



ACTORS TOURING COMPANY

EMBARGOED PRESS RELEASE - WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER
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ACTORS TOURING COMPANY ANNOUNCE NATIONAL TOUR OF *TAMBO & BONES* IN 2025

- ONE OF THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT CULTURAL EVENTS OF 2023, MATTHEW XIA'S CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED PRODUCTION RETURNS FOR A NATIONAL TOUR FROM 7 MARCH - 24 MAY 2025.
- WRITTEN BY SPOKEN WORD POET AND PLAYWRIGHT DAVE HARRIS *TAMBO & BONES* IS A BLISTERING EXPLORATION OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN RACE, CAPITALISM AND PERFORMANCE.
- THE CO-PRODUCTION WILL OPEN AT ROYAL & DERNGATE, BEFORE TOURING TO LIVERPOOL EVERYMAN & PLAYHOUSE, HOME MANCHESTER, BELGRADE THEATRE, STRATFORD EAST AND LEEDS PLAYHOUSE.
- TICKETS GO ON SALE FROM 25 SEPTEMBER.

★★★★ "Like nothing you've ever seen" *The Telegraph*

★★★★ "Unique, challenging and oh-so necessary" *The Guardian*

★★★★ "Clever, prickly, elaborate, challenging and delivered with great skill"
Financial Times

Actors Touring Company (ATC) have today announced that their acclaimed production of **David Harris' *Tambo & Bones*** will return for a national tour from 7 March - 24 May 2025, following its European premiere at Stratford East in 2023. Directed by Olivier-award-winning Director, Composer and DJ **Matthew Xia** (Artistic Director and Joint CEO of ATC) *Tambo & Bones* is an Actors Touring Company, Stratford East and Royal & Derngate, Northampton Co-Production in association with Belgrade Theatre, Leeds Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse.

*Tambo and Bones are stuck in a minstrel show.
It's hard to know what's real when you're stuck in a minstrel show.
Their escape plan: get out, get rich, get even.*

One of the most talked-about cultural events of 2023, *Tambo & Bones* is an exhilarating, darkly comic and provocative satire on capitalism and Black performance, that explores the commodification of the Black experience through the mediums of minstrelsy, hip-hop and

afro-futurism. Spanning 500 years, Tambo and Bones journey from comedy double-act, to hip-hop superstars to activists in a future America, contending with the alarming repercussions of a nation torn apart by race. Harris' blistering play laughs through our past, blows the roof off our present and imagines an explosive future for our world and for theatre.

The production will tour to **Royal & Derngate, Northampton** (7 – 15 March 2025), **Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse** (26 – 29 March 2025), **HOME Manchester** (1 – 5 April 2025), **Belgrade Theatre** (9 – 12 April 2025), **Stratford East** (29 April – 11 May 2025) and **Leeds Playhouse** (14 – 24 May 2025). Tickets go on sale from 25 September 2024.

Completing the creative team are set and costume designers **Sadeysa Greenaway-Bailey** and **ULTZ**, with lighting design by **Ciarán Cunningham**, Hip-Hop Beats produced by **Excalibah*** and **Roly Botha** sound design and additional composition by **Richard Hammarton**, magic and illusion consultancy by **Chris Cox** and puppetry design by **Hugh Purves**.

Tambo & Bones is the latest in a series of acclaimed productions from ATC, one of the only British theatre companies dedicated to producing international plays and presenting them throughout the UK. ATC's recently celebrated work includes *The Architect* (2023), *Family Tree* (2023) and *Bodies of Water* (2024).

