

Thursday 7 February 2019

THE NATIONAL THEATRE WILL TOUR  
**A TASTE OF HONEY**  
BY SHELAGH DELANEY  
IN AUTUMN 2019

- **A TASTE OF HONEY IS DIRECTED BY BIJAN SHEIBANI AND DESIGNED BY HILDEGARD BECHTLER**
- **JODIE PRENGER WILL PLAY HELEN**
- **A TASTE OF HONEY WILL TOUR TO NINE VENUES FROM SEPTEMBER, OPENING AT THE LOWRY, SALFORD**

The National Theatre today announced a UK tour of **Bijan Sheibani**'s production of *A Taste of Honey*, **Shelagh Delaney**'s remarkable taboo-breaking 1950s play, which was first produced in the Lyttelton Theatre in 2014, designed by **Hildegard Bechtler** and reconceived in an exciting new production, featuring a live on stage band, for the tour.

**Jodie Prenger** (*Oliver!*, *One Man, Two Guvvners*, *Abigail's Party* UK tour) plays Helen, with further casting to be announced.

Written by Shelagh Delaney when she was nineteen, ***A Taste of Honey*** offers an explosive celebration of the vulnerabilities and strengths of the female spirit in a deprived and restless world.

When her mother Helen runs off with a car salesman, feisty teenager Jo takes up with Jimmy, a sailor who promises to marry her, before he heads for the seas leaving her pregnant and alone. Art student Geoff moves in and assumes the role of surrogate parent until, misguidedly, he sends for Helen and their unconventional setup unravels.

An exhilarating depiction of working-class life in post-war **Salford**, *A Taste of Honey* will open there at The Lowry from 13 – 21 September, with a press night on **Friday 20 September**.

The tour will also visit the Kings Theatre, **Edinburgh** (24 – 28 September); the Marlowe Theatre, **Canterbury** (1 – 5 October); **Richmond** Theatre (7 – 12 October); Grand Opera House, **Belfast** (15 – 19 October); **Leicester** Curve (22 – 26 October); Theatre Royal, **Bath** (28 October – 2 November); Grand Theatre, **Wolverhampton** (5 – 9 November); and the **Norwich** Theatre Royal (12 – 16 November). Tickets will go on sale in venues from mid-February, check theatre websites for specific details.

The sound designer will be **Ian Dickinson** for Autograph, the composer will be **Paul Englishby**, the movement director will be **Aline David**.

**Shelagh Delaney** wrote her first play, *A Taste of Honey* in ten days after seeing Rattigan's *Variation of a Theme* in Manchester. She sent the script to Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop and the play opened at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East in 1958 before transferring to the West End. It was later made into a feature film with Rita Tushingham, Dora Bryan and Murray Melvin and the Broadway transfer featured Joan Plowright and Angela Lansbury. Delaney's other work includes *The Lion in Love*. For television she wrote *The House That Jack Built* and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

**Bijan Sheibani** is an award winning theatre and opera director. His work for the National Theatre includes *Barber Shop Chronicles*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Emil and the Detectives*, *The Kitchen*, and *Our Class* (Olivier Nomination for Best Director). Other theatre includes *Dance Nation* and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (Almeida Theatre); *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Home, Manchester); *The Brothers Size* (Young Vic, Olivier Nomination); *Giving* (Hampstead Theatre); *Moonlight* (Donmar Warehouse); *Gone Too Far* (Royal Court Theatre, Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre). He was artistic director of Actors Touring Company from 2007 to 2010, and an associate director at the National Theatre from 2010 to 2015.

**Jodie Prenger's** work for the NT includes *One Man, Two Guvnors* for the NT in the West End; Nancy in *Oliver!* (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane); Lady of the Lake in *Spamalot* (Playhouse Theatre and UK Tour); Calamity Jane in *Calamity Jane* (UK Tour); *Tell Me on a Sunday* (UK Tour); Miss Hannigan in *Annie* (New Theatre, Oxford); Shirley in *Shirley Valentine* (UK Tour); Kelly in *Fat Friends The Musical* (UK Tour) and Beverly in *Abigail's Party* (UK tour). Television includes *Years and Years*, *Citizen Khan*, *Wizards vs Aliens*, *Candy Cabs* and *Waterloo Road*. She won the Theatregoers' Choice Whats On Stage Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical.

**Hildegard Bechtler** is an Olivier Award-winning theatre and opera designer whose designs for the NT include *Consent*, *Sunset at the Villa Thalia*, *Waste*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Scenes from an Execution*, *After the Dance*, *Harper Regan*, *The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other*, *The Hothouse*, *Thérèse Raquin*, *Exiles*, *Primo*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II*, and *King Lear*. For the RSC she has designed *The Crucible* and *Electra*. In London's West End her designs include *Oresteia* (also Almeida Theatre), *Top Hat*, *Passion Play*, *Old Times*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Arcadia*, *The Lady from Dubuque*, *By the Bog of Cats*, *The Master Builder*, *Footfalls*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*, *The Crucible*. On Broadway she has designed *Primo*, *Arcadia*, and *The Seagull*.

*A Taste of Honey* is produced on tour by the National Theatre.

**ENDS**

For further information, contact **Susie Newbery** on 020 7452 3155 / [snewbery@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:snewbery@nationaltheatre.org.uk).

For booking details, visit [nationaltheatre.org.uk](https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk) or individual theatre websites.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **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's creative education through performance and writing programmes like Connections, New Views and Let's Play. Its major new initiative Public Acts creates extraordinary acts of theatre and community; the first Public Acts production was 2018's *Pericles*. 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 free streaming service On Demand In Schools, used by nearly 60% of UK state secondary schools. 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.

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