

ALMEIDA THEATRE

Press release: Tuesday 27 August

The Almeida Theatre today announces the full cast for Tinuke Craig's production of Maxim Gorky's *Vassa*, in a new version by Mike Bartlett.

VASSA

by **Maxim Gorky**

adapted by **Mike Bartlett**

Direction: **Tinuke Craig**; Design: **Fly Davis**; Light: **Joshua Pharo**; Sound: **Emma Laxton**;
Movement: **Jenny Ogilvie**; Casting: **Annelie Powell CDG**

Saturday 5 October – Saturday 23 November 2019

Press night: Tuesday 15 October 7pm

There are no miracles in this world. Only those we make for ourselves.

It's 8am and a revolt is underway.

The father is dying. The son is spying. The wife is cheating. The uncle is stealing. The mother is scheming. The dynasty is crumbling.

One house. One fortune. One victor.

The cast includes **Samantha Bond, Alexandra Dowling, Arthur Hughes, Daniella Isaacs, Amber James, Danny Kirrane, Kayla Meikle, Cyril Nri, Lee Ross** and **Sophie Wu**.

Tinuke Craig's directing work includes *The Color Purple* (Curve, Leicester); *Random/Generations* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *I Call My Brothers* (Gate Theatre) and *dirty butterfly* (Young Vic). As an Assistant/Associate Director, her credits include *wonder.land* (National Theatre); *Hamlet* and *All's Well That Ends Well* (RSC) and *The Changeling* (Young Vic). She was the Gate Theatre's Associate Director from 2015-

2016. In 2014 she was the winner of the Genesis Future Director Award. She is an Associate Artist of HighTide, a selector for the National Student Drama Festival, an Associate of the National Youth Theatre, and an Education Associate Practitioner at the RSC. She also regularly directs at Mountview, RADA and LAMDA.

Mike Bartlett's plays for the Almeida include *Albion*, *Game* and the multi-award winning *King Charles III* (Olivier Award - Best New Play) which premiered at the Almeida before West End and Broadway transfers, a UK and international tour. His television adaptation of the play was broadcast on BBC Two in 2017. Other plays include *Snowflake* (Old Fire Station and running at the Kiln Theatre this Christmas); *Wild*; *An Intervention*; *Bull* (won the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre); an adaptation of *Medea*; *Chariots of Fire*; *13*; *Decade* (co-writer); *Earthquakes in London*; *Love, Love, Love*; *Cock* (Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre), *Contractions* and *My Child Artefacts*. His writing for television includes *Press*; *Trauma*; *Doctor Foster* and *King Charles III*.

Vassa is part of New Cultural Perspectives, generously supported by the The Kamini and Vindi Banga Family Trust.

The Almeida is also grateful to Cockayne – Grants for the Arts and The London Community Foundation for their kind support of this production.

ENDS

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

ALMEIDA LISTINGS INFORMATION

Saturday 5 October – Saturday 23 November 2019

Vassa

by **Maxim Gorky**

adapted by **Mike Bartlett**

Press night: Tuesday 15 October

- Address** Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, London, N1 1TA
- Café Bar** The Almeida Café Bar is open from 11.00am -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
- Website** almeida.co.uk
- Twitter** @AlmeidaTheatre
- Facebook** facebook.com/almeidatheatre
- Instagram** @almeida_theatre
- Access** Captioned performance:
Thursday 14 November 7:30pm
Audio Described performance:
Saturday 9 November 2:30pm (Touch Tour at 12.45pm)
- Talkback** Post-show discussion with members of the company
Free to same day ticket holders
Monday 4 November
- Almeida Questions** An eclectic programme of pre-show discussions, which consider some of the questions raised by the work on our stage
Monday 28 October 6pm – Under One Roof

Notes to Editors

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Samantha Bond plays Vassa. Her theatre credits include *The Lie* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*; *Passion Play*; *What The Butler Saw*; *An Ideal Husband*; *Arcadia*; *Donkey's Years*; *A Woman of No Importance*; *Three Tall Women* (West End); *King James Readings* (National Theatre); *The Rubenstein Kiss*; *The Memory of Water*

(Hampstead Theatre/tour/West End); *Macbeth* (Albery Theatre); *Amy's View* (Broadway/National Theatre/West End); *The Winter's Tale* (RSC) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (UK tour/ Phoenix). Her television work includes *Outnumbered*; *Downton Abbey*; *The Queen and I*; *Silent Witness*; *Moving On*; *Election Spy*; *Homefires*; *Distant Shores* and *Donovan*. Her film work includes *Cold Blood*; *A Bunch of Amateurs*; *Die Another Day*; *The World is Not Enough*; *Tomorrow Never Dies* and *GoldenEye*.

Alexandra Dowling plays Lipa. Her theatre credits include *Don Carlos* (Rose Theatre Kingston); *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III* (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre); *A Lie of the Mind* (Southwark Playhouse); *While The Sun Shines* (Theatre Royal Bath); *I Have Been Here Before* and *The Last of the De Mullins* (Jermyn Street Theatre). Her television work includes *The Musketeers*; *Agatha Christie's Poirot*; *Game of Thrones* and *Merlin*. For film, her credits include the forthcoming *Starbright*.

