

Young Vic

Press Release – Thursday 27 June 2024

Images available [here](#)

FULL CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR ELVIS COSTELLO AND SARAH RUHL'S NEW MUSICAL *A FACE IN THE CROWD*

- Elvis Costello and Sarah Ruhl's new musical adaptation of the Hollywood classic *A Face in the Crowd* about the dangers of celebrity, power, and politics marks the final production from Kwame Kwei-Armah as Young Vic Artistic Director, with production design by Anna Fleischle.
- Broadway and West End stars Ramin Karimloo and Anoushka Lucas are joined by Jasmin Colangelo, Andrew Coshan, Stavros Demetraki, Olly Dobson, Emily Florence, Howard Gossington, Chris Jenkins, Vicki Lee Taylor, Sadie-Jean Shirley, Durone Stokes, Annie Wensak and Bobby Windebank.
- *A Face in the Crowd* runs at the Young Vic Theatre from 10 September – 9 November. Tickets are available at www.youngvic.org

The Young Vic Theatre today announces full casting for the world premiere musical *A Face in the Crowd* from legendary singer-songwriter **Elvis Costello** and award-winning Broadway playwright **Sarah Ruhl**. As countries across the world head to the polls, this timely production reignites the Hollywood classic about celebrity, power, and politics. It is directed by **Kwame Kwei-Armah** in his final production as **Young Vic Artistic Director** with production design by **Anna Fleischle**, and is based on the original story and screenplay by **Budd Schulberg** and the **Warner Bros.** film. *A Face in the Crowd* runs at the **Young Vic** from **10 September to 9 November** with opening night for press on **Friday 20 September**.

'You gotta keep him here, Miss Jeffries. He's the goose who laid the golden egg.'

When radio producer Marcia Jeffries meets drifter "Lonesome Rhodes", she immediately gives him a slot on her show. But as Lonesome's fan base grows and the politicians take notice, Marcia realises she has unleashed a force she can no longer control.

Joining the previously announced Tony and Olivier Award nominated **Ramin Karimloo** (The Phantom in *The Phantom of The Opera*, Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*) as Lonesome Rhodes and Olivier nominated **Anoushka Lucas** (*Oklahoma!*, *Elephant*) as Marcia Jeffries are **Stavros Demetraki** (Laurey Williams in *Oklahoma!*, *The Vote*) as Joey D, **Olly Dobson** (*Back to the Future* – Olivier Award nomination, *Just for One Day*) as Mel Miller, **Emily Florence**, in her professional stage debut, as Betty Lou, **Howard Gossington** (*Patriots*, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*) as Sheriff Hosmer/Ensemble, **Andrew Coshan** (*Groundhog Day*, *A View from the Bridge*), **Sadie-Jean Shirley** (*Ain't Too Proud*, *White Christmas*), **Chris Jenkins** (*Jack Absolute Flies Again*, *War of the Worlds*), **Durone Stokes** (*Groundhog Day*, *The Lion King*), **Vicki Lee Taylor** (*Heathers the Musical*, *Mrs Doubtfire*) and **Annie Wensak** (*Flowers for Mrs Harris*, *My Fair Lady*) in the Ensemble, and **Jasmin Colangelo** (*Groundhog Day*, *Legally Blonde*) and **Bobby Windebank** (*The Time Traveller's Wife*, *Rock of Ages*) as Swings.

The creative team also brings together Lighting Designer **Jackie Shemesh**, Musical Supervisor and Musical Director **Phil Bateman**, Sound Designer **Emma Laxton**, Choreographer **Lizzi Gee** and Casting Director **Heather Basten CDG**.

BSL Performance: Tue 15 October, 7.30pm

Captioned Performances: Thu 26 September, 7.30pm & Sat 5 October, 2.30pm

Relaxed Performances: Sat 19 October, 2.30pm & Thu 24 October, 7.30pm

Sensory Adapted Performance: Thu 10 October, 7.30pm

Audio Described Performances: Tues 1 October, 7.30pm & Sat 26 October, 2.30pm

BIOGRAPHIES

Elvis Costello (Music and Lyrics) is a writer and part-time musician who made a number of records in the 20th Century, some of which are still remembered today. Costello has been performing in public for over fifty years, writing over 500 songs and collaborating with Paul McCartney, Burt Bacharach and his wife, Diana Krall.

Sarah Ruhl (Book) is an award-winning playwright, author, essayist, and professor. She has received the Tony Award nomination for Best Play and is a two-time Pulitzer Prize Finalist. Her many plays include *Eurydice*, *The Clean House*, *Stage Kiss*, *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play*, *Stage Kiss*, *the Oldest Boy* and *Letters from Max*.

