

# National Theatre

## Press Release

### Sir Lenny Henry launches *On Demand in Schools Primary*

Sir Lenny Henry today launched *On Demand in Schools Primary* at Shenley Academy, Birmingham.

*On Demand in Schools Primary* is the second phase of the National Theatre's digital initiative offering acclaimed curriculum-linked productions free of charge, to schools across the country. Every primary and secondary school in the UK can now access world-class theatre on demand with Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure *Treasure Island*, the first primary age production (suitable for KS2) to be made available.

One year on from the launch of *On Demand in Schools Secondary*, one third of all state secondary schools have signed up to the free digital programme. Ian Horgan, Assistant Principal at Shenley Academy said: "We have been using *On Demand in Schools* for the last year and in that time pupils and teachers have found it a brilliant resource. Flexibility in lesson planning is important for any school and the programme means teachers can study key scenes with students or show the full production over a number of lessons. As specialist software is not required to watch the plays and streams can be viewed on multiple devices, we are able to use the service across a number of subjects to support lessons in every year group."

Sir Lenny Henry said: "The National Theatre was founded with a mission to educate as well as entertain and many of us working in the arts can remember an experience at school – a theatre visit, an inspiring teacher, meeting a professional artist – as the ignition to their career or enduring passion for the art form. If we can engage school children in the arts from an early age, the evidence tells us that they will have an interest in, and desire to, engage in the arts throughout their lifetime."

*On Demand in Schools Primary* complements trips to see live performances, enabling students to study plays day-to-day in their classroom. The plays are recorded in high definition in front of a live theatre audience by the National theatre's award-winning NT Live team. Available exclusively to UK schools, comprehensive learning resources produced by teachers and leading artists support each play; teachers can show the full production or watch key scenes over a number of lessons.

Alice King-Farlow, Director of Learning at the NT, said: "*On Demand in Schools Secondary* has seen over a third of state schools across the UK sign up to the initiative in just one year. That success (and demand) has confirmed our belief that teachers and schools across the UK are passionate about giving young people access to inspirational theatre and embedding the arts as a vital part of the curriculum. We are thrilled to be launching *On Demand in Schools Primary* and offering children of all age ranges access to world-class theatre in a curriculum-linked, classroom setting."

**Ends**

## Notes to Editors

1. For images, click [here](#). For further information or interviews, please contact the press office on 020 7452 3232 or email: [vkington@nationaltheatre.org.uk](mailto:vkington@nationaltheatre.org.uk)
  2. To learn more about *On Demand in Schools*, click [here](#).
  3. Sir Lenny Henry was appointed to the National Theatre Board in February 2016. He made his National Theatre debut in *The Comedy of Errors* in 2011; his other theatre roles include the title role in *Othello* for Northern Broadsides/West Yorkshire Playhouse, which transferred to the West End and for which he won the 2009 Evening Standard Outstanding Newcomer Award; August Wilson's *Fences* in the West End, for which he received the Critics' Circle Best Actor Award; and *Educating Rita* at Chichester.
  4. [Shenley Academy](#) is a mixed secondary school and sixth form located in the Weoley Castle area of southwest Birmingham. It first opened on the 4th of September 2009. The school's academy sponsor is E-ACT, a non-profit education foundation.
  5. *On Demand in Schools* is made possible by the generous support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Sidney E. Frank Foundation. Productions for primary schools are supported by The Goldsmiths' Company Charity.
  6. *On Demand in Schools* is part the National Theatre's wide ranging commitment to learning which includes [Connections](#), [New Views](#) and touring productions for schools.
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The National Theatre is dedicated to making the very best theatre and sharing it with as many people as possible. We produce productions on the South Bank in London each year, ranging from re-imagined classics to modern masterpieces and new work by contemporary writers and theatre-makers. The National's work is seen on tour throughout the UK, in London's West End, internationally (including on Broadway) and in collaborations and co-productions with theatres across the country.

Across 2015-2016, the NT staged 34 productions and gave 3,134 performances in the UK and internationally. The NT's award-winning programme had a UK audience of 2.5 million, 700,000 of which were NT Live audiences.

The Clore Learning Centre at the NT is committed to providing programmes for schools, young people, families, community groups and adult learners, including the nationwide youth theatre festival Connections and playwriting competition New Views. In 2015-2016, we engaged with over 181,000 participants through the NT Learning events programme. Further, over 2,200 secondary schools have signed up to the free streaming service, On Demand in Schools since its launch in September 2015.

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