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THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES TWO ADDITIONAL NEW MUSICALS IN 2025: *GODDESS* AND *THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS*

GODDESS to Premiere in Spring 2025;
THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS Set for Fall 2025

GODDESS

NEW YORK PREMIERE
CONCEIVED BY SAHEEM ALI
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY MICHAEL THURBER
BOOK BY JOCELYN BIOH
CHOREOGRAPHY BY DARRELL GRAND MOULTRIE
DIRECTED BY SAHEEM ALI
SPRING 2025

THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS

WORLD PREMIERE
ADAPTATION, MUSIC, AND LYRICS BY ETHAN LIPTON
BASED UPON THE PLAY *THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH* BY THORNTON WILDER
DIRECTED BY LEIGH SILVERMAN
FALL 2025

September 25, 2025 – The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director and Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) announced two additional new musicals today for **The Public’s Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 seasons** at their landmark Astor Place home on 425 Lafayette Street—**GODDESS** and **THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS**. The institution has long been an incubator for new musicals, including *HAIR*, *A Chorus Line*, *Fun Home*, *Hamilton*, and more recently, *Suffs* and *Hell’s Kitchen*. This spring, after a successful world premiere at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, **GODDESS** will debut in New York. The production, conceived and directed by Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director **Saheem Ali**, features music and lyrics by **Michael Thurber**, a book by Tony Award nominee **Jocelyn Bioh**, and choreography by **Darrell Grand Moultrie**. Performances will begin in the Newman Theater on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, and will run through Sunday, June 1, with an official press opening on Tuesday, May 20. Joining the previously announced **INITIATIVE** by Else Went in the Fall 2025 season will be the world premiere of **THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS**, a new musical based on Thornton Wilder’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *The Skin of Our Teeth*. The adaptation, music, and lyrics will be by Obie Award winner **Ethan Lipton** and the production will be directed by two-time Tony Award nominee **Leigh Silverman**.

"It's thrilling to be able to announce not one, but two big, ambitious, joyous original musicals at The Public, led by artists central to The Public Theater family," shares Artistic Director **Oskar Eustis**. "With **GODDESS**, Saheem, Michael, Jocelyn, and Darrell have perfectly set the myth of Marimba in a nightclub for the Gods, and Ethan Lipton's dry, smart, and hilarious musical wit is a perfect foil for Thornton Wilder's classic American voice in **THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS**, which will be directed by our own Leigh Silverman. The American theater continues to face challenges, but I'm so proud that we've been able to develop and produce these courageous and epic stories that are perfect for our time."

The critically acclaimed team behind the 2021 Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Merry Wives* returns to The Public with the New York premiere of a new musical conceived and directed by Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director **Saheem Ali**, featuring music and lyrics by **Michael Thurber** and a book by Tony Award nominee **Jocelyn Bioh**. A mysterious singer arrives at Moto Moto, a steamy Afro-jazz club in Mombasa, Kenya. She casts an entrancing spell on everyone, including a young man who has returned home from studying in America. Will the big plans for his life—stepping into a political legacy and marrying his fiancée—be upended? Inspired by the myth of Marimba, the Goddess who created beautiful songs from her heartbreak, this is a rousing tale of romance, the supernatural, and the quest towards one's truest self.

"When I was in my late teens growing up in Kenya, I dreamt of one day creating an original musical inspired by a myth about the Goddess of music," shares conceiver and director of **GODDESS**, **Saheem Ali**. "Years later, after immigrating to the United States, I gained the courage to pursue this vision. It's been quite a journey! At the core of the story—about the intersection of the creative and the divine—is a reminder that one can only step into one's power by accepting one's truth. I'm grateful to my creative siblings **Michael Thurber**, **Jocelyn Bioh**, and **Darrell Grand Moultrie**, for sticking beside me through the years, as we now bring this beautiful story set in my home country to my artistic home, The Public Theater."

Next fall, The Public's Emerging Writers Group alumnus and Obie Award-winning playwright, songwriter, and singer **Ethan Lipton** brings his irreverently funny show **THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS** to The Public for its world premiere. A rollicking adaptation of Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*, this new musical about age-old problems tells the twisting, often absurd story of the Antrobus family who have been alive for 5,000 years but live in the same existential dread as the rest of us. Mired in the hot mess of being alive, the Antrobuses survive all manner of catastrophe in their endless quest to begin again, and again, and again. Two-time Tony Award nominee **Leigh Silverman** directs this bracingly original spectacle—a musical reminder that surviving is what we do best.

"*The Skin of Our Teeth* is a beautiful play," shares adapter **Ethan Lipton** about his inspiration for **THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS**. "A comedy about a family in a world of never-ending existential crises, Wilder's script is prescient and heartbreaking and totally bonkers. I'm thrilled to have been given the chance to turn the show into a musical—at The Public, no less, and with the great Leigh Silverman—and I can't wait to share it with our own totally screwed-up world."

