

WESTON THEATER COMPANY
LONDON THEATER TOUR
November 7 - 16, 2023

DRAFT ITINERARY

*All events subject to change, owing to performance schedules and availability of guest speakers.
Full English Breakfast daily in the Blue Door Bistro or in your room at no additional charge.
Giles or Phill will provide a brief introduction to each play on the coach to the theatre.
Optional informal evening discussions over drinks in a private room adjoining the hotel bar.*

Tuesday 7 November

- 7:30am We recommend **Flight BA238/AA6981**, departing Boston Logan Terminal E for London Heathrow. Tour 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. All rooms available for **check-in** upon arrival.
- 9:30pm **Welcome:** We gather in the hotel conservatory with Tour Directors Giles Ramsay and Phill Ward for drinks and a late bite to eat, as they distribute tickets and welcome packets and provide a **briefing** on all aspects of the tour.

Wednesday 8 November

- 10:00am **The State We Are In.** We meet with a **leading political journalist** to discuss world events on both sides of the pond. 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:** Perhaps a production at the **Almeida Theatre** or the **Hampstead Theatre**, vibrant companies in London's tony neighborhoods that often transfer their latest hits with major artists to the West End and Broadway.
- 7:30pm Coach departs for a convivial **Welcome Dinner** in the private upstairs Library at **The Star Tavern**. An award-winning pub in stylish Belgravia known for its "farm to fork" dining, The Star Tavern has long been a favorite of the rich and famous including actors Peter O'Toole and Albert Finney. This is where the planning took place for the Great Train Robbery, the heist that netted its gang about £40 million in today's money.

Thursday 9 November

MORNING FREE – a perfect time to catch up on sleep or explore Bloomsbury.

- 1:00pm Coach departs for **an afternoon/evening in Richmond** including a 2:00pm visit to **The Musical Museum** in Brentford. Founded over 50 years ago by the late Frank Holland who had assembled a private collection of reproducing pianos, it now houses a wide range of musical instruments and unique inventions telling the story of how music

was recorded and captured through the ages. We then proceed to Richmond, with **free time** to stroll this picturesque London suburb of upscale boutiques and bistros. Set on the River Thames, Richmond is the location for the popular television series “Ted Lasso.”

5:30pm **Dinner** at **Bacco Ristorante Italiano**, a neighborhood Italian Trattoria.

7:30pm **Performance Two: MEETINGS** by Mustapha Matura at **The Orange Tree Theatre**, an intimate theatre in the round known for its award-winning productions of new plays and rediscovered classics. Pioneering Black playwright Mustapha Matura’s razor-sharp comedy is about identity, belonging and the cost of progress. We remain for a **post-performance discussion** with a member of the company.

Friday 10 November

10:00am **Discussion Session with Susanna Gellert and Steve Stettler**. A chance to talk with members of the group about the first two productions we have seen. Compare opinions and sharpen your critical skills in a friendly and stimulating atmosphere with Weston’s artistic leaders past and present.

AFTERNOON FREE – take a guided London Walk to expand your knowledge of the city.

6:30pm Coach departs **Performance Three:** Perhaps Oliver Mears’ critically acclaimed production of Giuseppe Verdi’s **RIGOLETTO** at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Containing some of Verdi’s most irresistible melodies, this devastating masterpiece pits power against innocence in a pitiless world of luxurious decadence, corruption and social decay.

Saturday 11 November

10:00am **Guest Speaker**. We meet with an artist associated with one of our chosen productions.

1:00pm Coach departs for **Performance Four:** The hit revival of **GUYS AND DOLLS**, Frank Loesser’s musical based on the stories of Damon Runyan, at Nicholas Hytner’s spectacular new **Bridge Theatre**. The seating is wrapped around the action, transporting audiences to the streets of Manhattan and the bars of Havana for the unlikely love stories of Sky Masterson and Sarah Brown, Nathan Detroit and Miss Adelaide.

EVENING FREE – enjoy dinner at a fine restaurant or a West End hit of your choice.

Sunday 12 November

MORNING FREE – take in a leisurely brunch and a visit to the nearby British Museum.

