

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Press Release: Friday 7 April

The Almeida Theatre announces further casting and on sale dates for the world premiere of *Against*, a new play by Christopher Shinn, directed by Ian Rickson, featuring Ben Whishaw

AGAINST

Press night: Friday 18 August at 7pm

Box Office: 020 7359 4404 (10am – 7.30pm)

Online: almeida.co.uk

Tickets for *Against* will go on public sale on Thursday 25 May at 10am. Priority Booking will open to Almeida Members at Designers' Circle level and above on Tuesday 16 May. Booking for Friends opens on Thursday 18 May.

Memberships start from £50.

For more information about memberships or to join at any level, call the **Development Team** on **020 7288 4930** or email: supporters@almeida.co.uk.

Silicon Valley. The future. A rocket launches.

Luke is an aerospace billionaire who can talk to anyone. But God is talking to him. He sets out to change the world. Only violence stands in his way.

Christopher Shinn's gripping new play, directed by Ian Rickson, features Ben Whishaw as Luke. Adelle Leonce and Naomi Wirthner join the cast with further casting to be announced.

Against is designed by **Uitz**. Casting is by **Sophie Holland**.

Against runs from Saturday 12 August – Saturday 30 September.

Adelle Leonce's theatre credits include *Torn* at the Royal Court Theatre; *In The Night Time* at the Gate Theatre; *Tipping The Velvet* at the Lyric Hammersmith; *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* at the National Theatre; *The Dutch Courtesan* at Shakespeare's Globe; and *Sing Ya Heart Out For The Lads* and *Hotel Baltimore* at the Avondale Theatre. Adele was part of the Lyric Hammersmith's Secret Theatre Company from 2013 – 2015. Television credits include: *Black Mirror*, *The Break*, *Ordinary Lies*, *Shameless*; and *Vera*.

Naomi Wirthner's theatre credits include *Evening At The Talkhouse*, *An Oak Tree*, *Marat Sade*, and *Fair Ladies At A Game Of Poem Cards* for the National Theatre; *African Gothic* at the Arcola Theatre; *Splash Hatch On The E Going Down* at the Donmar Warehouse; *Madman of the Balcony* at the Gate Theatre; *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Have*, *Cymbeline*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Bite of the Night* for the RSC. Naomi is Artistic Director of the Barebones Project where her recent projects include *PVT*

Wars and *Lone Star* by James McClure. Television includes *Fiona's Story*, *Baby Father II*, *Wycliffe*, *Soldier Soldier*, and *Between The Lines*.

Ben Whishaw previously appeared in *Bakkhai* at the Almeida. Other theatre credits include *The Crucible* on Broadway; *Mojo* and *Peter and Alice* in the West End; *Cock* at the Royal Court; *His Dark Materials*; *The Seagull*; and *The Idiot* at the National Theatre; and *Hamlet* at The Old Vic. His film credits include *A Hologram for The King*; *The Danish Girl*; *The Lobster*; *In The Heart of the Sea*; *Suffragette*; James Bond films *Spectre* and *Skyfall* as Q; *Paddington*; *Lilting*; *Enduring Love*; *Layer Cake*; *Perfume*; *Stoned*; *I'm Not There*; *Brideshead Revisited*; *Bright Star*; *The Tempest*; and *Cloud Atlas*. For television he won a BAFTA for the BBC adaptation of *Richard II*, directed by Rupert Goold. Other television includes *London Spy*; *The Hour*; *Nathan Barley*; and *Criminal Justice*, for which he won Best Actor Awards at the Emmys and the Royal Television Awards.

Christopher Shinn, who makes his Almeida debut with *Against*, is the author of twelve plays including *Now or Later* (shortlisted for the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play); *Dying City* (Pulitzer Prize Finalist); and *Where Do We Live* (Obie in Playwriting). His play *Teddy Ferrara* was produced at the Donmar Warehouse in 2015 directed by Dominic Cooke, and his adaptation of *Hedda Gabler* premiered on Broadway in 2009, directed by Ian Rickson. Five of his plays received their world premiere at the Royal Court, and his work has also been produced by Soho Theatre, Lincoln Center Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club, Vineyard Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, Goodman Theatre, South Coast Rep, and Hartford Stage. He has written short plays for Headlong and the Bush Theatre. A Guggenheim Fellow, he teaches playwriting at the New School.

