

# THE PUBLIC.

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE  
press@publictheater.org

THE PUBLIC THEATER Press Team: [press@publictheater.org](mailto:press@publictheater.org)  
HYPOKRIT LIVE ARTS Marketing Partner: [neal@hypokritnyc.org](mailto:neal@hypokritnyc.org)  
[ARTIST HEADSHOTS & ARTWORK](#)

## THE PUBLIC THEATER ANNOUNCES NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF **COUNTING AND CRACKING**

எண்ணிக்கை, இல்லையேல் கையோங்கு ගණන් නෙහන්නේ  
නම් ගණන් කරන්න  
**IN 2024-25 SEASON**

Presenting a Belvoir St Theatre & Kurinji Co-Production  
By S. Shakthidharan with Eamon Flack  
In Partnership with NYU Skirball

**Performances Run September 6-22 at NYU Skirball; Official Opening on September 12**

May 7, 2024 – The Public Theater’s Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham announced today the North American premiere of **COUNTING AND CRACKING**, a **Belvoir St Theatre** and **Kurinji** co-production of the epic play by **S. Shakthidharan** with **Eamon Flack**, as part of The Public’s **2024-25 Season**. A multilingual play staged in English, Tamil, and Sinhalese, **COUNTING AND CRACKING** features 19 performers in a multigenerational story of a Sri-Lankan Australian family from 1956-2004.

In partnership with **NYU Skirball**, the sweeping play will run September 6-22 at NYU Skirball (566 LaGuardia Place) after acclaimed engagements in Australia and the United Kingdom. The show will officially open on Thursday, September 12. Public Theater Supporter and NYU Skirball Member tickets for **COUNTING AND CRACKING** will go on sale on Tuesday, May 14 and full-price single tickets will be available on Tuesday, May 28.

“*Counting and Cracking* is the result of talking with dozens of Sri Lankans from around the world, including finally my own mother as she opened up to me about her buried secrets and those of my ancestors. This show is an epic celebration of our community in all its glorious complexity: an opportunity to journey together into our most deeply held truths, to find a path to reconciliation,” said playwright **S. Shakthidharan**. “I’m still a little in shock that this Australian story is coming to New York with The Public. The way that audiences of all kinds, from all over the world, have embraced our show has given me hope that we can find unity in our differences, and that love is tricky and cheeky and joyous in resonant ways in everyone’s families. I can’t wait to share *Counting and Cracking* with you this fall.”

“[A] powerful epic of love and war, exile and reconciliation.” – *The Australian*

“Contender for the best play of the year.” ★★★★★ – *Time Out Sydney*

"[*Counting and Cracking*] makes for an absorbing journey from separation to reconciliation, always alive to the pulse of history." ★★★★★½ – *The Guardian*

"[It] is a poignant, at times extremely funny exploration of western multiculturalism and assimilation." ★★★★★ – *The Times* (UK)

"It was brilliantly acted, tightly and yet meaningfully directed, and above all, the pathos that befell Sri Lanka in July 1983 depicted as the tragedy it was for the entire country." – *eLanka*

Belvoir St Theatre's **COUNTING AND CRACKING**, by **S. Shakthidharan** and directed by **Eamon Flack**, comes to NYU Skirball this fall for its North American Premiere after critically acclaimed productions in Australia and the United Kingdom. The sweeping, episodic play features nineteen actors from across the globe on a multi-generational journey of a Sri-Lankan Australian family from 1956-2004. Radha fled Sri Lanka with her unborn child as the nation struggled with conflict. Two decades later, her son Siddhartha, now an Australian man who knows little of his family's background, receives a call from the past that changes everything he thought he knew, and who he thought he was. One of the most highly anticipated premieres of 2024, **COUNTING AND CRACKING** is a joyous, epic story of family, forgiveness, the ghosts we leave behind, and the power of love.

The cast of **COUNTING AND CRACKING** will include **Rodney Afif, Prakash Belawadi, Antonyhasan Jesuthasan, Nadie Kammalaweera, Ahi Karunaharan, Abbie-Lee Lewis, Gandhi MacIntyre, Radhika Mudaliyar, Shiv Palekar, Dushan Philips, Sukhbir Singh Walia, Nipuni Sharada, Kaivu Suvarna, Raj Velu, and Sukania Venugopal**. They will be joined by musicians **Kranthi Kiran Mudigonda, Janakan Raj, and Venkhatesh Sritharan**.

**COUNTING AND CRACKING** will include set and costume design by **Dale Ferguson**, lighting design by **Damien Cooper**, and sound design and music composition by **Stefan Gregory**. **Anandavalli** serves as costume and cultural advisor.

The Public's 2024-2025 Season continues in Fall 2024 with the New York premiere of **GOOD BONES**, a sharp, funny new work about gentrification and the growing price of the American dream written by Pulitzer Prize winner **James Ijames** and directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director **Saheem Ali**. Australian playwright **David Finnigan** brings his play **DEEP HISTORY**, an urgent and personal retelling of how we've reached the brink of unthinkable climate disaster, to New York. **Elevator Repair Service's GATZ** returns to The Public for a thrilling and final New York City encore of the acclaimed production, an epic enactment of *The Great Gatsby*. With **Ma-Yi Theater Company** and **La Jolla Playhouse**, The Public kicks off 2025 with **SUMO**, a mesmerizing new drama set in the sacred world of Sumo wrestling by **Lisa Sanaye Dring**. The Astor Place season concludes with **GLASS. KILL. WHAT IF IF ONLY. IMP.**, a quartet of inventive plays written by groundbreaking playwright **Caryl Churchill** and directed by **James Macdonald**. The Public will also produce a world premiere audio play of **LET'S KEEP DANCING: A Death Row Story** by John Purugganan about two souls fighting to survive death row.

