



PRESS RELEASE – 15 Feb 2022

Queen's Theatre Hornchurch is excited to announce that *Princess Essex* will be going on tour to Essex community venues and audiences can see it for FREE.

Based on the little-known, true story of Princess Dinubolu, Princess Essex is the funny and dynamic tale of the first black woman to ever enter a beauty pageant in the UK.

Building on the success of last year's community tour of *Tales From The Thames*, ***Princess Essex*** will now also tour to venues in Grays, Aveley, Basildon, Pitsea and West Tilbury. The production is part of **Creative Estuary Co-commissions** – the initiative which aims to showcase 60 miles of the North Kent and South Essex region as one of the UK's most dynamic and creative areas in the whole of the UK – working on this occasion with **Queen's Theatre Hornchurch (QTH)**.

Princess Essex is written and performed by Anne Odeke. As a writer, Anne has recently represented Essex in *Radio 4's* latest series *United Kingdoms*. She has also been commissioned by Storyhouse theatre in Chester, to write an adaptation of *Little Women* set in World War One which will play this coming summer at Grosvenor Park. As a performer, Anne has recently worked with the RSC, as well as Shakespeare's Globe, the Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, Birmingham Rep & the Royal Lyceum.

Southend-on-Sea, Essex. 1908. Tired of life, black Essex girl Joanna, decides to take matters into her own hands and enter herself into one of the country's most prestigious beauty pageants, disguised as a Senegalese Princess. A true story, that not only asks us to question the misconception of the Essex girl, but invites audience members to consider who are the gate keepers of history and why have so many incredible black stories been hidden.

The team behind the project include: Director - Robin Belfield (RSC), Assistant Director - Michelle Payne (Squad Goals), Designer - Gemma Compton (All my Sons, QTH), Lighting Designer - Ben Garcia (Museum of the Homeless), Sound Designer - Hattie North (Shuga Fixx vs the Illuminati), Technical Stage Manager - Jade Ayres (Peter Pan). The play has been created with public funding from Arts Council England.

The show is also in partnership with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, The Mercury Theatre Colchester and the South Essex African Caribbean Association (SEACA). The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport funds the Cultural Development Fund which is administered by Arts Council England.

Princess Essex will first open at The Mercury Theatre Colchester before it then tours South Essex from **26 February to 11 March**. The venues and locations have been chosen as places where local people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to see live theatre performed. ***Princess Essex* will play at the Queen's Theatre, Billet Lane, Hornchurch on 27 February.**

Tickets for the Queen's Theatre Hornchurch event will cost **£10*** and the March events will be **FREE** (ticket still required). To book, call the Box Office on **01708 443333** or book online at **www.queens-theatre.co.uk**

(*+65p QNext fee)

[ENDS]



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If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Soliman, Head of Marketing and Press by email sarahs@queens-theatre.co.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

LISTINGS

Mercury Theatre, Colchester CO1 1PT

Date and time: **Saturday 19 February at 7.30pm**

Tickets: £8

<https://www.mercurytheatre.co.uk/>

The Balmoral Community Centre, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7AU

Date and time: **Saturday 26 February at 7.30pm**

Tickets: £10 (+65p QNext fee)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, RM11 1QT

Date and time: **Sunday 27 February at 7.30pm**

Tickets: £10 (+65p QNext fee)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

Tyrells Hall Working Men's Club, Grays, RM17 6EY

Date and time: **Tuesday 1 March at 7.30pm**

Tickets: Free (ticket still required)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

Aveley Community Hub, RM15 4BY

Date and time: **Thursday 3 March at 7.30pm**

Tickets: Free (ticket still required)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

The Place, Pitsea Leisure Centre, Basildon, SS13 3DU

Date and time: **Saturday 5 March at 7.30pm**

Tickets: Free (ticket still required)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

Wat Tyler Centre, Pitsea, SS16 4UH

Date and time: **Sunday 6 March at 2pm**

Tickets: Free (ticket still required)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

West Tilbury Village Hall, RM18 8UD

Date and time: **Friday 11 March at 7.30pm**

Tickets: Free (ticket still required)

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

About Queen's Theatre Hornchurch



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Queen's Theatre Hornchurch (QTH) is a vibrant producing theatre, working in Outer East London, Essex and beyond. As a cultural hub, over 210,000 people enjoy the programme each year. Audiences are guaranteed a warm welcome from a three-year winner of UK Theatre's Most Welcoming Theatre (2016 – 2018) and London Theatre of the Year 2020 (The Stage Awards), the first Outer London theatre to receive this prestigious award.

Twitter/Facebook: @QueensTheatreH
Instagram: @QueensTheatreHornchurch

Creative Estuary Co-commissions text:

Creative Estuary supports a wide range of cultural projects with new commissions for Estuary-based producers and artists, from activity for emerging cultural activists to large scale commissions with a diverse mix of partners. The Co-commissions raise widespread awareness of existing creative talent across the region and support creative practitioners and organisations to make and present new work. We are committed to engaging our local communities to contribute to their creative identity and will give artists, organisations and creative practitioners opportunities and support to help them realise their creative ambitions. The Co-commissions create opportunities for creative innovation and new cultural production - we want to capture imagination and provide opportunities for greater collaboration and knowledge sharing. For more information visit www.creativeestuary.com.

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About Creative Estuary text:

CREATIVE ESTUARY has a vision to forge a new future founded on creative energy and innovation, along the length of the Thames Estuary. The project is supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and led by the University of Kent on behalf of a consortium of public sector and cultural organisations. They include the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Kent and Essex County Councils, the Greater London Authority, 11 local authority areas represented by Greater North Kent Partnership and opportunity South Essex, South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), University of Essex, Locate in Kent and cultural organisations Metal and Cement Fields. In early 2019 the University of Kent was awarded £4.3m from the DCMS Cultural Development Fund on behalf of the partners. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport funds the Cultural Development Fund which is administered by Arts Council England.

For more information about Creative Estuary, visit www.creativeestuary.com, **Twitter** [@creativeestuary](https://twitter.com/creativeestuary) / **Linkedin** / [creative-estuary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/creative-estuary) / **Instagram** [@creativeestuary](https://www.instagram.com/creativeestuary)