



Press Release
Wednesday 24 March 2021

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#OutWest

LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE ANNOUNCES JUNE RE-OPENING WITH *OUT WEST*, A TRIPLE BILL OF NEW PLAYS BY TANIKA GUPTA, SIMON STEPHENS AND ROY WILLIAMS

- *OUT WEST* BRINGS TOGETHER THREE NEW PLAYS IN ONE PRODUCTION, CO-DIRECTED BY LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR RACHEL O'RIORDAN AND DIANE PAGE
 - *THE OVERSEAS STUDENT* BY TANIKA GUPTA REIMAGINES MOHANDAS K GHANDI'S FORMATIVE YEARS FOLLOWING HIS ARRIVAL IN LONDON, AGED 18
 - *BLUE WATER AND COLD AND FRESH* BY SIMON STEPHENS CONFRONTS WHITE MALE PRIVILEGE IN THE WAKE OF CITY LOCKDOWN LIVING AND BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTESTS
 - *GO, GIRL* BY ROY WILLIAMS CELEBRATES BLACK FEMALE EMPOWERMENT, HEROISM AND TRIUMPHS OVER THE EVERYDAY STRUGGLES OF SOCIETY
- THE PRODUCTION BRINGS TOGETHER AN EXCITING CREATIVE TEAM WITH SET AND COSTUME DESIGN BY SOUTRA GILMOUR, LIGHTING DESIGN BY JESSICA HUNG HAN YUN AND COMPOSITION AND SOUND DESIGN BY SIMON SLATER
- *OUT WEST* WILL RUN IN THE MAIN HOUSE FROM 18 JUNE TO 24 JULY. TICKETS GO ON SALE TODAY AT WWW.LYRIC.CO.UK. THE PRODUCTION WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO STREAM ONLINE

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre today announces the world premiere of *Out West* featuring works by three of the UK's leading playwrights, **Tanika Gupta** (*A Doll's House*), **Simon Stephens** (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) and **Roy Williams** (*Death Of England: Delroy*), to reopen the venue. The plays explore themes of race, identity, place and purpose and bring together a stellar creative team, co-directed by the Lyric's Artistic Director **Rachel O'Riordan** and **Diane Page**, with Set and Costume Design by **Soutra Gilmour**, Lighting Design

by **Jessica Hung Han Yun** and Composition and Sound Design by **Simon Slater**. **Out West** will run in the Main House **from 18 June to 24 July**, with opening night for press on Thursday 24 June. The show will operate with socially distanced seating for the entirety of the run. Tickets are on sale today via www.lyric.co.uk. The show will also be filmed for audiences to watch at home and will be available for online streaming from 12 to 17 July. Casting for each of the one-person plays will be announced in due course.

Rachel O’Riordan, Artistic Director and CEO of the Lyric and Co-Director of Out West said: *“Out West is the production that reopens our doors after the enforced closure due to the pandemic. The three writers, Tanika Gupta, Simon Stephens and Roy Williams, are some of the most exciting voices in British theatre and I am so proud that they are sharing our stage and bringing the Lyric back to life. All three plays speak to our current moment; questions of race, geography, identity, belonging and hope run through all three. Theatre has the power to move, to challenge and to entertain. It is also the medium through which, for centuries, human beings have attempted to understand each other and the world around us. I cannot think of a more necessary moment for theatre than now. I look forward, with co-director Diane Page, to sharing Out West with you. We are back. We are here.”*

Diane Page, Co-Director, said: *“Out West explores what it really means to belong in a shifting world. At a time when we have had cause to reflect on and analyse our values, beliefs and ideals – sometimes in uncomfortable and revealing conversations – each of these incredible plays proves to be ever more poignant.”*

The Overseas Student by Tanika Gupta.

London. 1888. 18-year old Mohandas K Gandhi is sent to the UK from India to study Law. He must navigate a time of uncertainty, growth and opportunity as he builds a new life far from his home and family. In Gupta’s sharp, witty, political play we see a teenage Gandhi struggle against class and imperialism yet delight in the joys of money, food and women as he attempts to fit into English society. A unique insight into the experiences which will go on to shape the moral and political beliefs of one of the most significant figures in history.

Blue water and cold and fresh by Simon Stephens

London, 2020. We follow one man’s journey as he is forced to confront his late father’s racism and his own white privilege. In the wake of city lockdown living and Black Lives Matter protests, as he explores the places his father once lived, his mourning is filled with difficult truths. Simon Stephens’ latest play is a heartfelt exploration that questions what it means to be a father, husband and son.

