

**WESTON PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY**  
**LONDON THEATRE TOUR**  
**November 5 - 14, 2019**

**DRAFT ITINERARY**

*All events subject to change, owing to performance schedules and availability of guest speakers.*

***Throughout the Tour:** Giles will provide a brief introduction to each play on the coach to the theatre. Take careful note of varied curtain times if you plan to meet the group at the theatre.*

*Tour members are invited to gather for drinks and optional informal discussion in the conservatory following the evening performances on November 7, 8, 11, and 12.*

**Tuesday 5 November**

- 7:30am *We recommend Flight BA238/AA6175, departing Boston Logan for London Heathrow. . Members arriving at other times/from other airports must arrange their own transport to the hotel.*
- 7:00pm **Arrive** at Heathrow Terminal 5 and transfer by private coach to **The Montague on the Gardens**, a 4-star hotel around the corner from the British Museum in tranquil, park-filled Bloomsbury. With its historic Georgian architecture and handsomely landscaped private gardens, the Montague offers maximum comfort and superior service within easy access of London's main attractions. Rooms available for **check-in** upon arrival.
- 10pm **Welcome:** We gather in the conservatory with Tour Director Giles Ramsay for drinks and a late bite to eat, as he distributes tickets and welcome packets and provides a **briefing** on all aspects of the tour.

**Wednesday 6 November**

- 10:30am **Lecture:** Giles will speak about "**London Theatre 1900 to Now.**" Our erudite Tour Director will provide a context for our 10 days together by examining the contrast between pre and post-war British theatre and how we, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, can reassess which playwrights stood the test of time. Followed by an optional **walking tour** of the neighborhood, pointing out ATM's, tube stations, shops, cafes, and other favorite spots.
- 1:30pm Coach departs for **Performance One: VASSA** by Maxim Gorky, adapted by Mike Bartlett (*King Charles III*) at the **Almeida Theatre** in tony Islington at 2:30pm. The controversial Russian Social Realist's savagely funny 1910 play is reinterpreted by one of London's finest contemporary playwrights. It's 8am and a revolt is underway. The father is dying. The son is spying. The wife is cheating. The uncle is stealing. The mother is scheming. The dynasty is crumbling. One house. One fortune. One victor.
- 7:15pm Coach departs for a convivial **Welcome Dinner** in the private boardroom at the **Guinea Grill**, a London institution located off Mayfair's famed Berkeley Square since 1952.

**Thursday 7 November**

- 10am **The State We Are In.** We meet in the conservatory with a **leading political journalist**. With a new Prime Minister in office and Brexit unlikely to be resolved, there is much to discuss about the world on both sides of the pond.

*AFTERNOON FREE – a perfect time to take in an exhibition at a favorite museum.*

6:30pm Coach departs for **Performance Two: EVERYBODY’S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE** at the **Apollo Theatre** on London’s West End at 7:30pm. A critically acclaimed new musical based on a BBC documentary and described as “*Billy Elliot* meets *Dear Evan Hansen* meets *Kinky Boots*,” JAMIE has rivaled *Hamilton* at the box office for two solid years. Jamie is sixteen and lives on a council estate in Sheffield. Jamie doesn’t quite fit in. Jamie is terrified about the future. He is going to be a sensation. Supported by his brilliant loving mum and surrounded by his friends, Jamie overcomes prejudice, beats the bullies and steps out of the darkness into the spotlight. “A blast of fresh air” – *The Times*

### **Friday 8 November**

10:30am Coach departs for London’s South Bank where Giles will lead a **Guided Walk of London’s historic Bankside**, the original Elizabethan Theatreland. Taking in the sites of the first professional playhouses where the plays of Shakespeare and Marlowe premiered, our private tour will also include a visit to the George Inn, a 17<sup>th</sup> century public house that was the site of Elizabethan “courtyard” productions, and Southwark Cathedral which dates back to 1106. The walk will end at the vibrant Borough Market, with free time to enjoy **lunch** on your own, returning by coach to the hotel in the afternoon.

6:30pm Coach departs **Performance Three: BLANK**, a new play by Alice Birch at the intimate **Donmar Warehouse** in Covent Garden at 7:30pm. This striking new drama takes a kaleidoscopic view of what happens when a woman goes to prison. BLANK receives its full-length premiere to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Clean Break, the leading theatre company working with women affected by the criminal justice system. Followed by a brief **post-performance discussion** with a member of the company.

### **Saturday 9 November**

10am **Discussion Session with Susanna Gellert**. A chance to talk with members of the group about the first three productions we have seen. Compare opinions and sharpen your critical skills in a friendly and stimulating atmosphere. Followed at 11am by a **Guest Speaker**, an artist from one of our chosen productions (finish 12:00n.)

1:00pm Coach departs for **Performance Four: Athol Fugard’s ‘MASTER HAROLD’... AND THE BOYS** at the flagship **Royal National Theatre** on London’s South Bank (2:15pm curtain). Set in 1950’s apartheid South Africa, Tony Award-winning playwright Fugard’s semi-autobiographical masterwork (seen at Weston in 2007) explores the nature of friendship and the ways people are capable of hurting even those they love.

