

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Press release: Thursday 1 February

Artistic Director Rupert Goold today announces the Almeida Theatre's new season:

- The world premiere of *The Writer* by Ella Hickson, directed by Blanche McIntyre.
- A rare revival of Sophie Treadwell's 1928 play *Machinal*, directed by Natalie Abrahami.
- The UK premiere of *Dance Nation*, Clare Barron's award-winning play, directed by Bijan Sheibani.
- The first London run of *£¥€\$ (LIES)* from acclaimed Belgian company Ontroerend Goed.

Also announced today:

- The return of the Almeida For Free festival taking place from 3 to 5 April during the run of Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*.
- The new cohort of eleven Resident Directors.

Rupert Goold said today, "It is with enormous excitement that we announce our new season, featuring two premieres from immensely talented and ground-breaking writers, a rare UK revival of a seminal, pioneering American play, and an exhilarating interactive show from one of the most revolutionary theatre companies in Europe.

"We start by welcoming back Ella Hickson, following her epic *Oil* in 2016, with new play *The Writer*, directed by Blanche McIntyre. Like Ella's previous work, this is a hugely ambitious, deeply political play that consistently challenges what theatre can and should be.

"Following *The Writer*, we are thrilled to present a timely revival of Sophie Treadwell's masterpiece, *Machinal*, directed by Natalie Abrahami. Ninety years after it emerged from the American expressionist theatre scene and twenty-five years since its last London production, it remains strikingly resonant in its depiction of oppression, gender and power.

"I first saw Belgian company Ontroerend Goed's show *£¥€\$ (LIES)* at the Edinburgh Fringe last year. It was an adrenaline-charged, unpredictable, all-consuming experience that hasn't left my mind since. I couldn't

be happier to welcome the company of LIES to the Almeida for a three week run in August and to share its glamour, risk and game-playing with London audiences.

“The season concludes with the award-winning new American play Dance Nation by Clare Barron, directed by Bijan Sheibani. Dance Nation is a fierce take on youth and ambition and the second winner of the Susan Smith Blackburn Award to be given its UK premiere at the Almeida, following Lucy Kirkwood’s Chimerica in 2013.

“We also announce today the return of our Almeida For Free festival, following its success on Hamlet last year. From 3-5 April, all performances of our production of Tennessee Williams’ Summer and Smoke will be performed to audiences aged 25 and under, with all tickets completely free. They will be accompanied by a diverse programme of free events, performances and masterclasses themed around the play. It continues our commitment to offering affordable, accessible tickets to young people for all Almeida productions.”

World Premiere

THE WRITER

By Ella Hickson

Directed by **Blanche McIntyre**; Designed by **Anna Fleischle**

Sound Design by **Emma Laxton**; Lighting Design by **Richard Howell**

Saturday 14 April – Saturday 26 May 2018

Press night: Tuesday 24 April 7pm

“I want awe. I feel like I need blood. All the time. And anything less than that makes me feel desperate. It makes me feel like I want to die.”

She wants to change the shape of the world. But a new way of thinking needs a new story. How can she make herself heard?

Ella Hickson returns to the Almeida following the success of *Oil* in 2016 with the world premiere of *The Writer*, directed by Blanche McIntyre.

Ella Hickson’s *Oil* was produced by the Almeida Theatre in 2016 (it won the Catherine Johnson Award for Best Play in 2013). Her other plays include *Merlin*, *Wendy and Peter Pan*, *Boys*, *The Authorised Kate Bane*, *Gift* (part of Headlong’s *Decade*), *Precious Little Talent* and *Hot Mess*.

Blanche McIntyre directs. Her theatre credits include *The Norman Conquests* at Chichester Festival Theatre; *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* for the RSC; *Noises Off* at the Nottingham Playhouse; *Welcome Home, Captain Fox!* at the Donmar Warehouse; *The Oresteia* at HOME, Manchester; *As You Like It* and *The Comedy of Errors* at Shakespeare's Globe; *Arcadia* for English Touring Theatre and Ambassador Theatre Group; *Accolade* at St James' Theatre and also at the Finborough Theatre; *Tonight at 8:30* and *The Nutcracker* at Nuffield Southampton Theatres; *Ciphers* for Out of Joint, Bush Theatre and Exeter Northcott; *The Birthday Party* at the Manchester Royal Exchange and *The Seagull* for Headlong Theatre, Nuffield Southampton Theatres and Derby Theatre (winner of Best Director at 2013 UK Theatre Awards) and *Foxfinder* at the Finborough Theatre. McIntyre was the winner of the 2011 Critics' Circle Most Promising Newcomer Award. She will direct *The Winter's Tale* at Shakespeare's Globe later this year.

