

PRESS RELEASE

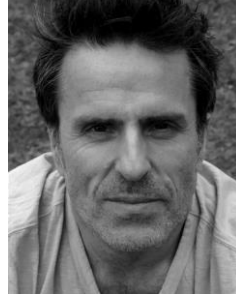
24 Jan 2018



AMELIA BULLMORE



SIAN CLIFFORD



CON O'NEILL



YASMIN PAIGE



ANTHONY OFOEGBU

Cast announced for Annie Baker's *Circle Mirror Transformation*, directed by Bijan Sheibani, at HOME Manchester

Fri 2 - Sat 17 Mar 2018

Press night Wed 7 Mar

HOME is delighted to announce a new production of Pulitzer Prize-winner **Annie Baker**'s masterpiece [*Circle Mirror Transformation*](#) (Fri 2 - Sat 17 Mar 2018), directed by **Bijan Sheibani** who most recently directed a sell-out run of Inua Ellam's [*Barber Shop Chronicles*](#) at the National Theatre, and is currently directing a revival of his production of *The Brothers Size* at the Young Vic by the Oscar-winning writer of *Moonlight*, Tarell Alvin McCraney.

In its first major revival since the acclaimed Royal Court production (2013), *Circle Mirror Transformation*'s five-strong cast will feature some of the UK's most distinguished names from stage and television, comprising actress and writer **Amelia Bullmore** (*Scott & Bailey*, *Twenty Twelve*, *The Crucible*) as Marty; **Sian Clifford** (*Fleabag*, *Gloria*) as Theresa; **Con O'Neill** (*Frank*, *Cucumber*, *Ordinary Lives*, *Harlots*, *A View From The Bridge*, *Happy Valley*) as Schultz; **Yasmin Paige** (*Submarine*, *Pramface*, *Ah, Wilderness!*) as Lauren; and **Anthony Ofoegbu** (*Spooks*, *Moonfleet*, *Casualty*) as James.

In a small town in Vermont, New England, five unlikely strangers come together in their community centre for a creative drama class for adults. The free-spirited

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Marty, recently divorced Schultz, former actress Teresa, the self-conscious high school student Lauren, and Marty's quiet husband James. Over six weeks of drama exercises and games ranging from the hilarious to the heart-breaking, their lives become entangled and transformed in the most humorous and moving ways.

Annie Baker, the winner of the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for drama, is considered one of the most talented and sought-after playwrights to have emerged in recent years. *Circle Mirror Transformation*, her second play, won the 2010 Obie Award for Best New Play, and was voted one of the top 10 plays by the *New York Times*, *Time Out*, and the *New Yorker*.

Bijan Sheibani was Artistic Director of Actors' Touring Company between 2007-10, and an Associate Director of the National Theatre between 2010-15. He has most recently directed a critically acclaimed production of Inua Ellams' new play *Barber Shop Chronicles* at the National Theatre.

After its second sold out London run, *Barber Shop Chronicles* will tour to Sydney, Perth and Wellington. At the National, Sheibani has also directed productions including *Our Class*, *The Kitchen*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Emil and the Detectives*, and a schools' version of *Romeo and Juliet*. His recent production of David Bruce's new opera *Nothing* for Glyndebourne was nominated for the 2017 Southbank Sky Arts Award for Best Opera.

Manchester University graduate **Amelia Bullmore**, who plays Marty, is a well-known face on TV, with leading roles in *Scott and Bailey* (some episodes of which she also wrote), *Happy Valley*, and BBC2's hilarious London Olympics satire *Twenty Twelve*. She also played Alan Partridge's put-upon girlfriend Sonja in the second series of *I'm Alan Partridge*. Early in her career, she played Steph Barnes in ITV Granada's *Coronation Street* for five years from 1990. On stage, her many roles include Ruth in *The Norman Conquests* at London's Old Vic and on Broadway for director Matthew Warchus.

The role of Theresa is played by **Sian Clifford**, who starred as Claire in BBC2's BAFTA-winning comedy show *Fleabag*. Her recent stage parts include playing the title-role in *Gloria* at the Hampstead Theatre.

Con O'Neill, who appears as Schultz, also has a host of major TV credits to his name, including alongside Amelia Bullmore in *Happy Valley*. Other leading roles include Channel 4's *Cucumber* and drama *Ordinary Lies* on BBC1, both of which were set in Manchester. He also played legendary record producer Joe Meek in



both the stage and film versions of *Telstar*. His most recent stage appearance in the north-west was as jaded lecturer Frank in Willy Russell's *Educating Rita* at the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse in 2015.

Yasmin Paige, who plays Lauren, starred on the big screen in Richard Ayoade's *Submarine*, and is also familiar from playing Beth in BBC's heart-warming comedy *Pramface*, about a young couple about to become parents.

Anthony Ofoegbu, who completes the cast as James, has TV credits in *Spooks*, *Moonfleet*, and *Casualty*, and also appeared in *Death and the King's Horseman* at the National Theatre for Rufus Norris, and in Athol Fugard's *My Children! My Africa!* at the Trafalgar Studios in London. He spent a lot of 2017 in three Royal Shakespeare Company productions - *Antony And Cleopatra* directed by Iqbal Khan, *Julius Caesar* directed by Angus Jackson, and *Titus Andronicus* directed by Blanche McIntyre.

Walter Meierjohann, Artistic Director: Theatre, HOME, says: "I cannot emphasise enough how thrilled we are to host a production by Annie Baker - I see her as the most exciting contemporary American playwright. Her very musical ear for dialogue, her emphasis on ordinary people, and her beautiful heightened naturalistic plays, make her a Chekhov of the 21st century.