Tappan Wilder, spokesperson for the Wilder family, shares similar excitement about the collaboration. "*The Skin of Our Teeth* blew the roof off Broadway in 1942, hurling it through time and space. After a long search for a music-maker for *Skin*, the stars aligned and led us to Ethan Lipton. 'Sensibility' is a difficult word to define, but not where the crazy and timeless genius of the play, Lipton, and Silverman's talents are concerned."

The Public's 2024-2025 Season began with the North American premiere of **COUNTING AND CRACKING**, a **Belvoir St Theatre** and **Kurinji** co-production of the epic play written and associate directed by **S. Shakthidharan** and directed and associate written by **Eamon Flack**, which just completed its run at NYU Skirball. Currently running at The Public's home on Astor Place is the New York premiere of **GOOD BONES**, a sharp, funny new work about gentrification and the growing price of the American dream written by Pulitzer Prize winner **James Ijames** and directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director **Saheem Ali**. Next, Australian playwright **David Finnigan** brings his play **DEEP**

HISTORY, an urgent and personal retelling of how we've reached the brink of unthinkable climate disaster, to New York. **Elevator Repair Service's GATZ** returns to The Public in November for final New York City encore of the acclaimed production, a thrilling enactment of *The Great Gatsby*.

Tied to the upcoming 2024 Election, The Public will also present a series of programming entitled **THE POLITICS OF NOW**, which will include week-long presentations of **THE FORD/HILL PROJECT** (a **Waterwell** production co-presented by The Public and **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company**) and **GUAC**, written and performed by **Manuel Oliver**. There will also be a one-night-only free screening of **Theater on Podil's** production of **Richard Nelson's CONVERSATIONS IN TUSCULUM** in Kyiv, Ukraine.

With Ma-Yi Theater Company and La Jolla Playhouse, The Public kicks off 2025 with **SUMO**, a mesmerizing new drama set in the sacred world of Sumo wrestling by **Lisa Sanaye Dring**. The Astor Place season concludes with **GLASS. KILL. WHAT IF IF ONLY. IMP.**, a quartet of inventive plays written by groundbreaking playwright **Caryl Churchill** and directed by **James Macdonald**. The Public will also produce a world premiere audio play of **LET'S KEEP DANCING: A Death Row Story** by **John Purugganan** about two souls fighting to survive death row.

Following a significant revitalization, The Delacorte Theater, home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, will reopen in Summer 2025 with a production of Shakespeare's classic comedy **TWELFTH NIGHT**, also directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director, Tony Award nominee **Saheem Ali**, and featuring an all-star cast of Public Theater alumni, including **Peter Dinklage**, **Jesse Tyler Ferguson**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Sandra Oh**, and more to be announced soon.

The Library serves food and drink beginning at 6:00 p.m. and closing at midnight. The Library is closed on Mondays. For more information, visit publictheater.org.

GODDESS BIOS:

SAHEEM ALI (*Conceiver and Director*) is a proud immigrant from Kenya, currently serving as the Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director of New York's Public Theater. He received Tony, Drama Desk, and Lucille Lortel Award nominations, as well as the Joe A. Callaway Award for his direction of *Fat Ham*. He most recently developed the *Buena Vista Social Club* musical at Atlantic Theater Company (Drama Desk nomination). His production of *Merry Wives* (Free Shakespeare in the Park) was recorded for PBS' "Great Performances" and was the subject of the HBO documentary *Reopening Night*. Other productions include *Goddess* (Berkeley Rep); *Nollywood Dreams* (MCC); *Romeo y Julieta*, *Shipwreck*, and *Richard II* (radio plays); *Fires in the Mirror* (Signature Theatre); *The Rolling Stone* (Lincoln Center Theater); *Passage* (Soho Rep); *Sugar in Our Wounds* (MTC); *Tartuffe* (Playmakers Rep); *Where Storms Are Born* (Williamstown); and *Kill Move Paradise* (National Black Theatre). He is a Usual Suspect at New York Theatre Workshop, a Sir John Gielgud SDCF Fellow, a Shubert Fellow and the recipient of an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Directing.

JOCELYN BIOH (*Book*) is an award-winning, Tony Award-nominated Ghanaian-American writer/performer from New York City. Her written works for theater include: *Jaja's African Hair Braiding* (MTC) which premiered on Broadway in 2023 and was nominated for five Tony Awards including Best Play, *Merry Wives* (Public Theater/Free Shakespeare in the Park, PBS Great Performances, 2022 Drama Desk Award winner for Outstanding Adaptation), *Nollywood Dreams* (MCC Theater), book writer for the musical *Goddess* (Berkeley Rep, 2022), the multi-award-winning *School Girls; Or, the African Mean Girls Play* which was originally produced at MCC Theater in 2017/2018 and has gone on to have over 65 regional productions and premiered in the U.K. in 2023. Bioh was a 2017 Tow Playwriting Fellow and has won several playwriting awards, including being awarded the Dramatist Guild Hull-Warriner Prize (in both 2018 and 2024), Steinberg Playwriting Award, Lortel, and Drama Desk. Bioh has also written for TV on "Russian Doll," Spike Lee's "She's Gotta Have It" (Netflix), "Tiny Beautiful Things" (Hulu), and the new Star Wars series "The Acolyte" (Disney+).

