



Thursday 2 May 2024

**NATIONAL THEATRE UP NEXT GALA RAISES A RECORD BREAKING  
£2 MILLION  
TO SUPPORT NATIONAL THEATRE FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN  
STORIES START HERE**

- **National Theatre Director, Rufus Norris, hosted a fundraising gala last night in the Lyttelton theatre with stars from stage and screen**
- **Funds raised go towards the National Theatre Stories Start Here Fundraising Campaign supporting the NT in its mission to spark imagination, nurture talent and inspire the world**
- **The evening featured an original performance conceived and co-directed by Rufus Norris and Emily Burns, with contributions from actors including Peter Forbes, Andrew Garfield, Adrian Lester, Katherine Parkinson and Dame Harriet Walter**
- **Star auction lots included behind-the-scenes access to the set of BAFTA-nominated Apple TV+ series, *Slow Horses* and a limited-edition David Yarrow print 'An Englishman in New York', with Champagne Afternoon Tea at The Wolseley with its subject, Bill Nighy.**

Last night the National Theatre's biennial Up Next Gala took place at the iconic South Bank venue. Raising a record-breaking £2m for the Stories Start Here Campaign, the most ambitious in the National Theatre's history, the evening showcased the power of stories and the impact the National Theatre has worldwide. The money raised will ensure the National Theatre, which serves 17.5m people a year, is thriving and vital, sparking imagination, nurturing talent and inspiring the world for generations to come.

On the night, Rufus Norris led two specially commissioned performances, in the Lyttelton theatre featuring leading performers from stage and screen. With both performances centering around the art of crafting a story, the stage was transformed into a beautiful writer's studio by the expert craftspeople of the National Theatre, using props from across the 60-year history of the theatre, including the last remaining rehearsal room desk from the National Theatre's original Old Vic Home and costumes from some of the the National Theatre's most iconic productions. After the first performance individually decorated tables were revealed on the Lyttelton stage, dispersed amongst the set and adorned with unique sustainable floral centerpieces from Pom Pom Factory. Performers throughout the evening included: Rosalie Craig, Peter Forbes, Victoria Hamilton-Barritt, Adrian Lester, Katherine Parkinson, Natey Jones, Fay Ripley, Harriet Walter, Duncan Wisbey and Sargon Yelda.

**Rufus Norris, Director and Co-Chief Executive of the National Theatre**, said: "Last night at the Up Next Gala we celebrated the immeasurable importance of the NT. The extraordinary support shown for our fundraising campaign from our many supporters and theatre makers is testament to the power of theatre, the impact stories have on all our lives and the importance of the National Theatre in telling and sharing these with millions of people worldwide every year. I never could have imagined that this building would be so central in the story of my own life, working together with the brilliant inspiring story tellers and theatre makers who I have travelled with over the last decade, making what we do more national in every way, reaching multitudes of young people, protecting and building up this unique skills centre ensuring the health of the sector for generations to come. To have raised £2m at my final Up Next Gala as Director of the National Theatre gives me such hope for the future, I feel so proud of the countless stories we have told that have enriched our culture and society - sparking imagination, nurturing talent and inspiring the world."

The evening began with a Nyetimber drinks reception, before guests were served a bespoke, seasonal dinner by the luxury catering company AP&Co. The three-course menu was paired with wine provided by award-winning fine wine specialists, Berry Bros & Rudd, all served on the stage of the Lyttelton theatre creating a unique and special evening for guests.

Bespoke experiences were purchased in a live auction on the night hosted by UK Chairman at Sotheby's Lord Harry Dalmeny. Auction lots also included exclusive access to the rehearsal room of the recently announced NT production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* featuring a cast including Ncuti Gatwa (*Doctor Who*), a football package with four hospitality tickets to watch

England V Finland at the European Championships, dinner for two with Joseph Fiennes – who played Gareth Southgate in smash-hit *Dear England* and a set visit to Match of the Day, a behind-the-scenes visit to the set of BAFTA-nominated Apple TV+ series, *Slow Horses* and Champagne Afternoon Tea with Bill Nighy at the Wolseley with a limited-edition David Yarrow print 'An Englishman in New York'.

The Stories Start Here fundraising campaign follows the landmark £26.4m capital investment from the government, marking the NT's 60th anniversary, supporting urgent infrastructure updates to the building and boosting specialist skills nationwide through the National Theatre Skills Centre. The government's commitment joins the £42million raised for the campaign demonstrating how private and public funders can work hand in hand to deliver transformative results.

### **ENDS**

Images can be downloaded [here](#).

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With thanks to: Mark Pigott Family, Charles Stanley, Nyetimber and Berry Bros & Rudd.

### **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 programs, we are active in 71 of the 109 levelling up priority areas in the UK. A registered charity with a 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](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk)

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