



PRESS KIT

THE PUBLIC THEATER WELCOMES CITIZENS AS PRESENTING PARTNER OF SHAKESPEARE FOR THE CITY

Citizens' first multi-year arts partnership in New York expands access to world-class theater across all five boroughs

April 3, 2025 – The Public Theater (Artistic Director, Oskar Eustis; Executive Director, Patrick Willingham) proudly announces **Citizens** as the presenting partner of **SHAKESPEARE FOR THE CITY**, the Theater's free summer programming that brings world-class theater to audiences across New York City. Through the multi-year partnership, Citizens support will help expand access to The Public's celebrated productions, including: Free Shakespeare in the Park's **TWELFTH NIGHT** at the newly-revitalized Delacorte Theater, the touring Mobile Unit's **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**, and Public Works' **PERICLES** at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

"Free Shakespeare in the Park is a beloved tradition that brings people together to celebrate the creativity, diversity, and vibrancy that make New York City so special," said **Rebecca O'Connell**, NYC Metro Market President at Citizens. "We look forward to working with The Public Theater to support its summer programming and help expand access so that more communities can experience the magic of live theater."

"Free Shakespeare in the Park, Mobile Unit, and Public Works are the purest expressions of The Public's belief that culture belongs to everyone. It's been exciting to find such perfect alignment in Citizens and their deep commitment to community-first access," shares Executive Director **Patrick Willingham**. "Reopening The Delacorte Theater in Central Park is a tremendous milestone in a summer full of programming for New Yorkers in all five boroughs. 'Shakespeare for the City' encompasses our foundational idea that Shakespeare's work belongs to every New Yorker and this work will remain free, for all, forever."

- Part of The Public Theater's Civic Artistic Programs, the acclaimed Mobile Unit will celebrate its 15th anniversary with a free touring production of **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**. Directed by **Rebecca Martinez**, director of 2023 and 2024's tours of *The Comedy of Errors*, this new production of **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** will be performed at public plazas, parks, and beloved NYC landmarks across the city from May 29 to June 29. Performance locations will be announced on April 15.
- New York's beloved Public Works program will present a chorale adaptation of **PERICLES**. With music and lyrics by **Troy Anthony** and direction by **Carl Cofield**, **PERICLES** will be performed at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, with performances running from August 28 to September 2.
- Following a significant revitalization, The Delacorte Theater, iconic home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, will reopen in Summer 2025 with a production of Shakespeare's classic comedy **TWELFTH NIGHT**, also directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director/Resident Director, Tony Award nominee **Saheem Ali**, and featuring Public Theater alumni **Khris Davis**, **Peter Dinklage**, **Jesse Tyler Ferguson**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Sandra Oh**, and **Daphne Rubin-Vega** and Public debuts **b, Junior Nyong'o**, and **Moses Sumney**.

Citizens joins the Jerome L. Greene Foundation in support of Free Shakespeare in the Park. With Citizens' support, The Public Theater's daily ticket distributions for Free Shakespeare in the Park will reach more New Yorkers than ever before. Free tickets at borough distribution sites will begin on Friday, August 8 and continue through September 14 at distribution partner sites in all five boroughs including select Citizens branches. The performance calendars can be found at PublicTheater.org. Free ticket distribution details will be announced in April.

Since expanding into New York in 2022, Citizens has been dedicated to becoming part of the city's fabric, earning its place as a trusted partner to New Yorkers. Neighborhood by neighborhood, Citizens has built partnerships to expand economic opportunity, invest in workforce development, and celebrate New York's culture, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit. Through collaborations with organizations like New York Roadrunners, Queens Night Market, LISC, Pursuit and New York Restoration Project, Citizens is helping create a stronger, more vibrant future for the city.

ABOUT FREE SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK:

Since its inception, over six million people have enjoyed more than 160 free productions of Shakespeare and other classical works and musicals at The Delacorte Theater. Conceived by founder Joseph Papp to make great theater accessible to all, Free Shakespeare in the Park continues to be the bedrock of The Public's vision of artistic excellence and free access to culture.

The Public has launched "Forever Public," an ambitious, multi-year capital campaign with a goal of raising over \$175 million to secure the transformative mission of free theater for everyone. In addition to establishing the Fund for Free Theater endowment, Forever Public provided capital support to make the Delacorte revitalization possible.

Built in 1962, the theater had not undergone meaningful capital upgrades since 1999. The Public, in partnership with the Central Park Conservancy, NYC Parks, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and Ennead Architects to create a design and construction plan that minimized impact on Central Park and foregrounded resilience and sustainability to ensure the longevity of Free Shakespeare in the Park for many years to come.

