

Press Release

Friday 11 December 2020

NATIONAL THEATRE TO RECEIVE EMERGENCY LOAN AS PART OF THE CULTURE RECOVERY FUND

The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport today announced that the National Theatre will receive a £19.7 million loan from the Culture Recovery Fund. The loan is part of the £1.57 billion Government package of emergency sector funding that was secured in the summer to support culture and heritage organisations affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier this week Oliver Dowden, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, visited the National Theatre to see the final rehearsals for *Dick Whittington* which opens for performances tonight. The Culture Secretary met Joint Chief Executives Rufus Norris and Lisa Burger along with members of the cast and production staff working on the pantomime.

Speaking about the Culture Recovery Fund announcement, Joint Chief Executives of the National Theatre Rufus Norris and Lisa Burger said:

“The National Theatre is incredibly grateful and relieved to secure this emergency loan from the Government’s Culture Recovery Fund. It is a vital lifeline that will form part of our recovery, helping to ensure that the National Theatre will be here for culture and here for the nation, now and in the future.

The NT’s impact extends across the UK and around the world, reaching millions of audience members and young people, and employing thousands of artists and freelancers every year. All of that was put under threat this year by the devastating financial impact of coronavirus closures which cut off 75% of our income overnight. Despite the generosity of our audiences and supporters and the drastic action we took to reduce costs including – very sadly – job losses, we face a multi-million-pound deficit this year and next.

The decision to apply for a loan of this scale was not taken lightly; it is an essential component in our survival. Together with support we hope to secure from our partners, donors and audiences it will enable us to invest in the freelance creative workforce to produce some of the world's most exciting theatre.

The Culture Recovery Fund demonstrates a clear recognition of the contribution culture makes to the nation. We look forward to continuing to work with Government to ensure this investment is built on in the long term and reaches all parts of our sector.

While the challenges of this pandemic are not over, we can now begin to rebuild the NT with a renewed commitment to make world-class theatre for everyone that celebrates the diversity of our nation. We will widen digital access, offer opportunities for every child in the country to experience theatre, help develop the next generation of talent, and change lives through participation. We stand ready to play our part in supporting the UK's economic and emotional recovery from the effects of COVID-19."

Academy Award-winner Olivia Colman, who appeared in Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes* at the National Theatre in 2017 said: *"Theatre is at the heart of Britain's creativity and the National Theatre is a crucial part of that, whether working with young people across the country or making shows to thrill global audiences. Alongside the grants to smaller theatres, it's wonderful to hear that the NT's future is being supported by this lifeline loan."*

The National Theatre closed earlier this year on the 16 March following government guidance about coronavirus. At the start of April National Theatre at Home launched which saw 16 NT Live and Archive productions streamed for free on the NT's YouTube Channel reaching an audience of over 15 million in more than 170 countries. The NT reopened for performances in the remodelled Olivier theatre on the 21 October with Clint Dyer and Roy Williams' new play *Death of England: Delroy*, which closed early on the 4 November due to new nationwide coronavirus restrictions. The performance was filmed and streamed free on the NT's YouTube channel on Friday 27 November during the second national lockdown.

At the start of this month the NT re-launched National Theatre at Home as a brand-new subscription streaming platform making an initial 11 productions from NT Live and the NT's Archive available online to watch worldwide anytime, anywhere. Further productions will be added each month. The National Theatre will reopen on Friday 11 December with Ciarad Lloyd and Jude Christian's pantomime *Dick Whittington*, which will also be available for families to stream for free on YouTube from 23 – 27 December. This month filming has begun

for the NT's made-for-screen version of *Romeo & Juliet* with Josh O'Connor and Jessie Buckley which will air on Sky Arts and PBS in Spring 2021.

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For more information and images contact Ruth Greenwood, Head of Press: rgreenwood@nationaltheatre.org.uk

For images [click here](#)

Notes to Editors

About the National Theatre

The National Theatre's mission is to make world class theatre that's entertaining, challenging and inspiring – and to make it for everyone. It aims to reach the widest possible audience and to be as inclusive, diverse and national as possible with a broad range of productions that play in London, on tour around the UK, on Broadway and across the globe. The National Theatre's extensive UK-wide learning and participation programme supports young people and schools through performance and writing programmes like Connections, New Views and Let's Play, while Public Acts creates ambitious new works of participatory theatre in sustained partnership with theatres and community organisations around the country. The National Theatre extends its reach through digital programmes including NT Live, which broadcasts some of the best of British theatre to over 2,500 venues in 65 countries, and the National Theatre Collection, which makes recordings of shows available to UK schools and the global education sector. The National Theatre invests in the future of theatre by developing talent, creating bold new work and building audiences, partnering with a range of UK theatres and theatre companies. For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk. [@NationalTheatre](#)