3:00pm Depart by coach for **St. Bartholomew the Great**, London’s oldest parish church. Located at the heart of Smithfield with its ancient hospital, pubs, and market, is a church built when Henry I, son of William the Conqueror, was King of England. Having survived the Great Fire of 1666 and the bombings of World Wars I and II, today the church is known for its Romanesque architecture and wonderful music and formal worship. We will tour the church and attend a classic **Choral Evensong** at 5:00pm.

EVENING FREE – enjoy a quiet dinner at the hotel or a cozy restaurant nearby.

Monday 13 November

10:00am **Discussion Session with Susanna Gellert and Steve Stettler**. A chance to discuss together the third and fourth productions we have seen with an eye to particular elements. Followed at 11:00am by a **Guest Speaker** associated with one of our productions.

AFTERNOON FREE – enjoy shopping at Harrod’s or other famed London emporiums.

6:30pm Coach departs for **Performance Five: The Royal Shakespeare Company’s** West End Transfer of **HAMNET** at the **Garrick Theatre**. The world premiere of a new play by Lolita Chakrabarti (*Life of Pi*) based on Maggie O’Farrell’s best-selling novel, **HAMNET** explores how a personal tragedy affected the relationship of the world’s foremost playwright and his wife while leading to the writing of his greatest play.

Tuesday 14 November

9:00am Coach departs for **The Chocolate Factory Arts Studio** in North London. Artist Keith Ashley discovered this warm and attractive Victorian building that housed a former chocolate factory and converted it to what is now home to 27 studios of artists, authors, illustrators, ceramicists, printmakers, lighting designers, painters, photographers, film makers and graphic designers. We will meet there with **Lydia Bauman**, an artist, respected art historian and lecturer who will give us a private tour of the studios.

AFTERNOON FREE – sample a classic high tea at Fortnum & Mason or The Savoy.

6:30pm Coach departs for **Performance Six: Perhaps** a production at the famed **Royal National Theatre** which has spawned international hits like *War Horse* and *One Man/Two Guvnors*. Based on London’s South Bank, the National offers an unrivalled range of classics, musicals, and new plays. With three active stages, several cafes, informal concert spaces and a fine bookstore, the RNT is the flagship for British Theatre.

Wednesday 15 November

10:00am **Discussion Session with Susanna and Steve**, a chance to discuss the last two plays we’ve seen. Followed at 11:00am by the ever-popular **Critical Round-Up**, where you can compare your views with one of London’s leading reviewers (finish 12:00n).

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

6:15pm We travel by coach for a **Farewell Dinner**, perhaps in the private room at **Restaurant Saint Jacques**. Located in the heart of London, between Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly Circus, the Michelin Guide celebrated Saint Jacques is the creation of iconic restaurateur and sommelier, Richard Weiss. Enjoy the company of friends both old and new as we toast a memorable time together in London.

Thursday 16 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 our Tour Directors. Group flight BA213/AA6964 departs 11:30am, arriving in Boston at 2:05pm.

LONDON THEATER TOUR
prepared expressly for the
WESTON THEATER COMPANY

SUMMARY

Plays subject to change

- DATES** November 7 - 16, 2023
- ACCOMMODATION** 9 nights in classic doubles at The Montague on the Gardens, London
(upgrades and extra nights may be arranged – inquire for rates)
- FOOD & DRINK** Full English breakfast daily
Welcome dinner at The Star Tavern
Farewell dinner at Restaurant Saint Jacques
- PERFORMANCES (6)** Perhaps at the Almeida Theatre or the Hampstead Theatre
MEETINGS at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond
Perhaps **RIGOLETTO** at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
GUYS AND DOLLS at The Bridge Theatre
The RSC's **HAMNET** at the Garrick Theatre on the West End
Perhaps at the Royal National Theatre
- DISCUSSIONS (8)** The State We Are In: Journalist TBA
3 Group Discussions with Susanna Gellert & Steve Stettler
3 Meetings with actors and other theatre artists
Critical Round-Up
- OTHER EVENTS (3)** Visit to Richmond and The Musical Museum
Visit to St. Bartholomew the Great church including Choral Evensong
Guided Tour of the Chocolate Factory Arts Studio with Lydia Bauman
- 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 Director of London Arts Discovery, Giles runs bespoke 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 also Course Leader in Theatre at The Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Giles will be assisted on our tour by his colleague **Phill Ward**. www.londonartsdiscovery.co.uk*