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THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES COMPLETE CASTING FOR FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK'S *ROMEO & JULIET*

By William Shakespeare

Spanish Translations by Alfredo Michel Modenessi

Choreography by Mayte Natalio

Directed by Saheem Ali

Cast Includes Ra'Mya Latiah Aikens, Sergio Mauritz Ang, Daniel Bravo Hernández, Andrés Nicolás Chaves, Rachel Crowl, Reece dos Santos, Caleb Joshua Eberhardt, Jacquernst F. Filias, Glenn Fleshler, Francis Jue, Ariyan Kassam, LaChanze, Martin K. Lewis, Zack Lopez Roa, Gilda Mercado, Tina Muñoz Pandya, Deirdre O'Connell, Jason Manuel Olazábal, Jessica Pimentel, Fedra Ramírez Olivares, Piper Runge, Miles Segura, Mariand Torres, and Marlon Xavier

April 13, 2026 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today full casting for the Free Shakespeare in the Park production of **ROMEO & JULIET** at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park. 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. Beginning performances on Friday, May 22, 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** (*Nurse*), **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 composition by **Michael Thurber**, hair, wig, and makeup design by **Krystal Balleza**, puppet design by **Daniel Valle**, 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.

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.

BIOS

SAHEEM ALI (*Director*) is a proud immigrant from Kenya, currently serving as the Associate Artistic Director/ Resident Director of New York's Public Theater. He is a two-time Tony Award nominee, for *Buena Vista Social Club* and *Fat Ham*, the latter of which also earned the Joe A. Callaway Award and Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel nominations. He is the recipient of an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Directing. His productions of *Twelfth Night* and *Merry Wives* (Free Shakespeare in the Park) were recorded for PBS' "Great Performances," and *Merry Wives* as the subject of the HBO documentary *Reopening Night*. Productions include *Goddess* (The Public Theater, Berkeley Rep), *Good Bones* (The Public Theater), *Nollywood Dreams* (MCC), *Fires in the Mirror* (Signature Theatre), *The Rolling Stone* (Lincoln Center

Theater), *Passage* (Soho Rep), and *Sugar in Our Wounds* (MTC). He is a Sir John Gielgud SDCF Fellow and a Shubert Fellow.

RA'MYA LATIAH AIKENS she/her (*Juliet*) graduated from NYU's Acting MFA program in 2025. Recent credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Classical Theatre of Harlem) and *One Night Only* (Universal Pictures). Featured in last year's Disney Discovers Talent Showcase, Aikens is a trained singer and originally from Georgia. For her family, friends, and cohort. For anyone grieving. For mama, forever.

SERGIO MAURITZ ANG he/they (*Friar John/Ensemble*). The Public: debut! Select theater: *Pride and Prejudice* (Hartford Stage), *Far Country* (Yale Rep), Film: *Relay* (Blackbear Films). TV: "Crutch" (Paramount+), "Law and Order: SVU" (NBC), "The Other Two" (HBO Max). Love to CLA, BWA, Hubs, 妈妈, Tatay. For Dreamers. MFA: UNC Chapel Hill/Playmakers Rep. BFA: Brooklyn College. LaGuardia Arts High School. sergiomauritzang.com.

DANIEL BRAVO HERNÁNDEZ he/him (*Romeo*) is grateful to be back with The Public! The Public: *Much Ado About Nothing* (Mobile Unit). Broadway: *Romeo + Juliet* (2024). Off-Broadway: world premiere of *Spread* (INTAR). He'd like to thank The Stars of Tomorrow Project, Brian D. Hills, Clara Bello, Lucia Rogerson, Kate Murray, HCKR, and his family. Sobre todo gracias a Dios.

ANDRÉS NICOLÁS CHAVES (*Ensemble*). Colombian-born artist driven by a deep belief in the dignity and boundless value of those often forgotten. His work seeks to hold space for beauty and contradiction, all the while reckoning with the fractured realities of this time. NY: NYTW, INTAR, LPC. Regional: Guthrie, ATL, The Globe. Film: *La Piel de Ayer*, *Tumba del Mar*. NYU Graduate Acting.

RACHEL CROWL she/her (*Apothecary/Ensemble*). Public Theater debut. Off-Broadway: *Prince F****t* (Obie), *Between Two Knees* (Obie). Regional: *Between Two Knees*, *Henry V*, *As You Like It*, *The Swindlers*. Film: *And Then There Was Eve*. TV: "The Lowdown." Videogames: *Life Is Strange: Double Exposure*. She lives in Wisconsin mostly with her wife and cats.

