

National Theatre

Tuesday 23 January 2024

NATIONAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES NEW PRODUCTIONS FOR SUMMER 2024

- Carrie Cracknell returns to the National Theatre to direct Frank Galati's adaptation of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, with Cherry Jones as Ma Joad.
- Katori Hall's Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy *The Hot Wing King* makes its UK premiere in a new production directed by Roy Alexander Weise.
- 25 years since its first staging, Complicité bring back the transcendent *Mnemonic*. Conceived by Simon McBurney, this groundbreaking show from one of the UK's most highly regarded theatre companies will return at the National Theatre.
- James Graham's acclaimed adaptation of Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff* to transfer to the Olivier theatre for a limited run, directed by Kate Wasserberg.
- Tickets for *Boys from the Blackstuff*, *Mnemonic*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Hot Wing King* go on sale to the public on 8 February.

The National Theatre today announces new productions for all three South Bank stages this summer: Alan Bleasdale's *Boys from the Blackstuff* and *Mnemonic* in the Olivier theatre and *The Grapes of Wrath* in the Lyttelton theatre, alongside the previously announced *The Hot Wing King* in the Dorfman theatre. Tickets for all four productions are on sale to the public from **Thursday 8 February**, nationaltheatre.org.uk.

Following its acclaimed run at Liverpool's Royal Court, **James Graham's** powerful new adaptation of Alan Bleasdale's seminal TV show, *Boys from the Blackstuff*, comes to the Olivier stage. By arrangement with Bill Kenwright Limited, the production is directed by **Kate Wasserberg**, with original cast members **George Caple**, **Dominic Carter**, **Helen Carter**,

Aron Julius, Nathan McMullen, Lauren O’Neil, Barry Sloane and Mark Womack returning. This is followed by *Mnemonic*, conceived by **Simon McBurney**, in a co-production with Complicité. Exploring memory, origins and migration, casting includes original company members **Richard Katz** and **Kostas Philippoglou** with further cast to be announced.

In the Lyttelton is a new production of **Frank Galati’s** Tony Award-winning adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath*, based on the novel by **John Steinbeck**, directed by **Carrie Cracknell**. Casting includes **Cherry Jones** (*Succession*) as Ma Joad with further casting to be announced.

In the Dorfman is the previously announced *The Hot Wing King* by **Katori Hall**, who makes her National Theatre mainstage debut and reunites with director **Roy Alexander Weise** after their celebrated production of *The Mountaintop*. Cast includes **Kadiff Kirwan** (*Slow Horses*) as Cordell with further casting to be announced.

Director of the National Theatre, **Rufus Norris**, said: ‘Collaboration is at the heart of our work and this summer our three stages are energised by this as we welcome friends both new and old to the South Bank. I’m thrilled that Katori Hall will make her mainstage debut bringing a taste of Memphis’ culture and cuisine to the stage with the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Hot Wing King*, making its UK debut here at the National Theatre.

‘Partnering with Liverpool’s Royal Court we will see Alan Bleasdale’s seminal *Boys from the Blackstuff* in the Olivier, as well as reuniting with Complicité, who return to the National for the first time since 2016, to delight and inspire new theatre-goers with a reworking of their timelessly classic production of *Mnemonic*. Lastly, we welcome back Carrie Cracknell to the National Theatre, who will direct a new production of *The Grapes of Wrath*.’

All shows will have a limited number of 6.30pm performances as part of the National Theatre’s continuing pilot. This trial follows a major piece of research undertaken by the National Theatre to understand more from audiences about their post-Covid lifestyles and habits, including varying working patterns and journey times, particularly for those living outside of London. The early evening performances offer flexibility for audiences to make the most of their evening, with more time after curtain down to eat or to travel. 6.30pm performances fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Olivier theatre

Forty years after **Alan Bleasdale’s** ground-breaking television series, and following its run at Liverpool’s Royal Court, **James Graham’s** (*Dear England*) powerful new adaptation of *Boys from the Blackstuff* comes to the South Bank for a limited run, directed by **Kate**

Wasserberg (Artistic Director, Theatr Clwyd) in her National Theatre debut. In 1980s Liverpool, life is tough as Chrissie, Loggo, George, Dixie and Yosser play the game. But there is no work and no money. What are they supposed to do? Find jobs, avoid the 'sniffers', work harder, work longer, buy cheaper, spend less? All whilst having a laugh along the way. Cast includes **George Cagle, Dominic Carter, Helen Carter, Aron Julius, Nathan McMullen, Lauren O'Neil, Barry Sloane** and **Mark Womack** with further casting to be announced.

Directed by **Kate Wasserberg**, the set and costume designer is **Amy Jane Cook**, lighting designer **Ian Scott**, movement director **Rachael Nanyonjo**, composer and sound designer **Dyfan Jones**, associate sound designer **Kate Harvey**, audio visual designer **Jamie Jenkin** and fight director **Rachel Bown-Williams** of Rc-Annie Ltd.

Playing in the Olivier theatre 22 May–8 June, with press night on 29 May.

Boys from the Blackstuff is a Liverpool's Royal Court production by arrangement with Bill Kenwright Limited.