MACHINAL

By **Sophie Treadwell**

Directed by **Natalie Abrahami**; Designed by **Miriam Buether**

Composition and Sound by **Ben and Max Ringham**; Lighting Design by **Jack Knowles**

Monday 4 June – Saturday 21 July 2018

Press night: Monday 11 June 7pm

"Your skin oughtn't to curl - ought it - when he just comes near you - ought it? That's wrong, ain't it? You don't get over that, do you - ever, do you or do you?"

The city. A woman is restless. A woman is suffocating. A woman is silenced.

The woman revolts.

Natalie Abrahami directs a visceral production of Sophie Treadwell's expressionist masterpiece.

Sophie Treadwell (1885 – 1970) was a playwright and journalist. She was the author of 39 plays including *Machinal* (most recently revived in London at the National Theatre in 1993), *Gringo*, *O Nightingale*, *Ladies Leave*, *Lone Valley*, *Plumes in the Dust* and *Hope for a Harvest*.

Natalie Abrahami directs. She was previously Artistic Director of the Gate Theatre from 2007-2012 and Associate Director at the Young Vic from 2013-2016. Her credits include *Wings*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, *Happy Days* and *After Miss Julie* at the Young Vic; *Queen Anne* for the RSC and at the Theatre Royal Haymarket; *Hitchcock Blonde* at Hull Truck Theatre; *Yerma*, *How To Be An Other Woman*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, *Vanya*, *Unbroken*, *Women in Love* and *The Internationalist* at the Gate Theatre; *Pericles* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Headlong.

**Ontroerend Goed, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Richard Jordan Productions and Vooruit Kunstcentrum
in association with Big in Belgium present**

£¥€\$ (LIES)

Tuesday 31 July – Saturday 18 August 2018

Press performances: Wednesday 1 August 6pm and 9pm; Thursday 2 August 6pm

Script by **Joeri Smet, Angelo Tijssens, Karolien De Bleser, Alexander Devriendt**

Directed by **Alexander Devriendt**

Technical support from **Babette Poncelet** and **Iben Stalpaert**; costumes by **Astrid Peeters**; music composed by **Johannes Genard**; design by **Nick Mattan** and scenography by **Vormen**.

'The best way to rob a bank is to own one' (William Crawford, Commissioner of the California Department of Savings and Loans).

For one night only we invite you to join the super-rich. The 1%. You will call the shots. You will be the centre of the economy. You will have the power.

Given the chance to do things your way - will you play it safe or risk it all?

World-renowned Belgian theatre company Ontroerend Goed brings its award-winning immersive production to the Almeida Theatre for a limited run.

Special thanks to Toneelacademie Maastricht and with the support of the Flemish Government, Province of East-Flanders, the City of Ghent.

Ontroerend Goed produces self-devised work grounded in the here and now, inviting its audiences to participate as well as observe. It first emerged on the international scene in 2007, with *The Smile Off Your Face*, a one-on-one show in which the audience is tied to a wheelchair and then blindfolded. Its hit show *Once and For All we're gonna tell you who we are so shut up and listen*, was an uncompromising celebration of raw teenage energy on stage. With every new piece of work, Ontroerend Goed provides an intense experience constructed in reality; life goes on during the performance. The company has won numerous awards across Europe, including STUK-prijzen (2003), Scotsman Fringe Firsts (2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2017), Herald Angels (2008, 2009), Total Theatre Awards (2007, 2008, 2012) and The Stage Award for Best Ensemble (2014). Ontroerend Goed performs in Dutch, English and French, and has played to critical acclaim in New York, Sydney, Hong Kong, Toronto and London. Its work is currently being 'staged' in countries around the world with successful local remakes in Istanbul, Moscow and Vancouver. Ontroerend Goed is Alexander Devriendt, David Bauwens, Joeri Smet, Wim Smet, Charlotte De Bruyne, Karen Van Ginderachter, Karolien De Bleser, Babette Poncelet, Aurélie Lannoy and Angelo Tijssens. They

are currently associated artists in residence at Vooruit Arts Centre in their hometown Ghent, Belgium. With award-winning British theatre producer Richard Jordan and leading UK producing theatre Theatre Royal Plymouth, they co-produce and develop all their productions worldwide.

UK Premiere

DANCE NATION

By Clare Barron

Directed by **Bijan Sheibani**

Monday 27 August – Saturday 6 October 2018

Press night: Tuesday 4 September 7pm

“Maybe this is the year, this is the moment, this is the dance where your lives will start!”