REECE DOS SANTOS he/him (*Balthasar*). Off-Broadway: *The Irrepressible Magic of the Tropics* (INTAR Theatre). Selected Regional: *Pride & Prejudice* (Cleveland Play House), *All My Sons* (Hartford Stage), *A Welcome Guest* (Contemporary American Theater Festival). Feature Film: *The Man I Love* (dir. Ira Sachs), *Triumph of the Will*. TV: "New Amsterdam," "The Equalizer," "American Rust." MFA: NYU Graduate Acting. IG: @reece_dossantos

CALEB JOSHUA EBERHARDT he/him (*Mercutio*). Public Theater debut. Broadway: *An Enemy of the People* (Drama League nomination), *Choir Boy*. Off-Broadway: *You Got Older*, *Galas*, *Eurydice*, *The Comeuppance* (Obie Special Citation, Drama League nomination), *On Sugarland*, *Is God Is*. Select TV/Film: "Demascus" (Tubi), "Betty" (HBO), *A House of Dynamite* (Netflix). Training: SUNY Purchase, B.F.A. @rosehardt

JACQUERNEST F. FILIAS he/him (*Ensemble*) is a Haitian actor. Upon completing his BFA at SUNY Purchase he made his Off-Off-Broadway debut at the Chain Theatre with his performance of *Hang It Up*. He's thankful to Casting and to Saheem Ali. He also thanks his loved ones and Brian D. Hills, without them none of this would be possible. Ayiti Cherie!

GLENN FLESHLER (*Lord Capulet*). Public Theater: *Stuff Happens*, *Mother Courage*, *Measure For Measure*, *King Lear*, *Merchant of Venice* (Broadway transfer). Other Broadway: *Good Night, and Good Luck*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Arcadia*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Spring Awakening*. Film: *Joker*, *Suburbicon*, *A Most Violent Year*, *Werewolves Within*. TV: "Billions," "Barry," "For Life," "True Detective," "Boardwalk Empire."

FRANCIS JUE (*Friar Laurence*) received Tony, Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, and Obie Awards for *Yellow Face*. Other recent theatre: *Tartuffe*, *Cambodian Rock Band* (Lucille Lortel Award), *Twilight: Los*

Angeles 1992, Good Enemy, Soft Power (Outer Critics Circle Award), *Wild Goose Dreams* (Obie Award). Film/TV: *Good Sex, Our Son, White Noise, Joyful Noise*, "Madam Secretary," "New Amsterdam," "Law & Order: SVU."

ARIYAN KASSAM (*Tybalt*). London-born Muslim actor with roots in East Africa and South Africa. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama. Kassam is grateful to be returning to The Delacorte for a second consecutive year. Previous credits include Luca Guadagnino's *After the Hunt*. Kassam is deeply grateful for every opportunity he receives to bring his own authenticity to each role.

LACHANZE (*Lady Capulet*) is excited to be making her Delacorte debut as Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet!* For more information on her performance and directing credits, please visit mslachanze.com. For more information on her producing credits, please visit lachanzeproductions.com. Enjoy the show!

MARTIN K. LEWIS he/him (*Paris*). is thrilled to make his Public Theater debut! Off-Broadway: New York Theatre Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Red Bull Theater. Regional credits include Chautauqua Theater Company, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Miami New Drama, and Elm Shakespeare Company. Film: *Meet Cute in Manhattan*. Training: MFA from NYU. To my friends and family: I love y'all so much!

ZACK LOPEZ ROA he/him (*Benvolio*). Off-Broadway: *Titus Andronicus*. Regional: *The Importance of Being Earnest, As You Like It, The Story of My Life*. TV: "The Equalizer" (Tustin Green). Training: Columbia University/MFA Acting. A massive thanks to my Team, to my brother Jack, and to my husband (& reader!) Taylor - GO BILLS!

