



PHOTOS: DELACORTE THEATER & HEADSHOTS

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**THE PUBLIC THEATER
ANNOUNCES
60TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON OF
FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK
AT THE DELACORTE THEATER**

RICHARD III

Directed by Robert O'Hara

Featuring Danai Gurira in the Title Role

**Return of Public Works' Musical Adaptation of
*AS YOU LIKE IT***

Adapted by Shaina Taub & Laurie Woolery

Music & Lyrics by Shaina Taub

Original Choreography by Sonya Tayeh

Directed by Laurie Woolery

**The Jerome L. Greene Foundation Returns as Lead Sponsor of
Free Shakespeare in the Park**

**The Public Theater Embarking on Much-Needed Revitalization of
The Delacorte Theater to Dramatically Improve the 60-Year-Old Home of
Free Shakespeare in the Park**

February 2, 2022 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) announced the line-up today for the 60th Anniversary Season of Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater. Since 1962, over six million people have enjoyed more than 150 free productions of Shakespeare and other classical works and musicals in The Public's beloved home in Central Park.

This summer, Free Shakespeare in the Park will begin with the drama **RICHARD III**, directed by Tony nominee **Robert O'Hara** and featuring **Danai Gurira** in the title role.

The summer season will continue with the return of the free Public Works musical adaptation of **AS YOU LIKE IT** after it was originally scheduled for the 2020 season, but delayed due to the pandemic. Adapted by Public Theater Artist-in-Residence **Shaina Taub** and Director of Public Works **Laurie Woolery**, with music and lyrics by Shaina Taub, original choreography by Tony Award winner **Sonya Tayeh**, and directed by Laurie Woolery, **AS YOU LIKE IT** will feature **Darius de Haas** (*Duke Senior*), **Joel Perez** (*Touchstone*), and **Shaina Taub** (*Jaques*), reprising their roles from the original 2017 Public Works production. They will

be joined by two rotating ensembles of community members from all five boroughs to perform together on The Delacorte stage in this enchanting comedy.

Production dates, performance schedules, and complete casting for both productions will be announced at a later date.

"After last summer's glorious and joyous *Merry Wives*, this year, we are finally returning to a full slate of shows in the Park, and the artists and shows will be thrilling," said Artistic Director **Oskar Eustis**. "Robert O'Hara has been a member of The Public's family for 20 years, as director and as playwright. One of our greatest and most exciting directors, he will be creating a *Richard III* unlike any you have seen before. Our dearly beloved Danai Gurira will be giving us her version of this extraordinary character. Shakespeare's Richard created the model for politics as an extension of show business—with devastating results. As always, Shakespeare seems to be speaking directly into our contemporary dreams and nightmares."

Eustis continued, "As *You Like It* is an extraordinary version of Shakespeare's most beautiful play. Composed by and featuring the electric Shaina Taub, adapted by her and Laurie Woolery, *As You Like It* is an extraordinary creation of our Public Works program. You'll see New York's finest actors sharing the stage with hundreds of their fellow community members. The joyous democracy of this Public Works show stuns the senses, and will certainly be one of the most glorious highlights of 2022."

Tony Award nominee **Robert O'Hara** (*Slave Play*, The Public's *Barbecue*) brings his sharp wit and storytelling genius to The Delacorte with a bold new production of **RICHARD III**. One of Shakespeare's most indelible villains, Richard is determined to be King. Following his lust for power and the throne, he manipulates, kidnaps, and kills all who stand between him and his throne, using brilliant words and dark charm to conceal his dismantling of government and justice. This masterful dive into the muddy middle between political genius and violent power grab will open Free Shakespeare in the Park's 60th Season with piercing relevancy and electrifying drama.

RICHARD III Director **Robert O'Hara** said, "It has been over 30 years since *Richard III* was produced at The Delacorte and I'm excited to bring one of drama's all-time favorite villains back onto the Central Park stage. *Richard III* speaks to the dangerous machinations that we have witnessed by leaders throughout history, but most acutely in recent years in our own government. While navigating the projections of those around him by his decision to 'prove the villain,' Richard is our unreliable narrator, protagonist, and antagonist, drawing us deeper and deeper into his murderous mayhem. I am thrilled to collaborate again with the brilliant, multi-talented Danai Gurira as she returns to The Delacorte in the title role of this infamous usurper King, full of bloody confrontations, political intrigue, and familial toxicity."

