The National Theatre today launches the first episode in a 10 part podcast series. This new podcast series seeks to interact with the social and cultural questions of our time, using theatre as a springboard for discussion and debate. Each podcast is focused on the productions, creations, people and stories that make up the National Theatre today, delving into the medium of theatre and exploring its purpose in the world. The series is available free from the NT website and on iTunes.

The NT’s inaugural podcast asks ‘How can theatre respond to Brexit?’ This episode goes behind the scenes to look at the development and staging of Rufus Norris’s latest verbatim production, My Country; a work in progress. The episode unlocks the approach to this first-of-its kind listening project; the gatherers who collated the verbatim material post-referendum and the reaction from audiences in a post-Brexit landscape. Ed Miliband MP shares his thoughts on My Country; a work in progress and discusses the divisions in the country following the referendum vote, seeking answers on what Britain’s future will be after Brexit.

Emma Keith, Head of Broadcast at the National Theatre, said: “The NT continuously seeks to open up theatre and its processes and ensure we are as accessible as possible to audiences globally. The NT’s podcast series is a further opportunity to explore theatre through a platform that can be freely accessed by anyone, wherever they are in the world. Our stages are filled with work that reflects today’s society, and the NT podcast series is an opportunity to deepen audiences’ relationship with that work and start a discussion that explores how the arts intersect with the issues that affect all of us, across the UK and around the world.”

Commenting on the production My Country; a work in progress and the NT podcast, Ed Miliband said: “My Country was a fantastic play and I would encourage the whole country to go and see it. It expertly and movingly allowed the audience to understand the motivations and concerns of both remainers and leavers, no matter which side of the divide they were on. The NT podcast is a great way of going beyond the theatre's walls to speak to the country. Art plays such an important role in reflecting our society and helping to educate and understand the world we live in. I am sure the series will be a resounding success.”

The NT’s second podcast, to be released on 2nd June, investigates the work of the Synergy Theatre project. Synergy has been renowned in the UK for effectively using theatre to rehabilitate prisoners and ex-offenders, using the transformative nature of the arts to embed meaningful change in people’s lives. In this episode, we hear directly from Synergy's team and ex-offenders they’ve worked with to understand the value of the arts in the criminal justice system.

In episode three, Dame Harriet Walter reflects on her career frequently playing men on stage and reinventing traditional male roles as women. The podcast investigates the rise in gender-fluid casting in mainstream theatre, and takes a look at the rise of powerful women on the political stage to understand how womanhood is performed in theatre today.
It's often the pinnacle of an actor's career, but where can you go after playing King Lear? In episode four we hear from Lear's past and present to see what one of the greatest stage roles of all time tells us about the complex relationship between acting and ageing.

Following the NT’s 25-year anniversary production of Angels in America, episode five of the podcast series explores the history of LGBTQ+ stories on stage. The podcast explores the views of leading theatre-makers and explores what has – and hasn’t – changed in that important time.

Future episodes look at public art and performance, theatre for young people, the relationship between actor and audience, and how productions recover from the unexpected live on stage.

The episodes will be released regularly and available at: nationaltheatre.org.uk/podcast
Subscribe now via iTunes
Join the conversation with #NTpodcast

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Notes to Editors:
For images, click here.

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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 reimagined 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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