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**THE PUBLIC THEATER
BEGINS FREE PERFORMANCES
FOR PUBLIC WORKS'
MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF
HERCULES
SATURDAY, AUGUST 31**

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

**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
and Cameo Group Performances by 10 Hairy Legs
and Passaic High School Marching Band**

August 22, 2019 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will begin free performances for Public Works' musical adaptation of *HERCULES*, with music by **Alan Menken**, lyrics by **David Zippel**, book by **Kristoffer Diaz**, and directed by **Lear deBessonnet**, on Saturday, August 31. 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. A new stage adaptation of the Disney classic, *HERCULES* will run for seven nights for free, beginning August 31 through September 8, at The Delacorte Theater.

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.

HERCULES will feature Equity actors **Jelani Alladin** (*Hercules*), **Roger Bart** (*Hades*), **Jeff Hiller** (*Panic*), **James Monroe Iglehart** (*Philoctetes*), **Ramona Keller** (*Thalia*), **Tamika Lawrence** (*Calliope*), **Krysta Rodriguez** (*Megara*), and **Rema Webb** (*Terpsichore*); along with a special featured performance by 2019 Tony Honor Award recipient **Broadway Inspirational Voices**, celebrating their 25th Silver Anniversary this year, and cameo group performances by **10 Hairy Legs** and **Passaic High School Marching Band**.

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).

Tickets to **HERCULES** are free, continuing The Public Theater's long-standing tradition of free programming and community engagement. Tickets will be distributed, two per person, by an advance digital lottery hosted by TodayTix through the mobile app and website. Entries will be accepted through General, Senior Accessibility, and ADA Accessibility lotteries. There will be an Audio Described performance on Saturday, August 31 and an ASL performance on Saturday, September 7. Accessible tickets for these performances are available through their respective TodayTix lotteries. For more information, please visit **PublicTheater.org**.

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

PUBLIC WORKS, a major initiative of the Public Theater, aims to restore and build community by connecting people through theater—both performing it and experiencing it—reminding us that we're all in this together. Working with partner organizations 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. Led by Founder Lear deBessonet and Public Works Director 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. Public Works exemplifies The Public's long-standing commitment to community engagement that is at the core of the theater's mission. It is animated by the idea that theater is a place of possibility, where the boundaries that separate us from each other in the rest of life can fall away. It seeks to create a space where we can not only reflect on the world as is, but where we can actually propose new possibilities for what our society might be.

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 and Simon Stephens and Nick Payne's *Sea Wall/A Life* featuring Jake Gyllenhaal and Tom Sturridge. 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

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