Royal Shakespeare Company returns to London’s Roundhouse from November 2010 with 10 week season

- One company of 44 actors playing 228 roles
- Six full-scale Shakespeare productions
- Two Young People’s Shakespeares – innovative, distilled productions adapted for young people
- Education projects across London and at the Roundhouse
- One specially constructed 750-seat thrust stage auditorium – bringing audiences closer to the action – in one iconic venue

Following its hugely successful, Olivier award-winning Histories Season in 2008, the RSC returns to London’s Roundhouse in November 2010 to present a ten-week repertoire of eight plays by Shakespeare – six full-scale productions and two specially adapted for children and families.

This is the first chance London audiences will have to see the RSC’s current 44-strong ensemble, who have been working together in Stratford-upon-Avon since January 2009. The RSC Ensemble is generously supported by The Gatsby Charitable Foundation and The Kovner Foundation.

The season opens with Rupert Goold’s production of *Romeo and Juliet* and runs in repertoire to 5 February next year, with Michael Boyd’s production of *Antony and Cleopatra*; *The Winter’s Tale* directed by David Farr; *Julius Caesar* directed by Lucy Bailey; *As You Like It*, directed by Michael Boyd; and David Farr’s *King Lear* (see end of release for production details at a glance). All six productions have been developed throughout their time in the repertoire and are revised and re-rehearsed with each revival in Stratford, Newcastle, London and finally for next year’s residency in New York.

The season also includes the RSC’s two recent Young People’s Shakespeare (YPS) productions created especially for children and families, and inspired by the Stand Up For Shakespeare campaign which calls for more children and young people to See Shakespeare Live, Start Shakespeare Earlier and Do Shakespeare on their Feet – *Hamlet*, directed by Tarell Alvin McCraney, and *The Comedy of Errors* (in association with Told by an Idiot), directed by Paul Hunter. These shows have already toured schools in the Black Country and London, acclaimed by critics and children alike (“I’ve rarely seen the myth that schoolchildren find Shakespeare boring so effectively punctured.” The Guardian)
The RSC will once again construct a specially-built thrust stage with a 750 seat auditorium wrapped around it, within the columns of the iconic Roundhouse. The auditorium emulates Stratford’s temporary 1000 seat Courtyard Theatre where the productions originate and which is the template for what will be the new configuration of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre stage, due to reopen in late 2010.

Michael Boyd, RSC Artistic Director, said:

“It is great to be returning to the Roundhouse where we had such success with The Histories cycle in 2008. London audiences will be able to see our ensemble in full flight - 44 actors pushing each other to set the bar of their achievements higher. From work of great emotion, elemental chaos and haunting tragedy, to moments of subversive wit and unabashed clowning, they have responded to a repertoire encompassing the broadest scope of human experience. When they touch down at the Roundhouse in our specially built auditorium in November it will mark a significant highpoint two years into their journey together.

“As well as full-scale Shakespeare productions, we will bring our energetic Young People’s Shakespeares, which have captivated children and critics alike, and a whole programme of events and education initiatives. In February, the ensemble will return to Stratford-upon-Avon where they will open our new home with a short season of two Shakespeares and rehearse three new plays which we will bring to London in the spring of 2011.”

Vikki Heywood, RSC Executive Director, said:

“We are delighted to be reinstating our 750 seat ‘Roundyard’ auditorium inside the central columns of the Roundhouse which was such a sensational space for the Histories. This specially-constructed auditorium replicates our temporary theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, The Courtyard Theatre, which is itself a prototype for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre due to open in late 2010, The intimate auditorium wraps the audience around three sides of a thrust stage, bringing everyone really close to the action.”

Marcus Davey, Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Roundhouse, said:

"The RSC's dazzling staging of The Histories at the Roundhouse was one of the landmark theatre events of 2008. We’re delighted to be welcoming the company back and look forward to more outstanding Shakespeare for our audiences to enjoy, as well as working together on projects that meet our shared commitment to offering creative opportunities for young people."

