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PRESS CONTACT:

Alexandria Moreland, 848.482.0462

amoreland@roundhousetheatre.org

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE AND OLNEY THEATRE CENTER
BEGIN 2023-2024 SEASONS WITH CO-PRODUCTION OF

INK

ELECTRIFYING TONY AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY & WEST END HIT

BY JAMES GRAHAM

DIRECTED BY JASON LOEWITH

August 30 – September 24 at Round House Theatre

Bethesda, Md. (July 25, 2023) – Round House Theatre and Olney Theatre Center continue their longstanding partnership and kick off the 2023-2024 Season with a co-production of ***Ink***, **written by James Graham**. This Tony Award-winning Broadway and West End hit is an electrifying new drama, directed by Jason Loewith. Press Night is Tuesday, September 5, 2023. **Please see below for complete program details and ticket information.**

London, 1969. A brash young Australian named Rupert Murdoch approaches journalist Larry Lamb with a staggeringly ambitious proposition: to turn the struggling paper *The Sun* into the best-selling tabloid in the UK...within a year. An unexpected partnership is born as Lamb and Murdoch assemble a team of scrappy underdog journalists and begin to transform *The Sun* into a populist juggernaut. Once they discover the formula to success the consequences are thrilling

and terrifying. This “riveting” (*The Guardian*) Tony Award-winning Broadway and West End hit depicts the birth of our hyper-partisan news culture in a truth-is-stranger-than-fiction drama that will have you on the edge of your seat.

Artistic Director Ryan Rilette is thrilled to continue Round House’s longstanding collaboration with Olney Theatre Center, and to welcome back Olney Artistic Director Jason Loewith with *Ink*. “We have assembled an amazing team for this phenomenal play, and the creative team has designed a stunning production,” says Rilette. “As with our collaborations on *In the Heights*, *Angels in America*, and *Fela!*, *Ink* promises to be a not-to-be-missed production.”

Director Jason Loewith, who produced the American premiere of James Graham’s comedy *Labour of Love* at Olney Theatre Center, is looking forward to unpacking another of the British playwright’s incisive forays into culture and politics. “*Ink* is a magnificent story, told by a virtuoso playwright at the top of his game. Graham’s view of this moment in 1969 tells us more about the state of our culture today than any number of talking heads you could watch just about anywhere,” says Loewith. “The play also affords us an opportunity to watch some of this region’s most extraordinary acting talent performing as an ensemble for the first time.”

The brilliant cast includes **Sophia Early** (*Sleep Deprivation Chamber* at Round House Theatre and Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man* at Olney Theatre Center), **Maboud Ebrahimzadeh** (*Oslo* at Round House Theatre and *The Invisible Hand* at Olney Theatre Center), **Chris Genebach** (*Kinky Boots* at Olney Theatre Center and *The Till Trilogy* at Mosaic Theater Company), **Michael Glenn** (*Small Mouth Sounds* at Round House Theatre and *Red Velvet* at Shakespeare Theatre Company), **Zion Jang** (*Romeo and Juliet* at NAATCO/Two River Theater and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* at Portland Stage), **Cody Nickell** (*The Tempest* at Round House Theatre and *The Nosebleed* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre), **Kate Eastwood Norris** (*The Tempest* at Round House Theatre and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Folger Theater), **Andrew Rein** (*The Makropoulos Secret* at Washington Stage Guild and *Jericho* at 59E59), **Walter Riddle** (*A Raisin in the Sun* with *The National Players* and *Fences* at Virginia Repertory Theatre) **Ryan Rilette** (*Uncle*

Vanya at Round House Theatre and *No Sisters / Three Sisters* at Studio Theatre), **Todd Scofield** (*Oslo* at Round House Theatre and *Holiday* at Arena Stage), **Craig Wallace** (August Wilson's *Radio Golf* at Round House Theatre and *King Lear* at Shakespeare Theatre Company), and **Awesta Zarif** (*Selling Kabul* at Signature Theatre and *Jane Eyre* at Geya Theatre Center). The offstage understudy for this production is **Pratigya Paudel**.