Kwame Kwei-Armah (Director) is Artistic Director of the Young Vic Theatre and Artistic Advisor at Manhattan Theatre Club. He was previously Artistic Director of Baltimore Center Stage and Artistic Director of the Festival of Black Arts and Culture, Senegal. As a playwright, Kwame was the first black Briton to have a play produced in the West End (*Elmina's Kitchen*). His triptych of plays was produced at the National Theatre where he created the online resource The Black Play Archive. Kwame was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama and has been listed as one of 100 Great Black Britons.

Anna Fleischle (Production Designer). Previous Young Vic: *Nachtlund*, *The Collaboration* (& Broadway), *Hamlet*, *The Unforgotten*, *Death of a Salesman* (West End & Broadway), *You Can See the Hills*, *Love & Money* (2007 Olivier Award Nominee for Outstanding Achievement in Affiliate Theatre, & Royal Exchange Manchester). Other theatre includes: *2:22 A Ghost Story* (Noel Coward Theatre, now at the Gielgud Theatre); *Once Upon A One More Time* (Nederlander/Shakespeare Theatre Co, Washington DC); *A Kind of People*, *The Kid Stays In The Picture* (& Complicité); *Hangmen* (& West End/Broadway, 2016 Olivier Award Winner for Best Set Design, Critics' Circle Best Designer Award 2015 and Evening Standard Award for Best Design 2015); *Liberian Girl* (Royal Court Theatre); *Two Ladies*, *A German Life*, *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (Bridge Theatre); *Message In A Bottle* (Sadler's Wells); *JOHN, Can We Talk About This?* (NT/DV8); *Home I'm Darling* (2019 Olivier Award Nominee for Best Set Design and Best Costume Design, Theatr Clwyd/NT/West End); *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* (West End/Tour); *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (Old Vic); *Beware of Pity* (Schaubühne, Berlin/Complicité); *Weimar Nightfall* (LA Philharmonic). Anna is a founding member of Scene/Change.

Ramin Karimloo's (Lonesome Rhodes) stage credits include: *Songbird* (Washington National Opera), *The Addams Family* (London Palladium), Nicky Arnstein in *Funny Girl* (August Wilson Theatre, NYC), *Rumi: The Musical* (London Coliseum), Anatoly in *Chess in Concert* (Umeda Arts Theatre, Osaka & Tokyo International Forum), Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar in Concert* (Theatre Orb, Tokyo), Che in *Evita* (Theatre Orb, Tokyo & Vancouver Opera), Gleb Vaganov in *Anastasia* (Broadway), *The Secret Garden* (Lincoln Centre), Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* (Toronto, West End & Broadway, Tony Award Nominee), The Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* (West End, Italy & Monte Carlo) & The Phantom in *Love Never Dies*

(West End, Olivier Award Nominee). Film/Television includes: *Bound*, *Holby City*, *Nativity Rocks*, *Life's Too Short*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Phantom of the Opera at the Royal Albert Hall*, *Les Misérables in Concert*. Ramin has toured worldwide both solo and with Ramin Karimloo & The Broadgrass Band. He has released five solo albums on Sony Records: *From Now On*, *Human Heart* and *The Road to Find Out* series.

Anoushka Lucas (Marcia Jeffries) returns to the Young Vic where she played Laurey in *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* and in the West End transfer, earning an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress in a Musical. She recently played Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* at Sheffield Theatres. Anoushka's debut play *Elephant*, which she wrote and performed in, premiered at The Bush in 2022, and was reprised in 2023 to wide critical acclaim. She won a Stage Debut Best Writer Award and was nominated for an Evening Standard Theatre Award. She is currently recording her second studio album. Previous theatre credits include lead roles in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Henry V* (Donmar Warehouse) and *Afterlife* (National Theatre). Film includes: *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Stavros Demetraki (Joey D) recently played Ali Hakim in the Olivier Award winning production of *Rodgers' and Hammerstein's Oklahoma!* at the Young Vic and in the West End. Other theatre credits include: *Peter Pan* (Birmingham Repertory Theatre), *The Vote* (Donmar Warehouse), *Timon of Athens*, *Antigone*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Kitchen* (National Theatre), *Adventures In Wonderland*, *Supermarket Shakespeare* (Teatro Vivo), *As You Like It* (Dash Arts / Curve), *Blood Wedding* (Liverpool Everyman), *By The Way* (Chopped Logic), *Gilgamesh* (Belgrade Theatre / National Tour), *Birds Without Wings* (Eastern Angles). Television includes: *Miss Scarlett & The Duke*, *Doctor Who*, *Tyrant*, and *White Van Man*, *Doctors*. Film includes: *The Phantom Warrior*, *Hampstead*, *Risen*, *Dracula Untold*, *The Hope Rooms*, *Blush Furiously*, and *The Simple Equation*.

