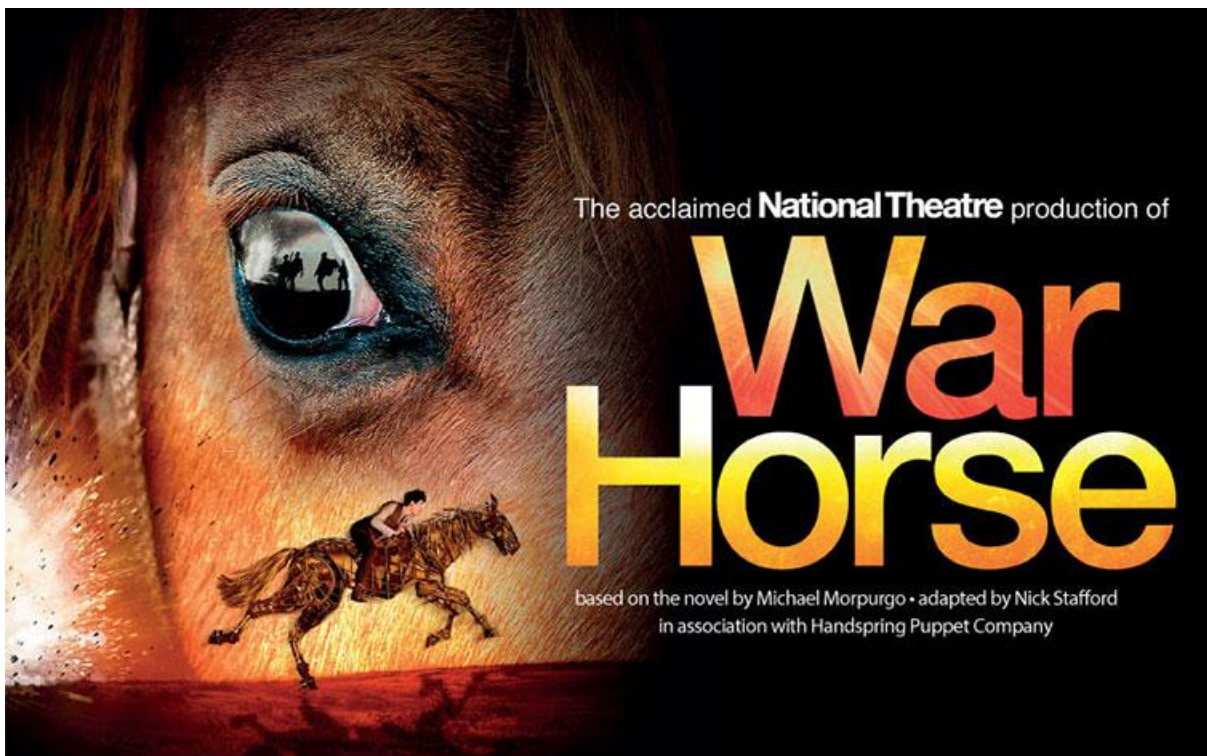




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**National Theatre's Acclaimed Theatre Production *War Horse*
Makes its Singapore Premiere in April 2020**



SINGAPORE, 24 September 2019 – Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) and Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay are delighted to announce the joint presentation of the National Theatre's acclaimed production of *War Horse*, which will take place from 24 April to 3 May 2020 at the Esplanade Theatre. Adapted by Nick Stafford from Michael Morpurgo's beloved novel, and directed by Marianne Elliot and Tom Morris, *War Horse*'s Singapore premiere is part of its UK and International Tour 2019-20, which includes stops in the United Kingdom, Paris and Australia before Singapore.

War Horse is a remarkable story of courage, loyalty and friendship, about a young boy called Albert and his horse Joey, set against the backdrop of the First World War. At the outbreak of

World War One, Joey, young Albert's beloved horse, is sold to the Cavalry and shipped to France. He's soon caught up in enemy fire, and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in no man's land. Albert, who remained on his parents' Devon farm, cannot forget Joey. Though still not old enough to enlist he embarks on a treacherous mission to find him and bring him home.