Following groundbreaking in October 2023, reconstruction of interior spaces and the grandstand layout began with subsequent installation of redesigned lighting towers and the new wood façade made from salvaged NYC water towers. Concurrently, the Central Park Conservancy is renovating the Delacorte Restroom, slated for completion alongside the theater renovation. Reopening to visitors this summer, the revitalized Delacorte offers a state-of-the-art experience for audiences, artists, and staff alike with improved access for people living with disabilities.

The Delacorte project is publicly and privately funded with \$42 million contributed by the New York City Mayor, City Council, and Manhattan Borough President, as well as \$1 million from New York Assembly Member O'Donnell. The Public also wishes to acknowledge State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal and NYC Parks who have contributed funding to the Central Park Conservancy's Delacorte restroom renovation project.

ABOUT CIVIC ARTISTIC PROGRAMS:

Civic Artistic Programs is The Public Theater's hub for furthering our access, civic engagement, and community focused artistic innovation, focused on building connections with community organization and their members.

Now in its 15th season, The Public Theater's **MOBILE UNIT** is a modern reimagining of Joseph Papp's Mobile Theater. Mobile Unit reaches across economic and geographic barriers to the arts by meeting our

communities where they are—staging free professional theater productions and programs in local neighborhood venues such as libraries, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, and community centers across all five New York City boroughs. Mobile Unit has served thousands of audiences with critically acclaimed productions, including a 2018 National tour of Lynn Nottage’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Sweat*. In 2020, Mobile Unit received a Special Drama Desk Award for its program. During the pandemic, Mobile Unit launched a digital workshop inside the NYC Department of Corrections called *Hip-Hop vs. Shakespeare*, where participants were encouraged to write their own stories. In summer 2021, Mobile Unit returned in-person with *Mobile Unit’s Summer of Joy*, co-produced with National Black Theatre, popping up at public plazas in neighborhoods hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. Mobile Unit believes theater is its most powerful when it reflects and connects to the lives of our community.

PUBLIC WORKS, a major artistic program of the Public Theater, aims to restore and build community by connecting people through the creation of extraordinary works of art. Public Works is animated by the idea that theater is a place of possibility, where the boundaries that separate us from each other in the rest of life can fall away. Working with partner organizations in all five boroughs, Public Works invites community members to take classes, participate in programming, attend performances, and join in the creation of ambitious works of participatory theater. Public Works deliberately blurs the line between professional artists and community members, creating theater that is not only for the people, but by and of the people as well. Public Works exemplifies The Public’s long-standing commitment to putting community at the core of the theater’s mission. Public Works seeks to create a space where we can not only reflect on the world as it is, but where we can propose new possibilities for what our society might be. The Public Works model continues to be adopted by theaters across the country and around the world. The Public Works community partner organizations are **Brownsville Recreation Center** (Brooklyn), **Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education** (Bronx), **Center for Family Life in Sunset Park** (Brooklyn), **Children's Aid** (all boroughs), **DreamYard** (Bronx), **Domestic Workers United** (all boroughs), **The Fortune Society** (Queens), and **Military Resilience Foundation** (all boroughs).

ABOUT CITIZENS:

Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is one of the nation’s oldest and largest financial institutions, with \$217.5 billion in assets as of December 31, 2024. Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island, Citizens offers a broad range of retail and commercial banking products and services to individuals, small businesses, middle-market companies, large corporations and institutions. Citizens helps its customers reach their potential by listening to them and by understanding their needs in order to offer tailored advice, ideas and solutions. In Consumer Banking, Citizens provides an integrated experience that includes mobile and online banking, a full-service customer contact center and the convenience of approximately 3,100 ATMs and approximately 1,000 branches in 14 states and the District of Columbia. Consumer Banking products and services include a full range of banking, lending, savings, wealth management and small business offerings. In Commercial Banking, Citizens offers a broad complement of financial products and solutions, including lending and leasing, deposit and treasury management services, foreign exchange, interest rate and commodity risk management solutions, as well as loan syndication, corporate finance, merger and acquisition, and debt and equity capital markets capabilities. More information is available at www.citizensbank.com or visit us on [X](#) (formerly Twitter), [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#).

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER:

THE PUBLIC continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation’s first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public’s wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City’s five boroughs, Public Lab, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe’s Pub. Since

premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musicals *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 64 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 62 Drama Desk Awards, 61 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critic Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. publictheater.org

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The Public also gives our respect to the people of Seneca Village, a community of Black property owners who were removed from their land and whose village was destroyed in the creation of Central Park. We recognize the sacrifice that these ancestors made and honor Seneca Village's legacy.

Jerome L. Greene Foundation is the proud season sponsor of Free Shakespeare in the Park.

Performance calendars can be found at PublicTheater.org. Free ticket distribution details will be available in April.

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