The cast is joined by a dynamic creative team that includes Scenic Designer **Tony Cisek**, Costume Designer **Deb Sivigny**, Lighting Designer **Minjoo Kim**, Sound Designer **Matthew M. Nielson**, Projections Designer **Mike Tutaj**, Choreographer **Nikki Merza**, Dialect Coach **Lisa Nathans**, Properties Coordinators **Anna Cable and Jason Deering**, Casting Director **Sarah Cooney**, Dramaturg **Naysan Moigani**, and Resident Stage Manager **Che Wernsman**.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org. Round House Theatre is located at 4545 East-West Highway, one block from Wisconsin Avenue and the Bethesda station on Metro's Red Line.

ARTIST INFORMATION

James Graham (Playwright) is a playwright and screenwriter. His screen work includes *Sherwood*, which aired on BBC One in 2022 to rave reviews and will return for a second season. James also wrote *Quiz* (ITV and AMC) in 2020, directed by Stephen Frears, which was one of the most watched UK television dramas of the year, and *Brexit: An Uncivil War*, which garnered huge public attention and critical acclaim in 2019. It was broadcast on Channel 4 and HBO, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, and was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Television Movie, and a BAFTA for Single Drama. His feature film *X+Y* was selected for the Toronto International Film Festival in 2014. James' latest play, *Dear England*, is currently in the Olivier Theatre at London's National Theatre to sell out audiences and universal critical acclaim, tackling England's national obsession with football in a funny and moving play about the psychology of the game, the country, and masculinity. *Best of Enemies*, about the political debates between Gore Vidal and William F. Buckley Jr., opened at the Young Vic in 2021 and

played in the West End. It was nominated for an Olivier for Best New Play and won a Critics' Circle Theatre Award. His new musical, *Tammy Faye*, with music from Elton John and lyrics from Jake Shears, opened at the Almeida in 2022. *Ink*, about the early days of Rupert Murdoch, opened to huge praise at the Almeida before transferring to the West End in September 2017, where it played in the theatre next door to James' other new play—political romantic comedy *Labour of Love*—creating theatre history. *Labour of Love* went on to win an Olivier Award, and *Ink* transferred to Manhattan Theatre Club on Broadway and was nominated for six Tony Awards. His play *Privacy* about data surveillance culture premiered at the Donmar Warehouse in 2014 before moving to the Public Theater in New York, starring Daniel Radcliffe. His first musical, *Finding Neverland*, ran for 18 months on Broadway in 2015 before touring the U.S.

James's breakout play, *This House*, premiered at the National Theatre's Cottesloe Theatre in September 2012 and transferred to the Olivier in 2013, where it enjoyed a sell-out run. It garnered critical acclaim and a huge amount of interest and admiration from current and former MPs for his rendition of life in the House of Commons. The play went on to have an Olivier-nominated sell-out revival in the West End in 2017 and it was chosen by popular vote as the best play of the 2010's for the major theatre publisher Methuen. James received an OBE in 2020 for "services to drama and young people."

Jason Loewith (Director) is delighted to return to Round House Theatre, where he co-directed *Angels in America* with Ryan Rilette in 2016. He was appointed Artistic Director of the Olney Theatre Center in 2013, and since then has directed 12 shows for the company, including the world premieres of *The Joy That Carries You*, his own adaptation of Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, and Steven Dietz's *Rancho Mirage*, as well as musicals like *Kinky Boots*, *On the Town* and *How to Succeed in Business...* . As a playwright, Jason won Lucille Lortel, Outer Critics Circle, and Jeff Awards for Best New Musical for *Adding Machine: A Musical*, which he co-wrote with composer Joshua Schmidt (off-Broadway, 2008-09). He made his DC playwriting debut with Adventure Theatre's *Big Nate: The Musical*, which he wrote with composer Chris