This powerfully moving and imaginative drama, filled with stirring music and songs, is a show of phenomenal inventiveness. At its heart are astonishing life-sized horses by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, who bring breathing, galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on stage. *War Horse* is an unforgettable theatrical event which takes audiences on an extraordinary journey from the fields of rural Devon to the trenches of First World War France.

Said Author Michael Morpurgo, "Joey, the *War Horse* and his great team from the National Theatre, are touring the UK and internationally again, taking their show all over the world, to towns and cities. I am so pleased this is happening; that so many more people will have the chance to enjoy this unique theatrical event. Steady boy, steady Joey. Trot on!"

In the past decade and beyond, SRT and Esplanade have collaborated to bring some of the best theatre in the world to Singapore. These include The Royal Shakespeare Company's tour of Ian McKellen's *King Lear* and Oscar-winning director Sam Mendes' The Bridge Project, where Singapore was the only city to host all three instalments. Previous collaborations also include the *3 Titans of Theatre* season in 2013 which featured Simon McBurney of Complicite, revered theatre director Yukio Ninagawa and celebrated auteur Peter Brook. In 2017, Esplanade and SRT collaborated for a restaging of the beloved *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress* and most recently in 2018, SRT and Esplanade jointly presented National Theatre's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

Said Charlotte Nors, Managing Director for Singapore Repertory Theatre, "SRT's partnership with UK's National Theatre is part of our strategic investment in working with some of the best theatre companies from around the world. The end goal is to produce a Singaporean show that will tour the world. Following the sold-out presentation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* last year, we look forward to collaborating with Esplanade to co-present *War Horse* in April."

Said Yvonne Tham, Chief Executive Officer, The Esplanade Co Ltd, "Esplanade's presentations of theatre productions by the National Theatre have always been well-received and brought many new audiences into the theatre. With the Singapore premiere of *War Horse*,

we are excited to continue collaborating with SRT to bring some of the most memorable theatre productions in the world to inspire our audiences and artistic community here. *War Horse* epitomises the magic of theatre with its deeply moving story and the awe-inspiring skill displayed in its lifelike puppetry.”

War Horse has been seen by eight million people worldwide and is the most successful play in the National Theatre’s history, having won 25 awards including the Tony Award for Best Play on Broadway.

Tickets on sale 24 September 2019 for priority booking, *Esplanade&Me* members and Friends of SRT. Public sales from 25 September 2019. Tickets will be available on Esplanade’s website (www.esplanade.com/warhorse), SRT’s website (www.srt.com.sg/warhorse), at the Esplanade Box Office at Mezzanine Level, at SRT’s box office at KC Arts Centre, via the SISTIC Hotline (Tel: +65 6348 5555) and at all SISTIC outlets.

~ End ~

Issued by Singapore Repertory Theatre and The Esplanade Co Ltd.

About Singapore Repertory Theatre

Founded in 1993, Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) is one of the leading English language theatre producers and presenters in Asia. In addition to its repertoire of original musicals like *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress*, the company has produced a number of critically acclaimed plays including *The Pillowman*, *Disgraced* and most recently *Caught*. SRT was the first Singaporean theatre company on Broadway in 1998 as Associate Producer of *Golden Child*, which went from Singapore to New York and earned three Tony Award nominations. SRT's international collaborations include Royal Shakespeare Company's *King Lear* and *The Seagull* starring Sir Ian McKellen, Oscar-winning Sam Mendes' *The Bridge Project* (2009-2011) as well as *3 Titans of Theatre* – a season of works directed by Simon McBurney, Yukio Ninagawa and Peter Brook.

SRT produces the very successful Shakespeare in the Park season and is one of the biggest producers of children's theatre in Southeast Asia with shows like *The Cat in the Hat*, *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Three Little Pigs*.

SRT is also very active in the local community with Learning & Engagement programmes that benefit thousands of young learners and educators underpinning a substantial investment in audience and talent development for the wider industry in Singapore.

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It has a year-round line-up of about 3,500 performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are non-ticketed. The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

To bring even more of the arts to a wider audience, and provide more platforms to support Singapore's next generation of artists, Esplanade is building a new theatre with at least 550 seats along its busy waterfront, opening in 2021.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for three consecutive years since 2016.

