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Mamoudou Athie



Khris Davis



Téa Guarino



Susan Kelechi Watson

CAST & CREATIVE HEADSHOTS

THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES COMPLETE CASTING FOR NEW YORK PREMIERE OF *GOOD BONES*

By James Ijames
Directed by Saheem Ali

Casting Includes Mamoudou Athie, Khris Davis, Téa Guarino,
and Susan Kelechi Watson

Performances Begin with a Joseph Papp Free Preview Performance
On Thursday, September 19 and Run Through Sunday, October 13;
Official Press Opening on Tuesday, October 1

July 23, 2024 – The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director and Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) announced casting today for the long-anticipated New York premiere of **GOOD BONES** written by Pulitzer Prize winner **James Ijames** and directed by Public Theater Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director **Saheem Ali**. After the duo's collaboration on the wildly successful **FAT HAM**, Ijames and Ali return to The Public with **GOOD BONES** after its premiere last spring at Studio Theatre in Washington, D.C. Performances will begin in the Martinson Hall with a Joseph Papp Free Performance on Thursday, September 19 and run through Sunday, October 13. The production officially opens on Tuesday, October 1.

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **James Ijames** explores gentrification and the growing price of the American dream in his sharp, funny new play, **GOOD BONES**. A work opportunity to revitalize the blighted neighborhood she grew up in has led Aisha and her chef husband Travis to buy and renovate a charming old house. But as everyone knows, renovation is expensive and stressful—both for buildings and the communities that surround them. Aisha's young contractor Earl grew up in the area too, but his memories are of more than just dangerous streets and hollowed-out homes. When their purely professional

relationship gives way to heated debate about who gets to stay and who must go, Aisha is forced to reckon with the choices she's made to get ahead and the painful, joyful, complicated ghosts that haunt her dreams... and her dream house. The Public's Associate Artistic Director **Saheem Ali** directs this New York premiere play about community, change, and the soul of our cities.

"I am thrilled to be returning to The Public and working with Saheem again this fall on **GOOD BONES**," shares playwright **James Ijames**. "The Public is really dear to me and I'm excited to bring this story about how to make and hold on to community to New York audiences."

The cast of **GOOD BONES** includes **Mamoudou Athie** (*Travis*), **Khris Davis** (*Earl*), **Téa Guarino** (*Carmen*), and **Susan Kelechi Watson** (*Aisha*).

The production will include scenic design by **Maruti Evans**, costume design by **Oana Botez**, lighting design by **Barbara Samuels**, sound design by **Fan Zhang**, hair and wig design by **Krystal Balleza**, and prop management by **Claire M. Kavanah**. **Jack Phillips Moore** will serve as the production's dramaturg. **Norman Anthony Small** will be the production stage manager and **Giselle Andrea Raphaela** will be the stage manager.

"I'm delighted to be working again with James Ijames after our journey together on **FAT HAM**, and excited to explore this story with the extraordinary **Mamoudou Athie**, **Khris Davis**, **Téa Guarino**, and **Susan Kelechi Watson**," shares director **Saheem Ali**. "**GOOD BONES** is a stunning new play. It adds a layer of complexity to the ongoing conversation about gentrification, community, and the places we call home."

The Public's 2024-2025 Season begins in Fall 2024 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** to be performed in partnership with and at **NYU Skirball**. A multilingual play staged in English, Tamil, and Sinhalese, **COUNTING AND CRACKING** features 19 performers in a multigenerational story of a Sri –Lankan-Australian family from 1956-2004. 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 a thrilling and final New York City encore of the acclaimed production, a thrilling enactment of *The Great Gatsby*.

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 alumni to be announced soon.

The Library serves food and drink beginning at 5:00 p.m. and closing at midnight. The Library is closed on Mondays. For more information, visit publictheater.org.

BIOS:

JAMES IJAMES (*Playwright*) is a playwright and educator. Ijames is the recipient of the 2022 Pulitzer in Drama for *Fat Ham*, a Pew Fellow for Playwriting, the Terrance McNally New Play Award for *White*, the Kesselring Honorable Mention Prize for *...Miz Martha*, a Whiting Award, a Kesselring Prize for *Kill Move*

Paradise, and a 2020 and 2022 Steinberg Prize. The 2023 Broadway production of *Fat Ham* received 5 Tony nominations including Best Play. James is an Associate Professor of Theatre at Villanova University.

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 received Tony, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel 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 nom). 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 Theater); *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 Theater). He is a Usual Suspect at New York Theater Workshop, a Sir John Gielgud SDCF Fellow, a Shubert Fellow, and the recipient of an Obie Award for Sustained Excellence in Directing.