Go, Girl by Roy Williams

London, 2020. Once the schoolgirl chosen to sing for the First Lady Michelle Obama, Donna is now a security guard patrolling the grounds of Westfield shopping centre. The hope and excitement she once felt has now become isolation and judgement of the choices she has made. Yet when Donna and her teenage daughter find themselves in a situation that tests their bravery and humanity, she realises just how truly remarkable they are. Roy Williams’ new play holds a lens up to female resilience and celebrates Black women and everyday heroism in the face of adversity.

Alongside the Lyric’s production of *Out West*, West London writer and poet **Zia Ahmed** will lead a playwriting partnership to create new stories that are rooted in West London with students

across six secondary schools in Hammersmith & Fulham. A selection of work will be filmed and presented in the Lyric's Cinema, running in parallel with *Out West* during the summer.

Biographies

Tanika Gupta, Writer, *The Overseas Student*, has written over 20 stage plays that have been produced in major theatres across the UK. Her critically acclaimed adaptation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* set in Colonial Calcutta launched Rachel O'Riordan's acclaimed first season as Artistic Director of the Lyric in 2019. Other *theatre credits include: Lions And Tigers* (Globe - James Tait Black Prize Winner for Drama 2018); *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (Hull Truck), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Globe – Dramaturg), *Hobson's Choice* (Young Vic and The Royal Exchange, Manchester) *Anita and Me* (Birmingham Rep), *Love N Stuff* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *The Empress* (RSC); *Wah! Wah!* (Sadler's Wells), *Mindwalking* (*Bandbazi Theatre*), *Great Expectations* (Watford Palace/ETT), *Meet The Mukherjees* (Bolton Octagon), *Sugar Mummies* (Royal Court), *Gladiator Games* (Sheffield Crucible), *Fragile Land* (Hampstead Theatre), *Sanctuary*, *The Good Woman Of Setzuan*, *The Waiting Room* (National Theatre), *Skeleton* (Soho Theatre). *Television credits include: Doctors, London Bridge, EastEnders, Flight*. *Radio credits include: Trumpet, A Passage To India, Emma, The God Of Small Things*. Tanika was awarded an MBE for Services to Drama and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Simon Stephens, Writer, *Blue water and cold and fresh*, is a multi-award-winning playwright whose plays include the Olivier and Tony Award winning *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (National Theatre /Apollo /Gielgud /Barrymore Theatre, Broadway), and Olivier Award Best New Play winner *On The Shore Of The Wide World*. He joined the Lyric Hammersmith as Artistic Associate in 2019 and previously his award-winning play *Punk Rock* premiered at the venue in 2009 followed by *Morning* (also Edinburgh Fringe Festival), *Three Kingdoms* (also Tallinn/Munich) *A Thousand Stars that Explode in the Sky* and *The Seagull*. Other theatre credits include: *Blindness* (Donmar Warehouse); *Fortune* (Metropolitan Theatre, Tokyo); *Light Falls, Blindsided* (Royal Exchange, Manchester); *Rage, Maria* (Thalia, Hamburg); *Song From Far Away, The Cherry Orchard, A Doll's House, I Am The Wind*, (Young Vic); *Carmen Disruption* (Deutsches Schauspielhaus/Almeida Theatre); *Birdland, Wastwater* – winner 2011 Theater Heute's Award, *Motortown* - winner 2007 Theater Heute's Award, *Country Music, Herons, Bluebird* (Royal Court); *Pornography* - winner 2008 Theater Heute's Award (Deutsches Schauspielhaus/Edinburgh Festival/Birmingham Rep/Tricycle Theatre); *Sea Wall* (Bush Theatre); *Harper Regan, Port* – winner 2001 Pearson Award for Best Play (National Theatre). He is a Professor of Scriptwriting at The Writing School at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Roy Williams, Writer, *Go, Girl*, is one of the UK's leading dramatists. In 2020, his play *Death of England: Delroy* reopened the National Theatre and he received both a BAFTA Nomination (Best Short Form Drama) and an RTS nomination (Best Writer, Drama) for his contribution to BBC4's *Soon Gone, A Windrush Chronicle*. His plays include: *Absolute Beginners* (Lyric Hammersmith), *Sucker Punch* (Olivier nomination for Best Play), *Death of England, Sing Yer Heart Out For The Lads (NT), Fallout, Clubland, Lift Off* (Royal Court), *The Firm, Wildefire* (Hampstead Theatre), *Soul: The Untold Story of Marvin Gaye* (Royal and Derngate/Hackney Empire), *Antigone* (Pilot Theatre/UK Tour), *Kingston '14, The No-Boys Cricket Club* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Category B* (Tricycle), *Days Of Significance* (RSC), *Joe Guy* (Tiata Fahodzi), *The Gift* (Birmingham Rep / Tricycle), *Starstruck* (Tricycle, John Whiting Award, Alfred Fagon Award & EMMA Award for Best Play). Other television credits include: *Fallout, Offside* (BAFTA Children's Film & TV Award

for Best Schools Drama). Film includes: *Fast Girls*. Radio credits include: *A Choice Of Straws*, *The Midwich Cuckoos* and eight series of *Interrogation* for BBC Radio 4. He was awarded the OBE for Services to Drama and is a fellow of The Royal Society of Literature.