TECL is funded by Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit www.esplanade.com for more information.

About 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 and schools through performance and writing programmes like Connections, New Views and Let's Play, while Public Acts creates ambitious new works of participatory theatre in sustained partnership with theatres and community organisations around the country. 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 65% 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/> or follow <https://twitter.com/NationalTheatre>.

~ End ~

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ANNEX A

National Theatre's War Horse

Jointly Presented by Singapore Repertory Theatre and Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

24 Apr, Fri – 3 May 2020, Sun
Esplanade Theatre

Tue – Fri: 8pm
Sat: 3pm & 8pm
Sun: 2pm & 7pm



Photos by Brinkhoff/Mögenburg

“★★★★★ An entertainment phenomenon.”

– *The Daily Telegraph, London*

“Theatrical magic.”

– *The New York Times*

“Unforgettable. *War Horse* gallops away with your heart.”

– *The Sunday Telegraph, Sydney*

SINGAPORE PREMIERE OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GREAT BRITAIN'S INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED PRODUCTION

Based on the beloved novel by Michael Morpurgo, the National Theatre of Great Britain's Tony Award-winning production of *War Horse* is coming to Singapore.

Hailed by *Time Magazine* as “a landmark theatre event”, this powerfully moving and imaginative drama, filled with stirring music and songs, is a show of phenomenal inventiveness. At its heart are astonishing life-sized puppets created by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, who bring breathing, galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on stage.

At the outbreak of World War One, Joey, young Albert's beloved horse, is sold to the cavalry and shipped from England to France. He is soon caught up in enemy fire, and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in no man's land. But Albert, who remained on his parents' Devon farm, cannot forget Joey. Though still not old enough to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find Joey and bring him home.

Recommended for ages 10 and up
(2hrs 40mins, including a 20min intermission)

**Tickets on sale 24 Sep 2019 for Priority Booking, Esplanade&Me members and Friends of SRT
Public sales 25 Sep 2019**

\$48*, \$68**, \$88***, \$118^, \$148^

Limited concessions for students, NSF & seniors: \$30*, \$50**, 70***

Fri & Sat evening performances: \$58*, \$78**, \$98***, \$128^, \$168^

Limited concessions for students, NSF & seniors: \$40*, \$60**, \$80***

Early Bird Special (till 8 Dec 2019)

^ Enjoy 20% off Cat 1 & 2 tickets

Esplanade & Me Early Bird Special (till 8 Dec 2019)

^ White Card: 20% savings

Black Card: 25% savings

Friends of SRT Early Bird Special (till 8 Dec 2019)

^ Enjoy 25% off Cat 1 & 2 tickets

Corporate Entertainment & VIP Packages

For customised experiences and discounts for group bookings of 20 tickets and more, please contact Emmanuel at emmanuel@srt.com.sg or 6221 5585 for more information.

School Bookings

For school bookings and enquiries, please contact Carolyn at carolyn@srt.com.sg or 6221 5585.

ANNEX B

WarHorse

FACTS & FIGURES

- **Eight million people have now seen *War Horse* around the world, in 98 towns and cities across 12 countries.**

