

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES FULL ARRAY OF ADDITIONAL FREE PROGRAMMING

MAKE ME DOWN: SONGS FOR MAKING IT THROUGH ALIVE BY THE HAWTPLATES

**The HawtPlates: Jade Hicks, Kenita Miller-Hicks, and Justin Hicks
Public Theater Commission Visual EP Available to Watch Now**

ROMEO Y JULIETA

By William Shakespeare

Adapted by Saheem Ali & Ricardo Pérez González

Based on the Spanish Translation by Alfredo Michel Modenessi

Directed by Saheem Ali

Lupita Nyong'o and Juan Castano to Play the Star-Crossed Lovers

**The Public's Bilingual Podcast Series Co-Presented with WNYC Studios
Debuts March 18, 2021**

Brooklyn Public Library in Association with The Public to Present a Series of One-Night-Only Events with Eisa Davis, Raúl Esparza, Stephen Greenblatt, Philip Lorenz, and Pulitzer Prize-winning Historian Jill Lepore

Joe's Pub Live to Stream Concerts by Tariq Al-Sabir, Nona Hendryx, Mai Khoi, Loser's Lounge, Nellie McKay, and Roy Nathanson; and Tribute to Public Luminary Liz Swados

Brave New Shakespeare Challenge Welcomes Guest Artist Curators Danaya Esperanza and Alexandria Wailes

November 23, 2020 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director Oskar Eustis, Executive Director Patrick Willingham) announced an array of free programming has been added to The Public's digital season. Though its physical stages remain dark, the additional virtual programming will include a bilingual audio adaptation of *Romeo y Julieta* co-presented with WNYC Studios featuring Lupita Nyong'o and Juan Castano as the star-crossed lovers; a visual EP by creative trio The HawtPlates; concerts with Mai Khoi, Tariq Al Sabir, Nona Hendryx, Loser's Lounge, Nellie McKay, and Roy Nathanson on the Joe's Pub digital stage; an exciting series of one-night discussions with Public Shakespeare Initiative and the Brooklyn Public Library; and new guest artist curators for the Brave New Shakespeare Challenge. The Public also continues its year-round engagement through its vital programs: [Joe's Pub](#), [Mobile Unit](#), [Public Works](#), [Under the Radar Festival](#), [Public Forum](#), [Public Shakespeare Initiative](#), [#BARS](#), and [Emerging Writers Group](#).

“The COVID crisis has been a devastating blow, and the racial reckoning has been a much-needed wake-up call. Through these challenges and opportunities, The Public is committed to pursuing its mission. We need, more than ever, the sense of community and connection that the theater provides. We are home, alone, far more than we were before this pandemic and The Public means for its digital work to provide strength and solace,” said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. “We also continue to innovate: *Romeo y Julieta* expands our Shakespeare into Spanish, creating a multilingual world that reflects our own city—and country. The *HawtPlates*’ thrilling and utterly unique offering gives us joy and beauty and a sense of hope in this time when we need those things desperately. We will come through this, we will come through this better, and these artists are helping us believe that.”

This fall has been unlike any The Public has experienced before. The Public continues to be unable to gather in-person in theaters and is navigating immense challenges because of the global coronavirus pandemic, and in response to the long overdue reckoning around racism in the country and in the theater community, The Public has begun interrogating its practices and systems to move closer to being an inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist organization. This is a moment of uncertainty, transformation, action, and accountability. There is much work to be done, but The Public’s mission has not changed, and artists and their voices play a critical role in this moment too.

