



PRESS CONTACT:

[press@publictheater.org](mailto:press@publictheater.org) // 212-539-8666

## THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES SPRING PUBLIC FORUM AND PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE INITIATIVE LINE-UP

**One-Night-Only Events Include**  
**Exploration of World Premiere Play *Coal Country*;**  
**Preview of the 2020 Free Shakespeare in the Park Season;**  
**Conversation About Shakespeare and Spanish Playwright Lope de Vega;**  
**Discussion Featuring Palestinian and Syrian Artists and Activists;**  
**and the Return of the Free Civic Salon Series**

January 21, 2020 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced today the spring Public Forum and Public Shakespeare Initiative line-up that will explore the intersection of art, ideas, and action and illuminate the study and performance of Shakespeare's works. Highlights of the upcoming season include a closer look into the world premiere play *Coal Country* with members of the creative team; a preview of the upcoming Free Shakespeare in the Park season, featuring cast and creative team members; a conversation about William Shakespeare and Spanish playwright Lope de Vega; a discussion featuring Palestinian and Syrian artists and activists discussing migration and displacement; the continuation of monthly free Civic Salon gatherings; and more.

**PUBLIC FORUM** is the Public Theater's space where art, ideas, and action collide. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> season, Public Forum creates exciting opportunities year-round for communities to engage deeply with current events, original thinkers, and the most pressing questions of our time. Throughout each season, Public Forum energizes civic responsibility by inviting people from all backgrounds to share, converse, and connect. Public Forum hosts one-night-only events, special appearances, post-show discussions, and town hall conversations, and curates events with the Public Shakespeare Initiative.

**PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE INITIATIVE** offers a wide range of programming which includes larger Public Shakespeare Presents evenings, blending incisive commentary by scholars and other thinkers with appearances by artists of all disciplines; intimate Public Shakespeare Talks, giving audiences unique insight into the artistic and intellectual processes of leading Shakespeare practitioners working in the theater; Artist Development Programs, to cultivate some of the most visionary artistic minds working on Shakespeare today; and Education Programs, specifically the Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble, which The Shakespeare Society co-founded with the Hunts Point Alliance for Children over a decade ago, and which has offered hundreds of elementary and middle school students the opportunity to develop their confidence, knowledge, and creativity through the transformative experience of bringing Shakespeare's words to life onstage in the 12 Shakespeare productions the Ensemble has presented.

### **SPRING 2020 LINE-UP INCLUDES:**

***PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE TALKS: SHAKESPEARE IN A DIVIDED AMERICA***

Monday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. | Joe's Pub

Read at school by almost every American student and long-valued by conservatives and liberals alike, Shakespeare's plays provide a rare common ground for civil discussion. However, as brought to vivid life in the pages of **James Shapiro's** forthcoming *Shakespeare in a Divided America*, Shakespeare has also been the site of some of our bitterest disagreements. Professor **Ayanna Thompson** sits down with Shapiro, The Public's Shakespeare Scholar in Residence, to discuss his latest book. By better understanding Shakespeare's role in American life, might we begin to mend our bitterly divided land?

***PUBLIC FORUM: UNION, GOD & COUNTRY***

Monday, March 16 at 7:00 p.m. | Anspacher Theater

Documentary theatermakers Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen spent years interviewing survivors and family members of victims about the Upper Big Branch mining disaster of 2010 to develop their new play **COAL COUNTRY**. Members of the creative team, industry experts, and community organizers from Appalachia will dive deep into the process of bringing this harrowing real-life experience to the stage.

***PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS: SHAKESPEARE AND THE SPANISH GOLDEN AGE***

Monday, March 23 at 7:00 p.m. | Anspacher Theater

In 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century England and Spain, the theater was uniquely prized—and feared—for its ability to imagine, articulate, and test ideas about political, religious, sexual, and social life. Shakespeare and Lope de Vega, two of the greatest playwrights of their respective nations, harnessed this power to interrogate and explore the worlds around them in ways that still resonate today.

Cornell University professor **Philip Lorenz** and a cast of actors gather for an evening of readings and commentary exploring Shakespeare and Lope's differing and converging dramatic achievements—as well as the quixotic efforts of their fellow genius, Miguel de Cervantes, to achieve theatrical greatness.

***PUBLIC FORUM: (DIS)PLACEMENT***

Monday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. | LuEsther Hall

In association with The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at Georgetown University

As our world becomes increasingly polarized, geopolitical, humanitarian, and environmental crises threaten to displace a record number of people around the globe. Through conversation facilitated both live and digitally, **PUBLIC FORUM: (DIS)PLACEMENT** will hold space for Palestinian and Syrian artists and activists who are navigating migration, exile, and the search for home.

