

Bush Theatre

PRESS RELEASE

27 February 2017

Guards at the Taj

Written by Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Jamie Lloyd

Designed by Soutra Gilmour

Bush Theatre

7 April - 20 May

Press Night 12 April

New image released

Download [here](#) (Username: Bush | Password: 2017)

Casting is announced today for the European premiere of *Guards at the Taj*, written by Pulitzer Prize finalist **Rajiv Joseph** and directed by **Jamie Lloyd**. **Danny Ashok** (*Disgraced*, Bush Theatre; *Capital*, BBC) will play Humayun and **Darren Kuppen** (*East is East*, West End/ UK Tour) will play Babur. A new image of the cast has been released today and is now available to download [here](#).

This darkly comic play will open the 2017 season at the Bush Theatre, following its major £4.3m capital project to revitalise the building. *Guards at the Taj* takes an enduring legend about the Taj Mahal and prompts audiences to explore questions about art, privilege and duty. The play premiered at the Atlantic Theater in New York to great acclaim in 2015 and is the recipient of both the Obie Award for Best New American Play and the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play.

"If we hadn't done our jobs tonight, we'd be hanging by our necks in the royal courtyard getting our eyes pecked out by the royal crows. So excuse me if I don't wallow in some misbegotten guilt all night. Was it fucked up? Yes, it was. But I don't have to feel terrible about it."

It's 1648. Agra, India. Imperial guards Humayun and Babur keep watch as the final touches are put to the mighty Taj Mahal behind them. The emperor has decreed that no one, except the masons, labourers and slaves who exist within those walls, shall turn to look at the building until it is complete.

Guards at the Taj is written by Rajiv Joseph, directed by Jamie Lloyd and designed by Soutra Gilmour. Lighting design is by Richard Howell with sound design and music composed by George Dennis. Fight direction is by Kate Waters.

Danny Ashok's credits at the Bush Theatre include the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Disgraced*, which transferred to Broadway and was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play. Most recently at the Bush he appeared in *Zaida and Aadam*, part of last season's *This Place We Know*. Elsewhere his theatre credits include *The Djinn of Eidgah* (Royal Court), *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* (Theatre Royal Bath) and *Blood and Gifts* (National Theatre). He

Bush Theatre

most recently appeared in the International Emmy Award-winning BBC Drama *Capital*. Further television work includes *The Five*, *Chasing Shadows* and the BAFTA-winning *The Dumping Ground*. He has recently finished shooting the lead role in *Finding Fatimah*, directed by Oz Arshad, which will be released this spring.

Darren Kuppen most recently appeared on stage in *The Tempest* (Shakespeare's Globe). Previous credits include *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare's Globe), as Maneer Khan in *East Is East* (West End/ UK Tour), *An August Bank Holiday Lark* (Northern Broadsides), *England Street* (Oxford Playhouse), *Great Expectations* (English Touring Theatre/ Watford Palace), *Rafta Rafta* (Bolton Octagon/ New Vic Stoke), the lead in Theatre Royal Stratford East's *Aladdin*, *Arabian Nights* (New Vic Stoke) and *Bollywood Jane* (West Yorkshire Playhouse). Television work includes *Spooks* and *Britannia High*.

Jamie Lloyd (director) has directed many productions in the West End for The Jamie Lloyd Company, including *Doctor Faustus*, *The Maids*, *The Homecoming*, *The Ruling Class* (Evening Standard Award for Best Actor for James McAvoy), *Macbeth* (Olivier nomination for Best Revival), *The Hothouse*, *Richard III* and *The Pride*. He won the Evening Standard Award for Best Musical for *Passion* while he was Associate Director of the Donmar Warehouse (2008 to 2011) and the Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre for *The Pride* (Royal Court). Lloyd's other extensive credits include *Urinetown* (St. James & West End), *The Commitments* (West End & UK Tour), *The Duchess of Malfi* (Old Vic), *She Stoops to Conquer* (National Theatre) and *The Faith Machine*, *Inadmissible Evidence*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* and *Polar Bears* (all Donmar Warehouse) as well as many others. He is currently directing a double bill of Philip Ridley's work, *Killer* and *The Pitchfork Disney*, at Shoreditch Town Hall.