Matthew Xia, Artistic Director and Joint CEO of ATC said, *"I'm so excited that Tambo & Bones - our genre-busting headline-grabbing production - is getting a second outing. Tambo & Bones is a truly audacious satire, both ridiculous and profound, which combines my greatest passions: hip-hop and theatre, to interrogate perceptions of race in the past, present and future. There is truly no experience quite like it, I can't wait to see how audiences in Northampton, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry and London respond to this sucker punch of a play."*

Biographies

Dave Harris is a poet and playwright from West Philly. Selected plays include *Tambo & Bones* (LA Drama Critics Award "Best New Play", TimeOut London "Best Plays of 2023,"), *Exception To The Rule* (Roundabout Theatre Company, 2022), and *Everybody Black* (Humana Festival 2019). His first feature film, *Summertime* premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was released in 2021. Selected honors include: the 2023 Horton Foote Prize, the Ollie Award, The Lorraine Hansberry Award and Mark Twain Award from The Kennedy Center, The International Commendation for The Bruntwood Prize, the Venturous Fellowship, and a Cave Canem poetry fellowship amongst others. Dave has written feature and television projects for AMC (*Interview With A Vampire*), Netflix, Amazon (*The Fortress of Solitude*), and FX amongst others. His first full-length collection of poetry, *Patricide*, was published by Button Poetry.

Matthew Xia is the multi-award-winning Artistic Director of ATC (Actors Touring Company). He was previously Associate Artistic Director at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Director-in-Residence at The Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse; and Associate Director at Stratford East. He was Associate Artist at the Nottingham Playhouse alongside James Graham and Amanda Whittington.

Matthew has directed some of the UK's most talented actors, including Daniel Kaluuya, Cynthia Erivo, Joseph Quinn, Maxine Peake, David Haig, Samuel Barnett, Matt Henry, Karl Collins, Martina Laird, Christopher Colquhoun, Malachi Kirby, David Moorst, Natasha J. Barnes, Yolanda Kettle, and Erin Doherty.

Directing includes: *Bodies of Water* (ATC/GDIF); *Skeleton Crew* (Donmar Warehouse); *The Architect* (GDIF/ATC/Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation); *Tambo & Bones* (ATC/Stratford East); the Olivier Award-winning *Hey Duggee – The Live Theatre Show* (Kenny Wax Family Entertainment/Cuffe & Taylor); the Fringe First Award-winning *Feeling Afraid as if Something Terrible is Going to Happen* (Francesca Moody Productions/Bush Theatre); *Rice* (ATC/Orange Tree); *The Wiz* (Ameena Hamid Productions/Hope Mill/BBC Big Night of Musicals); *Family Tree* (GDIF/ATC/Belgrade/Brixton House); *846Live* (Stratford East/GDIF); *Amsterdam* (ATC/Orange Tree/Plymouth Theatre Royal); *Blood Knot* (Orange Tree); *Eden* (Hampstead Theatre); *One Night In Miami...* (Nottingham Playhouse/Bristol Old Vic/HOME); *Into The Woods*, *Frankenstein* (Royal Exchange); *Wish List* (Royal Exchange/Royal Court); *Shebeen* (Nottingham Playhouse/Stratford East); *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Blacks* (Stratford East); *Dublin Carol* (Sherman Theatre); *Blue/Orange*, *The Sound of Yellow* (Young Vic); *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* (Young Vic/Eclipse); *I was looking at the ceiling and then I saw the sky* (Co-Director, Stratford East/Barbican); *Suckerpunch Boom Suite* (Barbican/NitroBEAT).

Matthew has worked with an array of renowned writers as a director and a dramaturg, including; Susan Lori Parks, Dominique Morisseau, Arinze Kene, April D'Angelis, Joe Penhall, Vikki Stone, Katherine Soper, David Levi-Addai, Yasmin Joseph, Mojisola Adebayo, and Nessah Murty. He has been a respected panelist for the Evening Standard Future Fund, Yale Drama Series, the Alfred Fagon Award, BEAM, the Bruntwood Prize and most recently the Eurovision Song Contest!

DJ / Composing / Sound Design includes: presenting an award-winning Hip-Hop show on BBC 1XTRA (DJ); The London Paralympics Opening Ceremony (DJ); *The People Are Singing* (Royal Exchange); *Free Run* (Underbelly); *That's The Way To Do It* (TimeWontWait); *Pass The Baton*, *Bolero Remixed* (New London Orchestra); *Da Boyz*, *Family Man*, *The Snow Queen*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *Medea*, and *Squid* (Stratford East).

