

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
presents**

**A Celebration Of Solo Performances
For Young Audiences**

Nearly Lear

Adapted from William Shakespeare by Susanna Hamnett and Edith Tankus

Starring Susanna Hamnett

Directed by Edith Tankus

May 12–14, 2017 in the Family Theater

Mouth Open, Story Jump Out

A Battersea Arts Centre Production

Conceived and created by Polarbear

Co-commissioned by Southbank Centre

May 20–28, 2017 in the Terrace Gallery

Titus

Presented by Red Bridge Arts from Scotland

Written by Jan Sobrie

New English Version by Oliver Emanuel

Directed by Lu Kemp

May 20–21, 2017 in the Family Theater

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces a celebration of solo performances for young audiences in May with a trio of plays: *Nearly Lear*, the great and tragic story of King Lear as if told by the King's closest companion; *Mouth Open, Story Jump Out*, which introduces a world of zany characters and madcap adventures as Polarbear invites the audience to explore how one little decision sets off a huge chain

reaction; and *Titus*, a play that examines the struggles of loneliness and loss, and how we find the courage to truly connect.

What if the great and tragic story of King Lear was told by the King's closest companion? In *Nearly Lear*, a one-woman tour-de-force, actress Susanna Hamnett from Canada plays the Fool—who, in good Shakespearean tradition, is actually disguised as a boy—and every other character to tell a very personal and poignant story that borrows from the words of William Shakespeare. Hamnett braves the most savage storm in English literature with breathtaking hilarity and heartache, honoring the beautiful language of King Lear while taking a bit of poetic license. *Nearly Lear* is both profoundly accessible and fun, while serving the great spirit, language, and emotional core of the play. *Nearly Lear* is most enjoyed by audiences age 9 and over.

Mouth Open, Story Jump Out's Polarbear, one of the UK's most exciting spoken word artists, makes things up—stories, jokes, adventures. But where did it all begin? *Mouth Open, Story Jump Out* is about the moment that started it all, and how one little decision set off a chain reaction that changed his life forever. International assassins, secret codes, dog-eating boa constrictors, and much more fill the hole left when a father disappears and a boy discovers a talent for telling tales. *Mouth Open, Story Jump Out* is most enjoyed by audiences age 8 to 12.

Titus is the story of a 10-year-old boy on the edge. Surrounded by adults and peers to whom he just cannot relate, Titus weaves fanciful stories—like pigs that fall in love and an Olympic medalist mom. Yet the real world has put him in a situation that seems hopeless. He can either give up or fight. Originally written by Belgian writer Jan Sobrie, *Titus* was awarded the Dutch-German Author Prize in 2007 and is considered one of Europe's most successful plays for young people. This new English version, written by Oliver Emanuel and directed by Lu Kemp, won the 2015 International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) Victor Award (“People's Choice”) for Best Theater Production. *Titus* is most enjoyed by audiences age 12 and over.

About Education At the Kennedy Center

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is the national champion for arts learning and creativity. Committed to increasing opportunities for all people to participate in, learn about, and understand the arts, [Education at the Kennedy Center](#) offers programs and events that strive to reflect

the nation and communities and that are accessible and inclusive for all. From performances and exhibits on the Center's stages and in the community, to classroom and community partnerships, including the recent addition of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities Turnaround Arts initiative, to online resources accessible nearly anywhere, the Center serves the burgeoning artist, the exploring student of any age, the teacher and teaching artist, and even the local and national infrastructure—any person interested in arts learning and utilizing the arts for positive change. As an essential component of the living memorial to President Kennedy, the Center's Education utilizes the arts to embrace the ideals of service, justice, freedom, courage, and gratitude, and to activate and support the Citizen Artists in all our audiences. For more information, please visit kennedy-center.org/education/.

Ticket Information

Nearly Lear will be performed from May 12 through May 14, 2017. *Mouth Open*, *Story Jump Out* will be performed from May 20 through May 28, 2017. *Titus* will be performed from May 20 through May 21, 2017. A post-show discussion will follow each performance of *Titus*. Tickets for all three shows begin at \$20 and are currently on sale. For more information please visit the Kennedy Center website, in-person at the Kennedy Center box office, or call (202) 467-4600 or (800) 444-1324.

Funding Credits

***Bank of America** is the Presenting Sponsor of Performances for Young Audiences.*

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

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