A note from Oskar Eustis, Patrick Willingham & Arielle Tepper

DEAR FRIENDS

We have always thought of The Public Theater as a big tent. A place where we make space for one of humanity’s most ingrained instincts: gathering together to share a story. The impulse to connect through the shared experience of storytelling is as human as our need to breathe, and it means that stages are our most apt spaces for welcoming people into the story of the world. Joe Papp knew this when he started The Public Theater—and every experiment he undertook, from Free Shakespeare in the Park to inaugurating our downtown home with Hair, renews the story of American theater. Every facet of The Public was created to knock down a wall, to open up a door, to broaden the idea of whose story mattered and who was invited to hear it. It is a legacy we still strive to champion and a movement we continue to build upon because of what it means.

It means that everyone belongs. That Don Sullivan’s bloody, chest-thumping rendition of Shakespeare’s Coriolanus belongs next to first-time playwright Patricia Iren Lloyd’s haunting ghost play among others in O’NEIL’S GONG. That Tim Blake Nelson’s DRACULAS reflecting on one of humanity’s most celebrated thinkers only comes alive when it lives alongside June Anderson’s MOTHER OF THE MIND imagining the humble poet that drove the parent of a saint.

It means that everyone’s stories matter. That the iconic poetry of Bob Dylan in GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY envisions America as potently as Jordan E. Cooper’s mesmerizing, thrilling portrait of blackness in ANTLERS OF THE MIND. That the pain and grief ofletters in Simon Stephens and Nick Payne’s SEA WALL/LA LUTE cannot be fully understood without also understanding the critically suffering father at the center of Luis Alfaro’s INUANDA.

It means that we are never, ever done. That the triumph of Muny Winter Chair and Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks’ WHITE NOISE, only rings louder alongside the beauty of emerging voice Hansol Jung’s WILD DOG DREAMS. That when Mobile Unit National uses Lynn Notario’s SWEAT to ask questions with folks throughout the rural Midwest, the best answers come from almost a dozen national and international Public Works programs, echoing together in a song of unity, connection, and community-led artistry. And this fall, when Kenny Leon’s glorious MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING featuring the first all-black cast in The Delacorte becomes the first Free Shakespeare in the Park production to air on public television in more than four decades, we will know even then that the promise of our mission is not complete.

Making space, for artists, for stories, for the people of our city, is our perpetual pursuit. We believe that everyone’s voice belongs, that everyone’s cultural life deserves nourishment—that is why The Public Theater’s mission must never have an end. It must always get bigger. We must always seek new voices to celebrate, new stories to share, new communities to welcome. Our tent must always make more room for everyone, forever, forever.

With gratitude.

Oskar Eustis
Artistic Director

Patrick Willingham
Executive Director

Arielle Tepper
Board Chair

Photo by Joan Marcus
The Public was founded on the belief that culture belongs to everyone, and our founder Joe Papp envisioned a theater that is fundamentally democratic—one that everyone has access to, where everyone belongs, where differences are not only accepted but also celebrated, and where a diversity of experiences and worldviews can be explored. Honoring and building our vision requires a never-ending and ever-expanding dedication to making space for audiences: people who have seen dozens of productions and first-time visitors; students just beginning to explore the arts and teachers who’ve taught theater throughout their careers; and people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities from New York City’s five boroughs and beyond.
18/19 SEASON:
274,943
joined us at Actor’s Place

40,341
came to The Public for the first time

23,391
saw more than one production

121,881
free & low cost tickets distributed

2,223
Free First Preview tickets distributed

114,118
visited The Delacorte for Free Shakespeare in the Park

6,199
Free Shakespeare in the Park tickets distributed at community centers, libraries, and service organizations across NYC’s five boroughs

We welcomed
84
student groups from all five NYC boroughs, across the country, and across the globe

We welcomed
16
non-profit organizations

We distributed
3,910
free or low cost tickets to ensure access for audience members with disabilities

3
ASL interpreted (American Sign Language) performances downtown at Actor’s Place

More than
40
performances featuring CatsPro, a mobile app providing accessibility and translation services for Free Shakespeare in the Park

For
35
years, Free Shakespeare in the Park has offered American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted performances

CULTURE BELONGS TO EVERYONE
FOSTERING COMMUNITY

A theater that is of, by, and for all people isn’t merely a space for productions—it’s a living, breathing part of the community.