Ian Rickson previously directed *Parlour Song* at the Almeida. Ian was Artistic Director at the Royal Court from 1998 to 2006, during which time he directed *Krapp's Last Tape*; *The Winterling*; *Alice Trilogy*; *The Sweetest Swing in Baseball*; *Fallout*; *The Night Heron*; *Boy Gets Girl*; *Mouth to Mouth* (also in the West End); *Dublin Carol*; *The Weir* (also in the West End and on Broadway); *The Lights*; *Pale Horse*; *Mojo* (also at the Steppenwolf Theatre, Chicago); *Ashes & Sand*; *Some Voices*; and *Killers*. His final Royal Court production of *The Seagull* also transferred to Broadway. Other theatre includes *The Nest* at the Lyric, Belfast and Young Vic; *Evening At The Talkhouse*; *The Red Lion*; *The Hothouse* and *The Day I Stood Still* at the National Theatre; *The River* at the Royal Court and on Broadway; *Electra* at The Old Vic; *Mojo*; *Old Times*; *Betrayal*; and *The Children's Hour* in the West End; *Hamlet* at the Young Vic; *Jerusalem* at the Royal Court, West End and Broadway; *Hedda Gabler* at the Roundabout Theatre, New York; *The House of Yes* at the Gate; and *Me & My Friend* at Chichester Festival Theatre. Film includes *Fallout*; *Krapp's Last Tape*; and *The Clear Road Ahead*. Radio includes *In Therapy* for Radio 4.

ENDS

For all press enquiries and images, contact Susie Newbery, Press and Media Relations Manager, on 020 7288 4911 or snewbery@almeida.co.uk

ALMEIDA LISTINGS INFORMATION

Saturday 12 August – Saturday 30 September

AGAINST

by Christopher Shinn

directed by Ian Rickson

Press night: Wednesday 23 August, 7pm

Address Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, London, N1 1TA

Café Bar The Almeida Café Bar is open from 11.30am -11.00pm, Monday to Saturday

Box Office **Online** almeida.co.uk

Phone 020 7359 4404 (10am – 7pm Monday – Saturday)

In person 10am – 7pm, Monday – Saturday

Nearest Tube: Angel / Highbury & Islington

Website almeida.co.uk

Twitter @AlmeidaTheatre

Facebook facebook.com/almeidatheatre

Instagram @almeida_theatre

Access ***Against*** Captioned performance:
Thursday 14 September at 7.30pm
Against Audio Described performance:
Saturday 16th September at 2.30pm (Touch Tour at 12.45pm)

Talkback Post-show discussion with members of the company
Free to same day ticket holders

Against Thursday 21 September

At least 500 £5 tickets per production are available to audiences aged 25 and under. Audiences aged 30 and under have access to 450 £15 tickets per production. See almeida.co.uk/concessions for further details.

Notes to Editors

ABOUT THE ALMEIDA THEATRE

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.

Founded by Pierre Audi in 1980, his successors were Jonathan Kent and Ian McDiarmid in 1990, and Michael Attenborough in 2002. Productions including *Hamlet* with Ralph Fiennes in 2005, Rufus Norris'

Festen, Ruined by Lynn Nottage and most recently *Chimerica, Ghosts* and *King Charles III* have given the theatre international renown.

In summer 2013, Rupert Goold joined the Almeida as Artistic Director. His first production was *American Psycho: a new musical thriller*, which transferred to Broadway in 2016. In 2014 the Almeida productions of *Ghosts* and *Chimerica* won eight Olivier Awards including Best Actress, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best New Play, Best Director and Best Revival and enjoyed transfers to the West End and Broadway respectively. This was followed by *King Charles III*, which transferred to the West End at the Wyndham's Theatre and won the Olivier Award for Best New Play in 2015, transferred to Broadway, and toured the UK and Sydney. Other notable productions as Artistic Director include *The Merchant of Venice, Medea* and *Richard III*, which in July 2016 was broadcast to cinemas around the world via Almeida Theatre Live.

In summer 2015, the Almeida presented *Almeida Greeks*, which included three major new productions of *Oresteia, Bakkhai* and *Medea*, the latter of which was directed by Goold, with a festival of events, performances, talks and readings running alongside.

He co-directed *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* with Almeida Associate Director Robert Icke. Involving more than 60 readers, *The Iliad* reached an audience of over 50,000 people across the world, watching online, or in person at the British Museum and the Almeida Theatre. *The Odyssey* followed the huge success of *The Iliad*, and involved an army of artists in various locations around London. As with *The Iliad*, both theatrical events were live streamed throughout and achieved ground-breaking levels of online engagement.

At least 500 £5 tickets are available to audiences aged 25 and under per production at the Almeida. Audiences aged 30 and under have access to 450 £15 tickets per production.

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

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