With theaters closed and in-person programming on pause, The Public Theater continues to navigate the immense challenges created by the pandemic, including an operating budget that has contracted significantly, substantial furloughs among full-time staff, and a lack of employment opportunities to offer the freelance artistic community. The Public continues to rely on its community of loyal supporters who stand alongside the organization as it upholds its mission during this uncertain time. With the generous contributions of supporters as the only current source of revenue, The Public continues to reimagine theater for the digital space, support a range of artistic voices in making new work, and share it with a growing global audience. Become a Partner or a Supporter of The Public Theater today at www.publictheater.org

“As we head into the holiday season so much will be different this year, but one thing remains the same: we turn to our artists and the stories they tell to help us feel inspired and connected. Our artists continue to innovate and reimagine theater for the digital space, reaching a truly global audience with exciting new artforms. And I know our artists will lead the way to a brighter tomorrow, when we can gather together to experience the magic of live theater in person,” said **Board Chair Arielle Tepper**. “I’m incredibly proud of my fellow Public Theater Trustees and the resolve they continue to show in navigating the immense challenges we and our field are facing. I hope their leadership and generosity inspire others to participate in our GivingTuesday efforts so we can continue fulfilling our mission alongside The Public’s extraordinary staff, providing support for our artists and theatermakers, and sharing innovative storytelling with the world.”

As part of the global movement GivingTuesday, The Public will launch a week-long effort to help raise mission critical funds for our FY21 season. Long-standing partner, The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, will offer a special 2X match for all new funds raised between November 23 and December 1 up to \$125,000. Funding will support the current season including a second round of pandemic relief payments to The Public’s freelance community. The Public remains committed to taking care of those who work on its stages and behind the scenes to make the work possible and whose unemployment is most affected by the ongoing impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the field. To date, The Public’s pandemic relief payments have been directed to freelancers employed in the most recent FY20 season, along with its most recent classes of artist development program members. The Public gratefully acknowledges the generosity of its Board of Trustees and extended donor community in making initiatives like this possible, and for their continued support of The Public’s mission during this period of unprecedented challenge.

ADDITIONAL DIGITAL PROGRAMMING:

RSVP for free digital events through The Public’s website to receive email updates and reminders. The Public Theater strives to make its performances, digital content, and facilities accessible to all patrons and

visitors. For additional information or if you have questions, need assistance, or an accommodation to access our digital content, please email at accessibility@publictheater.org.

MAKE ME DOWN: SONGS FOR MAKING IT THROUGH ALIVE BY THE HAWTPLATES

The HawtPlates: Jade Hicks, Kenita Miller-Hicks, and Justin Hicks

World premiere visual EP now available on The Public's YouTube: [HERE](#)

Last seen in 2020's Under the Radar Festival, The HawtPlates presented *Waterboy and the Mighty World*, remixing songs made famous by Odetta Holmes to explore heroism through the life of Bass Reeves. Commissioned by The Public Theater, The HawtPlates (Justin Hicks, Kenita Miller-Hicks, and Jade Hicks) present **MAKE ME DOWN**, a new 17-minute visual EP with music that again engages the spirit of Odetta's work and proffers the notion that sometimes, songs are meant to keep us going.

An artistic statement from The HawtPlates is available on The Public's [website](#) and music from **MAKE ME DOWN** can be found now on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#). **MAKE ME DOWN** is available with Closed Captioning, Audio Description, and with Spanish subtitles on The Public's YouTube.

ROMEO Y JULIETA

By William Shakespeare

Adapted by Saheem Ali & Ricardo Pérez González

Based on the Spanish Translation by Alfredo Michel Modenessi

Directed by Saheem Ali

Bilingual podcast series to be co-presented with WNYC Studios

Available for on demand listening starting March 18, 2021

The complete cast includes **Carlo Albán** (*Benvolio*), **Karina Arroyave** (*Apothecary*), **Erick Betancourt** (*Abram*), **Michael Braugher** (*Balthasar*), **Carlos Carrasco** (*Lord Montague*), **Juan Castano** (*Romeo*), **Ivonne Coll** (*Nurse*), **John J. Concado** (*Peter*), **Hiram Delgado** (*Tybalt*), **Guillermo Diaz** (*Gregory*), **Sarah Nina Hayon** (*Lady Montague*), **Kevin Herrera** (*Ensemble*), **Modesto Lacen** (*Prince Escalus/Capulet's Cousin*), **Florencia Lozano** (*Capulet*), **Irene Sofia Lucio** (*Mercutio*), **Keren Lugo** (*Sister Joan*), **Benjamin Luis McCracken** (*Paris's Page*), **Julio Monge** (*Friar Lawrence*), **Javier Muñoz** (*Paris*), **Lupita Nyong'o** (*Julieta*), and **David Zayas** (*Sampson*).