Rachel O’Riordan, Co-Director, was appointed Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre in February 2019. *Out West* will be the third show directed by Rachel at the Lyric following the success of *A Doll’s House* in September 2019 and *Love, Love, Love* in March 2020 both of which featured as part of her acclaimed inaugural season. Previously, Rachel was the Artistic Director and CEO of Sherman Theatre from February 2014 – February 2019. During her tenure the theatre was transformed into a vibrant, exciting and influential producing theatre, winning The Stage’s prestigious Regional Theatre of the Year Award in 2018. Her credits as a director for the theatre include: *The Cherry Orchard*; the Olivier award-winning *Killology* (with the Royal Court); *Bird* (with the Royal Exchange) and *Iphigenia in Splott* (also at the National Theatre; England tour, Edinburgh Festival, Schaubühne, Berlin and off-Broadway).

Diane Page, Co-Director: Training MFA Theatre Directing Birkbeck University. Credits for the Lyric include: *In Love and Loyalty* (as Director and Writer), *Ghost Stories*, *Leave to Remain*, *Dick Whittington*, *othellomacbeth* (also HOME, Manchester) (as Assistant Director) *Ghost Stories* – West End and UK tour (as Associate Director). Other credits include, as Director: *Yeggs* (Online rehearsed reading for Wildcard), *Love and Information* (ArtsEd), *Krool Britannia* (Rabbit Hole Theatre/ Camden Fringe). As Assistant Director: *Bartholomew Fair* (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, Shakespeare’s Globe), *Easter* (RADA).

Soutra Gilmour, Set and Costume Designer, has received huge acclaim for her work recognised with five Olivier Award nominations and two Tony Award nominations including Best Set Design for *Betrayal* and Best Costume Design for *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Theatre credits include: *Romeo and Juliet* (Lyttelton Films for the NT), & *Juliet* (Shaftesbury Theatre), *Pinter at the Pinter* (Harold Pinter Theatre), *Evita* (Regent’s Park), *Timon of Athens* (RSC ,TFANA Brooklyn), *Guys and Dolls* (Manchester Royal Exchange), *Knives in Hens*, *Inadmissible Evidence*, *Piaf* (Olivier nomination) (Donmar Warehouse), *Apologia*, *Richard 111*, *The Maids*, *The Homecoming* (Trafalgar Studios), *The Guards at the Taj* (Bush Theatre), *My Brilliant Friend* (Rose Kingston), *Pitchfork Disney*, *Killer* (Shoreditch Town Hall), *Twelfth Night*, *Les Blancs*, *Antigone* (Evening Standard Award) (NT), *I See You*, *The Pride* (Royal Court), *Assassins*, *Merrily We Roll Along* (Menier), *Bull* (Young Vic), *Reasons to be Happy* (Hampstead), *Urinetown* (St James, West End), *The Crucible*, *The Duchess of Malfi* (Old Vic), *Reasons to be Pretty* (Almeida), *The Caretaker* (Olivier & ES Award nomination) (Sheffield Crucible/Tricycle), *The Commitments*, *From Here to Eternity*, *The Lover* and *The Collection* (Olivier nomination) (West End). Opera credits include: *Noye’s Fludde* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Turn of the Screw* (Regent’s Park), *Quartett* (ROH and tour).

Jessica Hung Han Yun, Lighting Designer, received the 2019 Knight of Illumination Award for Plays and Off West End Award for Best Lighting Design for *Equus* (Stratford East/Trafalgar Studios/UK Tour). Recent credits also include: *The Band Plays On* (Sheffield Theatre), *Blindness* (Donmar Warehouse), *Dick Whittington* (National Theatre), *Inside* (Orange Tree Theatre) and *Fairview* (Young Vic). Other theatre credits include: *The Glow*, *Seven Methods of Killing Kylie Jenner*, *Pah-La* (Royal Court), *Snowflake* (Kiln Theatre), *The Last of the Pelican Daughters* (Complicité, Edinburgh/Royal & Derngate), *Cuckoo* (Soho Theatre), *Armadillo* (The Yard), *Rockets and Blue Lights* (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester), *One* (Manchester Home/UK Tour/International Tour), *Summer Rolls* (also Bristol Old Vic), *A Pupil* (Park Theatre), *Faces in the Crowd*, *Mephisto [A Rhapsody]*, *Dear Elizabeth*, *The Human Voice* (Gate

Theatre), *Forgotten* (Plymouth/Arcola), *Hive City Legacy* (Hot Brown Honey at Roundhouse); *Nine Foot Nine* (Bunker Theatre/Edinburgh Festival - Off West End Nomination for Best Lighting Design) and *Becoming Shades* (Vaults Festival).

