

National Theatre

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

NATIONAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES RUFUS NORRIS' FINAL SEASON

A CULMINATION OF TEN YEARS INCLUDING NEW VOICES AND WORLD PREMIERES, RETURNING HIT SHOWS, EXPANDED GLOBAL REACH AND SECTOR-LEADING SUSTAINABILITY

- New season will showcase four world premieres with new plays by Suzie Miller, Shaan Sahota, David Lan, and David Eldridge.
- The UK premiere of Stephen Sondheim's final musical *Here We Are*, first staged in New York during 2023, with a book by David Ives and directed by Joe Mantello in a new production at the National Theatre.
- New production of Michael Abbensetts' *Alterations*, a seminal work from the Black Plays Archive based at the National Theatre.
- Casting for productions include Adeel Akhtar, Arinzé Kene and Rosamund Pike making their National Theatre debuts. Actors returning to the National Theatre include Tracie Bennett, Rory Kinnear, Denis O'Hare, Michael Sheen, Cherrelle Skeete and Juliet Stevenson.
- The return of the award-winning *London Road*, directed by Rufus Norris, for a limited run at the National Theatre.
- Two national transfers with the revival of *Dear England* playing for four weeks at The Lowry in Salford and *Nye* returning to Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff.
- The National Theatre Green Store, a major new sustainability centre, opens in Bermondsey, marking the latest milestone on the National Theatre's journey to reach net zero by 2030.
- The National Theatre's nationwide youth theatre programme, Connections celebrates its 30th anniversary with 125,000 young people having taken part.

- **Audiences around the world are invited to ‘Take your Seats’ for a free stream of *Nye* on YouTube in November.**

Rufus Norris today announces his final programme as Director of the National Theatre, concluding his decade leading the organisation and creating a lasting impact for generations to come. The work on stage and the initiatives announced today exemplify the commitments he has driven forward – to new work, representation on and off stage, sustainability and nationwide reach.

The programme was launched today at the new **National Theatre Green Store**, the latest and most significant National Theatre environmental initiative marking Rufus’ profound commitment to sustainability, and includes four world premieres by playwrights **Suzie Miller**, **Shaan Sahota**, **David Lan**, and **David Eldridge** alongside the return of some of the National Theatre’s most popular and loved productions – *Dear England*, *London Road* and *Nye*.

Together they showcase the National Theatre as a powerhouse for new writing and celebrate the creation by Rufus of the New Work Department, which over ten years has expanded the range of voices and stories told on the National Theatre’s stages. His final season continues the commitment to increasing the recognition of the work of underserved creative talent with the programming of **Michael Abbensetts’ *Alterations***, a seminal work from the Black Plays Archive based at the National Theatre. Also announced today is the long-awaited return of the musical *London Road*, originally directed by Rufus in 2011 which led to him becoming an Associate of the National Theatre and then Director in 2015, as well as a new production of **Stephen Sondheim’s** last musical *Here We Are*. This staging of Sondheim’s final work follows the huge success of *Follies* and cements the National Theatre as the UK home of the legendary composer’s work.

Rufus Norris’ passion to bring new audiences to theatre and cultivate future generations of theatre-makers is seen through the continued expansion of the digital reach of the National Theatre with a free global YouTube stream of *Nye* as part of his **‘Take Your Seats’** initiative, available to watch from 7pm GMT on 7 – 11 November on the National Theatre’s YouTube channel. His focus on creative education and access to the arts will also have a landmark

moment in 2025 with the 30th anniversary of the National Theatre's flagship nationwide youth theatre programme **Connections**, over the decades **125,000** young people have taken part. Over the past 30 years, Connections alumni have forged careers across the creative industries as well as gained vital transferable skills for roles in wider sectors. Tonight, the National Theatre celebrates the homecoming of one of its most celebrated Connections alumni, **David Oyelowo**, taking centre stage for ***Coriolanus***.

Productions announced today

This final season features stories told by world-class theatre-makers that reflect a rich and resonant range of perspectives. From **Shaan Sahota's** brand-new play ***The Estate***, directed by **Daniel Raggett**, a family drama and political satire about the moral downfall of a politician played by **Adeel Akhtar**, to **Suzie Miller** who reunites with director **Justin Martin** following the global success of ***Prima Facie***, for the world premiere of ***Inter Alia***, with initial casting that includes **Rosamund Pike** making her National Theatre debut as an eminent High Court Judge forced to reckon her professional life and role as wife, mother, friend and feminist. Guyana-born British writer **Michael Abbensetts'** era-defining comedy from the Black Plays Archive ***Alterations***, which illuminates the Guyanese experience of 1970s London and the aspirations and sacrifices of the Windrush generation. Refreshed with additional material by **Trish Cooke**, ***Alterations*** will receive its largest ever staging by director **Lynette Linton**, with initial casting that includes **Arinzé Kene** making his National Theatre debut and **Cherrelle Skeete**. Former Young Vic Artistic Director **David Lan's** new play ***The Land of the Living*** will be directed by **Stephen Daldry**, with a cast that includes **Juliet Stevenson**, and tells the story of displaced children after World War II. ***End***, a new play by **David Eldridge** – the concluding part of his trilogy of plays commissioned by Rufus during his tenure – will be directed by Lyric Hammersmith Artistic Director **Rachel O'Riordan**.

