



Press Release
Tuesday 18 May 2021

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#OutWest

CASTING ANNOUNCED AND FIRST IMAGES RELEASED FOR *OUT WEST* AT THE LYRIC HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

- ESH ALLADI, AYESHA ANTOINE, AND TOM MOTHERSDALE TO STAR IN *OUT WEST*, A WORLD PREMIERE TRIPLE BILL OF NEW PLAYS BY UK LEADING WRITERS TANIKA GUPTA, SIMON STEPHENS AND ROY WILLIAMS
- THE LYRIC PARTNERS WITH INC ARTS UK TO PILOT ITS NEW ACT AGAINST RACISM CAMPAIGN IN ADDITION TO SIGNING UP TO THE UNLOCK TOOLKIT
- *OUT WEST* LAUNCHES THE LYRIC'S SUMMER REOPENING PROGRAMME WITH LIVE SHOWS FROM 18 JUNE – 24 JULY PLUS AN ONLINE STREAMING FROM 12-17 JULY

The Lyric Hammersmith Theatre today announces casting and releases images for its summer reopening production *Out West* which brings together new plays by three of the UK's leading writers. Esh Alladi will play a young Gandhi in Tanika Gupta's *The Overseas Student*, Tom Mothersdale will play new father Jack in Simon Stephens' *Blue Water and Cold and Fresh* and Ayesha Antoine will play security guard Donna in Roy Williams' *Go, Girl*. The production runs from 18 June to 24 July, with opening night for press on Thursday 24 June, and with an online streaming from 12 to 17 July. *Out West* is co-directed by the Lyric's Artistic Director Rachel O'Riordan and Diane Page, who this week received the 2021 JMK Award celebrating directors and designers with exciting creative visions. Set and costume design is by Soutra Gilmour, lighting design by Jessica Hung Han Yun and composition and sound design by Simon Slater.

Out West explores race, geography, identity, belonging and hope rooted in multicultural England of past and present, from Tanika Gupta's *The Overseas Student* - a sharp and witty reimaging of Gandhi's formative student years in Victorian England as he is awed by wealth, women, lifestyle and food; to 2020 with Simon Stephens' *Blue Water and Cold and Fresh* which confronts white male privilege in the wake of city lockdown living and Black Lives Matter protests and is a heartfelt exploration of what it means to be a husband, father and son; and

present day in Roy Williams' **Go, Girl** – which follows Donna, who once performed for First Lady Michelle Obama at school but is now a shopping centre security guard and mum to a teenage daughter, yet she discovers her brilliance in the face of adversity in this celebratory story of Black female empowerment and everyday heroism.

The Lyric has teamed up with **Inc Arts**, a national collective that champions the UK's ethnically diverse workforce, to pilot Inc Arts' **Act Against Racism** campaign, alongside signing up to the online toolkit Unlock. Unlock is the UK's first cross-sector interactive tool for measuring anti-racist progress in the creative and cultural sector and offers a choice of over 100 suggestions to help bring anti-racist commitments to life in arts workplaces. Act Against Racism is a long-term campaign to take positive anti-racist action in cultural spaces to change the way the industry works. The objectives of the campaign are to celebrate anti-racist work, provoke a sector-wide response and to hold accountability and transparency. *Out West* celebrates diverse stories and will include interactive audience opportunities to encourage dialogue on the content and themes of the shows through interval activities, a post-show event and up-front information on the anti-racist work that the Lyric has committed to.

The Lyric's Free First Night scheme also returns for the production of *Out West*. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the scheme, a long-term partnership with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, which has seen the Lyric give away nearly 100,000 free tickets to people who live or work locally for its first preview performances.