Somewhere in America, a revolution is coming.

An army of competitive dancers is ready to take over the world, one routine at a time.

With a pre-teen battle for power and perfection raging on and off stage, *Dance Nation* is a ferocious exploration of youth, ambition and self-discovery.

Winner of the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and The Relentless Award, Clare Barron’s explosive new play *Dance Nation* makes its UK debut in summer 2018, directed by Bijan Sheibani.

Clare Barron is a playwright and actor. She won the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for *Dance Nation*. Her plays include *You Got Older*, *Baby Screams Miracle*, *Solar Plexus* and *Dirty Crusty*. She is the recipient of the 2014 Page 73 Playwriting Fellow and the Paula Vogel Award at the Vineyard, and a two-time finalist for the Clubbed Thumb Biennial Commission. She is also a member of Youngblood, an Affiliated Artist with Target Margin and an alumnus of the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab. As an actor, Barron appeared in the world premiere of Heidi Schreck’s *The Consultant* (Long Wharf) and travelled to Beirut to play Mae in an Arabic-English production of María Irene Fornés’ *Mud*.

Bijan Sheibani directs. He previously directed *The House of Bernarda Alba* and *Fixer* at the Almeida Theatre. His production of *The Brothers Size* is currently running at the Young Vic and he will shortly direct *Circle Mirror Transformation* at HOME Manchester. His other theatre credits include *Barber Shop Chronicles*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Emil and the Detectives*, *The Kitchen* and *Our Class* at the National Theatre; *Giving* at Hampstead Theatre; *Moonlight* at the Donmar Warehouse, *Eurydice* for ATC and the Young Vic and *Gone Too Far!* for the Royal Court, Hackney Empire and Albany Theatre

(Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre). His opera work includes *Nothing at Glyndebourne* and *The Virtues of Things* and *Through His Teeth* at the Royal Opera House. He was Associate Director at the National Theatre from 2010-2015 and Artistic Director of ATC from 2007-2010.

ALMEIDA FOR FREE – SUMMER AND SMOKE

Tuesday 3 April – Thursday 5 April 2018

Following the success of the inaugural 'Almeida For Free' during the run of *Hamlet* in 2017, the festival returns for a second time during the final week of Rebecca Frecknall's production of the Tennessee Williams classic *Summer and Smoke*. All performances across the three days will be made free to 25s and under with an additional programme of free live music and theatre, late night cabaret, exclusive masterclasses with creative professionals and panel discussions. The full programme will be announced shortly.

1,600 people aged 25 and under saw *Hamlet* for free during the inaugural festival in April 2017, with another 750 involved in events over the week. 69% of participants had never visited the Almeida before.

This year's festival has been made possible through the generous support of The Taylor Family Foundation. The Taylor Family Foundation, set up in 2007 by Ian and Cristina Taylor, supports charities giving opportunities to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their chances of attaining success; improving access and engagement in the performing arts and helping the homeless and struggling families to overcome their challenges. <http://www.thetaylorfamilyfoundation.co.uk/>

RESIDENT DIRECTOR POOL 2018

The Almeida Theatre's Directors' Pool offers directors in the early stages of their career the opportunity to work closely with the theatre in all aspects of the artistic programme, to gain experience through access to the resources provided by the Almeida, and to widen their artistic network. For each of our productions, the Director will select a Resident Director from the pool to support the production process from first rehearsals to public performance. Alongside the opportunity to assist, the group will take part in script readings and workshops led by Almeida creatives, and lead projects for Almeida Participation during their residencies. The 2017 pool included Rebecca Frecknall whose production of *Summer and Smoke* runs at the Almeida from 24 February – 7 April.

The cohort for 2018 is:

Piers Black

Or Ben Ezra

Nel Crouch

Floriana Dezou

Matt Hassall
Hannah Joss
Caitlin McLeod
Dervla Toal
Denzel Westley-Sanderson
Joseph Winters
Lucy Wray

The Almeida Theatre is grateful to the Eranda Rothschild Foundation for its support of our Resident Director programme.

ENDS

For all press enquiries and images, contact Alexander Milward, Press and Media Relations Manager, on 020 7288 4911 or amilward@almeida.co.uk

Tickets for *The Writer*, *Machinal* and *Dance Nation* go on sale to the public on Thursday 15 February.

Priority Booking for *The Writer*, *Machinal* and *Dance Nation* will open to Bronze Friends and above on Tuesday 6 February and for Almeida Friends on Thursday 8 February.

Booking for *Almeida For Free – Summer and Smoke* opens on Tuesday 20 February.