RICHARD III has been previously staged at The Delacorte four times. It was last seen 32 years ago in a 1990 production featuring Denzel Washington in the title role and Sharon Washington as Lady Anne, directed by Robin Phillips. The 1983 production, directed by Jane Howell, featured Kevin Kline as Richard III, David Alan Grier as Richmond, and Ving Rhames as Hastings. In 1970, the production was directed by Stuart Vaughan and featured Donald Madden as Richard III. Four years after The Delacorte opened, the 1966 production, directed by Gerald Freedman, featured Joseph Bova as Richard III, Penny Fuller as Lady Anne, and Philip Bosco as Duke of Buckingham.

To complete this anniversary season, Public Works' acclaimed musical production of **AS YOU LIKE IT** returns to Central Park, bringing together its diverse ensemble of both professional actors and community members from across New York. Adapted by **Shaina Taub** and Director of Public Works **Laurie Woolery**, featuring music and lyrics by Taub, this ambitious work of participatory theater has been hailed as "thrilling & terrifically vital" by *The New York Times*. Forced from their homes, Orlando, Duke Senior, his daughter Rosalind, and niece Celia are banished to the Forest of Arden. There, they discover a community of acceptance and transformational love, where all are welcomed and embraced. Laurie Woolery directs this magical adaptation of a beloved classic. Join for Free Shakespeare in the Park's 60th birthday party, celebrating six decades of free Shakespeare for all New Yorkers, and toasting the many decades to come!

Public Works and **AS YOU LIKE IT** Director **Laurie Woolery** said, "Our musical adaptation of *As You Like It* was created in response to a shifting world post the 2016 presidential election, where polarizing opinions fractured relationships and created a culture of 'othering' one another. Over the last five years, our country has experienced a global pandemic, anti-racist uprising, and so much loss that has further isolated us. The nature of theater is to gather and sit in community with one another. The heart of the story of *As You Like It* contains the possibility of humans being whole again through the healing power of community and its ability to gather and hold space for one another during the darkest of times. This is a dream we had for over two years and can't wait to gather together in community, outdoors, under the stars at The Delacorte Theater."

PUBLIC WORKS, a major initiative of The Public Theater, aims to restore and build community by connecting people through the creation of extraordinary works of art. Public Works is animated by the idea that theater is a place of possibility, where the boundaries that separate us from each other in the rest of life can fall away. Working with partner organizations in all five boroughs, Public Works invites community members to take classes, attend performances, and join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater. Led by Public Works Director Laurie Woolery, this initiative deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members, creating theater that is not only for the people, but by and of the people as well. Public Works exemplifies The Public's long-standing commitment to putting community at the core of the theater's mission. Public Works seeks to create a space where we can not only reflect on the world as it is, but where we can propose new possibilities for what our society might be.

The Public Works community partner organizations are **Brownsville Recreation Center** (Brooklyn), **Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education** (Bronx), **Center for Family Life in Sunset Park** (Brooklyn), **Children's Aid** (all boroughs), **DreamYard** (Bronx), **Domestic Workers United** (all boroughs), **The Fortune Society** (Queens), and **Military Resilience Foundation** (all boroughs).

The second cohort of Public Works National includes an extraordinary list of national affiliates: Long Wharf Theatre (New Haven, CT), Pittsburgh Public Theater (Pittsburgh, PA), Theatre Under The Stars (Houston, TX), Trinity Repertory Company (Providence, RI), Tulsa Performing Arts Center and Trust (Tulsa, OK), Virginia Stage Company (Norfolk, VA), and Williamstown Theatre Festival (Williamstown, MA). These National Affiliates joined the Founding Public Works National and International Partners—Dallas Theater Center (Dallas, TX), the National Theatre's Public Acts program (London and nationally, United Kingdom), and Seattle Repertory Theatre (Seattle, WA). This network of theaters gathers to actively share practices and build momentum around community-based theater nationwide. Collectively, they are seeking to put theater at the heart of every community, and community at the heart of every theater.

Free tickets will be distributed in a variety ways across all five boroughs with distribution details and locations announced by May 2. **TodayTix** will return as partner for the free virtual ticket lottery distribution.

"We are thrilled to be returning as the exclusive Lottery partner to the iconic New York tradition of Shakespeare in the Park. TodayTix was founded with the express purpose of democratizing access to theater, so we can't wait for new and returning audiences to enter our easy-to-use digital Lottery for a chance to attend a performance at The Delacorte and be exhilarated by live theater," said **Merritt Baer**, President and Co-founder of TodayTix.

The Public will welcome audiences back to The Delacorte at full capacity this summer. Proof of a complete COVID-19 vaccination AND proof of a booster dose (for those eligible in accordance with CDC guidelines) by the date of attendance will be required for access to the facility and theater. Approved face masks will be required at all times, including while watching a performance, with exceptions for while attendees are actively eating and drinking. Public Theater staff and artists are subject to a mandatory vaccination and booster policy, in addition to onsite testing protocols when working within all facilities. For more information on the health and safety protocols this season, please visit thepublic.nyc/safeinthepark.

