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PEARSON EDEXCEL MAKES AN ACTIVE COMMITMENT TO DECOLONISE DRAMA WITH FOUR NEW SET TEXTS FOR GCSE STUDENTS AND A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LONDON THEATRE CONSORTIUM

In a major step towards inclusivity and decolonising the Drama curriculum, Pearson has added a total of four new plays to its GCSE qualification by Bola Agbaje, In-Sook Chappell, Tanika Gupta and Roy Williams. As a result, a third of Pearson Drama set texts are now by global majority playwrights.

Pearson is also thrilled to announce a partnership with the London Theatre Consortium (LTC), Representation in Drama (RinD) led by Romana Fello (Royal Court Theatre Participation Manager and Chair of the LTC Creative Learning Group) and mezze eade (LTC & CLA Specialist Advisor). Romana and mezze will offer the Pearson Drama team their expert support and will also work with the original producing theatres of the new texts (Lyric Hammersmith, National Theatre, Pilot Theatre, Royal Court Theatre and Theatre Royal Stratford East) to create additional content for teachers, further strengthening Pearson’s commitments to addressing long-term representation in Drama.

Today’s announcements from Pearson come after close consultation with the London Theatre Consortium (LTC) and the Royal Court Theatre, who in 2020 set a national provocation to all awarding bodies offering GCSE Drama: to include at least two works by global majority playwrights in their set text lists. Pearson has exceeded this target by adding four new texts.

Following consultation with a range of external partners and drawing on the work of *Beyond the Canon*,¹ the four plays, published by Methuen Drama, will be added to Pearson’s Edexcel GCSE course as part of a wider move to revise its set list in favour of representation across the board. They are: Tanika Gupta’s India-based adaptation of *A Doll’s House*; Roy Williams’ 21st century update of the classic tragedy *Antigone*; Bola Agbaje’s award winning play about race identity and youth culture *Gone Too Far!* and In-Sook Chappell’s North Korean-based drama *The Free9*.

Speaking about the updated GCSE qualification, Katy Lewis, Head of English, Drama and Languages at Pearson said: “We are committed to working with schools and young people to drive change and create learning environments that reflect the diversity of the modern world.

“We want all learners to see themselves in the literature they study; to find belonging, understanding, and value through representation, and to see our whole society fairly reflected. Our work does not stop here. As part of our drive to improve diversification, we will also be considering adding playwrights that give us greater representation across gender, heritage, LGBTQ+ and disability.”

Romana Fello, Participation Manager at the Royal Court Theatre and Chair of the LTC Creative Learning Group, said: “Since 2015, the Royal Court and LTC have worked closely with Pearson to embed better representation of artists from the global majority throughout the teaching and examination of Drama. It is uplifting to see them lead the way in GCSE Drama and we look forward to

¹ An organisation dedicated to promoting diversity in the arts by championing hidden and forgotten plays written by international culturally diverse playwrights



engaging more student, teacher and industry voices in change within Drama classrooms as we continue to work towards an inclusive Drama curriculum.”

The new texts, available for first teaching in September, are published by Methuen Drama, an imprint of Bloomsbury.

Dom O’Hanlon, Senior Commissioning Editor for Methuen Drama said: “Methuen Drama are committed to publishing diverse voices through our various play series and are delighted to hear that these four plays are being added to the curriculum. The works of Roy Williams, Tanika Gupta, Bola Agbaje and In-Sook Chappell all offer a wide range of stories that will appeal to students at GCSE level. We have published these four plays in our *Plays for Young People* series, specifically updated and revised to meet student needs and we’re confident that teachers and students will enjoy exploring these fantastic texts together.”

As part of its organisational commitment to champion greater inclusion in education, Pearson has set up a Global Task Force dedicated to identifying concrete actions to ensure its products and services build a more inclusive society. It is also working with respected partners to undertake wide-scale reviews of its qualifications, lead sector-wide campaigns championing change and launch first-of-their-kind editorial guidelines to ensure racial, gender and LGBTQ+ equality in its content.

ENDS

For Further Information

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About Pearson

Learning is the most powerful force for change in the world. More than 20,000 Pearson employees deliver our products and services in nearly 200 countries, all working towards a common purpose – to help everyone achieve their potential through learning. We do that by providing high quality, digital content and learning experiences, as well as assessments and qualifications that help people build their skills and grow with the world around them. We are the world’s leading learning company. Learn more at pearsonplc.com.

About the London Theatre Consortium

London Theatre Consortium partners 14 of London’s not-for-profit producing theatres: Almeida Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, Bush Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Gate Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Kiln Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, Royal Court Theatre, Soho Theatre, Theatre Royal Stratford East, The Yard, Unicorn Theatre and Young Vic. LTC runs projects and initiatives in priority areas: • Environmental sustainability • Representation, Inclusion and Access. • Workforce development

A decade ago, LTC partnered with Julie’s Bicycle and established collaborative leadership, peer working and learning on environmental sustainability. We have integrated sustainability into business



plans, strategic documents or capital projects. We monitor venues' energy/water/waste and have an in-depth understanding of our core environmental impacts.

In 2016, LTC founded an Executive Fellowship programme in collaboration with the MOBO to create diversity in the leadership pool by supporting mid-career leaders and offering them mentoring and skill sessions to help provide pathways into Executive leadership. Alumni include: Rachel Brogan Raidene Carter (Exec producer of Birmingham 2022) Nisha Modhwadia (Ex ED of The Print Room) Daniel Kok (Producer at Royal Court) Jessica Draper (Producer, London Borough of Culture) Nicholai La Barrie (Associate at Lyric). One of our early key projects in Workforce Development was championing of Apprenticeships: this award-winning programme created over 60 apprenticeships for young people.

RinD (Representation in Drama)

RinD, a London Theatre Consortium project, aims to address systemic imbalances in KS3, GCSE and A level drama, and support intersectional anti-racism work happening in UK schools, theatres and theatre companies. RinD promotes the study, directing and programming of plays by writers from the global majority* . The project will support schools, theatre and youth companies to embed anti-racism pedagogy in their practice, build the skills and confidence in teachers, facilitators and practitioners to teach and direct texts which represent the lived experience of their students and young people, and prepare young people to engage empathetically with Britain's rich society of heritages and ethnicities.

** Global majority includes, but is not limited to, artists of African, North African, South Asian, South East Asian, East Asian, Caribbean, Latinx, Middle Eastern, Native American, Native Australian, Pacific Islanders, Roma and Traveller heritage or diaspora, and refers to people who have experienced racism due to the colour of their skin. We do not want to lump individuals into one category and try to be specific when talking about individuals and communities.*

About Bloomsbury

Home to Methuen Drama, The Arden Shakespeare and Oberon Books, Bloomsbury English and Drama for Schools publish books that not only support teachers and students but also inspire a love for Drama.

Find out more: [Bloomsbury.com/Drama](https://www.bloomsbury.com/Drama)