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**THE PUBLIC THEATER
BEGINS PERFORMANCES OF
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK'S
ROMEO & JULIET
ON FRIDAY, MAY 22**

By William Shakespeare
Spanish Translations by Alfredo Michel Modenessi
Choreography by Mayte Natalio
Directed by Saheem Ali

Performances Run Through Sunday, June 28;
Press Opening on Thursday, June 11

Free Tickets Available to All at The Delacorte Theater and The Public Theater,
Through Borough Distributions in Partnership with Presenting Partner Citizens,
and Via Digital Lottery on TodayTix

May 14, 2026 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) kicks off this summer's **Free Shakespeare in the Park** season with **ROMEO & JULIET**, beginning performances at the newly revitalized Delacorte Theater in Central Park on Friday, May 22. Directed by Associate Artistic Director and Resident Director **Saheem Ali**, this will mark the first time in nearly 20 years the story of star-crossed lovers will captivate Free Shakespeare in the Park audiences. The production will run through Sunday, June 28 with an official press opening on Thursday, June 11. **Jerome L. Greene Foundation**, lead sponsor, and **Citizens**, presenting partner, return as supporters of **Free Shakespeare in the Park**.

Never was there a story of more woe, or more romance, than the Bard's timeless tale of two young lovers from warring families. As the Montagues and Capulets are torn apart by ideology and simmering violence spills into the streets of the border town of Verona, Romeo and Juliet dare to defy a world determined to keep them apart. In this bold new staging, the play unfolds in English, but Romeo and Juliet speak to one another in Spanish, a language reserved only for their shared world.

"While *Romeo & Juliet* endures as one of the greatest love stories ever told, it is equally a cautionary tale about the devastating consequences of division within a society. We are living through an extraordinary and painful moment, witnessing the loss of our fellow citizens as we wage war over the very question of who belongs in America," said director **Saheem Ali**. "Shakespeare has something urgent and heartbreaking to say about how the young and innocent become collateral in wars they did not choose. I am thrilled to bring this play back to The Delacorte for only the third time in our 64-year history, in a production that puts Spanish language at the heart of the lovers' story."

The complete cast of **ROMEO & JULIET** includes **Ra'Mya Latiah Aikens** (*Juliet*), **Sergio Mauritz Ang** (*Friar John/Ensemble*), **Daniel Bravo Hernández** (*Romeo*), **Andrés Nicolás Chaves** (*Ensemble*), **Rachel Crowl** (*Apothecary/Ensemble*), **Reece dos Santos** (*Balthasar*), **Caleb Joshua Eberhardt** (*Mercutio*), **Jacquernst F. Filias** (*Ensemble*), **Glenn Fleshler** (*Lord Capulet*), **Francis Jue** (*Friar Laurence*), **Ariyan Kassam** (*Tybalt*), **LaChanze** (*Lady Capulet*), **Martin K. Lewis** (*Paris*), **Zack Lopez Roa** (*Benvolio*), **Gilda Mercado** (*Ensemble*), **Tina Muñoz Pandya** (*Ensemble*), **Deirdre O'Connell** (*Nurse*), **Jason Manuel Olazábal** (*Lord Montague*), **Jessica Pimentel** (*Escalus*), **Fedra Ramírez Olivares** (*Ensemble*), **Piper Runge** (*Ensemble*), **Miles Segura** (*Ensemble*), **Mariand Torres** (*Lady Montague*), and **Marlon Xavier** (*Ensemble*).

ROMEO & JULIET features scenic design by **Maruti Evans**, costume design by **Oana Botez**, lighting design by **Christopher Akerlind**, sound design and sound system by **Mike Tracey**, prop management by **Jessica Zivny**, original music by **Michael Thurber**, hair, wig, and makeup design by **Krystal Balleza**, fight direction by **Thomas Schall**, intimacy direction by **Kelsey Rainwater**, and Spanish dialect and text coaching by **David Jarzen**. **Kamra Jacobs** is the production stage manager and **Benjamin E. C. Pfister** and **Giselle Andrea Raphaela** are the stage managers.

Shakespeare's classic story of star-crossed lovers has been presented at The Delacorte Theater only twice before. In 1968, Public Theater founder Joseph Papp directed Martin Sheen as Romeo and Susan McArthur as Juliet. Not staged again at The Delacorte for almost 40 years, the 2007 production was directed by Michael Greif and starred Oscar Isaac as Romeo and Lauren Ambrose as Juliet.

Throughout June, **Mobile Unit** will tour the five boroughs with a free production of Shakespeare's classic romantic comedy **AS YOU LIKE IT**, directed by The Public's Directing Fellow **Emma Rosa Went**. Free Shakespeare in the Park will continue with **THE WINTER'S TALE**, directed by Tony Award winner **Daniel Sullivan**, beginning Saturday, July 25. The Public's annual **Public Works** production will also return to The Delacorte Theater for a limited engagement of the North American premiere of **PUBLIC RECORD**, the creation of a live album onstage, based on a concept by **Dan Canham** and **Emily Lim**. Written by **Lisa Sanaye Dring**, with music supervision by **Michael Thurber**, direction by **Emily Lim**, and co-direction and choreography by **Dan Canham**, this electrifying new production stands as an act of collective hope, joy, and resistance. The Delacorte season concludes with a free three-day presentation of **SONGS FROM BARK OF MILLIONS** by **Taylor Mac** and **Matt Ray**.

