

National Theatre

17 December 2024

Gwilym Lee to play Gareth Southgate in the return of smash-hit production *Dear England* by James Graham

This Olivier Award-winning 'Best New Play' will return to the National Theatre in Spring 2025, followed by a 4-week run at the Lowry, Salford



Image: David Reiss

The National Theatre today announces that **Gwilym Lee** (*SAS Rogue Heroes*, BBC One; *Bohemian Rhapsody*, 20th Century Fox) will play former England manager **Gareth Southgate** in the return of James Graham's smash-hit production of [*Dear England*](#), which will play the Olivier theatre from 10 March to 24 May 2025 followed by a four-week run at its Theatre Nation Partner, the **Lowry** in Salford, from 29 May to 29 June 2025.

Written by playwright **James Graham** (*Punch*, Young Vic; *Sherwood*, BBC One) and directed by the Almeida Theatre's Artistic Director **Rupert Goold** (*Patriots*, *Ink*; Almeida Theatre/West

End/Broadway), *Dear England* is an epic examination of nation and game, which has been updated following the 2024 UEFA EURO tournament to reflect Gareth Southgate's final chapter as England manager.

Gwilym Lee is best known for playing legendary Queen guitarist Brian May in the award-winning *Bohemian Rhapsody* opposite Rami Malek, as well as Grigor Dymov in hit Hulu show *The Great*.

He can currently be seen in Robert Zemeckis' latest feature *Here* with Tom Hanks and Robin Wright and joins the second season of BBC One's *SAS: Rogue Heroes* which broadcasts from 1 January 2025.

Dear England marks Lee's return to the National Theatre after previous productions including *Danton's Death* (2010) and *Oedipus* (2008).

Gwilym Lee said *"I am thrilled to return to the stage after seven years (and to the National Theatre after nearly twice that) to play Gareth Southgate in Rupert Goold's brilliant production. I can't say I grew up with football in my bones, like some, but even I was swept up on the wave of excitement and optimism that this group of players under Gareth Southgate created again and again. They struck a chord that resonated beyond the world of football and started a conversation about things like identity, leadership and Englishness that James Graham so passionately encapsulates in this play. I can't wait to take on the role and continue this conversation."*

The wider creative team for *Dear England* includes set designer **Es Devlin**, costume designer **Evie Gurney**, lighting designer **Jon Clark**, co-movement directors **Ellen Kane** and **Hannes Langolf**, video designer **Ash J Woodward**, co-sound designers **Dan Balfour** and **Tom Gibbons**, additional music by **Max Perryment**, revival director **Elin Schofield**, casting director **Bryony Jarvis-Taylor**, dialect coach **Richard Ryder**, voice coaches **Cathleen McCarron** and **Tasmin Newlands**, associate lighting designer **Ben Jacobs**, associate sound designer **Johnny Edwards** and staff director **Connie Treves**.

Further casting to be announced.

The country that gave the world football has since delivered a painful pattern of loss. Why can't England's men win at their own game? The team has the worst track record for penalties in the world, and manager Gareth Southgate knows he needs to open his mind and face up to the years of hurt to take team and country back to the promised land.

Dear England was originally commissioned by the National Theatre and developed with the theatre's New Work department. It had its world premiere in the Olivier theatre on 20 June 2023. Following a sold-out run, *Dear England* transferred to the Prince Edward Theatre, in London's West End, from 9 October 2023 to 13 January 2024, where it broke box office records. *Dear England* was subsequently released to cinemas through National Theatre Live on 24 January 2024 and has been screened almost 2,500 times across the UK. The BBC has also recently commissioned a four-part drama of *Dear England* based on the stage production for BBC One and BBC iPlayer.

Dear England will play the Olivier theatre from 10 March to 24 May 2025, followed by a four-week run at **the Lowry** in Salford from 29 May to 29 June 2025.

ENDS

For Gwilym's headshot and images from the previous production of ***Dear England*** in the West End, click [here](#).

For press enquiries re the run at the **National Theatre**, please contact **Emily Ritchie**:
eritchie@nationaltheatre.org.uk

For press enquires re the run at the **Lowry**, please contact **Clare McCormack**:
cmccormack@nationaltheatre.org.uk

LISTINGS

National Theatre

Dates: 10 March 2025 – 24 May 2025

Press Night: Tuesday 18 March 2025, 7pm

Box Office: nationaltheatre.org.uk

Address: National Theatre, Upper Ground, London, SE1 9PX

Performance Schedule:

Mon–Sat at 7.30pm

Wed and Sat at 2pm and 7.30pm

Tue and Thu selected performances at 6.30pm

*schedule may differ during previews and bank holidays, please see website for details

Assisted Performances:

Audio Described performances: Sat 12 Apr, 2pm; Wed 30 Apr, 1 pm (school matinee); Fri 23 May, 7.30pm

Captioned Performances: Sat 19 Apr, 2pm Wed 7 May (school matinee, also with BSL), 1pm

Thu 15 May, 7.30pm. Smart caption glasses will be available from Weds 26 March.

BSL performances: Wed 7 May (school matinee, also with captions), 1pm; Fri 2 May, 7.30pm

Relaxed performance: Tue 15 Apr, 7.30pm

Lowry

Dates: 29 May - 29 June 2025

Press Night: Sunday 1 June 2025, 3pm

Box Office: thelowry.com

Address: Lowry, Pier, 8 The Quays, Salford, Manchester M50 3AZ

Assisted Performances:

BSL Performance: Saturday 7 June, 7pm & Wednesday 11 June, 2pm

Captioned Performances: Wednesday 11 June, 7pm

Audio Described: Wednesday 18 June, 7pm & Saturday 28 June, 2pm

With Thanks

The commissioning of this production was supported by the Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation. The original production at the National Theatre was generously supported by the Dear England Team of Production Champions.

Dear England at the National Theatre and the Lowry is supported by American Express, the National Theatre's Official Payment Partner.

About American Express® Experiences:

Through Amex® Experiences, Cardmembers have access to presale tickets, as well as the best seats and exclusive offers at some of the UK's most sought-after entertainment events via partnerships with a range of institutions, including the National Theatre. Cardmembers will receive presale access to *Dear England* from 10am on 12 June. Amex Experiences is just one example of the powerful backing that American Express provides its Cardmembers.

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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 every local authority 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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About Lowry

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