



PRESS RELEASE  
26 September 2017 1PM

## YOUNG VIC THEATRE APPOINTS KWAME KWEI-ARMAH AS NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Young Vic is thrilled to announce that Kwame Kwei-Armah will become the new Artistic Director in February 2018.

Kwame Kwei-Armah is an award-winning director and playwright and the outgoing Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage where he directed extensively. Directing credits also include New York's Public Theater, Signature Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Birmingham Repertory Theatre. His production of *One Night in Miami* at the Donmar Warehouse was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best New Play.

His works as playwright include *One Love* (Birmingham Rep), *Marley*, *Beneatha's Place* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Elmina's Kitchen*, *Fix Up*, *Statement of Regret* (National Theatre) and *Let There Be Love* and *Seize the Day* (Tricycle Theatre). Kwame was the Chancellor of the University of the Arts London from 2010-15, and in 2012 was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama.

Kwame will succeed David Lan further to the announcement that he would be stepping down in 2018 after 18 years in the role. Kwame will announce his first season of work as Artistic Director in the new year.

Kwame Kwei-Armah says: "To walk into the Young Vic is to come face to face with everything I love about theatre, so I am beyond humbled, if not a little scared. But to lead this magnificent theatre at this time in our nation's history, after such a visionary as David, excites me beyond words. I can't wait to get started."

Patrick McKenna, Chair of the Board, says: "After meeting Kwame the panel was unanimous in its decision to appoint him as the next leader for this remarkable institution. Kwame's wealth of experience directing, writing and working with the local community in Baltimore and beyond will translate beautifully to his new role leading the work on the Young Vic's three stages as well as its pioneering outreach and education work in London."

David Lan, outgoing Artistic Director, says: "The choice the panel has made is inspired. I welcome it wholeheartedly and will do whatever I can to support Kwame in the early days as he finds his own distinctive way to keep the Young Vic one of the great producing theatres of this country and the world."

### Notes to Editors

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### **About Kwame Kwei-Armah**

Kwame Kwei-Armah, born in 1967, is the outgoing Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage where he has directed: *Jazz, Marley, One Night in Miami, Amadeus, Dance of the holy ghosts, The Mountaintop; An Enemy of the People, The Whipping Man* and *Things of Dry Hours*. Other work as a director includes: *Twelve Night, Comedy of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing, Detroit'67* (Public Theatre, New York), *The Liquid Plain* (Signature Theatre, New York and Oregon Shakespeare Festival), *Porgy and Bess* (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra) the Olivier Nominated *One night in Miami* for Best New Play 2016 (Donmar Warehouse) and *One Love* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre).

As a playwright his credits include *One Love* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre), *Beneath's Place* (Baltimore Center Stage) *Elmina's Kitchen, Fix Up, Statement of Regret* (National Theatre) *Let There Be Love* and *Seize the Day* (Tricycle Theatre).

Kwame was Artistic Director for the *Festival of Black arts and Culture, Senegal*, in 2010. He conceived and directed the opening ceremony at Senghor National stadium. He is an Associate Director of the Donmar Warehouse and has served on the boards of the National Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, and Theatre Communications Group. Kwame was the Chancellor of the University of the Arts London from 2010 to 2015, and in 2012 was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama.

In 2012, 2013 and 2014 Kwame was named Best Director in City Paper's Best of Baltimore Awards and in 2015 was nominated for the prestigious Stage Directors and Choreographers Zelda Fichandler Award for Best Regional Artistic Director. In 2016 he was awarded the Urban Visionary Award alongside House Representative Elijah Cummings by the Center for Urban Families for his work in the Baltimore community.

### **About the Young Vic**

The Young Vic produces classics, new plays, forgotten works, musicals and opera, and tours widely in the UK and internationally. It has deep roots in its neighbourhood and extensive co-producing relationships with leading theatres all over the world. The Young Vic's associate companies are BirdGang Dance, Belarus Free Theatre, Good Chance, and Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme.

**Box Office:** [www.youngvic.org](http://www.youngvic.org) | 020 7922 2922

### **The Young Vic's Supporters**

The Young Vic receives public subsidy from Arts Council England and Lambeth & Southwark Borough Councils.