DARRELL GRAND MOULTRIE (*Choreography*). A recipient of the Princess Grace Choreography Fellowship Award and a graduate of The Juilliard School, Moultrie's select credits include *Fat Ham* (Broadway & The Public), *Good Bones* (The Public), *Merry Wives* (Free Shakespeare in the Park), *Goddess* (Berkeley Rep) *Space Dogs* (MCC), Disney's new revival of *Aida* (the Netherlands), *Invisible Thread* (Second Stage), *Daddy* (The New Group/Vineyard Theatre), *Sugar in Our Wounds* (MTC), and *Witness Uganda* (ART). Moultrie has choreographed premieres for dance companies around the world including American Ballet Theatre, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Smuin Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet. Moultrie served as a choreographer on Beyonce's "Mrs. Carter" world tour.

MICHAEL THURBER (*Music and Lyrics*) is a Drama Desk-nominated composer and lyricist. Thurber made his international debut with his score for *Antony and Cleopatra*, a co-production between the RSC and The Public Theater directed by Academy Award winner Tarell McCraney. He has composed scores for numerous other Public Theater productions, including the 2021 Free Shakespeare in the Park *Merry Wives*; and *Romeo y Julieta*, a radio play starring Lupita Nyong'o. Thurber was the 2020 recipient of the Bryan Gallace Fellowship grant via SPACE@Ryder Farm. He was the bassist on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" under the leadership of Jon Batiste. He has performed globally with many artists including Chris Thile, Willie Nelson, James Taylor, Mavis Staples, David Byrne, Lawrence, Alisa Weilerstein, Louis Cato, and many more. Thurber teaches at NYU's Clive Davis Institute. He studied music at Juilliard and the Interlochen Arts Academy.

THE SEAT OF OUR PANTS BIOS:

ETHAN LIPTON (*Adaptation, Music, and Lyrics*)'s plays include *Tumacho* and *Luther* (Clubbed Thumb), and *Red-Handed Otter* (Playwrights Realm). Musicals include *No Place to Go* and *The Outer Space* (produced by The Public in Joe's Pub; tours produced by ArKype), and *We are Your Robots* (premiering fall 2024 in a co-production from TFANA and Rattlestick). Winner of the Kleban Prize and an Obie award, Lipton has been a Creative Capital Grantee, a Guggenheim fellow, a Page One fellow, and an inaugural member of The Public's Emerging Writers Group. *The Seat of Our Pants* will be his fifth theatrical collaboration with director Leigh Silverman. As frontman for the quartet Ethan Lipton & his Orchestra, Lipton has played SF Jazz, Celebrate Brooklyn, MASS MoCa, Pitchfork Paris, ATP, Theatre de la Ville, the Gate (London), a 50th birthday party where no one could hear anything, and most recently at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. www.ethanlipton.com

LEIGH SILVERMAN (*Director*) is a two-time Tony nominated director. Her credits with Ethan Lipton at The Public include *No Place to Go* and *The Outer Space* (also with Clubbed Thumb); *Tumacho*. Broadway credits include *Yellow Face* (Roundabout); *Suffs* (Tony nom); *Grand Horizons*; *The Lifespan of a Fact*; *Violet* (Tony nom); *Chinglish*; *Well*. Recent credits include *Harry Clarke* (West End, BRT, Vineyard/Audible); *Suffs* (The Public); *Merry Me* (NYTW); *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* (Shed, CTG); *Soft Power* (CTG/Curran, The Public); *Hurricane Diane* (NYTW). Other world premieres at The Public include *Well*, *Yellow Face*, and *Wild Goose Dreams*. Silverman has directed the following Encores productions: *Violet* and *The Wild Party*. Audible productions include *Yellow Face*; *Harry Clarke*; *Dykes to Watch Out For*. She received an Obie Award in 2011 and a 2019 Obie for Sustained Excellence.

THORNTON WILDER (Playwright, *The Skin of our Teeth*) (1897-1975) was a novelist and playwright whose work celebrates the connection between the commonplace and the cosmic dimensions of human experience. He is the only writer to win Pulitzer Prizes for both drama (*Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*) and fiction (*The Bridge of San Luis Rey*). He collaborated with Alfred Hitchcock on *Shadow of a Doubt*, hiked the Alps with the heavyweight boxing champion Gene Tunney, received a bronze star for his service in World War II, and was credited with discovering Orson Welles. He was also a much-loved teacher, letter-writer (especially with Gertrude Stein), and public speaker—in four languages. *Hello, Dolly!* is based on his play *The Matchmaker*. Learn more about his extraordinary life at thorntonwilder.com.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

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, 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, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 57 Drama Desk Awards, 63 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 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 LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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