Matthew was a founding member of Act for Change. In 2019, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of the Arts London for his efforts to make theatre universally accessible by working to promote minority groups as theatre leaders, makers, and consumers.

-ENDS-

An Actors Touring Company, Stratford East and Royal & Derngate, Northampton Co-Production in association with Belgrade Theatre, Leeds Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse

TAMBO & BONES - National Tour

Friday 7 March - Saturday 24 May 2025

Press Night: Tuesday 11 March 2025, 7pm Royal & Derngate Northampton

Written by Dave Harris

Directed by Matthew Xia

Set & Costume Design by Sadeysa Greenaway-Bailey & ULTZ

Lighting Design by Ciarán Cunningham

Hip-Hop Beats produced by Excalibah*

Sound Designer & Additional Composition by Richard Hammarton

Magic & Illusions Consultancy by Chris Cox

Puppetry Design by Hugh Purves

***WAR produced by Roly Botha and Excalibah**

Dollars to Dreams produced by Excalibah and Roly Both

Schedule:**Royal & Derngate, Northampton**

Friday 7 – Saturday 15 March 2025

<https://www.royalandderngate.co.uk/>**Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse**

Wednesday 26 – Saturday 29 March 2025

<https://www.everymanplayhouse.com/>**HOME Manchester**

Tuesday 1 – Saturday 5 April 2025

<https://homemcr.org/>**Belgrade Theatre**

Wednesday 9 – Saturday 12 April 2025

<https://www.belgrade.co.uk/>**Stratford East**

Tuesday 29 April – Saturday 10 May 2025

<https://www.stratfordeast.com/>**Leeds Playhouse**

Wednesday 14 – Saturday 24 May 2025

<https://www.leedsplayhouse.org.uk/>

Please check venue websites for details of show times, ticket prices and access performances.

Running Time: 2 hours inc interval, approx

Age Guidance: 14+ (This show contains sounds of gunfire, violence, ethnic violence, strong language, strong racial language and discusses themes some may find upsetting relating to race.)

Actors Touring Company

Actors Touring Company (ATC) is a portable portal to the world. Through our work, we connect global artistic voices to local communities.

ATC is the UK's leading theatre producer of international plays. We create dialogue between Britain and the rest of the world – and between the intersecting cultures within nations.

We are passionate about giving voice to the 'outsider within'. We create a dialogue between those deemed 'the other' and audiences in every UK region and beyond: from Scarborough to Hong Kong.

The Tambo & Bones national tour is made possible due to the kind support of Arts Council England, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, John Ellerman Foundation, The Wates Foundation and The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust.

Stratford East

We are Stratford East. We're here to push boundaries, champion talent and create hard-hitting shows in the beating heart of East London. We're here to move you, excite you and keep theatre open for all.

We have been telling stories since 1884. Many leading actors, writers and directors have been part of the family including Meera Syal, Barbara Windsor, Don Warrington, Indhu Rubasingham, Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams, and Cynthia Erivo.

Abigail's Party is Nadia Fall's last production as Artistic Director of Stratford East; under her tenure we have presented a bold programme of reimagined classics, timely revivals, and ground-breaking new work, including her final season celebrating the theatre's 140th Anniversary celebrations.

X (Twitter): **@stratford_east**
Instagram: **@stratford_east**
Facebook: **/theatreroyalstratfordeast**

Royal & Derngate, Northampton is the main venue for arts and entertainment in Northamptonshire and one of the major regional producing theatres in the country, with its acclaimed *Made in Northampton* work touring nationally and internationally.

The theatre was nominated for Theatre of the Year in The Stage Awards 2022. Eight of its productions transferred to London and the West End in 2019, with *The Worst Witch* winning the 2020 Olivier Award for Best Family Show and *Our Lady of Kibeho* being nominated for the 2020 Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre. The adapted screenplay from Royal & Derngate's original play commission of *The Pope* was nominated for Best Adapted Screenplay at the Academy Awards as Netflix's *The Two Popes*.

Looking ahead, the theatre is excited to be presenting the world premiere of *The Jolly Christmas Postman*, as well partnering with Paines Plough on *My Mother's Funeral: The Show* and with the Rose Theatre in Kingston for this new stage adaptation of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*.