GILDA MERCADO she/her (*Ensemble*) is a bilingual Mexican actress based in NYC. Her work has taken her to NYC, Glasgow, and London, where she performed at Shakespeare's Globe through her training at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. A graduate of RCS and Stella Adler Studio, her work spans theater and film, including *Center of the Echo* (New York Latino Film Festival). @gildamarianamer

TINA MUÑOZ PANDYA she/her (*Ensemble*) is an actor/musician based in Chicago, where credits include: *Dhaba on Devon Ave* (Writers Theatre); *London Road* (Shattered Globe); *The Mousetrap* (Court Theatre). Regional/Touring: *Matchbox Magic Flute* (Goodman Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre DC, Berkeley Rep); *As You Like It* (Door Shakespeare); *The Pirates of Penzance* (The Hypocrites-Skirball Center, Pasadena Playhouse, Olney Theatre). Represented by Gray Talent Group.

DEIRDRE O'CONNELL (*Nurse*) has worked at The Public Theater, Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, Page 73, Playwrights Horizons, Labyrinth, New York Theatre Workshop, Rattlestick, Soho Rep, and the Vineyard. TV includes "The Penguin" (Emmy nomination). Film includes *Eddington*. She has received two Obies, an Outer Critics Circle Award, New York Drama Critics Circle Citation, Lilly Award, Lucille Lortel Award, and Tony Award.

JASON MANUEL OLAZÁBAL he/him (*Lord Montague*). The Public: *Guinea Pig Solo, Massacre: Sing to your Children*. Broadway: *Julius Caesar, Anna in the Tropics*. Select Film/TV: *Skincare, I Don't Feel at Home in This World Anymore* (Sundance Grand Jury Award winner), *Inside Man, Bad Boys II*, "Dexter" (SAG Award nomination), "Fear the Walking Dead" (AMC). MFA: UMKC. LAByrinth Theater Company member.

JESSICA PIMENTEL (*Escalus*). Brooklyn-born actor/musician and three-time Screen Actors Guild Award winner, featured in numerous film and television productions, is best known for playing Maria Ruiz on "Orange Is The New Black" (Netflix). Notable theater credits: *Don't Eat the Mangos, Jasper, Surfer Girl, The Clean House, Anna in the Tropics*. Graduate of The American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

FEDRA RAMÍREZ OLIVARES she/her (*Ensemble*) is an actor/musician from Mexico City. She is excited to be making her debut at The Public Theater. Shoutout to @sonerosdecitylore por crear una comunidad

tan bella en Nuevayol llena de amor y música. Gracias! Film: *In Passing*. Regional: *Metamorphoses*, *Native Gardens*, *Smokefall*, *How to Defend Yourself*. MFA: NYU. @fedraramirez

PIPER RUNGE she/hers (*Ensemble*) is elated to be making her Public Theater debut. TV: "The Chair Company," "FBI," "Chicago Fire." Rutgers MGSA (BFA). Thank you to HCKR and Suskin/Karshan. Huge thanks and love to her incredible family, friends, and loved ones. I am so very lucky. This is so very cool. @piperrunge

MILES SEGURA he/him (*Ensemble*) is delighted to be making his Off-Broadway debut at The Public. Segura lives in Brooklyn, trained in the Stella Adler Studio of Acting (NYU Tisch), and has an ardent fervor for all things Shakespeare. Love and gratitude to my father, mother, Naima, IanJ, Benny, Ryan, IanH, Steve, Tirosh, Mr. Miller. @milessegura

MARIAND TORRES (*Lady Montague*). The Public: *Hell's Kitchen*. Broadway: *Wicked*, *Hell's Kitchen*, *Lempicka*, *Hadestown*, *In Transit*. National Tour: *Wicked* (Elphaba). Off-Broadway: *The Great Comet*. Film: *Holiday Touchdown*. TV: "Law & Order: SVU," "Madam Secretary." Torres starred in the Japan world premiere of *Prince of Broadway*, directed by Hal Prince & Susan Stroman. Love to Nick. Favorite role: Maia's mama.

MARLON XAVIER (*Pedro*) is of Ecuadorian descent. Thrilled to make his Public Theater debut. Theater: *Extraordinary Aliens*, and many more, Film: *A Stage of Twilight*, *Magic Hour*. TV: "Law & Order," "Blue Bloods," "The Savant." MFA: Actors Studio Drama School. LAByrinth Theater Company member and Actors Studio finalist. Grateful to his wife and his family for their unwavering support.

ABOUT CITIZENS FINANCIAL GROUP, INC.

Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is one of the nation's oldest and largest financial institutions, with \$226.4 billion in assets as of December 31, 2025. 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 3,100 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](#).

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

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, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 64 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. (*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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