Director Saheem Ali continues his audio exploration of William Shakespeare's canon with a new production of **ROMEO Y JULIETA**, collaborating with playwright Ricardo Pérez González on an adaptation of noted scholar Alfredo Michel Modenessi's Spanish translation. Actor Lupita Nyong'o plays Julieta, with Juan Castano as her Romeo, in this bilingual Spanish and English production that will bring one of history's most famed lovers to your homes and phones in a stunning new audio play. This marks the second collaboration between The Public Theater and WNYC Studios on an audio theater production; the four-part radio play *Free Shakespeare on the Radio: Richard II* – also directed by Ali – launched earlier this year to critical acclaim and is currently available as a podcast series.

ROMEO Y JULIETA will feature sound design and supervision by **Bray Poor**; sound design by **Jessica Paz**; **Isaac Andrew Jones** will serve as lead engineer; **Izumi Rosas**, **Chris Morocco**, and **Beth Lake** will be audio engineers; and it will feature original music composition by **Michael Thurber**. WQXR's **Elliott Forrest** will serve as Creative Consultant to the project.

JOE'S PUB LIVE:

While Joe's Pub is temporarily closed to public access, join online for Joe's Pub Live! – a free series of live-streamed and archived performances from artists' HQ and their iconic stage in New York City. Facilitating social connectivity during this time of physical distancing, Joe's Pub remains dedicated to supporting performing artists at every stage of their careers through sharing concerts with our audiences each week. Chat with Joe's Pub, fellow audience members, and the artists themselves via the Joe's Pub YouTube channel during these premieres: **Nellie McKay** on December 1 at 8:00 p.m., **Mai Khoi** on December 8 at 8:00 p.m., **Roy Nathanson's 5pm Porch Concert Ensemble** on December 10 at 5:00 p.m., **Tariq Al-Sabir and Nona Hendryx** on December 15 at 8:00 p.m., and new bi-weekly live video

singles from **Loser's Lounge: Battle of the One Hit Wonders** at 8:00 p.m. on December 17, January 21, February 4, February 18, March 4, and March 18.

Joe's Pub TV also continues through December, with new episodes released monthly, from Latin Grammy winner [Mireya Ramos](#), Indian classical crossover artist [Roopa Mahadevan](#), Drama Desk Award winner [Ike Ofomadu](#), "High Maintenance" writer [Isaac Oliver](#), Bistro Award winner [Justin Sayre](#), and multi-instrumentalist [Celisse](#).

THE LIZ SWADOS PROJECT

Tuesday, November 24 at 8:00 p.m. ET on Joe's Pub YouTube Channel

The Liz Swados Project celebrates the release of the tribute album to the visionary composer, lyricist, performer, teacher, and trailblazer. The evening features performances from an epic family of artists including Sophia Anne Caruso, Heather Christian, Damon Daunno, Amber Gray, Stephanie Hsu, Grace McLean, Alicia Olatuja, Ali Stroker, and Taylor Mac, with a special appearance by Utkarsh Ambudkar.

PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS:

The Brooklyn Public Library in association with The Public Theater presents an exciting line-up of one-night-only evenings, blending incisive commentary by scholars and other thinkers with appearances by artists of all disciplines. All events will be streamed live via Zoom on The Public's YouTube and Facebook channels. Visit publictheater.org for more info and to RSVP.