This season, The Public proudly welcomes the return of **The Jerome L. Greene Foundation** as season sponsor. The generous support of The Jerome L. Greene Foundation helps to sustain The Public's mission of inclusion, creating great theater, boldly conceived, and free for all.

"The Jerome L. Greene Foundation is thrilled to be the lead sponsor of this summer's Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater," said **Chris McInerney**, President and CEO. "This iconic summer theater experience is always a joyous celebration in the cultural life of New York City. Shakespeare's *Richard III* performed under the stars, free, for city audiences will be a highlight."

The Public Theater, in partnership with Central Park Conservancy and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, is embarking on a much-needed revitalization of the 60-year-old Delacorte Theater in Central Park. The plan—a major investment in outdoor cultural space as part of New York's economic recovery—will dramatically improve the home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, addressing critical infrastructure, accessibility, and theatrical needs. The key approved design which will begin construction in Fall 2022 includes accessible and comfortable space for audiences and artists with disabilities, streamlined backstage operations and improved comfort for cast and crew, a revitalized exterior for a more dynamic aesthetic experience, a focus on resilience and sustainability, and lighting improvements, among other benefits. For more information on The Delacorte's revitalization, visit publictheater.org.

To support The Public Theater, become a Supporter or Partner by visiting publictheater.org/supporttoday.

The Public Theater's Annual Gala will be celebrated on **Tuesday, May 24** at The Delacorte Theater with a rain date on Wednesday, May 25. For more information on The Public Theater's Gala, visit <http://www.publictheater.org/gala22> or email gala@publictheater.org.

BIOS

ROBERT O'HARA (*Richard III* Director) is the Tony-nominated director of *Slave Play* and is currently working on several film, television, and theater projects. He's a two-time Obie Award and two-time NAACP Award Winner whose work has been seen around the country. Among his recent and upcoming projects are writing *Camp* for Warner Bros, to be directed by Billy Porter; directing *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at Audible/Minetta Lane Theater; and directing the revival of Anthony Davis' opera, *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in a co-pro of the MET, Michigan, Omaha, and Seattle Opera. SDC, WGA, DGA, AGMA.

DANAI GURIRA (*Richard III*) is an award-winning playwright and actress born in Iowa to Zimbabwean parents and raised in Zimbabwe. As an actor Gurira starred as General Okoye in Marvel's Academy Award-winning blockbuster film *Black Panther* (People's Choice Award, NAACP Image Award, SAG Award: Outstanding Performance by a Cast/Motion Picture). She reprised her role in *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*. She also starred as 'Michonne' on AMC's "The Walking Dead" for seven seasons. Some other acting credits include *Mother of George*, *The Visitor*, Shakespeare in the Park's production of *Measure for Measure* (Equity Callaway Award) and Broadway's revival of *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Playwright credits include *In the Continuum* (Obie Award, Outer Critics Award, Helen Hayes Award), *Eclipsed* (Tony nomination: Best Play, NAACP Award, Helen Hayes Award: Best New Play, Connecticut Critics Circle Award: Outstanding Production of a Play), *The Convert* (six Ovation Awards, L.A. Outer Critics Award), and *Familiar* (Sam Norkin Award). An ambassador for Bono's ONE campaign, she is co-founder of [Almasi Arts Alliance](#), founder of [Love Our Girls](#), and a Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women. MFA: Tisch Grad Acting, NYU. Twitter/Instagram: [@DanaiGurira](#)

SHAINA TAUB (As You Like It Adapter and Music & Lyrics/Jaques) is an Emmy and Drama Desk-nominated songwriter and performer. She is a winner of the Kleban Prize, the Fred Ebb Award, and the Jonathan Larson Grant. Her original musical *Suffs* will have its world premiere at The Public Theater this year. She is a signed artist with Atlantic Records, and her third album, *Songs of the Great Hill*, will be out this spring. She's an artist-in-residence at The Public Theater, where she has a regular concert residency at Joe's Pub. She's currently writing lyrics for the upcoming Broadway musical *The Devil Wears Prada*, with music by Sir Elton John. She created and starred in musical adaptations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth*

Night and *As You Like It* that were commissioned and produced by The Public Theater at The Delacorte in Central Park as part of their groundbreaking community-based program, Public Works. Those adaptations have now been produced in London, Seattle, Dallas, and beyond.