Olly Dobson (Mel Miller) received an Olivier Award nomination for Best Actor in a Musical as Marty McFly in *Back to the Future* in the West End. His other theatre credits include *Just for One Day* (Old Vic), *Bat Out of Hell* (West End and International Tour) *The Selfish Giant*, *Matilda* (West End), *Carrie* (Southwark Playhouse).

Emily Florence (Betty Lou) graduated from Arts Ed this year and is making her professional stage debut in *A Face in the Crowd*.

Howard Gossington (Sheriff Hosmer / Ensemble) Theatre includes: *Patriots* (Gielgud Theatre), *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical* (Aldwych Theatre), *The Lion King* (Lyceum Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Infinite Jest/Hague Shakespeare Festival), *The Elephant Man* (Sheffield Crucible), *The Important of Being Earnest* (SJT), *Nation* (National Theatre), *Treasure Island* (Haymarket), *Hey, Get a Life!* (Jermyn St. Theatre), *Madame Bovary* (Northampton Royal & Derngate), *The Rivals* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Skylight* and *Mojo* (Dukes, Lancaster) and *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Oxford Shakespeare Company). Television includes: *A Cruel Love: The Ruth Ellis Story* (ITV), *The Crown* (Netflix), *Downton Abbey* (ITV), *Gina's Laughing Gear* (BBC), *Hollyoaks* (Channel 4) and *The Basil Brush Show* (BBC). Film includes: *The Lawless Heart* and *Blind Spot*.

Andrew Coshan (Ensemble) Theatre credits include: *Groundhog Day* (GWB Entertainment, Australia), *A View from the Bridge* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Hamlet*, *The Wind in the Willows* (Australia Shakespeare Company), *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Anyone Can Whistle* (Hayes Theatre), *Into The Woods* (Belvoir St Theatre Company), *Jersey Boys* (New Zealand tour), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (The Production Company), *Phantom of the Opera* (Opera Australia) and *A Christmas Carol* (GWB Entertainment, Australia). Television includes: *Neighbours*.

Chris Jenkins (Ensemble) Theatre credits include: *Boundless as the Sea*, *Miss Littlewood* (RSC), *Titanic the Musical* (China Tour), *Groundhog Day* (Old Vic), *Hex*, *Jack Absolute Flies*

Again (National Theatre), *War of the Worlds* (Dominion/UK tour), *All That* (King's Head Theatre), *The Arcadians* (Wilton's Music Hall), *Candide* (Opera Della Luna), *Tick, Tick...BOOM!*, *The Burnt Part Boys* (Park Theatre), *Billy Elliot: The Musical* (Victoria Palace), *Spamalot* (Playhouse), *South Pacific* (Barbican and UK tour), *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Gielgud), *The Cradle Will Rock* (Arcola). Television includes: *It's a Sin*, *Sanditon*.

Durone Stokes (Ensemble) Theatre credits include: *Groundhog Day* (Old Vic Theatre), *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Catford Broadway), *The Lion King* (Lyceum), *Playboy of the West Indies* (Birmingham Rep) *A Taste of Honey* (National Theatre Tour and Trafalgar Studios), *Dreamgirls* (West End), *Grand Hotel* (Southwark Playhouse). Workshop includes: *Part of the Plan* (K-Squared Entertainment Group)

Vicki Lee Taylor (Ensemble) Theatre includes: *Mrs Doubtfire* (Manchester/West End), *Heathers* (The Other Palace), *A Chorus Line*, *Matilda*, *Cinderella*, *Urinetown* (all West End), *Carousel* (Arcola), *Groundhog Day* and *New Voices 24 Hour Plays* (Old Vic), *Mamma Mia!* (West End/International tour), *Kiss Me Quickstep*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Guys & Dolls*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *The Famous Five* (all UK Tour), *Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Christmas Carol* (Royal Festival Hall), *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (Southwark Playhouse), *Cats* (Cyprus), *Sunset Boulevard* and *Sweeney Todd* (ENO), *Hairspray* (Leicester Curve), *Annie!* (West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Betwixt!* (Trafalgar Studios), *A Christmas Carol* (Birmingham Rep/West Yorkshire Playhouse), *Stepping Out* (Oldham Coliseum). Television/Film includes: *Matilda* (Netflix Original), *Heathers Live Capture* (BKL/Village Roadshow), *Autopsy* (ITV), *The Queen's Nose, If...*, *Star for a Night* (all BBC), title role in *Big Meg*, *Little Meg* (Granada Kids), *Heartbeat* and *Emmerdale* (YTV), *The Theatre Channel Cafe 5* (Digital Series) and co-presenter on *Sooty* (CITV).