Education:

There will also be a number of innovative Education projects to complement the season, some of which the RSC will be pursuing in collaboration with the Roundhouse.

Radio Shakespeare
Using the venue’s in-house digital radio station run by a team aged 25 and under, RSC Education and the Roundhouse broadcast and new media team will work with Year 5 students to write stories inspired by the ghost story in *Hamlet* to be performed by Year 12 students from Camden on the 24 hour online radio station (www.roundhouse.org.uk/radio) from October onwards.

*Why Shakespeare?*

RSC and the Roundhouse will be working together with groups of young people in Camden, asking students to explore how, and why, Shakespeare is taught in schools today. The project will culminate in a day-long seminar in January 2011 which will include guest speakers from education and the arts, and where the young people involved in the project will share some of their findings through a mixture of performance and debate.

*Sound and Fury*

RSC Text and Voice Director Cicely Berry CBE and the RSC’s Education department will collaborate with leading UK spoken-word artists, poets and hip-hop artists to develop this project. With 14 – 16 year olds from secondary schools in Brent, it explores the links between Shakespeare’s plays and contemporary artists, helping young people make their own connections with Shakespeare’s text. This eight week project culminates in a public performance in the Roundhouse foyer in January 2011.

*Hounslow Lear*

RSC actress Kelly Hunter, a member of the current long ensemble, will be working with a company of young performers with a range of behavioural and learning difficulties. They will share their responses to *King Lear* (in which Kelly plays Goneril this season) at their local primary schools, and at the Roundhouse.

RSC Education Director Jacqui O’Hanlon said of the education work underpinning the season;

“Our education programme aims to dispel the myth that Shakespeare’s plays are ‘boring’ and ‘irrelevant’ to young people today. Working with the Roundhouse, we’ve created a range of projects around the season which engage all kinds of learners and which explore why Shakespeare is the only compulsory writer that all young people have to study in schools. We are asking children and young people to help answer that question. From our YPS productions to radio plays to spoken word projects, we’re finding new ways of engaging and inspiring young people through Shakespeare’s work; making connections with their own lives and experiences. It promises to be an exciting programme and we look forward to starting it through the autumn."

For further details of the RSC’s Education and Events programme and for full repertoire and casting details of the season, please go to www.rsc.org.uk/london
Roundhouse Season at a glance:

**Romeo and Juliet**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Rupert Goold, RSC Associate Director  
Previews from Tuesday 30 November 2010  
**Press night: Thursday 2 December 2010, 7pm**

**Antony and Cleopatra**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Michael Boyd, RSC Artistic Director  
Previews from Wednesday 8 December 2010  
**Press night: Friday 10 December 2010, 7pm**

**The Winter's Tale**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by David Farr, RSC Associate Director  
Previews from Tuesday 14 December 2010  
**Press night: Thursday 16 December 2010, 7pm**

**Julius Caesar**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Lucy Bailey  
Previews from Thursday 6 January 2011  
**Press night: Monday 10 January 2011, 7pm**

**As You Like It**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by Michael Boyd  
Previews from Thursday 13 January 2011  
**Press night: Monday 17 January 2011, 7pm**

**King Lear**  
By William Shakespeare  
Directed by David Farr, RSC Associate Director  
Previews from Friday 21 January 2011  
**Press night: Tuesday 25 January 2011, 7pm**

Young People’s Shakespeare productions:

**Hamlet**  
By William Shakespeare, edited by Tarell Alvin McCraney and Bijan Shebani  
Directed by Tarell Alvin McCraney, Associate Director Michael Fentiman  
*Performances on Saturday 18 December at 10.30am and Wednesday 26 January, 1.15pm*

**The Comedy of Errors**  
By William Shakespeare, edited by Gary Owen, in association with *Told by an Idiot*
Directed by Paul Hunter
Performances on Tuesday 21 December at 1.15pm and Tuesday 1 February at 1.15pm

