

10 January 2019

The Duchess of Sussex announced as new Royal Patron of the National Theatre

The National Theatre is honoured to announce that **Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Sussex** has become its Royal Patron. The patronage reflects Her Royal Highness's belief in using the arts to bring people from different backgrounds and communities together.

Her Majesty The Queen has passed on the Royal Patronage to The Duchess of Sussex having held the role for the last 45 years and has been associated with the organisation since its earliest days at the Old Vic in the 1960s. Her Majesty last visited the National Theatre in 2013, as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, where she officially opened the building after major redevelopment and watched some rehearsals before being reunited with Joey from *War Horse*.

The Duchess has spent decades championing the arts and feels that she can use her position to focus attention on and make a particular difference to the sector. Whilst Her Royal Highness spent ten years working in television, her training is in theatre. As well as a double major in theatre and international relations from Northwestern University, which is renowned for its drama programme, Her Royal Highness volunteered at a performing arts after school programme for children in underprivileged school districts in Los Angeles.

Rufus Norris, Director of the National Theatre said: "I would like to thank The Queen for Her Majesty's long and unwavering support and service to the National Theatre. We were honoured when The Queen became our Patron in 1974 and have celebrated many moments together including, in recent years, the Diamond Jubilee and the marking of our 50th anniversary. It is a privilege to welcome The Duchess of Sussex as our new Patron. The Duchess shares our deeply-held conviction that theatre has the power to bring together people from all communities and walks of life. I very much look forward to working closely with Her Royal Highness in the years to come".

Her Royal Highness met with Rufus Norris last year and conducted a private visit to the theatre. The Duchess is expected to carry out a public visit to the NT in the coming weeks.

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For further PRESS information please contact Ruth Greenwood, Interim Head of Press, NT on 020 7452 3233 or email rgreenwood@nationaltheatre.org.uk. For any enquiries about The Duchess of Sussex contact Kensington Palace on 02079304832.

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.

For more information, please visit <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>.

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