The show's history

- *War Horse* received its World Premiere at the National Theatre on 9 October 2007 and played in the Olivier for 92 performances until 14 February 2008 and was seen by over 104,000 people.
- *War Horse* returned to the National Theatre for a second run playing from 10 September 2008 until 18 March 2009 for a total of 114 performances and was seen by a further 130,000 people.
- *War Horse* transferred to the West End in 2009 with its first performance at the New London Theatre on 28 March 2009 and its final performance there on 12 March 2016.
- The New York production of *War Horse* opened on 14 April 2011 at the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center and ran until 6 January 2013; it was seen by over 700,000 people.
- In February 2012 *War Horse* opened at the Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto, and ran until 6 January 2013 where it was seen by over 380,000 people.
- A US tour of *War Horse* began in Los Angeles on 14 June 2012 visiting cities including San Francisco, Dallas, Boston, Washington DC, Chicago and Seattle, and toured North America until 22 June 2014. It was followed by a visit to Tokyo, Japan in summer 2014. The tour was seen by over 1.2m people.
- An Australian production opened at the Melbourne Arts Centre State Theatre on 31 December 2012 and then toured to Sydney and Brisbane.
- A tour of the UK and Ireland ran from September 2013 until February 2015, visiting Plymouth, Birmingham, Salford, Edinburgh, Southampton, Dublin, Sunderland, Bradford, Cardiff, Salford again, Stoke-on-Trent and Bristol. Over 700,000 people attended the show.
- In October 2013 a German language production called *Gerfährten* opened at the historic Theater des Westens in Berlin, where it ran for a year.
- In June 2014, a Dutch language production of *War Horse* premiered in the Netherlands at the Royal Theatre Carré in Amsterdam as part of the Holland Festival. It toured around the Netherlands (Rotterdam, Breda, Groningen, Apeldoorn, Rotterdam, Heerlan) and then went on to Antwerp, Belgium where it was performed in Flemish from 16 May – 14 June 2015.
- *War Horse* toured to South Africa from October 2014 until January 2015, playing in Johannesburg and Cape Town. It was seen by 140,000 people.
- A Chinese-language production of *War Horse* opened in autumn 2015 at the National Theatre of China's theatre in Beijing followed by a tour which included Shanghai and Guangzhou. This collaboration is part of a partnership between the National Theatre of Great Britain and the National Theatre of China and the play continues to tour in China.

- On 25 October 2012 *War Horse* celebrated 5 years since its world premiere at the National Theatre. The celebrations at the New London Theatre were attended by an audience including Olympians, Paralympians, actors, sports stars and presenters.
- A BBC *War Horse* Prom inspired by the play and Michael Morpurgo's novel took place on Sunday 3 August 2014 as part of the centenary commemorations of World War One. It featured a new suite created by Adrian Sutton from his score for the original production, as well as other music from the period with performers including the Proms Military Wives Choir and Gareth Malone.
- John Tams performed his song 'Only Remembered' from *War Horse* at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall on 9 November 2014.
- A second UK tour of *War Horse* began in Canterbury in September 2017, before touring to Bristol, Liverpool, Oxford, Brighton, Bradford, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Southampton, Salford, Cardiff, Woking, Plymouth, Milton Keynes, Birmingham, Glasgow, Sunderland, a return to Canterbury, Dublin, Stoke-on-Trent, Leicester and a return to Liverpool and Oxford through 2019.
- This tour also visited Hong Kong and New Zealand. After visiting Paris, *War Horse* will tour to Australia with further international dates to be announced in 2019-2020.
- *War Horse* returned to the National Theatre on 8 November 2018, for the first time in ten years, playing in the Lyttelton Theatre until 5 January 2019 to mark the centenary of Armistice Day.
- On 11 November 2018 a special commemorative performance took place, introduced by *War Horse* author Michael Morpurgo. The performance included a specially staged moment of remembrance that the company had worked into the show. The audience was made up of paid patrons, a number of veterans and servicemen and women and their families, and Public Acts and community partners across other Learning projects. The day ended with a projection on the NT's fly tower of Rae Smith's poppy sketch, visible to Londoners from across the River Thames. The NT's contribution to the national moments of remembrance taking place across the country.
- A five-week London run of the production will open at Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre on 18 October 2019, as part of the current tour.