*EVENING FREE – perhaps enjoy a special dinner at one of London’s fine restaurants and/or a West End hit of your own choosing.*

### **Sunday 10 November**

10:30am Depart by coach for an 11:30am Sunday morning **Coffee Concert** at the famed **Wigmore Hall**, an exquisite Renaissance style concert hall built by the Bechstein piano family. Cellist Isang Enders plays a Bach cello suite and is joined by pianist Sunwook Kim for Rachmaninoff’s cello sonata and three duo works by 20<sup>th</sup> century French composer Nadia Boulanger. Your choice of complementary coffee or sherry following the concert.

*AFTERNOON and EVENING FREE – an ideal day for a leisurely brunch, and we'll provide a list of attractions, exhibits and performances available at this time.*

### **Monday 11 November**

*MORNING & AFTERNOON FREE – a good time for a quick day trip out of London.*

- 6:30pm Coach departs for **Performance Five**: Limited run of Bristol Old Vic's **TOUCHING THE VOID** by **David Grieg** at the **Duke of York's Theatre** at 7:30pm. Directed by Tom Morris (*War Horse*) and based on a best-selling memoir turned BAFTA-winning film, this new play charts Joe Simpson and Simon Yates' struggle for survival on the perilous Siula Grande Mountain in the Peruvian Andes. Life-affirming and often darkly funny, Grieg's adaptation takes the audience on an epic adventure that asks how far you'd be willing to go to survive. "Thrilling, chilling drama" – *The Guardian*

### **Tuesday 12 November**

- 10:30am Meet with a **Guest Speaker** linked to one of the productions that we will be seeing.

*AFTERNOON FREE – perhaps to visit an historic site or enjoy a London Walk.*

- 6:30pm Coach departs for **Performance Six**: The West End transfer of Marianne Elliott's revival of Arthur Miller's **DEATH OF A SALESMAN** at the **Piccadilly Theatre** at 7:30pm. Award-winning director Elliott (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, *Angels in America*) has cast the Loman family from Brooklyn as African Americans in this celebrated Young Vic production of Miller's modern classic (seen at Weston in 2010). Wendell Pierce (*The Wire*) makes his UK stage debut as Willy Loman opposite Olivier Award-winning actress Sharon D. Clarke as Linda. "A revelation" – *Financial Times*

### **Wednesday 13 November**

- 10:30am **Discussion Session with Steve Stettler**, a chance to discuss the last three plays we've seen. Followed at 11:30am by the ever-popular **Critical Round-Up**, where you can compare your views with one of London's leading reviewers (finish 12:30pm).

*AFTERNOON FREE – a last chance to shop, take in a matinee, or begin to pack.*

- 7:00pm We travel by coach for a sumptuous **Farewell Dinner** in the raised, glass-enclosed private room at **Quaglino's**. From its inception by Giovanni Quaglino in 1929, the restaurant has held an iconic place in London's social history. A recent full-scale renovation by Russell Sage Studio maintained its signature Art Deco flourishes and central sweeping staircase. The menu is a canon of European classics with a nod towards Middle Eastern spicing, all using the highest quality British ingredients. Enjoy the company of friends both old and new as we toast a memorable time together in London. (*It is a good idea to settle your bill with the hotel upon our return from dinner.*)

### **Thursday 14 November**

- 8:00am **Departure for US** (*all are welcome, but coaching and drop-off is guaranteed only to coincide with the recommended group flight*). Luggage outside rooms at 7:30am for porter pick-up, then an 8am coach departure for Heathrow Terminal 5, with check-in assistance from Giles and Steve. Group flight BA213/AA6164 departs 11:15am, arriving in Boston at 1:55pm.

**LONDON THEATRE TOUR**  
*prepared expressly for the*  
**WESTON PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY**

**SUMMARY**

- DATES** November 5 - 14, 2019
- ACCOMMODATION** 9 nights in classic doubles at The Montague on the Gardens, London
- FOOD & DRINK** Full English breakfast daily  
Welcome dinner  
Farewell dinner
- PERFORMANCES (6)** VASSA at the Almeida Theatre  
EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE at the Apollo Theatre  
BLANK at the Donmar Warehouse  
'MASTER HAROLD' ... AND THE BOYS at the National Theatre  
TOUCHING THE VOID at the Duke of York's Theatre  
DEATH OF A SALESMAN at the Piccadilly Theatre
- DISCUSSIONS (8+)** Lecture with Giles Ramsay  
The State We Are In: Journalist TBA  
2 Group Discussions with Susanna Gellert & Steve Stettler  
3 Meetings with actors and other theatre artists  
Critical Round-Up  
Optional informal discussions in the bar following evening performances
- OTHER EVENTS (2)** Guided Walk of Bankside  
Coffee Concert at Wigmore Hall
- COACHING** To and from London airport for one recommended group flight only, all sight-seeing excursions, and all events not within easy walking distance of the hotels. Please note we do not provide coaching to optional events, or to or from the airport for flights other than the recommended flight.

**ABOUT OUR TOUR DIRECTOR**

*Our professional tour guide will again be **Giles Ramsay**. A former director of London Arts Discovery Tours, Giles runs independent cultural tours for North American non-profit theatres and for the U.S.-based Elderhostel/Road Scholar. He is the Founding Director of Developing Artists which specializes in creating new work with artists in developing countries. A Fellow of St. Chad's College, Durham University, Giles is Course Leader in Theatre at The Victoria and Albert Museum in London. [www.gilesramsay.co.uk](http://www.gilesramsay.co.uk)*