



ACTORS TOURING COMPANY ANNOUNCES 'TRANSFORMATION SEASON' FOR 2023



L-R (Mojisola Adebayo, Roy Williams, Bola Agbaje, Dexter Flanders, Vanessa Macauley, XANA, Dave Harris)

ACTORS TOURING COMPANY (ATC), the UK's leading producer of international plays, today announce an ambitious season of work for 2023 that responds to a single artistic provocation:

'Can we transform the painful legacies of history into a future of hope and possibility?'

ATC's **Transformation Season** embraces three very different approaches to that question. Mojisola Adebayo's poetic ritual-drama **FAMILY TREE** uncovers the hidden legacy of Henrietta Lacks, and is currently touring to 12 places across the UK.

TAMBO & BONES is the UK Premiere of a new play from USA that interrogates the intersection of race, performance and capitalism, exploding the proscenium arch of music hall style theatres with a satire on minstrelsy, a hip-hop concert ... and robots.

THE ARCHITECT is an immersive journey aboard a London bus, created by a collective of leading Black artists, in response to a seismic event in British history, and is made in proud support with the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation.

The season, curated and directed by ATC Artistic Director & Joint CEO, Olivier Award winner **Matthew Xia** comments: *“Too often as a touring company, we appear to be a sum of parts: a show made in one place, another show pops up elsewhere. The truth is, that we are creating a body of work arising from a single artistic idea: transforming painful histories into a more hopeful future.”*

ATC Executive Director & Joint CEO **Andrew Smaje** adds: *“Sometimes the work of touring companies can feel like it’s hidden under the place-based blanket of the brilliant venues we visit and make our productions with. This year, ATC is speaking loud and proud about our body of work in 2023, which will be produced and seen in towns and cities across the nation, from Plymouth to Glasgow, via Keswick and Ipswich, all created from ATC’s two bases in Bradford and Brixton.”*

ATC’s newest commission is *The Architect*, a radical new piece, conceived by **Matthew Xia**, and leading playwrights **Roy Williams** (*DEATH OF ENGLAND*) and **Mojisola Adebayo** (*FAMILY TREE*), and created with a collective of leading Black artists including **Bola Agbaje** (*GONE TOO FAR!*, originally an ATC commission) **Dexter Flanders** (*FOXES*), writer/performer **Vanessa Macauley** and sound artist **XANA** (*846LIVE, FAIRVIEW*).

This immersive theatrical journey through time and a city will transport audiences via an iconic red bus, through South London, in celebration of Black lives and their full potential. Co-produced with the **Greenwich + Docklands International Festival**, performances will take place as part of the festival in early September 2023 before touring nationally to festivals and events in the coming years.

In June, the previously announced co-production of *Tambo & Bones* by multi award-winning playwright, poet and performer **Dave Harris**, will open at **Theatre Royal, Stratford East** from 16 June to 15 July 2023 before touring in 2024.

Meanwhile, *Family Tree*, the Alfred Fagon Award-winning play by Mojisola Adebayo, which premiered in Coventry last month continues its major national tour from Keswick to Plymouth, via London, Liverpool and Bristol until 17 June. The play, co-produced with **Belgrade Theatre** in association with **Brixton House**, is one of ATC’s most substantial tours to date.

All three ATC productions champion a host of Black writers and creatives, adding a new wave of epic plays to the Black theatrical cannon.

Background

ATC is a 'portable portal to the world', a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England with an unrivalled track record in the commissioning, producing and touring of contemporary international plays for audiences, everywhere. Its work explores ideas of intersectionality, identity and belonging - opening up conversations across borders both geographic and cultural. Since 1980, they have been pioneering the touring of new global plays, often in world premiere translations of plays from Australia, Norway, Iran, Israel, and the US – bringing global stories to audiences across the UK.

-ENDS-

To download the Transformation Season lead image click [HERE](#)

Pic: Caption L-R (Mojisola Adebayo, Roy Williams, Bola Agbaje, Dexter Flanders, Vanessa Macauley, XANA, Dave Harris)



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NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT

ACTORS TOURING COMPANY (ATC) is a "portable portal to the world". We are a touring theatre company with an unrivalled track record in the commissioning, producing and touring of contemporary international plays. Our work explores ideas of intersectionality, identity and belonging - opening up conversations across borders both geographic and cultural.

