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**THE PUBLIC THEATER  
ANNOUNCES CASTING  
FOR FREE PUBLIC WORKS'  
MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF  
*HERCULES***

**Music by Alan Menken  
Lyrics by David Zippel  
Book by Kristoffer Diaz  
Choreography by Chase Brock  
Directed by Lear deBessonet**

**Seventh Season of Public Works to Feature 200 New Yorkers  
From All Five Boroughs on The Delacorte Stage  
with Jelani Alladin, Roger Bart, Jeff Hiller,  
James Monroe Iglehart, Ramona Keller,  
Tamika Lawrence, Krysta Rodriguez, and Rema Webb**

**Featuring Special Performance by Broadway Inspirational Voices  
August 31-September 8**

June 20, 2019 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced casting for the Public Works' musical adaptation of **HERCULES** with music by **Alan Menken**, lyrics by **David Zippel**, book by **Kristoffer Diaz**, and directed by **Lear deBessonet**, running for seven nights for free, August 31-September 8 at The Delacorte Theater. Based on the Disney film written by Ron Clements, John Musker, Donald McEnery, Bob Shaw, and Irene Mecchi and directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, **HERCULES** will feature over 200 New Yorkers from all five boroughs and features choreography by **Chase Brock**, as well as additional new songs by Menken and Zippel for this Public Works production in addition to six songs from the film's beloved Academy Award-nominated score.

The Public Theater's initiative that invites communities across New York to create ambitious works of participatory theater is closing out the summer in truly epic fashion. Public Works will present the glorious story of **HERCULES**, brought to vibrant life by professional actors and community groups from across the city. Journey with Hercules in this new stage adaptation that invites New Yorkers from all five boroughs to participate in a joyous musical that celebrates the heroes found in all of us. More information on how to access free tickets to **HERCULES** will be available in July at [PublicTheater.org](http://PublicTheater.org).

**HERCULES** will feature Equity actors **Jelani Alladin** (*Hercules*), **Roger Bart** (*Hades*), **Jeff Hiller** (*Panic*), **James Monroe Iglehart** (*Phil*), **Ramona Keller** (*Thalia*), **Tamika Lawrence** (*Calliope*), **Krysta Rodriguez**

(*Meg*), and **Rema Webb** (*Terpsichore*); along with a special featured performance by 2019 Tony Honor Award recipient **Broadway Inspirational Voices**, celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary this year.

The Public Works community partner organizations are **Brownsville Recreation Center** (Brooklyn), **Center for Family Life in Sunset Park** (Brooklyn), **DreamYard** (Bronx), **The Fortune Society** (Queens), and **Military Resilience Foundation** (all boroughs), along with alumni partners **Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education** (Bronx), **Children's Aid** (all boroughs), and **Domestic Workers United** (all boroughs).

“Many generations of our Public Works families have embraced Disney musicals as a shared American canon,” said **Public Works Founder and Hercules Director Lear deBessonet**. “*Hercules*’ roots in Greek mythology, infused with soulful gospel music, make it a natural extension of Public Works’ radical exploration of humanity through Shakespeare and the classics. We’re excited to see how this Public Works production will uncover the deeper meaning of what it means to be a hero and how true strength is derived, not from the greatness of one person, but the transformative power of community.”

**HERCULES** features scenic design by Dane Laffrey; costume design by Andrea Hood; lighting design by Tyler Micoeau; sound design by Kai Harada and Jessica Paz; wigs, hair, and makeup design by Cookie Jordan; puppet design by James Ortiz; music supervision and arrangements by Michael Kosarin; orchestrations by Danny Troob and Joseph Joubert; dance arrangements by Mark Hummel; and synthesizer programming by Randy Cohen. **HERCULES** is presented by special arrangement with Disney Theatrical Productions, under the direction of Thomas Schumacher.

**PUBLIC WORKS** is a national and international initiative of The Public Theater that seeks to engage the people of New York by making them creators and not just spectators. Led by Founder Lear deBessonet and Director of Public Works Laurie Woolery, Public Works deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members, creating theater that is not only *for* the people, but *by* and *of* the people as well. Working with community partners in all five boroughs, Public Works invites community members to take classes, attend performances, and join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater.

