RIVALRY, SEDUCTION, AND POWER: NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE ANNOUNCES TRIPLE THEATRICAL TREAT FOR CINEMA AUDIENCES IN 2026

The Audience, The Playboy of the Western World, and Les Liaisons Dangereuses confirmed for silver screen slate



Images are available here

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National Theatre Live announces its next slate of productions releasing to cinemas worldwide in 2026, including two highly anticipated National Theatre productions captured from the Lyttelton stage on London's South Bank and the re-release of a fan-favourite. These three titles join the previously announced ***Hamlet*** for the 2026 programme. All NT Live releases are captured in front of a live audience in a process honed over 16 years reaching viewers at over 1,000 venues across the UK and many more worldwide.

Returning to cinemas on **26 February 2026** (UK only) for the first time in over a decade, **Helen Mirren** plays Queen Elizabeth II in the Olivier and Tony Award-winning hit production ***The Audience,*** directed by **Stephen Daldry** and written by **Peter Morgan**. Netflix phenomenon *The Crown,* also written by Morgan, was based on this hit play. This production from Matthew Byam Shaw for Playful Productions, Robert Fox, and Andy Harries was captured live from London's West End in 2013 and went on to become one of the most-watched NT Live productions.

For 60 years, Queen Elizabeth II met with each of her prime ministers in a private weekly meeting. This meeting is known as The Audience. From Winston Churchill to Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron, the Queen advised her prime ministers on matters both public

and personal. Through these private audiences, we see glimpses of the woman behind the crown and witness the moments that shaped a monarch.

From **28 May 2026**, audiences can watch **Nicola Coughlan** *(Bridgerton)***, Éanna Hardwicke** *(Saipan)* and **Siobhán McSweeney** *(Derry Girls)* in John Millington Synge's ***The Playboy of the Western World,*** a story of youth and self-discovery directed by **Caitriona McLaughlin** *(Artistic Director of the Abbey Theatre).* This new production will be captured from its run in the Lyttelton theatre where it is playing until 28 February 2026.

Pegeen Flaherty's life is turned upside down when, on a normal day, a young man walks into her pub claiming that he's killed his father. Instead of being shunned, the killer Christy Mahon becomes a local hero. The welcome murderer wins hearts and races as he beds himself into village life. That is until a second man unexpectedly arrives on the scene…

BAFTA Award-winner **Lesley Manville** (*Phantom Thread*) joins **Aidan Turner** (*Rivals*) and **Monica Barbaro** (*A Complete Unknown)* in a striking new staging of **Christopher Hampton**'s celebrated adaptation of ***Les Liaisons Dangereuses***. **Marianne Elliott** (*Angels in America*) returns to the National Theatre after nine years to direct the major revival of Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' classic novel, captured from its run in the Lyttelton theatre where it will play from 21 March to 6 June 2026, ahead of its NT Live cinema release on **25 June 2026.**

Marquise de Merteuil is a master in the art of survival. Alongside the magnetic Vicomte de Valmont, they turn seduction into strategy and weaponise desire. But when their alliance collapses into rivalry, the battle between them threatens to destroy everyone in their path.

These three productions join the previously announced ***Hamlet*** captured from its run at the National Theatre this Autumn, directed by National Theatre Deputy Artistic Director, **Robert Hastie** (*Standing at the Sky's Edge, Operation Mincemeat)*, with Olivier Award-winner **Hiran Abeysekera** (*Life of Pi*) as Hamlet. This sharp, stylish and darkly funny reimagining will kick off the 2026 NT Live slate releasing to cinemas on **22 January**.

Trapped between duty and doubt, surrounded by power and privilege, young Prince Hamlet dares to ask the ultimate question – you know the one.

Audiences can find their nearest screening at NTLive.com with tickets going on sale from 10AM GMT on 4 December 2025.

