

THE PUBLIC.

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
press@publictheater.org

PREVIOUS RUN PRODUCTION PHOTOS
JACOB & TONY HEADSHOTS

PREVIEWS BEGIN FOR NEW YORK PREMIERE OF RED BULL THEATER'S PRODUCTION OF *HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE*; PRODUCTION EXTENDS THROUGH 10/25

A Co-Production with
Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Folger Theatre
Written and Performed by Jacob Ming-Trent
Directed by Tony Taccone

Performances Begin with a Joseph Papp Free Performance
on Tuesday, September 15 and Run Through Sunday, October 25;
Official Press Opening on Sunday, September 27

"This play is my testimony, I hope it will inspire you to give yours!"
– Writer and Performer Jacob Ming-Trent

September 8, 2026 – Red Bull Theater (Founder and Producing Artistic Director, Jesse Berger; Managing Director, Sherri Kotimsky) and The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) will soon open the New York premiere of **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE**, **Jacob Ming-Trent**'s one-man show, directed by **Tony Taccone**, about the creatives that molded him. After celebrated runs at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Folger Theatre, **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVES MY LIFE** will finally debut at Ming-Trent's artistic home at The Public Theater. Previews begin in the Shiva Theater on **Tuesday, September 15** with a Joseph Papp Free Performance. Ahead of first preview, the production has also been extended by one week and will now run through **Sunday, October 25**, with an official press opening on **Sunday, September 27**.

In the Red Bull Theater production of **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE**, **Jacob Ming-Trent** dares to rescue himself from the "slings and arrows" of his past. Born with a gift for poetry but rejected as unfit to play the part of the poet, Ming-Trent invites us to take a deep dive into the crevices of his youth. His search for home is relentless, and the results are by turns hilarious and tragic. Calling on the Bard and a host of genius rappers, half-crazed preachers, and soulful poets to throw him a lifeline, he takes us on a propulsive ride that reaffirms the power of language. It all adds up to one man's attempt to reclaim his life, and through that journey we connect to the deeper parts of ourselves, and, ultimately, to each other. Directed by **Tony Taccone**.

"I couldn't be more excited to invite NYC audiences to experience Jacob Ming-Trent's **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE**," shares Red Bull Artistic Director **Jesse Berger**. "Jacob's writing is fearless, funny and insightful in this thrilling production directed by Tony Taccone. And it is not an

exaggeration to say that his performance is revelatory. This is a Homeric journey of self-discovery that will resonate with people from all walks of life, whether or not you've ever heard a word of Shakespeare, Tupac, or Baldwin. All of us at Red Bull Theater are grateful to be able to partner with Oskar and our friends at The Public in bringing this special show to audiences here in New York, and very thankful to all our partners on the rolling world premiere production that has enabled us to share Jacob's journey across the country – first at Berkeley Rep, then the Folger Theatre in Washington, DC, and now here in the Shiva. Jacob's play speaks directly to our mission at Red Bull and builds community in beautiful ways you won't want to miss."

HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE features scenic design by **Takeshi Kata**, costume design by **Danielle Preston**, lighting design by **Alan Edwards**, original music and sound design by **Jake Rodriguez**, projection design by **Alexander Nichols**, and movement direction by **Tiffany Rachelle Stewart**. **Kara Kaufman** is the production stage manager and **Mary Kate Baughman** is the stage manager.

After **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE**, the downtown season will continue with the world premiere of **Ryan J. Haddad's** multigenerational ensemble play of gay men growing up, falling in love, and cherishing the arts, **GOOD TIME CHARLIE**, directed by **Danny Sharron**. October will bring the much-anticipated North American premiere **THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON**, a musical reimagining of the iconic story of an old man who is not at the end of his life, but at the beginning. The Public will also welcome **Richard Nelson** back with the latest offering from the Apple Family—**WE'LL SEE**, which will follow the beloved family on midterm election day, November 3, 2026. The fall season will close out with a presentation of Fiasco Theater's production of the deeply modern play **THE VERGE**, written by **Susan Glaspell** in 1921 and directed by **Jessie Austrian**.

This fall, doors will open for The Astor, a downtown tavern located inside The Public Theater. For more information, visit theastornyc.com.