What is the City but the People? Shakespeare, Art, and Citizenship

With Eisa Davis, Stephen Greenblatt, and Jill Lepore

Thursday, December 3 at 7:00 p.m. ET

In the wake of the U.S. elections, we sit down with Professor Stephen Greenblatt, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics* and *The Swerve*; historian and award-winning author Jill Lepore (*These Truths: A History of the United States*); and award-winning actor and playwright Eisa Davis for an in-depth look, with brief readings from Shakespeare's plays and poetry, at the views and versions of citizenship, social organization, and individual human dignity in Shakespeare's plays, as well as the role of art and humanities in a modern democracy.

Two Monsters of Nature: Lope de Vega and William Shakespeare

With Raúl Esparza and Philip Lorenz

Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m. ET

Two writers. Two languages. Two colonial superpowers, linked by an explosion of theater-making and vital new questions of the individual imagination. Come hear how Lope de Vega, the author of more than a thousand plays, and William Shakespeare used the dynamic and populist form of theater to explore and interrogate the corrupt, militaristic, and misogynist monarchies they called home. With readings in English and Spanish by a cast including Tony Award nominee Raúl Esparza and commentary by Professor of Comparative Language at Cornell Philip Lorenz.

BRAVE NEW SHAKESPEARE CHALLENGE

New challenges posted to The Public's Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram every other week on Fridays

Inspired by the courageous ways the world community is responding to this challenging time by creating performance, song, conversation, and connection, The Public Theater is inviting the world to use Shakespeare's words to connect with friends, family, and communities, all from their homes. Public Shakespeare Initiative welcomes guest curators **Danaya Esperanza** and **Alexandria Wailes** who, for the months of November and December, will focus on a different passage or scene from Shakespeare and invite everyone to join in and create.

PUBLIC FORUM: CIVIC SALON

Live on The Public's YouTube: Monday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m. ET

RSVP at publictheater.org

Civic Salons are back, and they've gone digital! Never before has it been more important to connect with the communities around us. Civic Salons are a community crossroads where artists and audiences can come together to nurture our minds and our bodies. Through songs, poetry, text, and speeches all driven by a common theme, Civic Salons feature artists, activists, and organizers who are using their voices to create change in their communities. Break bread with your neighbor, raise your voice in song, and leave inspired.

ABOUT BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY:

Brooklyn Public Library is one of the nation's largest library systems and among New York City's most democratic institutions. As a leader in developing modern 21st century libraries, we provide resources to support personal advancement, foster civic literacy, and strengthen the fabric of community among the more than 2.6 million individuals who call Brooklyn home. We provide nearly 65,000 free programs a year with writers, thinkers, artists, and educators—from around the corner and around the world. And we give patrons millions of opportunities to enjoy one of life's greatest satisfactions: the joy of a good book.

ABOUT WNYC STUDIOS:

WNYC Studios is the premier producer of on-demand and broadcast audio, and home to some of the industry's most critically acclaimed and popular podcasts, including *Radiolab*, *On The Media*, *Trump, Inc.*, *The New Yorker Radio Hour*, *Death, Sex & Money*, *The United States of Anxiety*, and *Dolly Parton's America*. WNYC Studios is leading the new golden age in audio with podcasts and national radio programs that inform, inspire, and delight millions of intellectually curious and highly engaged listeners across digital, mobile, and broadcast platforms. Programs include personal narratives, deep journalism, revealing interviews, and smart entertainment as varied and intimate as the human voice itself. For more information, visit wnycstudios.org.

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, 184 Obie Awards, 55 Drama Desk Awards, 58 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 53 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

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

Lead support for The Public's digital programming provided by **The Blavatnik Family Foundation, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Bank of America, Open Society Foundations, American Express, JetBlue Airways, and Bloomberg Philanthropies.**

CONNECT WITH US

[Facebook.com/PublicTheater](https://www.facebook.com/PublicTheater)

Twitter | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://twitter.com/PublicTheaterNY)

Instagram | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.instagram.com/PublicTheaterNY)

#