Rajiv Joseph (playwright) became a Pulitzer Prize finalist (2010) for his Broadway play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, which starred Robin Williams in his Broadway debut. Other plays include *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Animals Out of Paper* and *All This Intimacy* (Second Stage Theatre). Screen credits include seasons 3 & 4 of the TV series *Nurse Jackie* and he was the co-screenwriter of the film *Draft Day*, starring Kevin Costner and Jennifer Garner.

Soutra Gilmour (designer) is an award-winning designer whose extensive credits include many productions in collaboration with Jamie Lloyd. She designed several productions in The Jamie Lloyd Company's recent West End season including *Doctor Faustus*, *The Maids*, *The Homecoming*, *The Ruling Class*, *Richard III*, *The Pride*, *The Hothouse* and *Macbeth*. Previous work at the Bush Theatre includes *Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Qur'an*.

- ENDS -

Press contacts

For further information please contact Laura Myers or Hannah Barnett Leveson at The Corner Shop PR:

laura@thecornershoppr.com / hannahbl@thecornershoppr.com / 0207 831 7657

Images available [here](#)

Username: Bush

Password: 2017

Bush Theatre

Listings

7 Apr - 20 May

GUARDS AT THE TAJ

A Bush Theatre production

Written by Rajiv Joseph

Directed by Jamie Lloyd

Designed by Soutra Gilmour

Lighting Design by Richard Howell

Sound Design and Music composed by George Dennis

Press night: 12 Apr, 7pm

Captioned: 27 Apr, 7.30pm

Audio described: 6 May, 2.30pm

Ticket prices

Count Me In: £10 (Theatre)

Adult: From £20 (Theatre) and £10 (Studio)

Count Me In tickets are just £10 and are available for performances in the Theatre. These are unreserved tickets which will be allocated to a seat on the day of performance. Audience members might not be sitting next to the people they booked with but will be guaranteed a seat.

Concessions: Bush Locals, Senior Citizens, Disabled and Unemployed patrons, and Bush Connect (Students and U26) members will be eligible for concession prices.

Booking

Phone 020 8743 5050

In person Bush Theatre, 7 Uxbridge Road, W12 8LJ

Online bushtheatre.co.uk

COMING UP AT THE BUSH THEATRE IN 2017

18 - 25 March

BUSH HOUSEWARMING

See bushtheatre.co.uk for more details

23 - 25 Mar

BLACK LIVES, BLACK WORDS

A Bush Theatre Production in association with Black Lives, Black Words International Project

Written by Winsome Pinnock, Rachel De-Lahay, Somalia Seaton, Mojisola Adebayo, Idris Goodwin and Harrison David Rivers

Directed by Madani Younis, Omar Elerian and Rikki Henry

Designed by Nina Patel-Grainger

7 Apr - 20 May

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26 Apr - 27 May

WHILE WE'RE HERE

A Bush Theatre, Up In Arms and Farnham Maltings co-production

Written by Barney Norris
Directed by Alice Hamilton
Designed by James Perkins

Press night: 28 Apr, 7pm
Captioned: 12 May, 7.45pm
Audio described: 13 May, 2.45pm

15 Jun - 22 Jul

HIR

A Bush Theatre production

Written by Taylor Mac
Directed by Nadia Fall
Designed by Ben Stones

Press night: 20 June, 7pm
Captioned: 7 Jul, 7.30pm
Audio described: 15 Jul, 2.30pm

24 - 29 Jul

NASSIM

A Bush Theatre production

Written and performed by Nassim Soleimanpour
Directed by Omar Elerian

Press night: N/A

20 Sep - 21 Oct

RAMONA TELLS JIM

A Bush Theatre production

Written by Sophie Wu
Directed by Mel Hillyard

Press night: 22 Sep, 7pm
Captioned: 13 Oct, 7.45pm
Audio described: 7 Oct, 2.45pm

18 Oct - 25 Nov

OF KITH AND KIN

A Bush Theatre and Sheffield Theatres co-production

Written by Chris Thompson
Directed by Robert Hastie
Designed by James Perkins

Press night: 20 Oct, 7pm
Captioned: 3 Nov, 7.30pm
Audio described: 11 Nov, 2.30pm