***PUBLIC SHAKESPEARE PRESENTS: WHAT'S COMING TO THE DELACORTE***

Monday, May 4 at 7:00 p.m. | Newman Theater

Free Shakespeare in the Park remains one of New York City's—and the world's—most enduring, joyous, radical, and democratic cultural institutions. The Public Shakespeare Initiative invites members of the cast and creative teams from summer 2020's Park productions to give special insight into their work on Central Park's most iconic stage.

***CIVIC SALONS*** | Joe's Pub (*Free with RSVP*)

Sunday, February 23 at 12:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 22 at 12:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 19 at 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 16 at 12:00 p.m.

Join Public Forum for free monthly gatherings where everyone can come together in the spirit of community to nurture their minds and bodies. Each month will feature a different theme driven by artists, musicians, poets, activists, and civic organizers who are using their voices to create change in their communities. Past Civic Salon keynote speakers have included playwright Lisa Kron, NPR's Maria Hinojosa, Artistic Director

of the Women's March Paola Mendoza, playwright Jessica Blank, activist Edefe Okporo, ACLU lawyer Chase Strangio, and more. Civic Salons are free and open to the public with an RSVP through The Public Theater's website. RSVPs will open immediately following the previous Civic Salon. Joe's Pub will offer a full food menu available for purchase.

### **ONGOING PROGRAMMING:**

Additional Public Forum programming includes Artist Talkbacks, Speaker Series Panels, and Audience Conversations. In **Artist Talkbacks**, members of the cast and creative team will take questions from the audience about the show and their process following selected performances during the season. **Speaker Series** presents 20-to-30-minute panel discussions after the performance with experts discussing a topic from the show, and **Audience Conversations** feature a member of The Public's artistic staff leading the audience in a conversation with each other about the show and its themes and ideas. For the most up-to-date schedule of post-show programming, please visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

Public Forum will host Artist Talkbacks on **Thursday, February 27** and **Thursday, March 26** following the 8:00 p.m. performances of *Coal Country*; **Tuesday, March 24** and **Friday, April 3** following the 7:00 p.m. performances of *The Vagrant Trilogy*; and **Thursday, April 2** and **Friday, May 1** following the 7:30 p.m. performances of *The Visitor*.

The post-show Speaker Series will take place on **Thursday, March 5** following the 8:00 p.m. performance of *Coal Country*; **Wednesday, April 22** following the 7:00 p.m. performance of *The Vagrant Trilogy*; and **Friday, May 8** following the 7:30 p.m. performance of *The Visitor*.

The Public Shakespeare Initiative's educational programming will also include the continuation of **Teaching Teachers**, a series of free professional development workshops for teachers of all schools and grade levels in NYC. Recent workshops have focused on topics including Shakespeare's genres and directing young people, and plays including *Measure for Measure*. Sessions have been led by scholars from CUNY, Cornell University, and West Point, and have also featured professional directors and other theater practitioners. For the latest on upcoming workshops, visit [thepublic.nyc/psi](http://thepublic.nyc/psi).

In addition, on **Friday, May 15** and **Sunday, May 17 at 6:00 p.m.**, The Hunts Point Children's Shakespeare Ensemble will celebrate its 13<sup>th</sup> year with two invited performances of the joyous romantic comedy **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** at venues in the Bronx and Manhattan. These performances mark the culmination of a year of study and rehearsal by the 50 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders participating in the Ensemble program, which is offered by the Public Shakespeare Initiative in collaboration with its vital community partner, the Hunts Point Alliance for Children, which co-founded the Ensemble with The Shakespeare Society in 2007.

Support for the collaboration of The Shakespeare Society and The Public Theater provided by the New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund.

The New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund (NYMAC) encourages and supports mergers, acquisitions, joint-ventures, and other types of formal, long-term collaborations between nonprofits in New York City. NYMAC's funders include Altman Foundation, The Booth Ferris Foundations, The Clark Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, The Lodestar Foundation, The New York Community Trust, SeaChange Capital Partners, and a number of philanthropic individuals.

### **ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:**

**THE PUBLIC** is theater of, by, and for all people. Artist-driven, radically inclusive, and fundamentally democratic, 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 Forum, Under the Radar, Public Studio, 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. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 59 Tony Awards, 178 Obie Awards, 53 Drama Desk Awards, 56 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Public Theater Partner and Public Supporter tickets are available now starting at \$25. Single tickets, starting at \$25 plus fees, are also on sale now and can be accessed by calling **(212) 967-7555**, visiting [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org), or in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

*There is no food or drink minimum for Public Forum or Public Shakespeare Initiative in Joe's Pub. Please note the final line-up is subject to change.* The Library at The Public is open nightly for food and drinks, beginning at 5:30 p.m., and Joe's Pub at The Public continues to offer some of the best music in the city. For more information, visit [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

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