

# ALMEIDA THEATRE

## PRESS RELEASE

Monday 13 March 2017

The Almeida Theatre announces the full programme for *Hamlet For Free*, a free festival of events and performances for anyone aged 25 and under.

- *Hamlet For Free* will feature four days of free performances, events, and workshops inspired by the themes of *Hamlet*
- Five performances of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, directed by Almeida Associate Director Robert Icke with Andrew Scott in the title role, will be performed exclusively for audiences aged 25 and under from 10 – 13 April, with all tickets completely free
- *Hamlet for Free* will offer more than 1650 young people the opportunity to see *Hamlet* for free and renews the Almeida's commitment to ensuring affordable and accessible tickets across the year, putting young people at the heart of the theatre

*Hamlet for Free* will run from Monday 10 – Thursday 13 April with five performances of the Almeida's production of *Hamlet*, directed by Robert Icke with Andrew Scott in the title role, exclusively available to anyone aged 25 and under. Alongside the play, *Hamlet For Free* will feature a programme of free performances, events, and workshops inspired by the themes and making of *Hamlet*.

Highlights of the festival include: **Press Go**, an interactive promenade murder mystery thriller taking the audience to various locations around Islington; a spoken word performance by MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist **Akala**; a discussion about the crisis in modern masculinity led by actor and musician **Jacob Anderson** (aka **Raleigh Ritchie**); a performance by poet **Vanessa Kisuule**; and a programme of **workshops** led by Almeida Artistic Director **Rupert Goold**, award-winning spoken word artist **Polarbear**, stage and screen-writers **Rachel De-lahay** and **Vinay Patel**, stage combat company **RC Annie**, immersive theatre-makers **Coney**, and members of the *Hamlet* cast. The Almeida will be open from 9.30am each day during the festival with the entire building and café bar dedicated to young people.

**Almeida Participation** will implement a programme of outreach work alongside *Hamlet For Free* which will see them allocate up to 750 tickets to community groups and young people who have not engaged with the Almeida before. *Hamlet* cast members are working alongside the team to meet young people, lead workshops to inspire them and encourage them to see *Hamlet* and to take part in all *Hamlet For Free* events and workshops. Almeida Participation will partner with charity groups who work with young people with visual impairments and hearing impairments ahead of the Audio Described and Captioned performance on 12 April.

The full festival schedule is:

**Monday 10 – Thursday 13 April, various times through the day**

***PRESS GO***

*Press Go*, an interactive promenade piece created in response to the themes of *Hamlet* which will run throughout each day of the Festival. *Press Go* sees a group of fearless young actors invite their audience on a journey around Islington in a murder mystery thriller where every move they make has game-changing consequences.

Win or lose, how this story ends is entirely up to the audience. Playing in teams of two they will visit multiple locations, with the choices they make along the way affecting how their journey unfolds. Combining storytelling, gaming and the ingredients of a classic psychological thriller, *Press Go* is a bold, cinematic and playful alternate reality game developed in collaboration with the Almeida's Young Producers, written by Hannah Wood and directed by Christopher Elmer-Gorry.

Location: Around Islington. Meet at the Almeida Theatre box office to collect tickets and begin the journey.

**Monday 10 April, 11am – 1pm**

***WRITING WORKSHOP WITH VINAY PATEL***

Using everyday inspiration to develop a short script or monologue, stage and screen writer Vinay Patel leads this writing workshop using the day's newspaper stories as provocation. Participants will work together to create topical short pieces with a chance to perform work in the Almeida bar.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Monday 10 April, 11am – 1pm**

***DIRECTING MASTERCLASS WITH RUPERT GOOLD***

*What's the point in staging Shakespeare today? And how do you make it good?*

The Almeida's Artistic Director Rupert Goold shares his secrets to staging Shakespeare, exploring a variety of techniques from the rehearsal room in a practical session.

Location: New Unity Church, Upper Street

**Monday 10 April, 2 – 3pm**

***AKALA: HIP-HOP AND SHAKESPEARE***

***spoken word performance***

MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist, writer, poet, educator and creator of 'The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company', Akala fuses his unique rap/rock/electro-punk sound with fierce lyrical storytelling.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Monday 10, Tuesday 11, Thursday 13 April, 2 – 4pm**

**ACTING MASTERCLASS WITH THE HAMLET COMPANY**

Three opportunities to take part in acting workshops led by members of the *Hamlet* cast. Looking at the *Hamlet* text, the actors will share their approaches to verse, drawing on techniques used in rehearsals for the production.

Workshop leaders to be announced.