Arthur Hughes plays Pavel. His theatre credits include *Our Town* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Saint Joan* (Donmar Warehouse); *The Solid Life of Sugar Water* (Graeae Theatre Company/National Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet* (Taking Flight) and *Tracy* (White Bear Theatre). His television work includes *The Innocents*.

Daniella Isaacs plays Dunyechka. Her theatre credits include *Devil with the Blue Dress* (Bunker Theatre); her one-woman show *Hear Me Raw* (Edinburgh Fringe/Soho Theatre) and *Mush and Me* (Bush Theatre, JW3, Adelaide Festival). For television, her work includes *Fleabag*.

Amber James plays Anna. Her theatre credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *Troilus and Cressida*, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Antony and Cleopatra* (RSC); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (English Touring Theatre) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Shakespeare's Globe). Her television credits include *Ransom*.

Danny Kirrane plays Semyon. He previously appeared in *The Hunt* at the Almeida. His other theatre credits include *We're Staying Right Here* (Metal Rabbit Productions); *As You Like It* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre); *A Little Hotel on the Side* (Theatre Royal Bath); *Three Sisters* (Young Vic); *Boys* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Headlong Theatre); *Jerusalem* (Royal Court, West End and Broadway) and *The History Boys* (National Theatre). His television work includes *Don't Forget the Driver*; *Poldark*; *Game of Thrones*; *Wasted*; *New*

Blood; *Doctor Thorne*; *Critical* and *Trollied*. For film, his work includes *Ravers*; *Peterloo*; *Game Over*; *Pirates of the Caribbean: Salazar's Revenge* and *Walking on Sunshine*.

Kayla Meikle plays Natalya. She previously appeared in *Dance Nation* at the Almeida. Her other theatre work includes *All My Sons* (The Old Vic); *ear for eye* (Royal Court); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* (National Theatre) and *Merlin* (Nuffield Southampton Theatres). Her television work includes *The Capture*; *Afterlife* and *Will*. For film, her work includes *Soundproof*.

Cyril Nri plays Mikhailo. He previously appeared at the Almeida in *Desire*. His recent theatre credits include *The Weatherman* (Park Theatre); *Barber Shop Chronicles* (National Theatre and tour); *Hamlet* (RSC); *Our Country's Good* (National Theatre); *The Absence of War* (Headlong); *Black Jesus* (Finborough); *Julius Caesar* (RSC, West End, BAM) and *The Riots* (Tricycle Theatre). His television work includes *Zapped*; *The ABC Murders*; *Class*; *Death in Paradise*; *Cucumber*; *Critical*; *Crims*; *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and *The Bill* (series regular). For film, his work includes *Jellyfish* and *Deadmeat*.

Lee Ross plays Prokhor. His theatre credits include *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*; *Birdsong* (West End); *Phone Calls*; *Spookhouse* (Hampstead Theatre); *Our Country's Good*; *The Neighbour* (National Theatre); *In Basildon*, *Country Music*, *The Lights*, *Some Voices*, *Hammett's Apprentice* (Royal Court); *Whipping It Up*, *Christmas*, *M.A.D* (Bush Theatre). His television work includes *White Gold*; *The Driver*; *Southcliffe*; *Secrets and Words*; *Titanic*; *Ashes To Ashes*; *Mutual Friends*; *The Catherine Tate Show*; *Life On Mars*; *Eastenders* (series regular); *Dunkirk*; *Jericho*; *Playing The Field*; *Robin Hood*; *Shine On Harvey Moon* and *Press Gang*. For film, his credits include *Farming*; *Containment*; *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*; *Centurion*; *Goal*; *Metroland*; *I.D.*; *Rogue Trader*; *Secrets and Lies*; *The English Patient*; *Buddy's Song*.

Sophie Wu plays Lyudmila. Her theatre credits include *Sketching* (Wilton's Music Hall); *Shopping and F**king* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Punk Rock* (Lyric Hammersmith and Manchester Royal Exchange); *The Wood Orchid* (Bush Theatre) and *Table* (National Theatre). For television, her credits include *New Blood*; *Babylon*; *The Midnight Beast*; *Fresh Meat*; *The Fades* and *Black Mirror*. For film, her work includes *Kick Ass*; *Kick Ass 2*; *The Other Man* and *Wild Child*. She is also a writer – her play *Ramona Tells Jim* was performed at the Bush Theatre in 2017 and she wrote and starred in *Sophie Wu is Minging and Looks Like She's Dead* at the Soho Theatre.

ABOUT THE ALMEIDA

The Almeida Theatre 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.

Since 2013, the Almeida has been led by Artistic Director Rupert Goold. During his tenure, 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* (transferred to the West End and won five Olivier Awards); *1984* (transferred to West End, Broadway and Australia); *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 was adapted for BBC television) and *Oresteia* (transferred to the West End and won the Olivier Award for Best Director). Recently, there have been West End transfers for Robert Icke's productions of *Hamlet* (also screened on the BBC) and *Mary Stuart, Ink* directed by Goold (also Broadway), Rebecca Frecknall's production of *Summer & Smoke* (winner of Best Play Revival and Best Actress at the 2019 Olivier Awards). The Almeida was named London Theatre of the Year at The Stage Awards in both 2015 and 2018.

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. The small auditorium, even when sold out, only provides 40% of the funding we need to operate. Therefore, more than £2m each year needs to be raised in order 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.