

National Theatre

8 May 2025

NATIONAL THEATRE RELEASES '*THE NEXT MORNING*', A NEW SHORT FILM CONNECTING WARTIME GENERATION WITH TODAY'S YOUTH IN TRIBUTE TO VE DAY'S LEGACY



To mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the National Theatre today releases *The Next Morning*, a short film by Olivier Award-winning writer **James Graham**, featuring **Julian Glover**, **Joseph Mydell** and **Siân Phillips**. Directed by **Alice Wordsworth**, and produced by **Emma Hall**, the film explores how memories of the Second World War are passed down through generations, asking what the end of the war means in a world shaped by its aftermath. The film can be viewed [here](#).

Set in contemporary Britain, *The Next Morning* interweaves three stories of children uncovering personal reflections from the day peace was declared in Europe in 1945.

As a wartime time capsule is uncovered in an allotment, a granddaughter discovers a diary in the attic, and a grandson reads an unsent letter to a father lost in the war, memories of VE Day

resonate with new meaning. A new generation listens, reads, and remembers as the echoes of history come alive through diaries, keepsakes, and family stories — culminating in a new time capsule buried for the future.

Combining archival footage with deeply personal monologues, *The Next Morning* is a celebration of remembrance, resilience, and renewal — reminding us that peace is a legacy we must choose to carry forward.

The National Theatre will also run a year-long [schools engagement programme](#) responding to the events of VE and VJ Day and this significant period of the UK's history. Starting in September 2025, the programme for Key Stages 3 and 4 will be delivered as part of a nationwide tour of the Oliver Award-winning play, *Dear England*, which will tour to 16 venues across England from 15 September until 16 March 2026, in a co-production with **JAS Theatricals**.

Inspired by Gareth Southgate's 'Dear England' open letter that he wrote to England fans in 2021, the schools programme will prompt young people across the UK to reflect on their own place in history, just as the footballers in Southgate's squad were encouraged to do. Assemblies and workshops using spoken word, and sound design, will be delivered in schools across England, supporting students to share the hopes and aspirations that they have for themselves and other young people 80 years' from now. A resulting sound archive will form a 2025-2026 time capsule containing young people's voices for now, and the future. Students will also be invited to see performances of *Dear England* during the tour. The programme is expected to reach over **10,000 young people**.

The Next Morning is made possible thanks to funding from the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport**.

James Graham, the multi-award-winning stage and screen writer and writer of *Dear England*, said: *"It's a real honour to be part of a project that considers how we pass on such a vital part of our national story to future generations. The inspiration drawn from Gareth Southgate's 'Dear England' letter feels especially powerful — his journey, like the themes of VE Day, speaks to identity, hope, and the strength we find in coming together. We were deeply moved by how Dear England resonated with younger audiences, and The Next Morning continues that spirit — a story that, much like post-war Britain, is ultimately about renewal, resilience, and the belief in a better future."*

Joseph Mydell said: *"What a powerful and moving film, linking the generations through memory and commemoration."*

Kate Varah, Executive Director & Co-Chief Executive, National Theatre said: *"At the National Theatre, we are honoured to be part of marking this important moment in the country's history. The Next Morning beautifully captures the emotional legacy of VE Day, reflecting on the hopes and aspirations young people held for themselves and their country in 1945. This film, alongside our nationwide schools programme delivered through the tour of our smash-hit play Dear England, invites today's young people to share their dreams for the future. Through these inter-connected perspectives, the project brings together the voices of 1945 and 2025 — inspiring creativity across the country and spotlighting the imagination, resilience, and optimism of a new generation."*

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Production Team

- **Writer:** James Graham
- **Director:** Alice Wordsworth
- **Producer:** Emma Hall
- **Creative Producer:** Marta Miskaryan
- **Head of Production & Content:** Jess Richardson
- **Editor:** Jacob Harrey
- **Head of Creative Studio, Video:** Sinead Blatch
- **Director of Photography:** Johnny Ho
- **Production Manager:** Joanna Green
- **Production Coordinator:** Rohan Perumatantri
- **Composer:** Jack Baxter
- **Dramaturgy:** Emma Hall and Alice Wordsworth

Images are available [here](#).

For more information, contact Benno Rembeck, Senior Corporate Communications Manager: brembeck@nationaltheatre.org.uk

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. We tell big stories in bold ways, offering the widest access to high quality theatre to millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on our own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

We bring the world to the National Theatre and take the National Theatre to the world through reimagined classic stories meeting fresh, contemporary voices. As part of our mission to celebrate and platform bold voices in British theatre, the National Theatre proudly hosts a dynamic group of Resident Companies, offering a platform for collaboration, growth, and innovation.

Through touring our work to local theatres, schools and through our nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. We invest in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously our role as the nation's theatre. We work with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity. The National Theatre Skills Centre supports thousands of young people every year to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk