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***Great Performances* Presents Star-Studded “Broadway’s Best” Lineup Featuring Performances by Leslie Odom, Jr., Audra McDonald and More Premiering May 10-31 on PBS**

Lineup includes “Hamlet” from The Public Theater’s Free Shakespeare in the Park, Audra McDonald in concert from London, Broadway’s “Purlie Victorious,” and the 80th Anniversary Celebration of the music of Rodgers & Hammerstein

Broadway’s Best returns to ***Great Performances*** in May with a starry lineup of drama, comedy and concerts. Raising the curtain on the lineup is ***Hamlet*** from The Public Theater’s Free Shakespeare in the Park starring Tony nominee **Ato Blankson-Wood** (“Slave Play”) in the title role with direction by Tony winner **Kenny Leon**, followed by ***Audra McDonald at the London Palladium*** who performs Broadway hits and more. The series also includes Broadway’s ***Purlie Victorious*** starring Tony Award winner **Leslie Odom, Jr.** also directed by Kenny Leon and concludes with ***Rodgers & Hammerstein 80th Anniversary***, a starry concert honoring the best of two legendary musical theater figures.

Great Performances: Hamlet

Premieres Friday, May 10 at 9 p.m. on PBS ([check local listings](#)), on pbs.org/gperf and the [PBS App](#)

From The Public Theater’s Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, experience this Shakespearean classic directed by Tony Award winner **Kenny Leon** featuring Tony Award nominee **Ato Blankson-Wood** (“Slave Play”) in the title role and **Solea**

Pfeiffer as Ophelia (“Hadestown”). Set in a desolate post-George Floyd world, this contemporary production is a present-day take on the Bard’s tale of family and betrayal.

Great Performances: Audra McDonald at the London Palladium

Premieres Friday, May 17 at 9 p.m. on PBS ([check local listings](#)), on pbs.org/gperf and the [PBS App](#)

The winner of a record-breaking six Tony Awards as well as two Grammy awards and an Emmy, **Audra McDonald** performs a repertoire of classic Broadway songs, including “I Am What I Am,” “I Could Have Danced All Night,” “Will He Like Me?,” “Summertime,” and many more. Recorded from the London Palladium, musical director Andy Einhorn leads the 40-piece London Musical Theatre Orchestra to accompany McDonald.

Great Performances: Purlie Victorious

Premieres Friday, May 24 at 9 p.m. on PBS ([check local listings](#)), on pbs.org/gperf and the [PBS App](#)

This comedic play starring Tony Award winner **Leslie Odom, Jr.** tells the story of a Black preacher’s scheme to reclaim his inheritance and win back his church from a plantation owner. Written by Kennedy Center honoree **Ossie Davis** with direction by Tony Award winner **Kenny Leon** (“A Raisin in the Sun”), **Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch** was recorded live at the Music Box Theatre on January 24-26, 2024. **Purlie Victorious** originally opened on Broadway in 1961 and featured Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Alan Alda, Godfrey Cambridge, Sorrell Booke and Beah Richards. The play mirrors playwright Ossie Davis’ personal journey, growing up in racially segregated Georgia, and challenging oppressive white authority in the South and beyond.

Great Performances: Rodgers & Hammerstein 80th Anniversary

Premieres Friday, May 31 at 9 p.m. on PBS ([check local listings](#)), on pbs.org/gperf and the [PBS App](#)

Beginning with their first collaboration on “Oklahoma!” in 1943, **Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II** revolutionized Broadway by integrating music and dance with well-crafted storylines to create a cohesive new form of musical theater. With a string of blockbusters including “Carousel,” “South Pacific,” “The King and I,” “Flower Drum Song” and “The Sound of Music,” the duo garnered 34 Tony Awards along with 15 Academy Awards for their film adaptations. Directed and choreographed by **Christopher Gattelli**, **Rodgers & Hammerstein’s 80th Anniversary** features an all-star cast at London’s Theatre Royal Drury Lane, including **Michael Ball, Daniel Dae Kim, Maria Friedman, Audra McDonald, Julian Ovenden, Aaron Tveit, Marisha Wallace** and **Patrick Wilson**, with additional surprise appearances by **Rita Moreno** and **Andrew Lloyd Webber**.

For more than 50 years on PBS, **Great Performances** has provided an unparalleled showcase of the best in all genres of the performing arts, serving as America's most prestigious and enduring broadcaster of cultural programming. Showcasing a diverse range of artists from around the world, the series has earned 67 Emmy Awards and six Peabody Awards. The [Great Performances website](#) hosts exclusive videos, interviews, photos, full episodes and more. The series is produced by The WNET Group. **Great Performances** is available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on [PBS.org](#) and the [PBS App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO.

A production of The WNET Group in association with the Public Theater, **Great Performances: Hamlet** is produced by Mitch Owing and directed for television by David Horn.

A Steam Motion and Sound Production, **Great Performances: Audra McDonald at the London Palladium** is produced by David Treatman and Brett Sullivan, and directed for television by Ben Crabb.

A production of STAGE2VIEW in association with Concord Originals, **Great Performances: Rodgers & Hammerstein 80th Anniversary Celebration** is produced by Rob Bagshaw and Austin Shaw and directed for television by Julia Knowles.

A production of The WNET Group, **Great Performances: Purlie Victorious** is produced by Leslie Odom, Jr., Mitch Owing and Stephanie Dawson, and directed for television by David Horn.

For **Great Performances**, Bill O'Donnell is series producer and David Horn is executive producer. Series funding for **Great Performances** is provided by The Joseph & Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, the LuEsther T. Mertz Charitable Trust, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Abra Prentice Foundation, Jody and John Arnhold, The Starr Foundation, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Thea Petschek Iervolino Foundation, Seton J. Melvin, the Estate of Worthington Mayo-Smith, the Jack Lawrence Trust, Ellen and James S. Marcus, Leni and Peter May and the Blanche and Hayward Cirker Charitable Trust.

Websites: <http://pbs.org/gperf>, <http://facebook.com/GreatPerformances>, [@GPerfPBS](#), <http://youtube.com/greatperformancespbs>, giphy.com/great-performances
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About The WNET Group

[The WNET Group](#) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York's [THIRTEEN](#) – America's flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](#), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](#), New Jersey's statewide public television network; Long Island's only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](#), the arts and culture media provider; newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](#); and FAST channel PBS Nature. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group's award-winning productions include signature PBS series **Nature**, **Great Performances**, **American Masters** and **Amanpour and Company** and trusted local news programs **MetroFocus** and **NJ Spotlight News with Briana Vannozzi**. Inspiring curiosity and

nurturing dreams, The WNET Group's award-winning Kids' Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series **Cyberchase**, interactive **Mission US** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for more than 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

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