston as Laertes, Raul Julia as Osrice, and Colleen Dewhurst as Gertrude. Two years after The Delacorte opened, Public Theater founder Joseph Papp directed a 1964 production featuring Alfred Ryder in the title role, with Howard Da Silva as Claudius and Julie Harris as Ophelia.

Since 1962, over five million people have enjoyed more than 150 free productions of Shakespeare and other classical works and musicals at The Delacorte Theater. Conceived by founder Joseph Papp as a way to make great theater accessible to all, The Public's Free Shakespeare in the Park continues to be the bedrock of the Company's mission to increase access and engage the community.

Free tickets will be distributed in a variety of ways across all five boroughs with distribution details and locations announced by May 2023. **TodayTix** returns as a partner for the free virtual ticket lottery distribution. Public Theater Supporter and Partner tickets are available now. COVID-19 health and safety protocols will be made available by May 2023.

This season, The Public proudly welcomes the return of **Jerome L. Greene Foundation** as season sponsor. The generous support of the Jerome L. Greene Foundation helps to sustain The Public's mission of inclusion, creating great theater, boldly conceived, and free for all.

The Public Theater's Annual Gala, a star-studded evening of dinner and performance, will be celebrated on Monday, June 12 on the lawn at The Delacorte Theater. This year, The Public will honor Darren Walker, President, and Ford Foundation for their immense philanthropic impact in the arts. In addition, The Public celebrates Marlla-Altigracia Torres as this year's community honoree. Torres serves as the Family & School Partnership Coordinator for LION Charter school, a close partner of Hunts Point Alliance for Children and the Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble, and uses her position as both a parent and a community partner to recruit other families and advocate for Hunts Point programming. For more information on The Public Theater's Gala, visit publictheater.org/gala23 or email gala@publictheater.org.

In 2018, The Public Theater, in partnership with Central Park Conservancy and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, began embarking on a much-needed revitalization of the 61-year-old Delacorte Theater in Central Park. The plan—a major investment in outdoor cultural space as part of New York's economic recovery—will dramatically improve the home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, addressing critical infrastructure, accessibility, and theatrical needs. The key approved design includes accessible and comfortable space for audiences and artists with disabilities, streamlined backstage operations and improved comfort for cast and crew, a revitalized exterior for a more dynamic aesthetic experience, a focus on resilience and sustainability, and lighting improvements, among other benefits. Initial construction began this past fall and will continue following **HAMLET**. Additional details, including production plans for the upcoming 2024 Free Shakespeare in the Park season, will be announced at a later date. For more information on The Delacorte's revitalization, visit publictheater.org.

To support The Public Theater, become a Supporter or Partner by visiting publictheater.org/supporttoday.

BIOS:

KENNY LEON (*Director*) is a Tony Award-winning director who has been honored with The Actors Fund Medal of Honor, an Obie Award, and an NAACP Image Award. Leon is also a proud honoree of the George Abbott Lifetime Achievement for American Theatre. Leon is on the producing team of *Some Like It Hot*, the musical directed by Casey Nicholaw. This season, Leon directed *Topdog/Underdog* and *Ohio State Murders* on Broadway. Other Broadway credits include *A Soldier's Play*; *American Son*; *Children of a Lesser God*; *Holler If Ya Hear Me*; *A Raisin in the Sun*; *The Mountaintop*; *Stick Fly*; and August Wilson's *Fences*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Radio Golf*. Off-Broadway work includes *The Underlying Chris*, *Everybody's Ruby*, *Emergence-SEE!* (The Public); and *Smart People* (Second Stage). Television and film credits include *Robin Roberts Presents: Mahalia*, "Colin in Black & White," "4400," "Amend: The Fight for America," *American Son* (adapted for Netflix), "Hairspray Live!," "The Wiz Live!," *Steel Magnolias*, "Dynasty," and *In My Dreams*. Leon is the author of *Take You Wherever You Go*. He is the artistic director emeritus of Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, as well as senior resident director at Roundabout Theatre Company.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

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 Lab, 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 the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Fat Ham* by James Ijames. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 190 Obie Awards, 56 Drama Desk Awards, 59 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 62 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

FREE TICKET INFORMATION

Performances of **HAMLET** will begin at The Delacorte Theater on Thursday, June 8 and continue through Sunday, August 6, with an official press opening on Wednesday, June 28.

Tickets to The Public Theater's Free Shakespeare in the Park are distributed in a number of ways. On the day of each public performance, free tickets may be acquired in person at The Delacorte Theater, in person at a borough distribution site, via an in-person lottery in the lobby of The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street, or through a digital lottery via the TodayTix mobile app or website. All tickets are subject to availability.

The **Open Caption** performance will be on Friday, July 14 at 8:00 p.m. The **American Sign Language Interpreted** performance will be on Friday, July 28 at 8:00 p.m. The **Audio Described** performance will be on Saturday, July 29 at 8:00 p.m.

A limited number of tickets are also available via advance reservation by making a contribution in support of Free Shakespeare in the Park. To learn more, or to make a contribution, call **212.967.7555**, or visit publictheater.org.

The full performance calendar can be found at publictheater.org. Complete ticket distribution details will be available later this spring.

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

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