SONYA TAYEH (*As You Like It Original Choreography*) is an Tony award-winning choreographer currently represented on Broadway with *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*. Selected credits include “Rent: Live” (Fox), *The Lucky Ones* (Ars Nova), *Face the Torrent* for Malpaso Dance Co, American Ballet Theatre, *You'll Still Call Me By Name* (commissioned by Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and New York Live Arts), Martha Graham Dance Company’s *Lamentation Variation* series and *Canticle* remount (The Joyce/Tour), *Hundred Days* (The Public’s Under the Radar Festival and NYTW), and *Kung Fu* (Signature Theatre). Her accolades include two Lortels, an Obie, two Emmy noms, and 2 Drama Desk Awards. Tayeh has directed and choreographed for world-renowned musical artists such as Madonna, Florence and the Machine, and Miley Cyrus. www.sonyatayeh.com

LAURIE WOOLERY (*As You Like It Adapter and Director*) is a director, playwright, community activist, and citizen artist who works in theaters across the country, including The Public Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory, Trinity Repertory, Goodman Theatre, Cornerstone Theater Company, and South Coast Repertory. Projects include the world premiere of Mary Kathryn Nagle’s *Manahatta* at both Yale Repertory and Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the world premiere musical of *As You Like It*, co-created with Shaina Taub for The Public Theater. In 2020, Woolery produced the documentary *Under The Greenwood Tree* that tells the story of how the Public Works community banded together amidst the global pandemic and anti-racist uprising, as well as curating the national community public art installation *The Seed Project* on the façade of The Public Theater, featuring 164 Public Works community members sharing their hopes for the future. Woolery has developed new work with diverse communities ranging from incarcerated women to residents of a Kansas town devastated by a tornado. She creates site-specific work ranging from a working sawmill in Eureka to the banks of the Los Angeles River. Woolery is the Director of Public Works at The Public Theater, a program that seeks to engage the people of New York by making them creators and not just spectators. Working with partner organizations in all 5 boroughs, Public Works invites members of diverse communities to join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater. Woolery is the former Associate Artistic Director of Cornerstone Theater Company and Conservatory Director at South Coast Repertory. Woolery is a founding member of The Sol Project, 2020 United States Artist recipient, and 2021 American for the Arts Johnson Fellow.

DARIUS DE HAAS (*Duke Senior*). Broadway credits include *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Carousel*, *Rent*, *The Gershwin's Fascinating Rhythm*, *Marie Christine*, and *Shuffle Along*. Other notable theater includes *The Waves in Quarantine*, *Running Man* (Obie Award), *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*, and *Children of Eden*. TV credits include “Dietland,” “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” (the singing voice of “Shy Baldwin”), and “In The Life.” As a musical artist, among de Haas’ credits are The Lincoln Center American Songbook, Duke Ellington Sacred Concert with Los Angeles Master Chorale, Carnegie Hall, and many orchestras including the National Symphony, Cincinnati Pops, and Boston Pops. His recordings include *Day Dream: Variations on Strayhorn*, *Quiet Please* (with Steven Blier), and many Original Cast Recordings. de Haas is proud to be on the Board of Directors for Covenant House and a founding member of Black Theatre United. Please visit www.dariusdehaas.com

JOEL PEREZ (*Touchstone*). His theater work includes *Fun Home* (Broadway), *Kiss My Aztec!* (La Jolla Playhouse), and *Sweet Charity* (New Group; Lortel Award). He can be seen on screen in *tick, tick... Boom!* (Netflix), “Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert” (NBC), and “Odd Mom Out” (Bravo). His writing includes *The Black Beans Project* (Huntington Theatre) and *Playing With Myself* (Ars Nova). He is a WarnerMedia 150 Artist for his pilot *You're Tired, You're Poor*. He won the 2021 Voces Latinx National Playwriting Competition for his play *From the Fountain*. He is a 2019 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow in Playwriting. @misterjoelperez www.joelperez.com

ABOUT **THE** **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 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

ABOUT TODAYTIX

TodayTix takes the drama out of theatre ticketing. The company caters to today's audiences with diverse shows, prices that can't be beat, and a frictionless, highly rated app. Founded in 2013, with its seamless platform, impressive reach, and first-to-market signature digital Lottery and mobile Rush programs, TodayTix works with over 2,000 partners in numerous markets to attract and engage millions of theatregoers across the world. TodayTix is part of TodayTix Group, the premier discovery and ticketing partner for global cultural events, combining unparalleled inventory, an expansive multi-retailer ecosystem, and unique relationships with theatre and culture's best. To learn more, visit www.todaytix.com or download TodayTix for iOS or Android.

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 Forum, Under the Radar, 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 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, 184 Obie Awards, 55 Drama Desk Awards, 58 Lortel Awards, 34 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 58 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—and 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.

The Jerome L. Greene Foundation is the proud season sponsor of Free Shakespeare in the Park.

The LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

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