

# National Theatre

## Press Release

**Cast announced for *Hamlet* reimagined for young audiences, returning to the National Theatre and on tour to schools across England**

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**18 January 2023**

**★★★★ The FT**

**★★★★ The Times**

**★★★★ The Stage**

**★★★★★ Reviews Hub**

*"Sharper, spookier storytelling than many a full-fat, four-hour version" - The FT*

Introducing young audiences to the world of theatre, an energetic retelling of one of Shakespeare's most well-known tragedies *Hamlet* returns for a schools tour across England culminating in performances in the Dorfman Theatre from **20 – 28 March 2023**.

This version is adapted for audiences aged 8–12 years old by **Jude Christian** (*Dick Whittington*, National Theatre) and originally directed by **Tinuke Craig** (*The Colour Purple*, *Vassa*). The revival is directed by **Ellie Hurt** (*A Christmas Carol*, *Shakespeare North Playhouse*).

**Simeon Desvignes** performs the role of *Hamlet* alongside a full company including **Curtis Callier**, **Adam Clifford**, **Ashley Gerlach**, **Kathrine Payne**, **Claire Redcliffe**, **Annabelle Terry** and **Monique Walker**.

Schools booking to watch the production in the Dorfman Theatre will be able to book pre-show workshops and a teacher training session at the National Theatre to explore theatre-making in the classroom.

Reaching over 8,000 young people in total, the production will also visit pupils as part of a 6-week tour into school halls across England, visiting seven areas including Thurrock, Knowsley, Tameside, Blackpool, Blackburn, Lincolnshire and Havering. The tour aims to introduce children to theatre and will include workshops, teacher training and resources for teachers to explore creative learning approaches to the world of Shakespeare as part of the curriculum. Last year *Hamlet* was watched by over 7,300 pupils from 50 schools across England.

Director **Ellie Hurt** said, *"I'm so excited to bring back Tinuke Craig's reimagining of Hamlet for young audiences. To be able to take it from the National Theatre stage and into schools across the country means this show will not only be some of our audience's first experience of Shakespeare, but also of live theatre. Along with a brilliant cast, creative and production team who have crafted this exciting, engaging and inclusive show, we hope to inspire younger audiences to explore the limitless possibilities in Shakespeare and theatre."*

Speaking about last year's touring production, a teacher said, *"It's a brilliant way of introducing Shakespeare to young people; making the plays accessible and enjoyable and boosting the confidence of young people. This project breathes life in Shakespeare's plays and ignites a new passion for theatres."*

**Rufus Norris**, Director of the National Theatre said, *"Our first experiences of live theatre can open a whole new world of discovery and opportunities, and so we are delighted to bring Jude Christian's exciting adaptation of Hamlet for young audiences back to the National Theatre and on tour to schools across the country. By transforming school halls with this production, we hope to introduce new young audiences to Shakespeare and theatre, and support teachers to ensure drama and creativity continues to be a key part of learning in primary schools"*.

Set and costume design is by **Frankie Bradshaw** with lighting designed by **Paul Knott**. Sound is designed by **Clark Henry-Brown** and **Dom Coyote**. Music is composed and directed by **Dom Coyote** and the fight director is **Jeremy Barlow**. Movement is directed by **Shane Dempsey**.

Tickets for public booking are now available at [www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/hamlet](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/hamlet)

The National Theatre supports primary schools to watch, make and learn about theatre with its **Let's Play** Programme. Opportunities include free teaching resources, teacher training, the **National Theatre Collection for Primary Schools** which provides state schools with free access to world-class plays to watch in the classroom and free digital storytelling project **Story Seekers**. To find out more visit [NT Learning](http://NT Learning).

**Performance Schedule**

Date	Location
2-3 Feb	Touring to schools across Thurrock
6-10 Feb	Touring to schools across Knowsley
13-17 Feb	Touring to schools across Tameside
20 – 24 Feb	Touring to schools across Blackpool and Blackburn
27 Feb – 3 Mar	Touring to schools across Lincolnshire
6 – 10 Mar	Touring to schools across Havering
20 – 28 Mar	Public Performances in Dorfman Theatre, NT

### **Access performances of *Hamlet***

Audio-described performance and touch tour - Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March

BSL/Captioned performance - Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March

*A supporting education programme is available for schools specially designed for pupils attending these performances including activity packs, pre-show workshops and a Q&A with the cast.*

Our partner organisations for the *Hamlet* schools tour are Shakespeare North, Tameside Council, Tameside Cultural Services, The Old Electric, Blackpool, Lincolnshire One Venues, Lincoln Performing Arts Centre, The Mighty Creatives, The Embassy Theatre Skegness and Grimsby Auditorium and Queens Theatre Hornchurch.

### **ENDS**

For images click [here](#)

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### **With thanks**

The National Theatre's Partner for Learning is Bank of America.

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### **About the National Theatre**

The National Theatre's mission is to make world-class theatre, for everyone. The National Theatre creates and shares unforgettable stories with audiences across the UK and around the world. On its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home, it strives to be accessible, inclusive and sustainable. The National Theatre empowers artists and craftspeople to make world leading work, investing in talent and developing new productions with a wide range of theatre companies at its New Work Department. Our nation thrives on fresh talent and new ideas, so the National Theatre works with young people and teachers right across the UK through performance, writing and technical programmes to ignite the creativity of the next generation. Together with communities, the National Theatre creates ambitious works of participatory theatre in deep

partnerships that unite theatres and local organisations – showing that nothing brings us together like theatre. The National Theatre needs your support to shape a bright, creative future.

For more information, please visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk)

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