"In a season where we programmed [People Places & Things](#) (which had a strong link to Chekhov's *The Seagull*) and [Uncle Vanya](#), it is befitting that we now look at *Circle Mirror Transformation*, a Chekhov for our times. I'm also very excited to welcome Bijan Sheibani to HOME. He is a very talented director who has worked extensively at the National, and at the Young Vic, where we met during my time there as Associate Director. I cannot wait to see him bring *Circle Mirror Transformation* to life on our stage with an extraordinary cast."

- ends

@home_mcr

#CircleMirrorTransformation

PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Fri 2 Mar 2018 - 19:30

Sat 3 Mar 2018 - 19:30

Mon 5 Mar 2018 - 19:30

Tue 6 Mar 2018 - 19:30

Wed 7 Mar 2018 - 19:30 (press night performance)

Thu 8 Mar 2018 - 19:30



Fri 9 Mar 2018 - 19:30
Sat 10 Mar 2018 - 14:00, 19:30
Tue 13 Mar 2018 - 19:30
Wed 14 Mar 2018 - 14:00, 19:30
Thu 15 Mar 2018 - 19:30 (caption subtitled)
Fri 16 Mar 2018 - 19:30 (audio described)
Sat 17 Mar 2018, 14:00 (British Sign Language interpreted), 19:30

TICKETS

Tickets £26.50 - £10 (concessions available)
Previews Fri 2 Mar £10; Sat 3, Mon 5, Tue 6 Mar £12.50.

PRESS NIGHT PERFORMANCE

Wed 7 Mar 2018 - 19:30

For further information - to request review tickets, images or interviews, please contact: Elisa Ruff, Senior Media and Communications Manager, +44 (0)161 212 3461, or elisa.ruff@HOMEmcr.org

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NOTES TO EDITORS

HOME, Manchester's centre for international contemporary art, theatre, film and books, officially opened its doors over the 2015 May Bank Holiday weekend. Designed by Dutch architects Mecanoo and featuring a 500-seat theatre; a 150-seat flexible theatre; a 500m², 4m high gallery space; five cinema screens; digital production and broadcast facilities; a café bar and restaurant. HOME's theatres are a platform for questioning and ambitious artistic projects that



involve audiences with new and extraordinary theatrical experiences. The international contemporary visual art programme is dedicated to presenting new commissions by emerging and established artists of regional, national and international significance, with a bold, proactive policy of visual, innovative storytelling with the ability to experiment and explore, probe and provoke, creating a distinct experience for both artists and audiences. HOME's five cinemas showcase the very best in contemporary and classic cinema, screening works by artists and filmmakers both established and new. HOME is a centre for co-production, talent development and artistic creation, dedicated to learning, for people of all ages. A place for new work and playful ideas; of festivals and commissions; of artists and of audience engagement. The patrons of HOME are Danny Boyle, former National Theatre Artistic Director Nicholas Hytner, actress Suranne Jones, playwright and poet Jackie Kay MBE, artists Rosa Barba and Phil Collins, filmmaker Asif Kapadia, and actress and author Meera Syal CBE. After *Circle Mirror Transformation*, HOME's theatres stage [Extraordinary Rendition](#) (7 - 9 Mar 2018), [Slap Talk](#) (10 Mar 2018), [The Flying Lovers of Vitebsk](#) (3 - 7 Apr 2018), [Minefield](#) (12 - 14 Apr 2018), [The Tiger Lillies: Corrido De La Sangre](#) (20 Apr - 5 May 2018), [Things Easily Forgotten](#) (25 - 28 Apr 2018), [Dollywould](#) (3 - 5 May 2018), [Long Day's Journey Into Night](#) (10 - 26 May 2018), [Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train](#) (16 - 19 May 2018), [Scottie: Fat Blokes](#) (22 - 24 May 2018), [The Duke](#) (6/7 June 2018), [Me & Robin Hood: Change the Story](#) (8/9 June 2018), [Diamond](#) (11 - 13 June 2018), [The Drill](#) (14 - 16 June 2018), [The Fishermen](#) (20 - 28 July 2018), [o t h e l l o m a c b e t h](#) (14 - 29 Sept 2018), [Släpstick](#) (13 - 22 Dec 2018), and [White](#) (13 - 23 Dec 2018). www.homemcr.org | @HOME_mcr

BIJAN SHIEBANI was born in Liverpool. He studied English Literature at St Hugh's College, at the University of Oxford, and has an MA in Advanced Theatre practice from the Central School of Speech and Drama. He directs theatre and opera, and his most recent work includes Inua Ellams' Barber Shop Chronicles, at the National Theatre, and *Nothing*, by David Bruce and Glyn Maxwell, at Glyndebourne in 2017. He was an Associate Director of the National Theatre between 2010-2015, where three of his productions were nominated for Olivier Awards - *Our Class*, by Tadeusz Slobodzianek, *The Brothers Size* by Tarell Alvin McCraney, and *Gone Too Far!* by Bola Agbaje, which won. He was Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company from 2007-2010.

ANNIE BAKER was born in 1981 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She studied at Tisch, New York University's Arts School, graduating in 2003. Her plays include *Nocturama* (2006), *Body Awareness* (2008), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (2009), which won the Obie Prize for Best New American Play, *The Aliens* (2010), *The Flick* (2013) which won her a Pulitzer Prize, as well as another Obie, *John* (2015), and *The Antipodes* (2017).

Did you know that HOME is a charity? We need your support to bring the best film, theatre and art to Manchester and inspire the next generation. Get involved at www.homemcr.org/support