MAMOUDOU ATHIE (*Travis*) is an Emmy-nominated actor based in LA. Athie was last seen in Yorgos Lanthimos' *Kinds of Kindness* which premiered at the 2024 Cannes Film Festival. He also recently wrapped *Wardriver* for writer-director Becca Thomas. Last year, Athie was seen in Maggie Betts' *The Burial* (Amazon Prime Video). Athie also led Pixar's *Elemental* (Oscar nominee). He also voiced a role in Hayao Miyazaki's *The Boy and the Heron*, which won an Oscar for Best Animated feature. Athie also starred in Colin Trevorrow's *Jurassic World: Dominion* and the James Wan-produced Netflix series "Archive 81." Other credits include "Uncorked" (Netflix), *Black Box* (Amazon), *The Front Runner*, "Sorry for Your Loss," *Unicorn Store*, *Patti Cake\$*, and Baz Luhrmann's Netflix series "The Get Down." Athie was nominated for an Emmy for his role in "Oh Jerome, No" (FX). He graduated from Yale School of Drama's MFA program and was given the Rising Star honor at TIFF in 2017.

KHRIS DAVIS (*Earl*) played the title role in Sony's biopic *Big George Foreman* opposite Forest Whitaker, who played his mentor/boxing trainer Doc Broadus. Davis played the heartbreaking role of "Biff Loman" in the acclaimed Broadway production of *Death of a Salesman* with Wendell Pierce and Sharon D. Clarke. He made his New York stage debut in Marco Ramirez's *The Royale* at Lincoln Center Theater. Loosely based on the life of Jack Johnson, his performance garnered him a Clive Barnes Award, an Obie Award, and a Theatre World Award for Best Actor. He also starred in the Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of the Tony-nominated, Pulitzer Prize-winning Lynn Nottage play *Sweat* and Atlantic Theater Company's production of *Fireflies* with DeWanda Wise. Davis recurred on FX's award-winning "Atlanta" opposite Donald Glover, for which he received a SAG Award nomination as part of the ensemble. His feature credits include Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit*, *Space Jam: A New Legacy* with LeBron James, and the Oscar-nominated *Judas and The Black Messiah*.

TÉA GUARINO (*Carmen*) is so grateful to be making her Public Theater debut! Guarino is a recent graduate of Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, where she holds her BFA in Acting ('23). Her favorite credits include *A Hundred Words for Snow* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Shakespeare's Globe Theatre). TV credits include "Law and Order: SVU." Guarino wants to give thanks to everyone at HCKR, Matthew Leshner, and her amazing parents who have always believed in her. @teaguarino_

SUSAN KELECHI WATSON (*Aisha*) is best known for her much-lauded role as Beth Pearson on the smash hit series "This is Us." Her acclaimed performance garnered her back-to-back SAG Outstanding Ensemble Awards as well as yearly NAACP nominations and several Critics Choice nominations. On stage, Watson starred in the London production of *Eureka Day* opposite Helen Hunt at The Old Vic and The Public's Free Shakespeare in the Park production of *Merry Wives* adapted by Jocelyn Bioh and directed by Saheem Ali. On TV, Watson can next be seen in the Shondaland limited series "The Residence" for Netflix. She most recently guest starred on ABC's "Will Trent" and memorably recurred in a major role on FX's critically acclaimed comedy series "Louie." In film, Watson starred in Marielle Heller's

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood opposite Tom Hanks and Matthew Rhys. She is the executive producer and one of the stars of the groundbreaking HBO adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, as well as the executive producer of *Premature* on Hulu.

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 Lab, 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 musicals *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 64 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antony 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.

TICKET INFORMATION

GOOD BONES begins performances in the Martinson Hall on Thursday, September 19 and will run through Sunday, October 13, with an official press opening on Tuesday, October 1.

Public Theater Partner, Supporter, and full-price single tickets 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 Public's Joseph Papp Free Performance initiative will offer free tickets to the performance on Thursday, September 19 through TodayTix. The lottery will open for entries on Thursday, September 12 and will close at 12:00 p.m. on the day before the performance. Winners will be notified by email and push notification anytime from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and if selected, winners will have one hour to claim their tickets.

The performance schedule is Tuesday through Sunday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 p.m. (*There will be no 1:30 performance on Saturday, September 21 and Sunday September 22. The performance on Wednesday, September 25 will be at 7:00 p.m.*)

The **Open Captioned** performance will be at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 5. The **Audio Described** performance will be at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 6. There will be an **American Sign Language** interpreted performance on Friday, October 11 at 7:30 p.m. The performance on Sunday, October 13 at 1:30 p.m. will **require patrons to wear masks**.

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

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