Two musicals will be staged at the National Theatre in 2025. **Stephen Sondheim's** final musical ***Here We Are***, with a book by Tony Award-nominee **David Ives**, makes its UK debut in a new production after its Off-Broadway premiere in 2023, directed by two-time Tony Award-winner **Joe Mantello** and with a cast including **Tracie Bennett**, **Rory Kinnear** and **Denis O'Hare**.

Alongside this is the return of **Alecky Blythe** and **Adam Cork**'s innovative award-winning musical ***London Road***, directed by Rufus Norris, which will also be captured for a future streaming release on National Theatre at Home. This season will also see the return of two epic state-of-the-nation plays, ***Dear England*** by **James Graham**, directed by **Rupert Gold**, telling the story of the England men's football team under Gareth Southgate, with Graham updating his epic examination of nation and game to reflect Southgate's final chapter as England Manager, and ***Nye***, **Tim Price**'s celebrated Welsh fantasia which charts the life of Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan and his battle to create the NHS, directed by Rufus Norris.

Sustainability

Confirming the National Theatre as sector leader for sustainable theatre practice, the National Theatre Green Store, a 36,000 sq. ft warehouse in south Bermondsey is the latest groundbreaking National Theatre sustainability initiative led by Rufus Norris. The National Theatre Green Store embodies the National Theatre's commitment to making essential change to theatre making practice, by not only housing the National Theatre's costumes, props and scenery in one space to encourage further reuse of production resources, but also through working together with cultural organisations to establish a production hub for subsidised London theatres and creating a circular economy of industry materials.

The central London location means that the production resources stored at the National Theatre Green Store will now be much more accessible for designers and creatives, leading to increased reuse of materials across National Theatre productions. In addition, DAF Trucks have generously donated an electric truck to the National Theatre for the transportation of production materials further reducing the carbon impacts of all transportation.

Across the UK and around the world

Following the success of the inaugural '**Take Your Seats**' last year where 185,000 people watched Deputy Artistic Director **Clint Dyer**'s *Othello* streamed live on YouTube, today it is announced that this autumn ***Nye*** will be streamed for audiences around the globe for free. This is the latest digital initiative further building the National Theatre's national and global reach,

which has exponentially grown during Rufus' tenure with the expansion of **National Theatre Live** now seen in 74 countries across the globe, which has twice broken the UK event cinema record for the highest-grossing event cinema release ever.

With the creation of **National Theatre at Home**, powered with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, a pioneering theatre streaming service now present in 184 countries around the globe, combined with the National Theatre's commitment to working with over 100 partner theatres across the UK and national and international touring, the National Theatre reaches a global audience of 19 million each year.

Young People and Schools

Rufus' commitment to community engagement and introducing young people to theatre has resulted in the National Theatre being active in every local authority in the UK. The creation of the streaming service **National Theatre Collection**, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this year and has been expanded to New York public schools, means world class theatre has never been more accessible for young people.

Following last year's secondary schools tour of ***Jekyll & Hyde***, which reached 10,000 young people nationwide, at the start of 2025 the National Theatre will return to schools with a tour of ***The LeftBehinds***, a new play co-created by Bristol playwright **Ross Willis** and director **Ned Bennett**. In a post-apocalyptic future, the LeftBehinds must race across a desolate wasteland in a high-octane quest to rebuild an android, unlock its power and save the planet. This new play will embark on a national tour, visiting secondary school halls in 11 areas nationwide across ten weeks in partnership with local theatres.

In June 2025, **Connections**, the National Theatre's annual nationwide youth theatre programme with esteemed alumni including **Rose Ayling-Ellis**, **Callum Scott Howells** and **Keira Knightley** celebrates its 30th anniversary. By giving young people experience on all aspects of staging and performing a new play, they develop truly transferable skills and the ability to think creatively, which is vital for any career path. Playwrights who have been commissioned to write

Connections plays over the last three decades include **Alice Birch, Chris Bush, James Graham** and **Lenny Henry** to name a few.