Other recent Made in Northampton productions have included Ralph Fiennes in the world premiere stage adaptation of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* which transferred to the West End and was made into a film, a new version of Joe Penhall's *Blue/Orange*, touring co-productions of *Animal Farm* and *Othello* with the National Youth Theatre, a brand new musical *Gin Craze!* by April de Angelis and Lucy Rivers, the world premiere stage adaptation of *Mog The Forgetful Cat*, the national and international tour of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* and most recently Spymonkey's *The Frogs* and Simple8's *Moby Dick*.

The venue also presents a diverse range of visiting productions on both the Derngate and Royal stages, featuring musicals, dance, comedy and music, and its two-screen cinema presents the best in world, independent, British and mainstream film.

Royal & Derngate's nationally recognised Creative Engagement programme works with schools, families and communities in Northamptonshire and beyond, and its Generate artistic development programme regularly supports hundreds of regional artists each year.
www.royalandderngate.co.uk

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for more than 50 years. It is an award-winning theatre and a cultural hub, a place where people gather to tell and share stories and engage in world class theatre. Its warm welcome was recognised at the UK Theatre Awards, where it was named Most Welcoming Theatre 2022. It makes work

which is pioneering and relevant, seeking out the best companies and artists to create inspirational theatre in the heart of Yorkshire.

Alongside the work on its stages, the Playhouse works creatively with the people, artists and communities of Leeds through its innovative, sector-leading Playhouse Connect programme. Focussing on two key areas – Learning & Skills and Creative Communities – Playhouse Connect engages with thousands of people in the region each year. As part of this work, its Artistic Development programme, Furnace, engages with theatre-makers, providing a creative space to refine their practice at all stages of their careers; it builds, develops and sustains projects to connect with refugee communities, young people and students, older people and people with learning disabilities; it hands over spaces to communities to use in ways they choose, from breakdancing to roller-skating, craft markets to tea parties, enlivening the building whilst fostering deeper relationships; and works in-residence around the city, connecting with people on their doorsteps.

As a registered charity, Leeds Playhouse relies on the support of valued partners to make great things happen. It is grateful for the continued support of Arts Council England, Leeds City Council, The Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and the many charitable trusts, business partners and individuals that continue to support the vital work of the theatre.

The Belgrade

As the largest theatre in Coventry and a leading regional producing theatre, the Belgrade has a broad, varied programme.

Popular musicals and entertainment sit happily alongside progressive, critically acclaimed new drama. Our two spaces, B1 and B2, stage exciting productions and events for families, couples, individuals, first timers and confirmed theatregoers.

As a publicly subsidised independent charitable trust, we also support health and education and build skills and talent in the region. Everything we do is with, by and for our local communities.

Some of our productions are fresh takes on well-loved stories. Others explore new ground – and have never been told before. To them all, we bring warmth, openness and collaboration, creating new community connections and encouraging different perspectives. By sharing the city's diverse stories, the Belgrade brings people in Coventry together. We call this co-creation.

Led by CEO Laura Elliot and Creative Director Corey Campbell, the Belgrade is realising its ambitious plans to build on the Theatre's rich history of inclusion. Born out of the post-Second World War spirit of peace and reconciliation and named with gratitude for the Serbian capital's gift of timber to build a new theatre, the Belgrade has offered a warm welcome to visitors since 1958.

Whether you're visiting the Belgrade for a show, a business event, or simply for tea, cake and a chat with friends, this unique sense of welcome is still unmissable.

Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse.

Two brilliant theatres, here for artists and audiences and the magic that happens when they come together. A local artistic force with national significance and an international reputation,

we use the power of theatre to inspire, entertain and nurture positive social change. Whether you visit us at the Everyman or the Playhouse, see our work online or out in the community, a warm welcome awaits you. We're grateful for the continued support of Arts Council England, Liverpool City Council, our donors, patrons, partners and our audiences.

Chief Executive Mark Da Vanzo

www.everymanplayhouse.com