It convenes conversations, inspires action, explores pressing and complex issues, acts as a creative home for artists and audiences alike, and partners with communities to explore the ways in which theater can help build relationships and connections.
Mobile Unit celebrated eight years of presenting free Shakespeare to correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and community centers across New York City’s five boroughs.

“MY HEART WAS BLOWN WIDE OPEN!”

“YOU BROUGHT LIGHT TO A DARK PLACE”

Powered by the vision of founder Joe Papp, Mobile Unit’s mission is to democratize access to great theater. Mobile Unit is a placed-based theater that iteratively develops new works, builds community, and brings art to audiences in places and spaces that have long lacked this vital cultural resource. Mobile Unit believes in the power of art to inspire progress through dialogue, collaboration, and innovation.

Since its launch, Mobile Unit has produced productions in 15 different neighborhoods across New York City, including The Tempest, Much Ado About Nothing, and Hamlet. Mobile Unit is committed to removing the barriers that currently prevent people from seeing and experiencing theater. Mobile Unit is a nonprofit organization that is changing the world one experience at a time.

Since Mobile Unit’s launch, 150 productions have toured New York City, 10,000 people have attended Mobile Unit performances in their neighborhoods, and 100 community groups have experienced Mobile Unit productions downtown at Astor Place.

This year, Mobile Unit presented A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM and THE TEMPEST across NYC, and went national when it took Lynn Nottage’s Pulitzer Prize-winning SWEAT to 15 small towns and cities throughout the Midwest for a month-long tour.

“YOU BROUGHT LIGHT TO A DARK PLACE”
Public Forum catalyzes conversations that connect our art to the most pressing questions of the world at large.

Each season, Forum programming fortifies The Public Theater as a hub of civic engagement.

In June, in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots and WorldPride in New York City, Public Forum welcomed more than 1,000 people to the Delacorte Theater for QUEFT & NOW, a celebration of music, poetry, prose, and theater. The evening centered and amplified the voices of LGBTQ+ artists, activists, and organizers, and highlighted the Public Theater's iconic productions, including THE NORMAL HEART and FEN HOME, that explore queer identity and experiences and the continuing fight for LGBTQ+ equality.
Public Shakespeare Initiative, now in its third season at The Public, builds community through efforts centered around the belief that:

SHAKESPEARE IS FOR EVERYONE.

By convening conversations with thinkers and performers, supporting artists’ development through Shakespeare-focused artistic residencies, and collaborating with students and teachers to employ Shakespeare’s work as dynamic educational tools in and out of the classroom, the Public Shakespeare Initiative celebrates and amplifies the enduring power of Shakespeare’s plays and poetry.

In May, more than 40 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students from the Hunts Point Children’s Shakespeare Ensemble, an afterschool program that is a collaboration between the Initiative and community partner Hunts Point Alliance for Children, presented a full production of *THE TEMPEST* at The Public’s Newman Theater, after a year of exploring the original text of the play. This community-driven education program helps students deepen their creative expression, build leadership skills, learn about teamwork, and develop a lasting connection to the power of language and theatre.
Public Works aims to restore and build community by connecting people through theater—both performing it and experiencing it—reminding us that public works and organized communities in all the boroughs. Public Works invites makers to make art that is community centered, equitable, and grounded in the creative and cultural histories of our city. Our projects aim to showcase the work of artists and communities in all the boroughs and to provide meaningful opportunities for the people who are affected by the issues we present. We seek to address the problems that affect our community by bringing together diverse voices and perspectives through art, culture, and community.
A HOME FOR ARTISTS

The Public Theater believes in radical inclusivity and reflects—on stage and off—the city, the nation, the world... and all of the issues, struggles, and possibilities they encompass. To make space for artists where they can connect, explore, and further develop their ideas. The Public commits to being a supportive and welcoming artistic home where artists from all backgrounds and identities and at every stage of their careers can tell their stories, introspection and exploration of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the questioning of the status quo and the unimaginable, and first glimpses of different perspectives and worldviews are just a few of the experiences artists navigate within their work at The Public Theater.
Let’s take a look back at the past year of sharing timely stories from authentic voices in The Public’s 18/19 season.

WE’RE ALIVE FOR A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME
JUN 12 A vivid musical memoir of hope, family, and transcendence written and performed by David Cali, with music co-written with Matthew Dorn Marsh and directed by Robert Falls, in a co-production with the Goodman Theatre.

FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
MAY 31 A re-imagining of the beloved comedy of romantic entanglements and miscommunication featuring Danielle Brooks and Grantham Coleman, and directed by Tony Award winner Kenny Leon that went on to be recorded by PBS “Great Performances.”