Location: New Unity Church, Upper Street

**Tuesday 11 April, 11am – 1pm**

**CREATING INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE WITH CONEY**

Immersive theatre-makers Coney lead this practical session exploring how everyday digital technology and games can be used to create imaginative and playful experiences for an audience.

Location: New Unity Church, Upper Street

**Tuesday 11 April, 11.30am – 1pm**

**ANSWERS BACK: WHO THE HELL'S IN CHARGE HERE?**

*What is wrong with the current political situation?*

*What changes need to be made?*

*What does an ideal leader look like?*

A panel event on the themes of leadership and division explored in *Hamlet*, will feature a panel of young people discussing what makes a good leader and how young people can motivate social change in this period of global political unrest.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Tuesday 11 April, 1 – 2.30pm\* and 4.30 – 6pm**

**WRITING WORKSHOP WITH RACHEL DE-LAHAY**

Participants will take part in a writing workshop in the Almeida bar led by award-winning playwright Rachel De-lahay. Rachel's most recent play, *Circles*, for which she won the Pearson Award to write, and won the Catherine Johnson Award from Channel 4, transferred to the Tricycle Theatre in London after a sell-out run at Birmingham Rep. Rachel is currently developing her first two feature films.

Location: Almeida Theatre

\*The location for the 1 – 2.30pm workshop is **The Noël Coward Room**, Alan Brodie Representation, Paddock Suite, The Courtyard, 55 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6HA.

**Tuesday 11 April, 2 – 4pm**

***TAKE A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES***

Join the Almeida technical team as they demonstrate how lighting, sound and stage management come together to create a seamless performance.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Tuesday 11 April, 2 - 4pm**

***RECLAIMING CRITICISM***

The Almeida Young Critics lead a practical workshop on how young people can break the mould of theatre criticism. Looking at new models of responding, the Young Critics will provide the tools to respond to theatre in non-traditional ways.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Tuesday 11 April, 3 – 6pm**

***GAMES BUS***

Handpicked classic arcade and storytelling games on PS4, Xbox and Wii for the ultimate gaming experience. The *Game Bus* will be parked just outside the theatre, and open to anyone to drop in.

Location: Almeida Street

**Wednesday 12 April, 11am – 1pm, 2 – 4pm and 4.15 - 6.15pm**

***INTRODUCTION TO SWORD FIGHTING***

Participants will work with a professional fight director from renowned dramatic violence company RC Annie and explore the basic skills needed to create realistic and dynamic sword fights on stage.

Location: New Unity Church, Upper Street

**Thursday 13 April, 11am – 3.30pm**

***SPOKEN WORD WORKSHOP WITH STEVEN CAMDEN (POLARBEAR)***

Steven Camden (Polarbear) is one of the most respected spoken word artists in the UK. Steven will work with a group of young people for the day, supporting them in developing new spoken word pieces. At the end of the workshop he will perform on the Almeida stage alongside the young performers. This performance will take place at 2.50pm.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Thursday 13 April, 2.30 – 4pm**

**LADS LOUNGE**

Jacob Anderson (aka Raleigh Ritchie) opens up a discussion about masculinity, inspired by themes in *Hamlet* and recent reports about the crisis in modern masculinity. Raleigh will consider his personal story in the public eye and participants will be invited to engage in the conversation.

Jacob's debut album 'You're A Man Now, Boy' was released in 2016 and he can currently be seen on television as Greyworm in *Game of Thrones*.

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Thursday 13 April, 5 – 6pm**

**VANESSA KISUULE POETRY PERFORMANCE**

Join Bristol based writer and performer **Vanessa Kisuule** for a special performance as part of the Festival. Vanessa has won numerous poetry slams (Roundhouse, Hammer and Tongue, Nuoryican).

Location: Almeida Theatre

**Wednesday 12 April, 1.30pm**

**HAMLET – Audio Described and Captioned performance**

An Audio Described and Captioned matinee performance of *Hamlet* for young deaf or hard of hearing and blind or visually impaired audiences, preceded by a Touch Tour at 11.45am – 12.30pm on Wednesday 12 April. Email [hamlet@almeida.co.uk](mailto:hamlet@almeida.co.uk) to book tickets for this performance and a place on the Touch Tour.

**HOW TO GET TICKETS**

**Tickets for *Hamlet for Free* events and workshops go on sale at 12pm on Monday 13 March.**

Free tickets for performances of *Hamlet* are currently sold out. These tickets must be collected by 6.30pm on the day of the performance. After that time they will be made available on a first come first served basis to a standby queue which the Almeida will be operating each day of the festival.

**TICKETS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE ALMEIDA THEATRE**

*Hamlet for Free* renews the Almeida's commitment to ensuring affordable and accessible tickets for young people across the year.