All tickets for *Lies* will go on sale on Tuesday 13 March.

Memberships start from £60.

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.

ALMEIDA LISTINGS INFORMATION

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 – 7.30pm, Monday – Saturday)

In person 10am – 7.30pm, Monday – Saturday

Nearest Tube: Angel / Highbury & Islington

Performance times for *The Writer, Machinal* and *Dance Nation*

Evening performances at 7.30pm

Wednesday and Saturday Matinees at 2.30pm

*Press night performances at 7.00pm

Performance times for *£¥€\$ (LIES)*

Monday to Friday: 6pm and 9pm

Saturdays: 4pm and 8pm

Website	almeida.co.uk
Twitter	@AlmeidaTheatre
Facebook	facebook.com/almeidatheatre
Instagram	@almeida_theatre

PRODUCTIONS THE WRITER

Saturday 14 April – Saturday 26 May

Press night: Tuesday 24 April 7pm

MACHINAL

Monday 4 June – Saturday 21 July

Press night: Monday 11 June 7pm

£¥€\$ (LIES)

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DANCE NATION

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MARY STUART AT THE DUKE OF YORK'S THEATRE

Until Saturday 31 March

Duke of York's Theatre
Box Office: 0844 871 7623
Website: MaryStuartPlay.com

Performances:

Monday – Saturday: 7.30pm
Wednesday and Saturday matinees: 2pm

MARY STUART ON TOUR:

Wednesday 4 April – Saturday 14 April
Theatre Royal Bath
Box Office: 01225 448844
Website: theatreroyal.org.uk

Tuesday 17 April – Saturday 21 April
Salford Lowry
Box Office: 0843 208 6000
Website: thelowry.com

Monday 23 April – Saturday 28 April
Cambridge Arts Theatre
Box Office: 01223 503333
Website: cambridgeartstheatre.com

Access

The Writer Audio Described performance:
Saturday 19 May 2.30pm (Touch Tour at 12.45pm)
The Writer Captioned performance:
Friday 11 May 7.30pm

Machinal Audio Described performance:
Saturday 7 July 2:30pm (Touch Tour at 12.45pm)
Machinal Captioned performance:
Tuesday 10 July 7.30pm

Dance Nation Audio Described performance:
Saturday 22 September 2.30pm (Touch Tour at 12.45pm)
Dance Nation Captioned performance:
Friday 28 September 7.30pm

Almeida Questions An eclectic programme of pre-show discussions, which consider some of the questions raised by the work on our stage

The Writer – Monday 30 April

Machinal – Monday 25 June

Dance Nation – Monday 17 September

Watch past events at almeida.co.uk/explore

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

The Writer Thursday 3 May

Machinal Thursday 12 July

Dance Nation Thursday 27 September

Read transcripts of past Q&As at almeida.co.uk/explore

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. It 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. 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. In summer 2013, Rupert Goold joined the Almeida as Artistic Director. Under his leadership, notable productions have included *American Psycho: a new musical thriller* (transferred to Broadway); *Ghosts* (transferred to the West End and won three Olivier Awards); *Chimerica* (won eight Olivier Awards and transferred to Broadway); *King Charles III* (transferred to the West End, won the Olivier Award for Best New Play, transferred to Broadway, toured the UK and Sydney, and received a BBC television adaptation) and *Oresteia* (transferred to the West End and won the Olivier Award for Best Director). 2017 saw West End transfers for *Hamlet*, directed by Robert Icke and *Ink*, directed by Goold, and Icke's new adaptation of *Mary Stuart* is currently running at the Duke of York's Theatre before touring to Bath, Salford and Cambridge. The Almeida was named London Theatre of the Year at the 2018 Stage Awards.

In summer 2015, the Almeida presented *Almeida Greeks*, which included three new productions of *Oresteia*, *Bakkhai* and *Medea*, and live durational readings of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* which were both live streamed achieving ground-breaking levels of online engagement.

In May 2017, the Almeida launched *Figures of Speech*, a major digital film project interrogating the vitality of speech and rhetoric, and what visionary leadership sounds like. The third series of films will be launched in spring 2018 at www.speech.almeida.co.uk. The Almeida is grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and a range of generous individual supporters for making this project possible.

3000 £5 tickets are available to audiences aged 25 and under each year for Almeida productions.

The Almeida Theatre is a registered charity and is dependent on the support of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations. Our small auditorium, even when sold out, only provides 40% of the funding we need to operate. We therefore need to raise more than £2m each year to realise our artistic ambitions, reach new audiences, and secure the financial future of the theatre.

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 grateful for the support of Arts Council England.