Esh Alladi's recent theatre credits include a UK Theatre Award-winning performance in *Hobson's Choice* at Manchester Royal Exchange, also adapted by Tanika Gupta. *Out West* will mark the second time Esh has taken on the role of Gandhi having previously played the Indian politician in his older years in *Lions and Tigers* at Shakespeare's Globe also written by Tanika. Other theatre includes: *The Argument* at Theatre Royal Bath, *Rutherford and Son* (Sheffield Crucible), *Absolute Hell*, *The Beaux Stratagem*, *Dara*, *From Morning to Midnight*, *Romeo and Juliet* (National Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (RSC), *Nell Gwynn* (Shakespeare's Globe), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New Wolsey Theatre) and *The Wind in the Willows* (Birmingham Rep). For TV, he has recently finished filming for the upcoming TV series *Halo* based on the video game franchise. His other TV credits include *Fear Fatigue/Unprecedented* for Headlong, the BBC's *EastEnders*, *Casualty*, *Anthony and Apple Tree House*, *The Confession* for ITV, and *Houdini and Doyle* and *Frankie*. Film includes *The Leak*, *Ordinary Love*, *Christmas at the Palace* and *Backseat*.

Ayesha Antoine's theatre credits include *Blank* at Donmar Warehouse, Irie Jones in *White Teeth* at the Kiln Theatre, Rosencrantz in the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company's *Hamlet* and Connie in *Red Velvet* in the West End. For television, her recent roles have included Dawn in Sky One comedy *In the Long Run* and Polly the Healer in the Netflix series *Cursed*, she is also well known for playing nurse Rachel Baptiste in *Holby City* and previously Dee Dee Blasco in *Doctor Who*, Judith in Michaela Coel's *Chewing Gum* and Molly in *The Long Song* on BBC. Other TV includes *Malory Towers*, *Pompidou*, *Skins*, *Mouth to Mouth* and Poppy Silver in *Grange Hill*. Film includes Disney's *Artemis Fowl*. Previous theatre credits also include: *Life of Galileo* and *Trade* (Young Vic), *The Suicide* (National Theatre), *The Wolf in Snakeskin Shoes*, *The House That Will Not Stand* (Tricycle Theatre), *Napoleon Disrobed* (Told by an Idiot), *Dirty Great Love Story* at Arts Theatre, *The Ghost Train* (Royal Exchange/Told by An Idiot), *We Are Proud to Present* (Bush Theatre), *Tartuffe* (Birmingham Rep), *Cinderella* (Theatre Royal Stratford East), *The Mountaintop* (Derby LIVE), *Big White Fog* (Almeida). *Absurd Person Singular* (Stephen Joseph Theatre) and *My Wonderful Day* (UK tour and off-Broadway).

Tom Mothersdale launched his career with roles in *Peaky Blinders*, *Doc Martin*, *King Charles III* and *Endeavour* and has continued to work extensively across stage, film and television. Recently he finished shooting Amazon's *Alex Rider* Season 2 and *War of the Worlds* Season 2 and featured in *Van Der Valk*, Sky's *A Discovery Of Witches* and the USA Network series *Treadstone* where he stars as Ferguson. Other TV Credits include *Hanna*, Philip K. Dick's *Electric Dreams - The Hood Maker*. He can also be seen in Bad Robot's cult film *Overlord*. *Out West* is Tom's third time working with Simon Stephens, having previously collaborated on *A Thousand Stars Explode In The Sky* also at the Lyric and *The Cherry Orchard* at The Young Vic, for which he received an Ian Charleson award. Recently in theatre, Tom played the title role in Headlong's *Richard III*, and starred in Caryl Churchill's plays, *Glass. Kill. Bluebeard. Imp.* at The Royal Court. Other theatre credits include: *John* (National Theatre), *Oil* (Almeida Theatre), *The Woods* (The Royal Court), *Dealing With Clair* (Orange Tree Theatre), *Boys* and *The Glass Menagerie* (Headlong), and *Cleansed* (National Theatre). Tom was listed as one of the Top 5 young actors to watch in 2019 in The Sunday Times Culture Magazine.

Out West live shows will be socially distanced for the duration of the run. All tickets are available via www.lyric.co.uk. Following *Out West*, the Lyric's summer season continues with *Heart of Hammersmith*, its first large-scale community play, from 12-14 August created by Nicholai La Barrie and the Lyric Community Company. The autumn will include a major revival of Martin McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* in a co-production with Chichester Festival Theatre where it runs from 03 September to 02 October before transferring to the Lyric from 09 October to 06 November, also directed by Rachel O'Riordan.

- ENDS -

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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

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Box office: 020 8741 6850

www.lyric.co.uk

Tickets from £10

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#OutWest

Creative Team 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, was recently announced as the 2021 JMK Award winner. Training includes: 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*.

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/>