Matt Risley, the National Theatre's newly appointed Chief Digital Officer said: "It has been a blockbuster year for NT Live and 2026 is already shaping up to follow suit. This year we've had over 1.2 million admissions worldwide, across six releases, and the momentum shows no sign of slowing down. As we shape the programme of NT Live, we always place audiences at the centre of our programme, and we believe our growing slate will resonate with audiences around the world. It's brilliant that we're able to bring back *The Audience* to the UK after over ten years, an often-requested fan-favourite, alongside two of the most highly anticipated productions of the National Theatre's new season."

Sky Arts is the Headline Sponsor of National Theatre Live in the UK.

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Notes to Editors

For further information please contact Zara Jayant at National Theatre zjayant@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Images are available here.

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 Sky Arts

Sky Arts exists to bring more art to more people across the UK. In 2020, with the creative industries under serious threat, we threw open our doors to make the channel free for everyone to watch. We've redoubled our mission to increase access to the arts and we're committed to getting everyone involved as the industry recovers. The fact is, we need the arts now like never before, and Sky Arts brings them straight to your living room.

We have something for everyone, championing creative talent by showcasing the best in music, theatre, dance, literature, opera and visual art. From Glyndebourne to Grime and Cézanne to The Style Council, we've got your passions covered. Millions of viewers tune in to hit returning series such as Portrait Artist of the Year, Urban Myths and British cultural institution The South Bank Show, but our acclaimed new programmes might take you anywhere from Pinter's house with Danny Dyer to a Scottish road trip with Samuel Johnson.

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. Sky Arts is the headline sponsor of National Theatre Live in the UK and we work with cultural partners across the country including the English National Opera, Royal Academy of Arts, Tate, Creative Industries Federation and Coventry City of Culture to name but a few.

You can watch Sky Arts for free on Freeview channel 11 and Freesat channel 147. If you've got Sky or a Now TV entertainment pass, you can also watch over 2,000 hours of shows exclusively on demand.

Playful Productions

Founded by Matthew Byam Shaw, Nia Janis and Nick Salmon in 2010, Playful Productions is one of the most eminent independent theatre producers in the West End. Alongside its producing work, Playful is also a full-service executive producer and general management company.

As Producer and General Manager productions include *Born With Teeth* (Wyndham's); *The Fifth Step* (@SohoPlace); *Dr. Strangelove* (Noël Coward and Bord Gáis, Dublin); *Macbeth* (Harold Pinter); *MJ* (Prince Edward); *The Artist* (Theatre Royal Plymouth); *The Unfriend* (Chichester Festival Theatre, Criterion and Wyndham's); *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Sheffield, Lyric Hammersmith and Theatre Royal Haymarket); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – The Musical* (UK & Ireland Tour); *Good* (Harold Pinter); *Get Up Stand Up! The Bob Marley Musical* (Lyric); *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up The Bodies* (Aldwych) and *The Audience* (Gielgud and Apollo).

As Producer productions include *All My Sons* (Wyndham's - November 2025); *The Unbelievers* (Royal Court); *Make It Happen* (Dundee Rep and Edinburgh International Festival); *Buena Vista Social Club* (Broadway); *Groundhog Day* (The Old Vic and Princess Theatre, Melbourne); *MJ* (Broadway); *The House of Bernarda Alba* (National Theatre); *A Little Life* (Richmond, Harold Pinter and Savoy); *Wolf Hall: Parts 1 & 2* (Broadway) and *The Audience* (Broadway).

Current and recent Executive Producer work includes *Wicked* (Apollo Victoria); *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* (Piccadilly); *MJ* (Prince Edward) and *Wild Rose* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh); additionally, Executive Producer on the multi-Emmy-award-winning Netflix TV series *The Crown* based on *The Audience*.

As General Manager productions include *Wicked* (Apollo Victoria, UK & Ireland Tours and International Tour); *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* (Piccadilly); *Inter Alia* (Wyndham's Theatre); *Wild Rose* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh) and *Come From Away* (Abbey Theatre, Dublin and Phoenix).

playfuluk.com