This year, Public Works welcomes seven new Public Works National Affiliates, including Long Wharf Theatre (New Haven, CT), Pittsburgh Public Theater (Pittsburgh, PA), Theatre Under The Stars (Houston, TX), Trinity Repertory Company (Providence, RI), Tulsa Performing Arts Center and Trust (Tulsa, OK), Virginia Stage Company (Norfolk, VA), and Williamstown Theatre Festival (Williamstown, MA). These National Affiliates will be joining the Founding National Partners—Dallas Theater Center (Dallas, TX), the National Theatre’s Public Acts programme (London and nationally, England), and Seattle Repertory Theatre (Seattle, WA). This network of theaters will be gathering to share practices and help build momentum around community-based theater nationwide. Collectively, they are seeking to put theater at the heart of every community, and community at the heart of every theater.

The three Founding Public Works National Partners are now all in production. This summer, all three Founding Partners will be presenting productions of *As You Like It*, adapted by Shaina Taub and Laurie Woolery, with music and lyrics by Shaina Taub. These three productions will appear in Dallas, at the Queen’s Theatre Hornchurch in London, and in Seattle in the months of August and September 2019.

**ALAN MENKEN** (*Music*). Menken’s legendary career includes composing scores for stage, film, and television. These include *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *The Little Mermaid*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *Newsies*; *Aladdin*; *Pocahontas*; *A Christmas Carol*; *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*; *Hercules*; *Weird Romance*; *King David*; *Home on the Range*; *Enchanted*; *Sister Act*; *Tangled*; *Galavant*; *Leap of Faith*; and *A Bronx Tale*. His honors include eight Academy Awards, 11 Grammys, seven Golden Globes, an honorary Emmy, a Tony Award, The Songwriters Hall of Fame’s Johnny Mercer Award, and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

**DAVID ZIPPEL** (*Lyrics*). Zippel’s lyrics have won him the Tony Award, two Academy Award nominations, two Grammy nominations, and three Golden Globe nominations. He is one of few contemporary lyricists to have achieved success on Broadway, in Hollywood, and in pop music. His musicals include *City of Angels*, *The Goodbye Girl*, *The Woman in White*, *Just So*, *Princesses*, *Going Hollywood*, and *Pamela’s*

*First Musical*. His films include Disney's *Hercules*, Disney's *Mulan*, *The Swan Princesses*, *Captain America*, and *The Wedding Planner*. His songs appear on over 25 million CDs sung by Stevie Wonder, Mel Tormé, Christina Aguilera, Barbara Cook, Michael Bolton, Ricky Martin, Cleo Laine, Nancy LaMott, Sarah Brightman, Barbra Streisand, and Liza Minnelli.

**KRISTOFFER DIAZ** (*Book*) is a playwright, screenwriter, and educator. His play *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama and has gone on to more than 30 productions nationwide. His other full-length titles include *Welcome to Arroyo's*, *Reggie Hoops*, and *The Unfortunates*. Awards include the Guggenheim, Jerome, Van Lier, NYFA, and Gail Merrifield Papp Fellowships; *New York Times* Outstanding Playwright Award; Lucille Lortel, Equity Jeff, and Obie Awards. As a screenwriter, he has developed original television pilots for HBO and FX, written for the first season of Netflix's "GLOW," and adapted the musical *Rent* for FOX. Diaz holds a BA from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, an MFA from NYU's Department of Dramatic Writing, and an MFA from Brooklyn College's Performing Arts Management program. He teaches playwriting at New York University.

**CHASE BROCK** (*Choreographer*). Brock's Public Theater credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *First Daughter Suite*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tempest*, and *Venice*. His Broadway credits include *Be More Chill*, *Picnic*, and *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*. Internationally, he choreographed Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (U.S., Germany, Japan). His Off-Broadway credits include *The Wildness*, *Gigantic*, *Tamar of the River* (Callaway finalist), and *The Blue Flower* (Lortel nomination). On television, his work has been seen on "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" and "Late Show with David Letterman." His video game credits include "Dance on Broadway" (Wii, PlayStation) and opera includes *Roméo et Juliette* (The Metropolitan Opera). His dance credits include 31 dances for The Chase Brock Experience, including *The Girl with the Alkaline Eyes*.

**LEAR DEBESSONET** (*Director*) is currently Resident Director at The Public Theater and Founder of Public Works. Her credits for The Public include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Public Works musical adaptations of *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Odyssey*, *Miss You Like Hell*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the Foundry Theater's *Good Person of Szechwan*. Her work has received multiple Drama Desk and Lortel nominations, the Doris Duke Impact Award, TCG's Peter Zeisler Award, a Lilly Award, and an Obie Award for Direction. She is also now Resident Director for Encores! at City Center.

## **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)

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