Following a significant revitalization, The Delacorte Theater, home of Free Shakespeare in the Park, will reopen in Summer 2025 with a production of Shakespeare's classic comedy **TWELFTH NIGHT**, directed by The Public's Associate Artistic Director and Resident Director, Tony Award nominee **Saheem Ali**, and featuring an all-star cast of Public alumni.

Become a Partner or a Supporter of The Public Theater today at [publictheater.org](https://publictheater.org).

# # #

**NYU SKIRBALL** is located in the heart of Greenwich Village, historically a center of resistance, dissent and free thinking. NYU Skirball's programming reflects this history and embraces today's renegade artists

and companies, presenting works that aim to engage, provoke and inspire audiences. NYU Skirball is NYC's home for cutting-edge performance, artistic research, and discourse, holding close to James Baldwin's dictum that "artists are here to disturb the peace." The 800-seat theatre provides a home for internationally renowned artists, innovators, and thinkers and presents ground-breaking events ranging from re-inventions of the classics to cutting-edge premieres, in genres ranging from dance, theatre and performance arts to comedy, music and film. [nyuskirball.org](http://nyuskirball.org)

**BELVOIR ST THEATRE** is a guest on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation (Australia). This is land where stories have always existed, and people have always gathered. In more recent times many new people, new stories and new languages have arrived, and continue to arrive. Belvoir, officially Company B Ltd, was founded in 1984 by a group of artists and audiences drawn together by the idea that a vibrant, open city needs many spaces to tell its many different stories. Our home is an old factory on a side street in Surry Hills which we share with public housing and two parks. For nearly four decades the company has been sustained by the belief that our basic tasks are to entertain audiences, to represent our society, to give artists the freedom to work, and to share our work as openly as possible. Belvoir's ambition is and always has been to honour the depth and breadth of our place and our history in our work. Each year the company presents an annual season of shows for this now-iconic corner stage. New work and new stories sit at the centre of Belvoir's programming, alongside a mix of reinvented classics and international writing, and a foundational commitment to Indigenous stories. In short, Belvoir is about theatrical invention, an open society, and faith in humanity. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Aaron Beach, Belvoir engages Australia's most prominent and promising theatre-makers. Landmark productions include *Counting and Cracking*, *The Jungle and the Sea*, *The Master and Margarita*, *The Wild Duck*, *FANGIRLS*, *Cloudstreet*, *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*, *The Drover's Wife*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Angels in America*, *Keating!*, *The Sapphires*, and many, many more. Belvoir regularly tours nationally and internationally. Belvoir receives government support for its activities from the Federal Government through Creative Australia and the state government through Create NSW.

**KURINJI** tells global stories that are epic, intimate and communal. Our productions are multi-sensory and immerse our audiences in other worlds. Our process is collaborative, and our work is made through respectful collaboration with real people, in real places. Our home is western Sydney, Australia; the land of the Wangal clan of the Dharug Nation.

**THE PUBLIC** continues the work of its visionary founder Joe Papp as a civic institution engaging, both on-stage and off, with some of the most important ideas and social issues of today. Conceived over 60 years ago as one of the nation's first nonprofit theaters, The Public has long operated on the principles that theater is an essential cultural force and that art and culture belong to everyone. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public's wide breadth of programming includes an annual season of new work at its landmark home at Astor Place, Free Shakespeare in the Park at The Delacorte Theater in Central Park, the Mobile Unit touring throughout New York City's five boroughs, Public Works, Public Shakespeare Initiative, and Joe's Pub. Since premiering *HAIR* in 1967, The Public continues to create the canon of American Theater and is currently represented on Broadway by the Tony Award-winning musical *Hamilton* by Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Suffs* by Shaina Taub, and *Hell's Kitchen* by Alicia Keys and Kristoffer Diaz. Their programs and productions can also be seen regionally across the country and around the world. The Public has received 60 Tony Awards, 194 Obie Awards, 57 Drama Desk Awards, 63 Lortel Awards, 36 Outer Critics Circle Awards, 13 New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, 65 AUDELCO Awards, 6 Antonyo Awards, and 6 Pulitzer Prizes. [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org)

The Public Theater stands in honor of the first inhabitants and our ancestors. We acknowledge the land on which The Public and its theaters stand—the original homeland of the Lenape people. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We honor the generations of stewards and we pay our respects to the many diverse indigenous peoples still connected to this land.

The Public also gives our respect to the people of Seneca Village, a community of Black property owners who were removed from their land and whose village was destroyed in the creation of Central Park. We recognize the sacrifice that these ancestors made and honor Seneca Village's legacy.

**The LuEsther T. Mertz Legacy Trust** provides leadership support for The Public Theater's year-round activities.

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

**COUNTING AND CRACKING** begins performances at NYU Skirball (566 LaGuardia Place) on Friday, September 6 and officially opens on Thursday, September 12. The show will run through Sunday, September 22.

Public Theater Supporter and NYU Skirball Member tickets for **COUNTING AND CRACKING** will go on sale on Tuesday, May 14 and full-price single tickets will be available on Tuesday, May 28.

The performance schedule is Tuesday through Sunday at 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. (*There will be no 1:00 p.m. performance on Saturday, September 7. The performance on Thursday, September 12 will be at 6:00 p.m.*)

The **Open Captioned** performance will be at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 14. The **Audio Described** performance will be at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 21.

The full performance calendar can be found at [publictheater.org](http://publictheater.org).

### **CONNECT WITH US**

[Facebook.com/PublicTheater](https://www.facebook.com/PublicTheater)

Instagram | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.instagram.com/PublicTheaterNY)

Threads | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.threads.net/@PublicTheaterNY)

TikTok | [@PublicTheaterNY](https://www.tiktok.com/@PublicTheaterNY)

# # #