MOJADA
JUL 2 A drama by MacArthur Genius Award-winning playwright Luis Alfaro and directed by Chay Yew that follows a young Mexican mother who gives up everything to bring her son to America and combine stories from the ancient Greek story of Medea with one of the most pressing issues of our time, immigration.

FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
CORIOLANUS
JUL 10 Shakespeare’s bitterest drama about a general voted into power by a populace hungry for change, and the5 surrounding that follows, returned to The Delacorte for the first time since 1970, directed by Daniel Sullivan.

CHORUS OF THE SHIPS
MAY 24

ASK OURSELVES a series of soul searching questions:

Each year, as we put together a new season

What conflicts are most alive in our world, and what new truths can we glean? Whom do we reserve empathy for, and who do we learn from? And whom can we turn to for stories that might bring us closer to our humanity?
The Public Theater is a non-profit and a civic institution that engages, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today.

The Public is Theater of, by & for all people.
SEASON 19

QUEER & NOW
JUNE 17, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Jasmine Jones

FEATURES: Teniye Adenuga, Kate Burton, Los Diablos, Joni L. Cooper, Ryan J. Hodell, Murray Hill, Javi Jones, the James-Johnson Gospel Choir, the LatinA & Gay/Bi/Trans Color Guard, Erin Kenny, Daniel Moore, Diana Oh, Poppenheim, Todd Reagan, Conrad Rivas, Nathaniel Swanson, Amoeba Steh, Chace Strangio, Jace Hilton Woodburn, and more.

PUBLIC STUDIO

THE LOOPHOLE
FEBRUARY 26 – MAY 22, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Rosslynn Britt
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY: Jay Adams

FEATURING: Ayana Tang, Zimba Britt, Cherie J. Davis, Amary Rose, Daniel Jovins, Damien Ramban, and Jason Vassay

SHAKESPEARE AS A PLAYWRIGHT
MARCH 3, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Lyle Parks and Lior Dotkevitz

WHAT'S HECUBA TO HIM? WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY
APRIL 22, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Morgan Dean

RARE VISIONS
MARCH 1, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Jenny Koons, Jenny Mann, Steph Schmit, and cast members from the Middle's production of A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

WHAT'S COMING TO THE DELACORTE
MAY 17, 2023
DIRECTED BY: James Shapiro and cast members Graham Coleman, Jerome Harris, and Morgan Dean

AS YOU LIKE IT
MAY 18, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Leslie Scott Taylor and Rhys McCandless

PUBLIC AND SHAKESPEARE
JULY 13, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Heidi Griffiths, Zainab Jah, Erica L. Smith, Zara Williams, and Stephanie Yarros

SUCH SWEET THUNDER
DECEMBER 14, 2022
DIRECTED BY: Jody Adams

FEATURING: Greg Thomas and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Youth Orchestra

FALSTAFF
FEBRUARY 8, 2023
 WITH Professor Olydia Callaught, Jay O. Sanders, and singers from the Met Opera SHAKE- SPEARE AS A PLAYWRIGHT
MARCH 3, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Lyle Parks and Lior Dotkevitz

WHAT'S HECUBA TO HIM? WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY
APRIL 22, 2023
DIRECTED BY: Morgan Dean

INCOMING!
CABIN
Sean Damaso (USA)

ALIVE! (FOR NOW)
Lavina Lawrence (USA)

JOE'S PUB IN CONCERT
MEOW MEOW
[More Home (Australia)]

HYPERBOLIC!
[The Illustrous Blacks (USA)]

ASTROV'S LOUNGE
CREATED BY: Melissa Krumen and Brian Mentas (USA)

MEIVE
[The Cheeky Project (USA)]

BITCH! DYKE! FASHAG! WHORE!
The Penny Arcade Sex and Feminism Shaw [Penny Arcade (USA)]
Since The Public Theater's founding, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION have been a cornerstone of our mission.

Under the leadership of founder Joe Papp and through the work of subsequent leaders, The Public has been widely recognized for its commitment to respectful and welcoming spaces in which differences are celebrated, both on and off the stage.

To continue building upon this rich history of ambitious and successful work that reflects the values and mission of the institution and the city it serves, The Public has developed a new Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Plan, created in collaboration with board members, staff, and outside experts, with the overarching goal of becoming an institution that reflects the demographics of New York City in all areas: staff, artists, and audiences.

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"Theater is a social force."

- Joe Papp

Not just an entertainment.