

National Theatre

Queen's Theatre Hornchurch extends collaboration with National Theatre-led *Theatre Nation Partnerships* network to build audiences for theatre across Outer East London and South Essex

- Theatre Nation Partnerships is an innovative network of theatres and community organisations founded by the National Theatre in 2017 to grow nationwide engagement with theatre
- The new programme will reach over **500,000** audiences, artists and participants across England over three years including in Outer East London and South Essex
- Theatre Nation Partnerships is supported by the National Theatre and a £1.25 million award by Arts Council England, made possible thanks to National Lottery players

To be issued: Tuesday 27 September 2022

Queen's Theatre Hornchurch will extend its involvement with the Theatre Nation Partnerships (TNP) network today.

Since 2017, the programme has engaged with over 222,000 participants, audiences and artists, including across England. In Outer East London and South Essex it has delivered three schools tours, and created a Public Acts performance in collaboration with local community organisations.

Three productions will tour directly into schools in **Havering** over the next three years, with a touring production of new play ***Shut Up, I'm Dreaming*** visiting secondary schools across the area from January 2023, as part of a national tour reaching over 12,000 students. Devised and directed by **The PappyShow** following residencies in three schools in Sunderland, Wolverhampton and Wakefield to bring young people's voices into the heart of the creative process, *Shut Up, I'm Dreaming* explores the ambitions, hopes and feelings of the next generation in an uncertain world. The touring production will be accompanied by a post-show Q&A, teaching resources and professional development workshops for teachers.

A new TNP production of **Roy Williams'** award-winning play *Sucker Punch*, produced by Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, will open in **Hornchurch** in March 2023. Directed by **Nathan Powell**, *Sucker Punch* is a bruising and funny play, winner of the Alfred Fagon Award, which explores being young and black in the 80s. Further tours of landmark productions will take place in 2024 and 2025.

Already announced, an epic multi-version production of *The Odyssey* will be retold in five episodes created and performed by artists and communities, with Queen's Theatre Hornchurch supporting the fifth episode taking place at the National Theatre in August 2023. The production marks the fifth anniversary of Public Acts, the NT's nationwide initiative to create extraordinary acts of theatre and community.

Speak Up which sees young people working in collaboration with local artists and teachers to lead creative projects will continue to work in schools in Havering from October 2023. This dynamic programme has been developed with Theatre Nation Partners to inspire young people to speak up about the issues that matter to them and will reach 140,000 young people nationwide.

The new partner organisations joining the Theatre Nation Partnerships (TNP) network today are **Restoke, Regent Theatre & Victoria Hall (Ambassador Theatre Group)** in Stoke-on-Trent, **Peterborough New Theatre with Selladoor Venues, Queen's Theatre Barnstaple** and **The Landmark** in Ilfracombe, North Devon with **Selladoor Venues, Curve** in Leicester, and **Trowbridge Town Hall**. Together, the 14 partner organisations will engage over half a million people over three years, more than doubling the existing reach of the network.

Theatre Nation Partnerships is supported by a £1.25million award from Arts Council England, made possible by National Lottery players. The National Theatre will triple this investment through further fundraising and commercial activity, and almost 90% of the total will be spent outside London directly in partner areas.

Mathew Russell, Chief Executive of Queen's Theatre Hornchurch said, "Audiences and communities, including thousands of school children, from Outer East London and South Essex have benefited so much from the life changing opportunities offered by the first phase of Theatre Nation Partnerships, including the rather extraordinary Public Acts version of 'As You Like It', produced by Queen's Theatre Hornchurch. As founding partners, we can't wait to work with and learn from any even wider array of theatres with shared values across the country and to engage with an increasing range of young people, artists and underrepresented and underserved communities to share and shape the power of world class theatre. We're particularly proud to be producing and opening the first TNP mid-scale tour - a landmark production of Roy Williams' 'Sucker Punch'."

Rufus Norris, Director of National Theatre said, "*Theatre Nation Partnerships* has shown how effectively a network of theatres can work together to inspire new audiences for theatre, deepen roots within communities and create more opportunities for the next generation to engage in the arts. Our nationwide work is a key part of the National Theatre's activity and we look forward to welcoming our new partners on board, learning from each other and creating an even bigger impact across the country over the next three years".

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For more information and press enquiries please contact **Sarah Soliman, Head of Marketing & Press** on sarahs@queens-theatre.co.uk

About Theatre Nation Partnerships

A collaboration between 14 organisations across 13 areas, TNP combines local expertise with nationally-delivered activity to build and sustain audiences for theatre across England. Activity includes touring to local venues and into schools, participatory opportunities and in-depth engagement with community groups.

Since 2017, the programme has engaged with over 222,000 participants, audiences and artists, delivered four schools tours reaching over 27,000 pupils, created four Public Acts performances and toured productions including *War Horse*, *Macbeth*, *A Taste of Honey* and *Hedda Gabler* to multiple partner venues. As part of the work delivered in these areas, over 340 artists have employed across all partner areas.

Our founding Theatre Nation Partners are Cast in Doncaster, Queen's Theatre Hornchurch, Sunderland Empire, Sunderland Culture, The Lowry in Salford (covering Greater Manchester including Rochdale & Wigan), Theatre Royal Wakefield, and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre.

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About Queen's Theatre Hornchurch

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.

www.queens-theatre.co.uk

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About the National Theatre

The National Theatre's mission is to make world-class theatre, for everyone. The NT 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 NT 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