ATC is currently developing projects with playwrights [Nessah Muthy](#), [Yasmin Joseph](#), and partners Soho Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth and imPOSSIBLE Productions of Cornwall.

www.atctheatre.com/about

Further information:

[Family Tree](#)

[Tambo & Bones](#)

[The Architect](#)

Artistic Director & Joint CEO MATTHEW XIA one of the busiest and most exciting directors in the UK, was appointed Artistic Director of Actors Touring Company in November 2018. A *2023 Olivier Award-winner* for his co-production of *Hey Duggee: The Live Theatre Show!*, he is a former Associate Artistic Director of Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Director in Residence at Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse; and Associate Director of Theatre Royal Stratford East.

Some of Matthew's acclaimed productions include: at the Royal Exchange, Manchester *Frankenstein*, *Wish List* (also Royal Court), and *Into The Woods*; for the Young Vic *Blue/Orange* and *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*; and *One Night In Miami...* and *Shebeen* at Nottingham Playhouse and *The Wiz* at Hope Mill.

Matthew's most recent projects include *Feeling Afraid as if Something is Going to Happen* by Marcelo Dos Santos (Francesca Moody, Edinburgh Fringe First Winner, 2022 – revi) and *Hey Duggee* (Cuffe & Taylor, Kenny Wax, BBC Studios, national tour Dec 2022 – June 2023).

Other work of note includes: *Blood Knot* at The Orange Tree, *Sleeping Beauty* at Stratford East, *Scrappers* and *Migration Music* at the Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse; *Dublin Carol* at the Sherman Theatre Cardiff; and NitroBeat's *Suckerpunch Boomsuite* at the Barbican.

Under the pseudonym Excalibah, Matthew was the first DJ to join BBC 1Xtra, where he spent 6 years.

As a sound designer and composer, credits include: *The People Are Singing* (Royal Exchange); *Freerun* (Udderbelly); *That's The Way To Do It* (TimeWontWait); *Bolero Remixed* (New London Orchestra). In 2012 Excalibah performed as a headline DJ at the London Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

Matthew is a founding member of Act for Change, a trustee of Artistic Directors of the Future, Get Into Theatre, and co-Vice Chair at Cardboard Citizens, he has served on the boards of Rich Mix, Creative Futures and Theatre Royal Stratford East. He has been a judge for the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting (2017), the Yale Drama Series (2018), the Alfred Fagon Award (2017 – 2021) and the Eurovision Song Contest (2022).

Executive Director & Joint CEO Andrew Smaje is a theatre producer, consultant and mentor. He has been Executive Director of ATC since 2016, where he has produced in collaboration with venues such as the Young Vic, Orange Tree, Belgrade Coventry, Royal Lyceum Edinburgh, Teatre Lliure Barcelona, Dublin Theatre Festival and Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Known for his work as a producer of contemporary theatre, particularly new writing, Andrew's productions and commissions were nominated at the TMA/ UK Theatre Awards in 2003, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2017 (including two nominations for Best Touring Production and three nominations for Best New Play).

He is also a consultant for leading theatre companies, organisations and artists, with clients including The Empty Space, Ferodo Bridges and Theatre Royal Plymouth.

As Executive Director of Hull Truck 2010 – 2012, he produced work by contemporary playwrights both in Hull and on tour, and co-produced with partners including Headlong, nabokov, Paines Plough, The Gate, Opera North and the RSC. Andrew was Associate Director of Theatre Royal Bath 2000 – 2010, supporting and developing new and innovative theatre across a broad spectrum of performance genres and practice: commissioning theatre-makers such as Rash Dash and Theatre Ad Infinitum; and working regularly with directors such as Lorne Campbell, Tessa Walker and Natalie Abrahams.

Andrew created the Bath International Puppet Festival (2000-2009), a showcase for adult puppetry; and was co-Director of the Bath Shakespeare Festival (2005-2010), an unplugged festival of contemporary perspectives on Shakespeare's work. The festivals commissioned much new work to UK artists and gave UK premieres to productions from Belgium, Portugal, USA, Australia and Zimbabwe.

Andrew has been Chair of [Cap-a-Pie](#), trustee of [Upstart Theatre](#) and of [Kakilang \(Chinese Arts Now\)](#) and is Vice-Chair of [Curious Monkey](#), a Newcastle-based Theatre of Sanctuary.



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