Rufus Norris, Director and Co-Chief Executive said *'Leading the creative powerhouse that is the National Theatre over the past decade has been a profound privilege. I am humbled by the commitment, dedication and passion shown day in and day out by the extraordinary people who have joined me in the mission to make the NT a representative, sustainable, world class theatre, reaching far beyond its concrete walls. From establishing the New Work Department, which has sparked an explosion of new voices on and off stage, to creating NT at Home, now streaming in nearly every county in the world, I am beyond thrilled that NT now has a global audience reach of 19 million. There is simply nowhere else like it on earth. I can't wait to watch from the wings as it flourishes and grows for future generations to enjoy under the brilliant leadership of Indhu Rubasingham and Kate Varah.'*

Kate Varah, Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive said, *'It has been a joy and privilege to work alongside Rufus for the past three years. His unwavering commitment to creating a truly national theatre, platforming new writers and artists, has given the country a decade of exciting and important cultural moments. Whether through the stories told on our stages, across the UK and around the world, or through his dedication to providing opportunities for young people and communities to experience theatre, the work of the National Theatre reaches more people than ever before, with an innovative new global digital footprint, all sparking creativity and changing lives. The qualities you see in his work - heart, generosity and integrity - have been the hallmarks of his leadership. As Indhu and I lead the NT into its next chapter, we stand on the shoulders of both Rufus and my predecessor, Lisa Burger. It is because of them that today, we have a vibrant, thriving National Theatre.'*

ENDS

For images, click [here](#)

Production	Theatre	Dates	Press Night	Press Contact
<i>Take Your Seats: Nye</i>	National Theatre at Home	From 7pm (GMT) 7 – 11 November 2024	N/A	Zara Jayant
<i>Secondary Schools Tour: The LeftBehinds</i>	Nationwide schools tour	January – March 2025	N/A	Orla Bentley
<i>Alterations</i>	Lyttelton theatre	20 February – 5 April 2025	Thu 27 Feb 2025	James Lever
<i>Dear England</i>	Olivier theatre & The Lowry, Salford	10 March 2025 – 24 May 2025	Tue 18 March 2025	Emily Ritchie
<i>Here We Are</i>	Lyttelton theatre	23 April – 28 June 2025	Thu 08 May 2025	James Lever
<i>Connections 30th Anniversary</i>	Dorfman theatre	June 2025	N/A	Rhian Bennett
<i>London Road</i>	Olivier theatre	5 – 21 June 2025	Thu 12 June 2025	Emily Ritchie
<i>Nye</i>	Olivier theatre & Wales Millenium Centre, Cardiff	3 July – 16 August 2025	Thu 10 July 2025	James Lever
<i>Inter Alia</i>	Lyttelton theatre	TBA	TBA	Emily Ritchie
<i>The Estate</i>	Dorfman theatre	TBA	TBA	James Lever
<i>The Land of the Living</i>	Dorfman theatre	TBA	TBA	Emily Ritchie

<i>End</i>	Dorfman theatre	TBA	TBA	James Lever
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With thanks

Dear England

The commissioning of this production was supported by the Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation. The original production at the National Theatre was generously supported by the *Dear England* Team of Production Champions.

Nye

This original production at the National Theatre was supported by the Huo Family Foundation and Rosetrees Trust. The commissioning of this play was generously supported by the Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation. This play is a recipient of an Edgerton Foundation New Plays Award.

The Estate

The commissioning of this play was generously supported by the Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation.

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National Theatre Learning

The Mohn Westlake Foundation supports nationwide Learning programmes for young people. Nationwide learning is supported by Buffini Chao Foundation, Clore Duffield Foundation, Crevan O'Grady & Jane McClenahan, MFPA Trust Fund for the Training of Disabled Children in the Arts, The Kartik Foundation, Behrens Foundation, Marlow Trust, Cleopatra Trust, and The Andor Charitable Trust.

Secondary Schools Tour

Secondary Schools Touring is supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation, Delta Air Lines, The Ingram Trust, The Constance Travis Charitable Trust, Susan Miller & Byron Grote, The Anthony and Elizabeth Mellows Charitable Settlement, The Britford Bridge Trust, William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust and The Dow Clewer Foundation.

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Connections 30th Anniversary

BNP Paribas are Headline Partner of Connections 2025. Connections is supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation, Buffini Chao Foundation, The EBM Charitable Trust, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Katie Bradford Arts Trust, Susan Miller & Byron Grote, Mulberry Trust, Tuixen Foundation, Rigby Foundation, The Peter Cundill Foundation, The Woodward Charitable Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Golsoncott Foundation and The John Thaw Foundation.

National Theatre Collection

Lead philanthropic support from Richard and Kara Gnodde. National Theatre Collection is made possible in primary schools by the Hearn Foundation, as the Principal Funder of the Primary Schools Programme. NT Collection is also supported by The Attwood Education Foundation, Delta Air Lines, Mike Staunton, The Michael Marks Charitable Trust, and The Oakley Charitable Trust. Creative Careers enabled by TikTok.

Take Your Seats: Nye

The Take Your Seats stream of *Nye* has been made possible by National Theatre at Home's partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies.

National Theatre Green Store

The Green Store is generously supported by the 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust.

With thanks to DAF Trucks for the generous donation of the National Theatre Green Store Electric Truck.

New Work Department

The National Theatre's New Work programme is supported by Sir Peter Shaffer Charitable Foundation, The Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation, Lawton W Fitt & James I McLaren Foundation, Edgerton Foundation, Red Butterfly Foundation, Genesis Foundation, Daniel Howard Foundation, The John S Cohen Foundation, Fenton Arts Trust, Idlewild Trust and Garrick Charitable Trust.

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London.

Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk

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