

Young Vic

Press Release – Thursday 9 May 2024

Images available [here](#)

RAMIN KARIMLOO AND ANOUSHKA LUCAS TO LEAD THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *A FACE IN THE CROWD* WITH SONGS BY ELVIS COSTELLO

- Directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah, featuring Music and Lyrics by Elvis Costello and Book by Sarah Ruhl, *A Face in the Crowd* is a cautionary tale about the dangers of celebrity, power, and politics.
- *A Face in the Crowd* runs at the Young Vic Theatre from 10 September – 9 November. Tickets are available at www.youngvic.org

The Young Vic Theatre today announces Ramin Karimloo (*The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*) and Anoushka Lucas (*Oklahoma!*, *Elephant*) in the world premiere of *A Face in the Crowd*, directed by Kwame Kwei-Armah in his final production as Young Vic Artistic Director, designed by Anna Fleischle. This brand new adaptation of the Hollywood classic, a cautionary tale about the dangers of celebrity, power, and politics, features original songs by Grammy Award-winner Elvis Costello and a Book by Sarah Ruhl (*Eurydice*, *The Clean House*), based on an original story by Budd Schulberg and the Warner Bros Film. It will run at the Young Vic from 10 September to 9 November with opening night for press on Tuesday 17 September.

Tony and Olivier Award nominated actor Ramin Karimloo, seen in major musical roles including as The Phantom in *The Phantom of The Opera* and Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*, will play Lonesome Rhodes. Actor, singer, songwriter and playwright Anoushka Lucas returns to the Young Vic where she performed as Laurey in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* and in the West End transfer, earning an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical. She will play Marcia Jeffries. Further casting will be announced in due course.

You gotta keep him here, Miss Jeffries. He's the goose who laid the golden egg.

When local radio producer Marcia Jeffries interviews drunk drifter 'Lonesome Rhodes' in his jail cell, she immediately sees his potential and gives him a slot on her show. But as Lonesome's fans grow more clamorous and the politicians start taking notice, Marcia realises she has unleashed a force she can no longer control.

A Face in the Crowd is a cautionary tale, highlighting the dangers of elevating celebrities to positions of unchecked power.

The creative team also brings together Lighting Designer Jackie Shemesh, Musical Supervisor and Musical Director Phil Bateman, Sound Designer Emma Laxton, Choreographer Lizzi Gee and Casting Director Heather Basten CDG.

Ramin Karimloo's (Lonesome Rhodes) stage credits include: *Songbird* (Washington National Opera), *The Addams Family* (London Palladium), Nicky Arnstein in *Funny Girl* (August Wilson Theatre, NYC), *Rumi: The Musical* (London Coliseum), Anatoly in *Chess in Concert* (Umeda

Arts Theatre, Osaka & Tokyo International Forum), Judas in *Jesus Chris Superstar in Concert* (Theatre Orb, Tokyo), Che in *Evita* (Theatre Orb, Tokyo & Vancouver Opera), Gleb Vaganov in *Anastasia* (Broadway), *The Secret Garden* (Lincoln Centre), Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* (Toronto, West End & Broadway, Tony Award Nominee), The Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* (West End, Italy & Monte Carlo) & The Phantom in *Love Never Dies* (West End, Olivier Award Nominee).

Film/TV includes: *Bound*, *Holby City*, *Nativity Rocks*, *Life's Too Short*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Phantom of the Opera at the Royal Albert Hall*, *Les Misérables in Concert*. Ramin has toured worldwide both solo and with Ramin Karimloo & The Broadgrass Band. He has released five solo albums on Sony Records: *From Now On*, *Human Heart* and *The Road to Find Out* series.

Anoushka Lucas (Marcia Jeffries) returns to the Young Vic where she played Laurey in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* and in the West End transfer, earning an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical. She recently played Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* at Sheffield Theatres. Anoushka's debut play *Elephant*, which she wrote and performed in, premiered at The Bush in 2022, and was reprised in 2023 to wide critical acclaim. She won a Stage Debut Best Writer Award and was nominated for an Evening Standard Theatre Award. She is currently recording her second studio album. Previous theatre credits include lead roles in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Henry V* (Donmar Warehouse) and *Afterlife* (National Theatre). Film includes: *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Elvis Costello is a writer and part-time musician who made a number of records in the 20th Century, some of which are still remembered today. Costello has been performing in public for over fifty years, writing over 500 songs and collaborating with Paul McCartney, Burt Bacharach and his wife, Diana Krall.

Sarah Ruhl is an award-winning playwright, author, essayist, and professor. She has received the Tony Award nomination for Best Play and is a two-time Pulitzer Prize Finalist. Her many plays include *Eurydice*, *The Clean House*, *Stage Kiss*, *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*, *Stage Kiss*, *the Oldest Boy* and *Letters from Max*.

Kwame Kwei-Armah is Artistic Director of the Young Vic Theatre and Artistic Advisor at Manhattan Theatre Club. He was previously Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage and Artistic Director of the Festival of Black Arts and Culture, Senegal. As a playwright, Kwame was the first black Briton to have a play produced in the West End (*Elmina's Kitchen*). His triptych of plays was produced at the National Theatre where he created the online resource The Black Play Archive. Kwame was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama and has been listed as one of 100 Great Black Britons.

BSL Performance: Tue 15 October, 7.30pm

Captioned Performances: Thu 26 September, 7.30pm & Sat 5 October, 2.30pm

Relaxed Performances: Sat 19 October, 2.30pm & Thu 24 October, 7.30pm

Sensory Adapted Performance: Thu 10 October, 7.30pm

Audio Described Performances: Tues 1 October, 7.30pm & Sat 26 October, 2.30pm

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Images: [available here](#)

About the Young Vic Theatre

Founded in 1970 as a space for world-premiere productions and unexpected takes on classic plays that speak urgently to our present, the Young Vic Theatre has been one of London's leading theatres for more than fifty years.

Welcoming more than 100,000 visitors a year to its London Waterloo location, the Young Vic stands out in the city's cultural landscape for balancing daring commercial drive, success and artistic flair with genuine grassroots social impact change in our neighbourhood. We forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our Taking Part programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping ticket prices low.

The Young Vic's Creators Program is our space for multi- and anti-disciplinary artists, and is the only scheme of its kind. Launched in 2001, and formerly known as the Directors Program, we offer artists and producers a unique opportunity to develop their craft through opportunities that range from trainee and assistant director roles to a two-year residency through the Genesis Fellow/Associate Director position. The Genesis Network provides an online community to over 2,500 artists and producers. Each year, the recipient of the Genesis Future Directors Award directs a show in the Clare Theatre with full support from the Young Vic team.

Built upon the principles of access, innovation, and community, the Young Vic is deepening its roots nationally and internationally. Recent transfers include a *Death of a Salesman* and *The Collaboration* on Broadway, and *Best of Enemies* and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* in the West End.

The Young Vic's founding spirit is iconoclastic and pushing at the forefront of possibility, bringing together artists and audiences on a global scale and using the power of stories to change our world.

Artistic Director: Kwame Kwei-Armah

Executive Director: Lucy Davies

www.youngvic.org

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We gratefully acknowledge Ian Burford and Alec Cannell for generously supporting the Young Vic's mission.