The Public will celebrate the launch of **SHAKESPEARE FOR THE CITY** with a **Kickoff Event**, a free afternoon of family-friendly festivities at the revitalized Delacorte Theater on **Saturday, May 30**, from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nothing says "summer in the city" like the reopening of The Delacorte in Central Park because it is New Yorkers who realize the potential of this civic space, especially as they join in community around these shared cultural experiences. Visitors can enjoy concessions and a pop-up from Wonder, meet-and-greets with Romeo the Raccoon, and giveaways. Partners activating on-site include Citizens, JetBlue, Venchi, Nordstrom, Montblanc, New York Road Runners, Starbright Floral Design, and TodayTix.

Summer Fridays at The Delacorte invites New Yorkers to experience their revitalized theater. On select Fridays (June 5 & 19; August 7, 14 & 21), The Public will host Delacorte Open Houses from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., featuring self-guided tours, onstage photo opportunities, family programming, and a pet-friendly atmosphere. Evenings continue with picnics from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., featuring music, giveaways, and special guests.

ABOUT FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Since its inception, over six million people have enjoyed more than 160 free productions of Shakespeare and other classical works and musicals at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park. Conceived by founder Joseph Papp to make great theater accessible to all, Free Shakespeare in the Park continues to be the bedrock of The Public's vision of artistic excellence and free access to culture.

The Public launched “Forever Public,” an ambitious, multi-year capital campaign with a goal of raising over \$175 million to secure the transformative mission of free theater for everyone. In addition to establishing the Fund for Free Theater endowment, Forever Public provided capital support to make the Delacorte revitalization possible.

Built in 1962, the theater had not undergone meaningful capital upgrades since 1999. The Public, in partnership with the Central Park Conservancy, NYC Parks, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Ennead Architects, created a design and construction plan that minimized impact on Central Park and foregrounded resilience and sustainability to ensure the longevity of Free Shakespeare in the Park for many years to come.

Following groundbreaking in October 2023, reconstruction of interior spaces and the grandstand layout began with subsequent installation of redesigned lighting towers and the new wood façade made from salvaged NYC water towers. Concurrently, the Central Park Conservancy renovated the Delacorte Restroom. The revitalized Delacorte reopened in summer 2025 and offers a state-of-the-art experience for audiences, artists, and staff alike with improved access for people living with disabilities.

ABOUT JEROME L. GREENE FOUNDATION

The Jerome L. Greene Foundation supports select programs that make a significant impact on the lives of all New Yorkers in the areas of the arts, education, medicine, and social justice. Its 40-year history is grounded in the vision of its founder, Jerry Greene, to give back to the city he loved. Today, the Foundation honors this commitment by continuing to fund quality programs and by identifying new ways to increase access to the arts and to education, create opportunities for ground-breaking medical research, and help ensure social justice for all. www.jlgreene.org

ABOUT CITIZENS FINANCIAL GROUP, INC.

Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is one of the nation’s oldest and largest financial institutions, with \$227.9 billion in assets as of March 31, 2026. Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island, Citizens offers a broad range of retail, private banking, wealth management and commercial banking products and services to individuals, small businesses, middle-market companies, large corporations and institutions. Citizens helps its customers reach their potential by listening to them and by understanding their needs in order to offer tailored advice, ideas and solutions. In Consumer Banking, Citizens provides an integrated experience that includes mobile and online banking, a full-service customer contact center and the convenience of approximately 3,000 ATMs and approximately 1,000 branches in 14 states and the District of Columbia. Consumer Banking products and services include a full range of banking, lending, savings, wealth management and small business offerings. Consumer Banking includes Citizens Private Bank and Private Wealth, which integrate banking services and wealth management solutions to serve high- and ultra-high-net-worth individuals and families, as well as investors, entrepreneurs and businesses. In Commercial Banking, Citizens offers a broad complement of financial products and solutions, including lending and leasing, deposit and treasury management services, foreign exchange, interest rate and commodity risk management solutions, as well as loan syndication, corporate finance, merger and acquisition, and debt and equity capital markets capabilities. More information is available at www.citizensbank.com or visit us on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Facebook](#).

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 Works, 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 64 Tony Awards, 197 Obie Awards, 63 Drama Desk Awards, 66 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 72 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 Public also gives our respect to the people of Seneca Village, a community of Black property owners who were removed from their land and whose village was destroyed in the creation of Central Park. We recognize the sacrifice that these ancestors made and honor Seneca Village's legacy.

Citizens is the presenting partner of **FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK**.

Jerome L. Greene Foundation is the lead sponsor of **FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK**.

FREE TICKET INFORMATION

ROMEO & JULIET begins performances at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park on Friday, May 22 and will run through Sunday, June 28, with an official press opening on Thursday, June 11.

Tickets to The Public Theater's Free Shakespeare in the Park are distributed in a number of ways. Free tickets may be acquired on the day of the performance in person at The Delacorte Theater, in person at a borough distribution site including 14 dates at Citizens branches (complete schedule can be found at publictheater.org), 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. All tickets are subject to availability.

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 performance schedule is Tuesday through Sunday at 8:00 p.m. (*The performance on Tuesday, June 8 will be at 8:30 p.m. There will be no performance on Wednesday, June 10.*)

The **Audio Described** performance will be on Friday, June 12. The **Sensory Adapted** performance will be on Sunday, June 14. The **English Open Captioned** performance will be on Thursday, June 18. The **Spanish Open Captioned** performance will be on Friday, June 19. The **American Sign Language Interpreted** performances will be on Saturday, June 20 and Tuesday, June 23.

The full performance calendar and complete distribution details can be found at publictheater.org.

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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