Simon Slater, Composer and Sound Designer, has composed over 300 original scores for film, TV, theatre and radio, including the composition for *Constellations* (Royal Court/Duke of York/Friedman Theatre, NY); which was nominated for an Olivier Award. He returns to the Lyric following the revival of *Love, Love, Love* in March 2020. *Theatre includes: Europe* (Donmar), *Orpheus Descending* (Theatre Clwyd/Menier Chocolate Factory), *Jude*, *Cost of Living*, *I and You*, *Wonderland*, *Raving*, *No Naughty Bits*, *Enlightenment* (Hampstead Theatre), *The Snow Queen*, *Treasure Island*, *Alice In Wonderland* (Stephen Joseph Theatre), *Honour* (Park Theatre), *Foxfinder* (Ambassador's Theatre), *Amadeus* (NT), *BIRD* (Royal Exchange/Sherman Cymru), *Cannibals* (Royal Exchange), *Constellations* (Royal Court/Duke of York/Friedman Theatre, NY), *The Winter's Tale*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*, *A Broken Heart* (Sam Wanamaker/Shakespeare's Globe), *Carmen Disruption* UK premiere (Almeida), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth* (RSC), *Rose Rage* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre/Duke Theatre, New York). *Film and Television includes: Prizefighter*, *Impact Earth*, *Dalziel and Pascoe – Demons On Our Shoulders*, *Dalziel and Pascoe – Houdini's Ghost*, *Inquisition*, *Hunting Venus*.

Zia Ahmed, Out West Schools Playwriting Partnership, is a poet and writer hailing from North-West London. He was shortlisted for London's Young Poet Laureate in 2015/16; he is a Roundhouse Slam Champion and a Writer in Residence at Paines Plough as part of Channel 4's Playwright Scheme 2017 and was chosen to be a part of the Bush Theatre's Emerging Writers Group in 2018. His stage debut *I Wanna Be Yours* premiered at the Bush Theatre in 2019.

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Notes to Editors

IMAGES available to download [here](#)

Listings

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre presents

Out West

by **Tanika Gupta, Simon Stephens and Roy Williams**

Co-Directed by **Rachel O'Riordan & Diane Page**

Designed by **Soutra Gilmour**
Lighting Design by **Jessica Hung Han Yun**
Composition and Sound Design by **Simon Slater**

Dates: Friday 18 June to Saturday 24 July 2021
Free First Night: Friday 18 June, 7.30pm
Press performance: Thursday 24 June, 7pm
Performance Schedule: Monday to Saturday at 7.30pm (excl. Saturday 26 June), plus Wednesday and Saturday matinees at 2.30pm
Open Captioned Performance: Saturday 10 July, 2.30pm
Audio Described Performance: Saturday 10 July, 7.30pm
Online streaming: Available to watch from Monday 12 to Saturday 17 July

Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL
Box office: 020 8741 6850
www.lyric.co.uk
Tickets from £10

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#OutWest

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre is 'See It Safely' approved

Ensuring the safety of our artists, audience and team is our number one priority. Our socially distanced seating and industry standard 'See It Safely' approved cleaning and Covid-safety measures complying with the latest Government guidelines mean that everyone can experience the joy of live theatre again at the Lyric. You can find out more at <https://lyric.co.uk/faqs/>

Also upcoming at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre

Heart of Hammersmith Summer 2021

Heart of Hammersmith is the Lyric's first large-scale community production, which will open in Summer 2021, the production will celebrate and tell the stories of the people and community of Hammersmith. The production will be led by a group of 15 young people, aged 18-25, from West London working alongside a team of professional creatives. The young people will shape and develop the direction of the production, and they will recruit other members of their community to be involved with the show, to create a truly inter-generational production.

Further details to be announced.

Aladdin
Christmas 2021

Expect the usual Lyric twist on all of your favourite characters as well as live music, magic lamps, plenty of laughs and a journey to a faraway land as *Aladdin* arrives at the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre this Christmas.

A new adaptation by award-winning comedian, actress and composer Vikki Stone who returns to write her debut pantomime for the Lyric following critically acclaimed appearances as Abanazar in the 2016 production of *Aladdin* and Fleshcreep in *Jack and the Beanstalk* in 2017. Vikki is well known for her original comedy songs. Credits include: *The Now Show* (BBC Radio 4), *Essential Classics* (BBC Radio 3) and presenting two series of the official *BBC Proms* podcast. TV appearances include *The John Bishop Show* (BBC1), *Partners in Rhyme* (BBC1) and the BAFTA award-winning *Ten Pieces*.

Further details to be announced.