

# ALMEIDA THEATRE

Press release: Monday 1 February 2021

## The Almeida Theatre announces live streamed performances of Lolita Chakrabarti's *Hymn*.

The world premiere production which was originally due to play to socially distanced audiences will now be streamed live from the theatre for five performances from Wednesday 17 – Saturday 20 February. Directed by **Blanche McIntyre**, the play features **Adrian Lester** in the role of Gil and **Danny Sapani** as Benny.

Almeida Artistic Director **Rupert Goold** said, “After being forced to cancel the run of *Hymn*, we’re so pleased to have still found a way to offer the show to audiences and are hugely grateful to the whole company for making it possible. We hope that with the actors performing the play live each night, people watching at home will sense some of that joyful energy that comes from being part of a unique shared experience.”

Tickets to the live stream go on sale to Almeida Members from Tuesday 2 February midday and on general sale from Wednesday 3 February midday.

### World Premiere

## HYMN

by **Lolita Chakrabarti**

Directed by **Blanche McIntyre**; Set and Costume: **Miriam Buether**; Lighting: **Prema Mehta**; Sound: **Gregory Clarke**; Musical Director: **D.J. Walde**; Movement Director: **Robia Milliner**

Wednesday 17 – Saturday 20 February 2021

**Press performance: Thursday 18 February 8pm**

*“Man, sometimes it takes a long time to sound like yourself”*

Miles Davis

Two men meet at a funeral.  
Gil knew the deceased. Benny did not.  
Before long their families are close.  
Soon they'll be singing the same tune.

Benny is a loner anchored by his wife and children. Gil longs to fulfil his potential. They form a deep bond but as cracks appear in their fragile lives they start to realise that true courage comes in different forms.

Featuring music from Gil and Benny's lives, **Lolita Chakrabarti's** searching, soulful new play asks what it takes to be a good father, brother or son.

Directed by **Blanche McIntyre** (*The Writer*), *Hymn* features **Adrian Lester** (*Red Velvet*, *Hustle*) and **Danny Sapani** (*Killing Eve*; *Les Blancs*).

**Lolita Chakrabarti** is a playwright and actor. Her plays include *Life of Pi* (WhatsOnStage Award for Best New Play 2019, UK Theatre Award for Best New Play 2019 – transfers to West End later this year); *Invisible Cities*; *Red Velvet* (Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright, Critics' Circle Award for Most Promising Playwright); *Message in a Bottle* for ZooNation/Sadler's Wells for which she was dramaturg; *The Greatest Wealth* – a series of monologues curated by Chakrabarti, including her own monologue titled *Speedy Gonzalez*; and *Last Seen* (an Almeida Theatre production with Slung Low). As an actor, her theatre credits include *Fanny and Alexander* (The Old Vic); *Hamlet* (Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company); *Last Seen* (Almeida Theatre); *Free Outgoing* (Royal Court) and *John Gabriel Borkman* (Donmar Warehouse). For screen, her credits include *Criminal*; *Riviera*; *Born to Kill*; *Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands* and *The Casual Vacancy*. She can be seen on television later this year in *Wheel of Time* and *Vigil*, and on stage in *Calmer*, her new play at Birmingham Rep.

**Blanche McIntyre** returns to the Almeida having previously directed *The Writer*. Her other credits include *Botticelli in the Fire* (Hampstead Theatre); *Tartuffe* (National Theatre); *Bartholomew Fair*, *A Winter's Tale*, *As You Like It* and *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Norman Conquests* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (RSC); *Noises Off* (Nottingham Playhouse); *Welcome Home, Captain Fox!* (Donmar Warehouse); *The Oresteia* (HOME, Manchester); *Arcadia* (English Touring Theatre and Ambassador Theatre Group); *Accolade* (St James' Theatre); *Tonight at 8:30*, *Women in Power* and *The Nutcracker* (Nuffield Southampton

Theatres); *Ciphers* (Out of Joint, Bush Theatre and Exeter Northcott); *The Birthday Party* (Royal Exchange Theatre) and *The Seagull* (Headlong Theatre, Nuffield Southampton Theatres and Derby Theatre – winter of Best Director at 2013 UK Theatre Awards); *Foxfinder* and *Accolade* (Finborough Theatre).