25 years after its first staging, Complicité's **Mnemonic** returns at the National Theatre, conceived and directed by **Simon McBurney** (*Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead, The Encounter, Street of Crocodiles*). A body is found in the ice, and a woman is looking for her father while a man searches for his lost lover. *Mnemonic* is as much about origins as it is about memory and remembering what is lost. *Mnemonic* asks: what is our place in the natural world? How have human relationships with the environment shaped patterns of migration? Who are we and where do we come from? Cast includes **Richard Katz** and **Kostas Philippoglou** with further casting to be announced.

Directed by **Simon McBurney**, the set designer is **Michael Levine**, costume designer **Christina Cunningham**, lighting designer **Paul Anderson**, sound designer **Christopher Shutt**, video designer **Roland Horvath**, casting director **Alastair Coomer CDG**, associate director **Christina Deinsberger** and associate set designer **Peter Butler**.

Playing in the Olivier theatre 22 June–10 Aug, with press night on 2 July.

Mnemonic is a co-production with Complicité.

Lyttelton theatre

Frank Galati's Tony Award-winning adaptation of **John Steinbeck's** masterpiece, ***The Grapes of Wrath*** is directed by **Carrie Cracknell** (*Julie, The Deep Blue Sea*). Forced to travel west in search of a promised land, the Joad family embark on an epic journey across

America in the hope of finding work and a new life in California. Cast includes **Cherry Jones** with further casting to be announced.

Directed by **Carrie Cracknell**, the set designer is **Alex Eales**, costume designer **Evie Gurney**, lighting designer **Guy Hoare**, composer **Stuart Earl**, staff director **Georgia Green** and casting by **Alastair Coomer CDG** and **Naomi Downham**.

Playing in the Lyttelton theatre 17 July–14 September, with press night on 25 July.

Dorfman theatre

Katori Hall's (*Tina: The Tina Turner Musical, The Mountaintop*) Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy ***The Hot Wing King*** makes its UK debut in a fiery new production directed by **Roy Alexander Weise** (*'Master Harold'... and the boys, Nine Night*). Things are heating up in Memphis as the annual Hot Wing Festival rolls into town. With their sights set on the crown, Cordell, his partner Dwayne and friends Isom and Big Charles team up again as the New Wing Order, with a new attitude and a mouth-watering new wing recipe. But after an unexpected family emergency, their plans get derailed as the men navigate the meaning of love, family and staying true to yourself. Cast includes **Kadiff Kirwan** with further casting to be announced.

Directed by **Roy Alexander Weise**, the set and costume designer is **Rajha Shakiry**, lighting designer **Joshua Pharo**, composer **Femi Temowo**, sound designer **Elena Peña**, choreographer **DK Fashola**, casting director **Jacob Sparrow**, dramatherapist **Samantha Adams** and dialect coach **Hazel Holder**.

Playing in the Dorfman theatre 11 July–14 September, with press night on 18 July.

National Theatre Learning

This summer, young people from across the UK will take over the Dorfman theatre as the 29th **National Theatre Connections Festival** returns from 25 to 29 June. Ten new plays from exciting contemporary writers, including **Luke Barnes**, **Mojisola Adebayo** and **Yasmeen Khan**, will be staged by ten youth theatre groups from across the UK. Over 7,000 young people from Pitlochry to Plymouth are taking part in Connections this year.

The New Views Festival also returns in July. The winning play of the National Theatre New Views playwriting competition for young people will be staged as part of the festival, alongside rehearsed readings from shortlisted writers. New Views sees over a thousand young people writing original scripts inspired by their own experiences. Further details to be announced.

For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning

ENDS

For images, [click here](#)

Production	Theatre	Dates	Press Night	Press Contact
<i>Boys from the Blackstuff</i>	Olivier theatre	22 May– 8 June	29 May	Emily Ritchie eritchie@nationaltheatre.org.uk 020 7452 3236
<i>Mnemonic</i>	Olivier theatre	22 June– 10 Aug	02 July	James Lever jlever@nationaltheatre.org.uk 020 7452 3763
<i>The Hot Wing King</i>	Dorfman theatre	11 July– 14 Sep	18 July	James Lever jlever@nationaltheatre.org.uk 020 7452 3763
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	Lyttelton theatre	17 July– 14 Sep	25 July	Emily Ritchie eritchie@nationaltheatre.org.uk 020 7452 3236

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Boys from the Blackstuff

This production is supported by Marcia B Whitaker and The Hintze Family Charitable Foundation.

The Hot Wing King

The National Theatre's New Work programme is supported by the Lawton W Fitt & James I McLaren Foundation.

Connections

Connections is supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation, Buffini Chao Foundation, The EBM Charitable Trust, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Katie Bradford Arts Trust, Susan Miller & Byron Grote, Mulberry Trust, Tuixen Foundation, The Peter Cundill Foundation, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Woodward Charitable Trust and The John Thaw Foundation.

New Views

New Views is supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation, Buffini Chao Foundation, Old Possum's Practical Trust, Kusuma Trust UK, Unwin Charitable Trust, Noel Coward Foundation, Chapman Charitable Trust and The Golsoncott Foundation. Audible is the Official Audio Partner of New Views.

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home. World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London. Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in 71 of the 109 levelling up priority areas in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre. For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk

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