Booking details:
Full Members’ web booking opens Wednesday 30 June
Full Members’ telephone booking opens Friday 2 July
Associate Members’ web booking opens Friday 9 July
Associate Members’ telephone booking opens Monday 12 July

Public Booking opens Friday 10 September 2010

From Friday 10 September, once public booking has opened, tickets should be booked at the Roundhouse Box Office either in person at Roundhouse box office, Roundhouse, Chalk Farm Road, London NW1 8EH, by phone 0844 482 8008 or online www.roundhouse.org.uk

The RSC’s 16-25 ticket scheme continues to offer £5 to young people within this age range with 20 tickets reserved for this scheme for every performance (10 of which can be purchased in advance and 10 to be sold on the day).

Production images for all the above are available to download by registering free of charge on www.epo-online.com

For further information, please contact Philippa.harland@rsc.org.uk or 020 7845 0512

For RSC Roundhouse press ticketing information, please contact Alexander.turner@rsc.org.uk or 020 7845 0513

Follow the RSC Press Office at www.twitter.com/RSCPress

Notes to Editors

• The RSC Literary Department is generously supported by The Drue Heinz Trust

• The same RSC ensemble are presented in New York in 2011 by the Lincoln Center Festival and Park Avenue Armory, in association with The Ohio State University, performing in the specially constructed Scarlet and Gray Theatre from 6 July – 24 August 2011. Further details from www.lincolncenter.org

• The Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Swan Theatre will reopen to the public from late November this year with a series of preview events and activities to test the building before the ensemble return to reopen the RST and Swan with full performances in February and March 2011 from our current repertoire. This will be followed in April 2011
with a new ensemble of actors performing a new season of plays to celebrate the RSC’s 50th birthday year.

- For the Histories season in 2008, the Roundyard stage and auditorium was constructed within the Roundhouse within 10 days using 34 lorries, 80 riggers, 7 project managers, 51 tons of steel and plywood on the 17 towers, and 1 ton of nuts and bolts.

- The Transformation Campaign to raise money for the new theatre is still ongoing with £5.5m left to raise – [www.rsc.org.uk/transformation](http://www.rsc.org.uk/transformation) for details of how to contribute.

- The Roundhouse is one of London’s leading performing arts venues, and as a charity it helps thousands of young people every year. Following an extensive refurbishment in 2006, more than half a million people have been to music, theatre, dance and circus events, and 15,000 11-25 year olds have developed their talents in the Studios. The Roundhouse delivers creative projects for many of London’s young people from all backgrounds including radio (with a dedicated radio station run by and for young people), music production, drama, poetry, TV, sound engineering, photography, VJ skills and much more.

Actors in the RSC 2009-2011 ensemble:

- CHARLES AITKEN
- JOSEPH ARKLEY
- ADAM BURTON
- DAVID CARR
- BRIAN DOHERTY
- DARRELL D’SILVA
- NOMA DUMEZWENI
- DYFAN DWYFOR
- PHILLIP EDGELEY
- CHRISTINE ENTWISLE
- GEOFFREY FRESHWATER
- JAMES GALE
- MARIAH GALE
- GRUFFUDD GLYN
- PAUL HAMILTON
- GREG HICKS
- JAMES HOWARD
- KATHRYN HUNTER
- KELLY HUNTER
- ANSU KABIA
- TUNJI KASIM
- RICHARD KATZ
- DEBBIE KORLEY
- JOHN MACKAY
- FORBES MASSON
- SANDY NEILSON
- JONJO O’NEILL
- DHARMESH PATEL
- PETER PEVERLEY
- PATRICK ROMER
- DAVID RUBIN
- SOPHIE RUSSELL
- OLIVER RYAN
- SIMONE SAUNDERS
- PETER SHOREY
- CLARENCE SMITH
- KATY STEPHENS
- JAMES TRAHERNE
- SAM TROUGHTON
- JAMES TUCKER
- LARRINGTON WALKER
- KIRSTY WOODWARD
- HANNAH YOUNG
- SAMANTHA YOUNG

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