Annie Wensak (Ensemble) Theatre credits include: *Flowers for Mrs Harris* (Riverside Studios), *Groundhog Day* (Old Vic Theatre), *My Fair Lady* (London Coliseum & UK Tour), *Sleepless the Musical* (Troubadour Theatre), *The Last Noel* (Attic Theatre Company), *The Children* (English Speaking Theatre, Frankfurt), *Moll Flanders* (Mercury Theatre Colchester), *Rhythm Method* (Bush Theatre), *Dick Whittington* (London Palladium), *Half a Sixpence* (West End and Chichester Festival Theatre), *Beyond the Fence* (Arts Theatre), *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *The Sound of Music* (Leicester Curve). Television includes: *Beyond the Fence*, *The Bill*, *Help Plus*, *Casualty*. Film includes: *Strictly Body and Soul*, *Fiddlers Lane*.

Sadie-Jean Shirley (Ensemble) Theatre credits include: *Ain't Too Proud* (West End), *White Christmas* (UK tour), *Crazy for You* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks Musical* (MHE), *City of Angels* (Garrick), *The Astonishing Times of Timothy Cratchit* (Hope Mill Theatre), *Aladdin* (West End/ Disney), *Ghost* (UK tour), *Dusty* (Theatre Royal Bath). Television includes: *Roisin Conaty's GameFace*. Film includes: *Confession* Sadie-Jean is currently the Associate Director at Punchdrunk Enrichment and previously Associate Choreographer at Birmingham REP.

Jasmin Colangelo (Swing) Theatre credits include: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (Birmingham Rep & Gillian Lynne Theatre), *Groundhog Day* (Old Vic), *Legally Blonde* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Saturday Night Fever* (Peacock Theatre), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* (London Palladium), *Matilda* (International Tour), *Cats* (International Tour & German Tour), *Kiss Me Kate* (Les Theatre de la Ville de Luxembourg), *Mamma Mia!* (Novello Theatre & International Tour), *Cinderella* (Hackney Empire), *Billy Elliot* (Victoria Palace), *Les Misérables* (Queen's Theatre). Television includes: *Matilda – Royal Variety Performance*, *All Star Musicals*, *Sadie Jones*, *Big Day Out*. Film includes: *The Man Who Cried*.

Bobby Windebank (Swing) Theatre includes: *The Time Traveller's Wife* (West End); *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* (West End); *Mimma* (Cadogan Hall); *Rock of Ages* (UK Tour); *Guys & Dolls* (Kilworth House Theatre); *Our House* (UK Tour); *Cats* (Cyprus); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (UK Tour); *West Side Story, Singin' in the Rain* (Kilworth House Theatre); *Carmen* (O2 Arena and Royal Albert Hall); *Hairspray, Chicago* (Aberystwyth Arts Centre); *Macbeth* (UK Tour); *Romeo & Juliet* (UK Tour); *Oliver!* (West End). Television includes: *American Monster* (Discovery); *The Railway Children, Randall and Hopkirk* (ITV); *999, The Mystery of Men* (BBC). Film includes: *Wicked* (Universal); *Snow White, The Little Mermaid* (Disney).

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Images: [available here](#)

About the Young Vic Theatre

Founded in 1970 as a space for world-premiere productions and unexpected takes on classic plays that speak urgently to our present, the Young Vic Theatre has been one of London's leading theatres for more than fifty years.

Welcoming more than 100,000 visitors a year to its London Waterloo location, the Young Vic stands out in the city's cultural landscape for balancing daring commercial drive, success and artistic flair with genuine grassroots social impact change in our neighbourhood. We forge deep connections in our neighbourhood through our Taking Part programme, where we engage with over 15,000 people every year via a wide range of projects, from skills-based workshops to on-stage performances. We give 10% of our tickets free to schools and neighbours, irrespective of box office demand, and we are committed to keeping ticket prices low.

The Young Vic's Creators Program is our space for multi- and anti-disciplinary artists, and is the only scheme of its kind. Launched in 2001, and formerly known as the Directors Program, we offer artists and producers a unique opportunity to develop their craft through opportunities that range from trainee and assistant director roles to a two-year residency through the Genesis Fellow/Associate Director position. The Genesis Network provides an online community to over 2,500 artists and producers. Each year, the recipient of the Genesis Future Directors Award directs a show in the Clare Theatre with full support from the Young Vic team.

Built upon the principles of access, innovation, and community, the Young Vic is deepening its roots nationally and internationally. Recent transfers include a *Death of a Salesman* and *The Collaboration* on Broadway, and *Best of Enemies* and Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* in the West End.

The Young Vic's founding spirit is iconoclastic and pushing at the forefront of possibility, bringing together artists and audiences on a global scale and using the power of stories to change our world.

Artistic Director: Kwame Kwei-Armah

Executive Director: Lucy Davies

www.youngvic.org

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Thank you to all of our donors who make our work possible.