**Adrian Lester** plays Gil. His theatre work includes *Cost of Living* (Hampstead Theatre); *Othello* (National Theatre – winner of Evening Standard Award for Best Actor); *Red Velvet* (Tricycle Theatre, West End and New York – Winner of Critics' Circle Award for Best Actor); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (West End); *Henry V*; *Sweeney Todd* (National Theatre); *Hamlet* (Theatres des Bouffes du Nord); *Company* (Donmar Warehouse – Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Musical); *As You Like It* (Cheek By Jowl) and *Six Degrees of Separation* (Royal Court). For television, his work includes *Life*; *The Rook*; *Curfew*; *Trauma*; *Riviera*; *Undercover*; *London Spy* and *Hustle*. His film work includes *Mary Queen of Scots*; *Grey Lady*; *Euphoria*; *Jimi: All Is by My Side*; *The Day After Tomorrow* and *Primary Colors*. Directing work includes *Of Mary* (Winner of Best Short Film at PAFF); *Hustle* and *Riviera* on television and *The Greatest Wealth* (The Old Vic) and the forthcoming *Calmer* (Birmingham Rep). He was recently made a CBE.

**Danny Sapani** plays Benny. He previously appeared at the Almeida in *Big White Fog*. His other theatre credits include *Invisible Cities* (Manchester International Festival); *Les Blancs*; *Medea*; *Home*; *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*; *The Overwhelming*; *His Dark Materials*; *Antony and Cleopatra*; *The Machine Wreckers* and *Richard II* (National Theatre); *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Young Vic); *Anderson's English* (Out of Joint); *Wig Out* and *Neverland* (Royal Court); *The Green Fields Beyond* (Donmar Warehouse) and *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare's Globe); For television, his work includes *Halo*; *Killing Eve*; *Harlots*; *Mother Father Son*; *Black Earth Rising*; *Traitors*; *Broken*; *The Crown*; *Chewing Gum*; *Bastard Executioner*; *Penny Dreadful*; *The Fear*; *The Town*; *Blackout* and *Misfits*. His recent film credits include *Black Panther* and *Trance*.

**ENDS**

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

## **ALMEIDA LISTINGS INFORMATION**

Wednesday 17 – Saturday 20 February 2021

### **HYMN**

by **Lolita Chakrabarti**

Directed by **Blanche McIntyre**

**Performance times:** 8pm, plus 3pm matinee on Saturday 20 Feb

**Tickets:** From £10.

**Box Office**                      **Online** [almeida.co.uk](http://almeida.co.uk)  
**Phone** 020 7359 4404

**Website**                         [almeida.co.uk](http://almeida.co.uk)  
**Twitter**                         [@AlmeidaTheatre](https://twitter.com/AlmeidaTheatre)  
**Facebook**                      [facebook.com/almeidatheatre](https://facebook.com/almeidatheatre)  
**Instagram**                     [@almeida\\_theatre](https://instagram.com/almeida_theatre)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About the Almeida:**

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 *Ink* directed by Goold (also Broadway), Associate Director Rebecca Frecknall's production of *Summer & Smoke* (winner of Best Play Revival and Best Actress at the 2019 Olivier Awards) and Robert Icke's productions of *Hamlet* (also screened on the BBC) and *Mary Stuart* and his production of *The Doctor* transfers to the Duke of York's Theatre in 2021. The Almeida was named London Theatre of the Year at The Stage Awards in both 2015 and 2018.

The Almeida Theatre is a registered charity and is dependent on the support of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations. The Covid-19 crisis has had a profound impact on our finances, halting income from ticket sales and commercial activity. We will need to raise more than £2m in the next 12 months to secure the future of the theatre, realise our artistic ambitions and connect with the widest possible audience.

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 grateful for the support of Arts Council England and to the government for its Culture Recovery Fund grant. #HereForCulture