

# PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE 20/2/19

## CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR SATIRICAL COMEDY HANDBAGGED

Casting is today being announced for a new production of Moira Buffini's biting satire, *Handbagged*, a co-production between Wiltshire Creative, Oldham Coliseum Theatre and York Theatre Royal, opening at Salisbury Playhouse from 4 – 20 April.

**Susan Penhaligon** (*The Importance of Being Earnest* UK tour, 2018; *Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, BBC and *A Fine Romance*) plays The Queen and **Sarah Crowden** (*Grantchester*, ITV; *The Chalk Garden*, Chichester Festival Theatre) plays Margaret Thatcher.

**Caroline Harker** (*The Chalk Garden*, Chichester Festival Theatre; *Middlemarch*, BBC) plays a younger version of the Queen and **Eve Matheson** (*May to December*, BBC; *Coram Boy*, Royal National Theatre) plays a younger Margaret Thatcher.

The cast is completed by **Jahvel Hall** (*Astro Babies*, Ovalhouse Theatre) and **Andy Secombe** (*Killing Eve*, BBC; *Star Wars*) who between them play a range of familiar characters including Ronald and Nancy Reagan, Gerry Adams, Arthur Scargill and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The play imagines what might have happened at the Queen's weekly meetings with Margaret Thatcher while Thatcher was Prime Minister.

Entertainingly told and packed with satirical humour, the two women collide as they share their opposing views of Britain's role in the world. With a supporting cast of Geoffrey Howe, Denis Thatcher and others, *Handbagged* is funny, sharp and mischievous.

This production is directed by Jo Newman (*Betrayal*, Salisbury Playhouse) with design by Dawn Allsopp (*Her Naked Skin*, Salisbury Playhouse).

ENDS

For press enquiries please contact Lucy Rouse, Wiltshire Creative PR & Communications Officer, on 07756 314437, 01722 345166 or [press@wiltshirecreative.co.uk](mailto:press@wiltshirecreative.co.uk).

Notes to Editors:

**Tour dates:**

4 – 20 April  
Salisbury Playhouse  
01722 320333  
[www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk](http://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk)

24 April – 11 May  
York Theatre Royal  
01904 623568  
<https://www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk/>

14 May – 1 June  
Oldham Coliseum Theatre  
0161 624 2829  
[www.coliseum.org.uk](http://www.coliseum.org.uk)

**About Wiltshire Creative**

Wiltshire Creative brings together Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury International Arts Festival and Salisbury Playhouse.

Wiltshire Creative has commissioned *A Wiltshire Tale* from musician Nick Harper, produced the regional premiere of Rebecca Lenkiewicz's suffragette drama *Her Naked Skin* and collaborated with LGBTQ+ museum Queer Britain on exhibition *Our Naked Skin*.

[www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk](http://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk)

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**About York Theatre Royal**

York Theatre Royal has brought delight and fulfilment to the people of York and beyond by offering a rich and diverse programme of creative activity for 275 years. York Theatre Royal is one of the UK's leading creative producers and presenters, constantly building on its reputation for producing high quality and ambitious theatre with highly regarded productions of new commissions, revivals at all scales and each year delivering a pantomime of international renown. The theatre serves audiences of all ages – children, youth, teenagers, adults and seniors. Productions in 2018 included the world premiere of *The Be All and End All* starring Imogen Stubbs; *The Secret Garden*, adapted by Jessica Swale and directed by Liz Stevenson; the first ever revival of Alan Bennett's *The Habit of Art* with Matthew Kelly; and *The Grand Old Dame of York* with Berwick Kaler celebrating 40 years in panto at the Theatre Royal. Productions for 2019 include Emma Rice's *Wise Children*, *Madagascar The Musical*, Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* (adapted by Sabrina Mahfouz), revivals of Moira Buffini's *Handbagged* and *Driving Miss Daisy* and *Swallows & Amazons* as the family summer production.

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Coliseum  
THEATRE**

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### **About Oldham Coliseum theatre**

Oldham Coliseum Theatre is a cultural and educational charity that works with over 150,000 individuals per year.

The Coliseum has a rich history in Greater Manchester dating back to 1885. It provides a wide variety of distinctive theatre performances and participatory activities for people from all communities in Oldham, Greater Manchester and beyond. It creates original productions each year which are presented at the Coliseum and on tour. Intrinsic to the town's on-going regeneration, the theatre works with its local communities and young people to develop creative programmes to facilitate learning, engagement and community cohesion.

[www.coliseum.org.uk](http://www.coliseum.org.uk)

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