Youstra. Prior to joining Olney Theatre Center, Jason served for four years as Executive Director of the National New Play Network, eight years as Artistic Director of Chicago's Next Theatre, two years at Court Theatre, five years off-Broadway with Classic Stage Company, and three years with LA's Odyssey Theatre. He is a three-time grantee from the NEA for Artistic Excellence, a recipient of support from the Rockefeller MAP Fund and MacArthur's International Connections Fund, and a TCG New Generations Future Leaders grant. Jason is proud to serve as Chair of the Board of TheatreWashington.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM INFORMATION

See cast list below. Full cast and creative team bios will be available at RoundHouseTheatre.org in the coming weeks.

CO-PRODUCTION INFORMATION

INK

Written by James Graham

Directed by Jason Loewith

August 30 – September 4, 2023

CAST LIST (alphabetical order):

Sophia Early: Diana/Landlady/Waitress/Chrissie/Anna Murdoch*

Maboud Ebrahimzadeh: Brian McConnel/Maurice Green

Chris Genebach: Ray Mills/Bob Edwards/Sir Percy*

Michael Glenn: Bernard Shrimmsley/Journalist/Daily Mail Editor/Christopher Timothy

Zion Jang: Beverly/Waiter/Journalist*

Cody Nickell: Lamb

Kate Eastwood Norris: Joyce/Muriel

Andrew Rein: Rupert Murdoch*

Walter Riddle: Bench Hand/Cameraman/Lee/ Howard/ Tailor/ Apprentice/Journalist/

Mourner/John Desborough

Ryan Rilette: Frank/Diner/Journalist

Todd Scofield: Alick/Sun Times Ed/ Chapel Father/Sound Operator

Craig Wallace: Cudlipp/Diner/Journalist/Stone Hand

Awesta Zarif: Stephanie/Sunday Times Editor/Linotype Operator/TV Host*

OFFSTAGE UNDERSTUDY:

Pratigya Paudel*

* - Round House Theatre debut

WHERE:

Round House Theatre, 4545 East-West Highway in Bethesda (one block from Wisconsin Ave. and Metro's Bethesda station). For directions, parking, and public transportation info, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/Visit-Us/.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

London, 1969. A brash young Australian named Rupert Murdoch approaches journalist Larry Lamb with a staggeringly ambitious proposition: to turn the struggling paper *The Sun* into the best-selling tabloid in the UK...within a year. An unexpected partnership is born as Lamb and Murdoch assemble a team of scrappy underdog journalists and begin to transform *The Sun* into a populist juggernaut. Once they discover the formula to success the consequences are thrilling and terrifying. This "riveting" (*The Guardian*) Tony Award-winning Broadway and West End hit depicts the birth of our hyper-partisan news culture in a truth-is-stranger-than-fiction drama that will have you on the edge of your seat. *Co-produced by Round House Theatre and Olney Theatre Center and performed at Round House Theatre.*

DATES AND TIMES:

Ink runs from August 30 to September 24, 2023. Performances are Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 pm, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 pm.

Audio described performance: Saturday, September 9, at 2:00 pm

Open captioned performance: Saturday, September 16 at 2:00 pm; additional date TBA

Mask-required performances: Tuesday, September 19 at 7:30 pm; Saturday, September 23 at 2:00 pm

TICKETS:

Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100, ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org, or visiting the box office. Available ticket discounts include:

- **Free Play** – free tickets for students ages 13 through college: Round House Theatre’s Free Play initiative ties into our greater strategy to develop theatre audiences of tomorrow by providing rich, meaningful arts experiences today. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/FreePlay or email Education@RoundHouseTheatre.org.
- **On the House** community ticket access program: Round House’s next step to remove barriers that can make it difficult for some members of our community to experience our work is On the House, which provides complimentary group tickets to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and community-serving organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/On-TheHouse or email Community@RoundHouseTheatre.org.
- **Pay-What-You-Can performances:** PWYC tickets go on sale online or by phone only (no walk-up sales) beginning one week before the first performance of each show. The patron decides the admission price. Limit of two tickets per order. PWYC tickets are available for performances on Wednesday, August 30 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, September 2 at 2:00 pm and are subject to availability.
- **Blue Star Theatre Program:** Active-duty military personnel, veterans, and their immediate family qualify for a \$10 discount off the single ticket price. Learn more at RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/Tickets.
- **2-For-1 Tuesday:** For all Tuesday performances of *Ink*, all seats are buy one, get one free. 2-for-1 Tuesday tickets are available online or by phone (240.644.1100) with promo code TWOFORONE. Discounts may not be combined. Not valid on previously purchased tickets.

- **Group Sales:** Groups of 10 or more can save 10% off the single ticket price and are exempt from single ticket fees. These tickets must be reserved and purchased in advance by calling 240.644.1100 or emailing GroupSales@RoundHouseTheatre.org.

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Round House Theatre no longer requires that audience members wear masks for most performances in our theatre. However, masks are required for certain performances and for events in other Round House spaces, including our Event Room. We continue to strongly recommend masks as the best way for individuals to protect themselves from COVID-19 and other seasonal viruses, and we ask our audience members to respect the choices of others.

Round House will offer a limited number of mask-required performances for audience members who may prefer a fully masked environment. **Masks are required for performances on September 19 (7:30 pm) and 23 (2:00 pm).**

ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 213 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 42, including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. Cornerstone programs include Free Play, which provides free tickets for students ages 13-college, the Teen Performance Company, which culminates in the student-produced Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Summer Camp for students in grades K-12, and a full slate of classes for adults and youth.

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Mission

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces and curates theatrical performance for the diverse audiences in our community, and educates, learns from, supports and inspires a more inclusive generation of theater-makers.

Vision

We strive to become an arts and culture powerhouse, redefining the American regional theater movement by cultivating and sharing the creativity of our community.

History

Founded in 1938 as a summer playhouse, Olney Theatre Center (OTC) now produces world and American premieres of plays and musicals, and reimaginings of familiar titles year-round; presents the work of leading companies and artists; tours nationally and locally; teaches students of all ages; and mentors a more inclusive generation of theatremakers. For more than 8 decades, OTC has brought impactful theater performance and education to our community, helping to grow the vibrancy and vitality of our home in the Washington, DC region.

Over the years, some of the biggest names in theater and film have appeared on our stages, including Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Jessica Tandy, Hume Cronyn, Bob Fosse, Phillip Bosco, Eve Arden, Eva Gabor, Burl Ives, Jose Ferrer, Carol Channing, Olivia d'Havilland, Tony Randall, Paulette Goddard, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Jane Seymour, Anne Revere, Frances Sternhagen, Arthur Treacher, James Broderick, Olympia Dukakis, Sir Ian McKellen, Marica Gay Harden, John Colicos, Uzo Aduba, Alan Cumming, Cheyenne Jackson, Robin de Jesus, Wilson Jermaine Heredia, among many, many others.

Olney Theatre is now the cultural anchor of a rapidly changing region and serves one of the most diverse, best educated, and wealthiest counties in the country. Situated on the unceded land of the Piscataway-Conoy people, the Olney area was once a rural farming community with a unique Quaker heritage. Now the area is occupied by every kind of family that makes up 21st Century America, along with major corporations, shopping districts, civic associations, non profit organizations and a diverse collection of houses of worship. Montgomery County's 1

million residents play a dynamic role in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, and are a driving force behind the region's creative economy.

Olney Theatre Center employs 40 full-time staff, 20 part-time positions, 26 early career apprentices and players, and more than 400 professional artists annually. The Theatre intends to continue expanding to better meet the needs of our community.

For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org/history

Follow Olney Theatre Center on Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok @olneytheatre and on Facebook at facebook.com/olneytheatre.

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