BIOS:

JACOB MING-TRENT (*Playwright and Jacob*). The Public: *The Harder They Come* (Lortel and AUDELCO nomination), *Merry Wives* (Falstaff, Drama Desk nomination), *Father Comes Home From the Wars* (Lortel Award, AUDELCO nomination), *Twelfth Night* (Sir Toby), *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*. Broadway: *Gypsy* revival (original cast), *Shrek the Musical* (original cast), *Hands on a Hardbody* (original cast). Red Bull Theater: *Medea Re-Versed* (Lortel nomination), *The Alchemist* (Lortel nomination). Other Off-Broadway: *Mother Courage* (CSC); *Merchant of Venice*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* (TFANA); *Widowers' Houses* (Epic Theater Ensemble), *On the Levee* (Lincoln Center). Film: *Superfly*, *Forty-Year-Old Version*, *Snakes, R#J*, *Possession of Hannah Grace*, *The Bygone*, Julie Taymour's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and others. TV: "White Famous" (Showtime, series regular); "Watchmen" (HBO, series regular), "Ray Donovan" (Showtime, recurring), "Feed the Beast" (AMC, recurring), "Only Murders in the Building," "WU-TANG: An American Saga," "New Amsterdam," "God friended Me," "High Maintenance," and several more. Writer/Creator: *Shake It Up: A Shakespeare Cabaret*, *Mac N Beth*.

TONY TACCONE (*Director*). Broadway: *Latin History for Morons*, *Wishful Drinking*, *Bridge and Tunnel*. New York: *The Harder They Come*, *Taking Over*, *Brundibar*. Regional: Berkeley Rep (Artistic Director for 22 years), The Guthrie, Center Theatre Group, La Jolla Playhouse, Yale Rep, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Seattle Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Currently a Professor of USC in Directing.

RED BULL THEATER brings rarely seen classic plays to dynamic new life for contemporary audiences. Our work unites a respect for tradition with a modern sensibility. Red Bull Theater is named for the rowdy Jacobean playhouse that illegally performed plays in England during the years of Puritan rule, and was the first London theater to reopen after the Restoration. This bold spirit is central to our identity. With the Jacobean plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as our cornerstone, Red Bull Theater is New York City's home for dynamic performances of great plays that stand the test of time. The company also produces new works that are in conversation with the classics. Red Bull Theater delights and engages the

intellect and imagination of audiences. A home for artists, scholars and students, we strive to make our work accessible, diverse, and welcoming to all theatergoers. Educational as well as entertaining, our work keeps a rich and vital tradition thriving. Red Bull Theater believes in the power of great classic stories and plays of heightened language to deepen our understanding of the human condition. We believe in the special ability of live theater to create unique, collective experiences. And we believe in the timeless capacity of classical theater to illuminate the events of our times. Founded in 2003 with a production of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, Red Bull Theater has been acclaimed by The New York Times as "a dynamic producer of classic plays" and by Time Out New York as "the most exciting classical theater in New York." Red Bull Theater serves adventurous theatergoers with Off-Broadway productions, Revelation Readings, and the annual Short New Play Festival. The company also offers outreach programs including Shakespeare in Schools, bringing professional actors and teaching artists into public school classrooms; Bull Sessions, free post-play discussions with top scholars; podcasts; and acting intensives in classical actor training led by veteran theater professionals. In over 20 years, Red Bull Theater has produced 28 Off-Broadway Productions and over 200 Revelation Readings of rarely seen classics, serving over 5,000 artists and providing quality artistic programming to an audience of over 200,000. The company's unique programming has received ongoing critical acclaim, and has been recognized with Lortel, Drama Desk, Drama League, Calloway, Off Broadway Alliance, and Obie nominations and awards.

THE PUBLIC THEATER 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

TICKET INFORMATION

HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE begins performances in The Public's Shiva Theater on Tuesday, September 15, with the Joe Papp Free Performance. The production officially opens on Sunday, September 27 and runs through Sunday, October 25.

Tickets are available now and can be accessed by visiting publictheater.org, calling **212.967.7555**, or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

The performance schedule is Tuesday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 p.m. (*Please note: the performance on Sunday, September 27 on Opening Night is at 7:30 p.m.*)

The **Audio Described** and *Open Captioned* performance will be on Saturday, October 10 at 1:30 p.m.

Members of the Global Majority are welcome to join us at the Tuesday, October 20 performance of **HOW SHAKESPEARE SAVED MY LIFE**. Discount tickets are available using promo code **VERSE1020**.

There will be a series of Bull Session Post Play Discussions following performances on September 29, October 13, and October 20. Moderators and speakers will be announced at a later date.

The full performance calendar can be found at publictheater.org.

CONNECT WITH US

[Facebook.com/PublicTheater](https://www.facebook.com/PublicTheater)

Instagram | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.instagram.com/PublicTheaterNY)

Threads | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.threads.net/@PublicTheaterNY)

TikTok | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.tiktok.com/@PublicTheaterNY)

#