Audience statistics

- By the time its West End run closed at the New London Theatre on 12 March 2016, *War Horse* was seen by 2.9 million people in London and over 7 million people worldwide across 11 countries.
- In February 2011 the 1 millionth patron to see the production in London met with writer Michael Morpurgo and was photographed with puppet horses Joey and Tophorn.
- The National Theatre Live screening of the West End production in February 2014 was seen by over 350,000 people world-wide – breaking previous UK records for NT Live.
- *War Horse* has been seen by The Queen, Prince Philip, Princess Anne, Prince William and Prince Harry as well as other famous faces including Michael Caine, Rupert Everett, Ethan Hawke, James Earl Jones, Tommy Lee Jones, Keira Knightley, Annie Lennox, Ian McKellen, Helen Mirren, Miranda Richardson, Alan Rickman, Meg Ryan, Will Smith, Steven Spielberg, Hilary Swank, Alec Baldwin, Natalie Portman, Cate Blanchett, Susan Sarandon, Sharon Stone, Diana Ross, Diane Keaton, William Shatner, Barbara Walters, Hugh Jackman, Ricki Lake, Kate Winslet, George Lucas, Blythe Danner, Joan Rivers, John McEnroe, Queen Latifah, Martin Sheen, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Billy Crystal, Sting, Madonna, Guy Ritchie, Angela Lansbury, Elaine Stritch, Michael Buble, Penelope Cruz, Javier Bardem, Martin Clunes, Liza Minnelli, Nicole Scherzinger, Gary Barlow, Sir Bob Geldof, Tom Daley, Philip Schofield, Tana Ramsay, John Hurt, Natalie Gumedde, Sir Steve Redgrave, Bill Bailey, Elizabeth Jagger, Greg Rutherford, Mary Berry, the late Terry Wogan and Ronnie Wood.

- Having seen the show at the New London Theatre, Steven Spielberg commissioned a new film adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's novel, which premiered in January 2012 and starred Jeremy Irvine, Benedict Cumberbatch, Tom Hiddleston and Emily Watson.

The puppets

- The puppets in *War Horse* were created by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones of South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, based in Cape Town.
- It takes eight months to build a complete set of puppets for *War Horse*; they are handmade by 14 craftsmen and women.
- The finished horse puppets weigh approximately 43 kilos for the body, including the puppeteers' backpacks, and another 7.7 kilos for the head. They are made of cane, leather and tyvec, a material used in book-binding (for the manes and tails). The torso is reinforced with aluminium and able to carry a rider on top.
- Joey, Tophorn and Joey as a Foal are each operated by three puppeteers – the Head, the Heart and the Hind. The three puppeteers work together to create the character of each horse and to produce the horse noises.
- Puppeteers train for eight weeks before they begin performing. Their training includes basic principles of puppetry before they work specifically on creating the horses.
- *War Horse* has 23 puppets, including horses Joey and Tophorn, as well as a goose, two swallows and two crows.

International awards

UK Awards

- 2007 Evening Standard Award for Set Design - Rae Smith and Handspring Puppet Company
- 2007 Critics' Circle Award for Set Design - Rae Smith and Handspring Puppet Company
- 2007 Laurence Olivier Awards for Set Design - Rae Smith and Handspring Puppet Company
- 2007 Laurence Olivier Awards for Best Theatre Choreographer - Toby Sedgwick
- 2012 Whatsonstage Best West End Show Award
- 2015 Mousetrap Award for Best Play

US Awards

- 2011 Outer Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding New Broadway Play
- 2011 Outer Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Director of a Play - Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris
- 2011 Outer Critics' Circle Award Outstanding Lighting Design - Paule Constable
- 2011 Outer Critics' Circle Special Achievement Award - Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler
- 2011 Drama Desk Special Award for Thrilling Stagecraft
- 2011 World Theatre Award - Dorothy Loudon Award for Excellence -Seth Numrich
- 2011 Broadway.com Audience Awards Favourite Play
- 2011 Drama League Awards - Distinguished Production of a Play
- 2011 Special Tony Award - Handspring Puppet Company
- 2011 Tony Award - Best Play
- 2011 Tony Award for Best Director of a Play - Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris
- 2011 Tony Award for Best Scenic Design of a Play - Rae Smith
- 2011 Tony Award for Best Lighting Design of a Play – Paule Constable
- 2011 Tony Award for Best Sound Design of a Play – Christopher Shutt

South African Award

- Fleur du Cap Award for Best Puppetry Design

Canadian Awards

- 2012 Toronto Theatre Critics Awards Best Design - The creative team of *War Horse*
- 2012 Toronto Dora Awards Outstanding Costume Design - Rae Smith, Adrian Kohler with Basil Jones for Handspring Puppet Company for *War Horse*
- 2012 Toronto Dora Awards Outstanding Choreography - Toby Sedgwick for *War Horse*
- 2012 Toronto Dora Awards Audience Choice Award - *War Horse*

US Tour Awards

- 2012 Best Presented Production - LA Ovation Awards