From *The Treatment* onwards, 500 £5 tickets per production will be available to anyone aged 25 and under, spread across a choice of four Monday performances throughout the run. Audiences aged 26 –

30 will have access to £15 tickets per production. See [almeida.co.uk](http://almeida.co.uk) for further details of ticket schemes and concessions.

**£5 25 and under tickets for *The Treatment* are bookable on a first come first served basis and will go on sale on Monday 3 April for the following performances:**

**Monday 24 April**

**Monday 1 May**

**Monday 8 May**

**Monday 29 May**

Rupert Goold, Almeida Artistic Director said: *“Hamlet For Free celebrates the young people who belong at the heart of the Almeida’s community. We are delighted to be producing this entirely free festival around Robert’s production of Hamlet, harnessing the imagination and energy of the Almeida for what will be an electric four days.*

*“We want to open up the doors of the theatre and welcome everyone aged 25 and under inside to experience the shows we create, the actors on stage, the creatives off stage, and to offer a platform for young people to explore their own talent, at no cost. It’s vital to remove any barriers to attending and making theatre and we are excited to welcome first-timers, students and young theatre-makers. No one should feel that theatre “isn’t for them” and Hamlet For Free is a fantastic opportunity for us to engage with audiences new to the Almeida and create a memorable and valuable experience.*

*“Hamlet For Free renews our commitment to ensuring affordable accessible tickets for young people across the Almeida’s artistic programme. We hope to see these audiences return for *The Treatment*, *Ink* and *Against* later this year with the discounted ticket schemes we’re rolling out.”*

The provision of free tickets for *Hamlet for Free* has been generously supported by Gregory Nasmyth and Samantha Rowe-Beddoe.

With thanks to the Noël Coward Foundation for their support of the writing workshop with Rachel De-la-hay.

**ENDS**

**For all press enquiries and images, contact Susie Newbery, Press and Media Relations Manager, on 020 7288 4911 or [snewbery@almeida.co.uk](mailto:snewbery@almeida.co.uk)**

**Notes to Editors**

***HAMLET***

The full cast of *Hamlet* is **Barry Aird, Elliot Barnes-Worrell, Jessica Brown Findlay, Marty Cruickshank, Calum Finlay, Joshua Higgott, Amaka Okafor, Daniel Rabin, David Rintoul, Andrew Scott, Juliet Stevenson, Luke Thompson, Peter Wight, Angus Wright and Matthew Wynn.** *Hamlet*

is designed by **Hildegard Bechtler**, with lighting by **Natasha Chivers**, sound by **Tom Gibbons**, and video design by **Tal Yarden**. The Associate Director is **Daniel Raggett**. Casting is by **Julia Horan**.

## **THE ALMEIDA**

The Almeida Theatre exists to launch the next generation of British artists onto the world stage. A small room with an international reputation, the Almeida began life as a literary and scientific society – complete with library, lecture theatre and laboratory. From the beginning, the building existed to investigate the world. Today, the Almeida makes brave new work that asks big questions: of plays, of theatre and of the world around us.

The Almeida brings together the most exciting artists to take risks; to provoke, inspire and surprise audiences; to interrogate the present, dig up the past and imagine the future. Whether new work or reinvigorated classic, whether in the theatre, on the road or online, the Almeida makes live art to excite, enliven and entertain. The Almeida makes argument for theatre as an essential force in an increasingly fragmented society.

The Almeida is grateful to its Principal Partner Aspen, in its third term as the Almeida's most significant corporate supporter. Aspen was established in 2002 and is a leading global insurance and reinsurance company.

[www.aspen.co](http://www.aspen.co)

The Almeida is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

### **ALMEIDA LISTINGS INFORMATION**

#### ***HAMLET***

by William Shakespeare

directed by Robert Icke

**Tickets for *Hamlet* from Monday 10 – Thursday 13 April are exclusively available to anyone aged 25 and under for free. Tickets are limited to two per person. Tickets are currently sold out but a standby queue will operate each day of the festival.**

<b>Address</b>	Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, London, N1 1TA
<b>Café Bar</b>	The Almeida Café Bar is open from 11.30am -11.00pm, Monday to Saturday
<b>Box Office</b>	<b>Online</b> <a href="http://almeida.co.uk">almeida.co.uk</a> <b>Phone</b> 020 7359 4404 (10am – 7pm Monday – Saturday) <b>In person</b> 10am – 7pm, Monday – Saturday <b>Nearest Tube:</b> Angel / Highbury & Islington
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://almeida.co.uk">almeida.co.uk</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	@AlmeidaTheatre
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/almeidatheatre">facebook.com/almeidatheatre</a>
<b>Instagram</b>	@almeida_theatre