

PRESS RELEASE – 27 NOVEMBER 2019

FULL CASTING ANNOUNCED FOR THE UK TOUR OF *A MONSTER CALLS*

From the novel by Patrick Ness, inspired by an idea from Siobhan Dowd

An Old Vic production in association with Bristol Old Vic

Global Creatures, Jonathan Church Productions and Chichester Festival Theatre today announce full casting for the UK tour of *A Monster Calls*, an Old Vic production, in association with Bristol Old Vic, which will be touring to 17 venues across the UK commencing in February 2020.

The full cast includes **Greg Bernstein** (Harry), **Kaye Brown** (Grandma), **Raffaella Covino**, **Ammar Duffus** (Conor), **Keith Gilmore** (Monster), **Jade Hackett** (Sully), **Cora Kirk** (Lily), **Kel Matsena** (Anton), **Maria Omakinwa** (Mum), **Sarah Quist** (Miss Godfrey), **Paul Sockett** (Mr Marl), **Ewan Wardrop** (Dad) and **Sam Wood**.

Patrick Ness's piercing novel is brought vividly to life in the **Olivier Award-winning** production by visionary director **Sally Cookson**. The production will also play at the Kennedy Center, Washington, in Summer 2020.

'Stories are wild creatures, the monster said. When you let them loose, who knows what havoc they might wreak?'

"A monster hit"
***** **The Times**

Thirteen-year-old Conor and his mum have managed just fine since his dad moved away. But now his mum is sick and not getting any better. His grandmother won't stop interfering and the kids at school won't look him in the eye. Then, one night, Conor is woken by something at his window. A monster has come walking. It's come to tell Conor tales from when it walked before. And when it's finished, Conor must tell his own story and face his deepest fears.

From the critically acclaimed bestseller, *A Monster Calls* offers a dazzling insight into love, life and healing. The book has sold over a million copies and garnered huge critical acclaim, including an unprecedented double win of the Carnegie and Greenaway Medals for outstanding children's literature and illustration.

The UK tour of *A Monster Calls* will be providing an extensive outreach and engagement programme across the tour. This will include discussions, workshops, an education pack and participatory activities and events for local community groups and audiences addressing the widespread themes within the production. *A Monster Calls* will be working with Kooth (kooth.com), a free and anonymous online counselling and emotional wellbeing support service for children and young people available in many areas throughout the country.

A Monster Calls was winner of the 2019 Best Entertainment and Family Olivier Award.

Access performances including BSL, Audio Described, Captioned performances and Touch Tours will also be available across the tour.

This adaptation is suitable for ages 10+.

The UK Tour of *A Monster Calls* is produced by Global Creatures, Jonathan Church Productions and Chichester Festival Theatre and supported by Arts Council England through a National Lottery Project Grant award and The Touring Partnership.

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| Director | Sally Cookson |
| Writer in the Room | Adam Peck |
| Set Designer | Michael Vale |
| Costume Designer | Katie Sykes |
| Composer | Benji Bower |
| Lighting | Aideen Malone |
| Sound | Mike Beer |
| Projection | Dick Straker |
| Casting | Jessica Ronane CDG |
| Movement | Dan Canham |

Sally Cookson trained at LAMDA and worked as an actor for ten years before embarking on a freelance directing career. Her theatre credits include *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* (Leeds Playhouse / Bridge Theatre); *Jane Eyre* and *Peter Pan* (Bristol Old Vic/National Theatre). She is an associate artist at Bristol Old Vic, where other productions include *Sleeping Beauty, Treasure Island, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, Papa Please Get the Moon for Me, Clown, Strange Case, Pericles, Pains of Youth* and *The Visit*. Her numerous collaborations with Travelling Light theatre include *Strictly Balti, The Ugly Duckling, Boing!, How Cold My Toes, Shadowplay, Cloudland, Lenny* and *Bob the Man on the Moon*. Other theatre includes *One Hundred and One Dalmatians, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Cinderella - A Fairytale* (Tobacco Factory Theatre, Olivier Award nomination); *La Strada, Hetty Feather* (Olivier Award nomination); *We're Going On A Bear Hunt* (Kenny Wax Productions); *Romeo and Juliet* (The Rose Theatre); *Stick Man* and *Tiddler* (Scamp Theatre).

Siobhan Dowd was born in 1960 to Irish parents. Brought up in London, she started her career working in New York City for International PEN, where she led the Rushdie Defence Committee and was named one of the 'top 100 Irish-Americans'. On her return to the UK, Siobhan co-founded English PEN's readers and writers program and went on to serve as Deputy Commissioner for Children's Rights in Oxfordshire. Siobhan only started to write herself when she was invited to contribute a story to an anthology for children about racism. She went on to write four award-winning novels, celebrating the publication of *A Swift Pure Cry* and *The London Eye Mystery but Bog Child* and *Solace of the Road* were published posthumously. Waterstones had only just named her one of the top '25 Authors of the Future'. She died in April 2007 aged just 47. In her final days Siobhan set up The Siobhan Dowd Trust to use the proceeds of her work to fund reading projects for children.

Patrick Ness is the multi-award-winning author of ten books for adults, young adults and children. *A Monster Calls*, inspired by an idea by the late Siobhan Dowd and which Patrick also adapted for the screen (2016, starring Sigourney Weaver, Liam Neeson and Felicity Jones), is published in forty-three languages. The first in his *Chaos Walking* trilogy is currently in post-production with director Doug Liman (*Bourne Identity*) and starring Tom Holland (*Spiderman*) and Daisy Ridley (*Star Wars*). Patrick has received numerous accolades for his writing, including the Costa Children's Book Award, the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, and the Red House Book Award, and was the second ever author to win the Carnegie Medal twice and the first to win two years in succession. He created and wrote the 8-part *BBC Doctor Who* spinoff *Class* and as a screenwriter has written for Fox, Lionsgate, Heyday, Warner Brothers and Entertainment One. His latest book, *And the Ocean Was Our Sky*, was published to critical acclaim last year.

Kaye Brown (Grandma). Theatre includes: *Holding the Centre* (The Belgrade Theatre); *Follies* (National Theatre); *The Stepmother* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Kiss Me, Kate* (Victoria Palace); *Cats* (New London); *Miss Saigon* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane); *Dr Dolittle* (Hammersmith Apollo). Television and films include *Coronation Street, King Lear, Jingle Jangle* (Netflix), *Kingsman 2 – The Golden Circle, Finding Your Feet*.

Greg Bernstein (Harry) Theatre includes: *Peter Pan* (National Theatre); *The American Clock* (The Old Vic); *42nd Street* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane); *Mary Poppins* (UK tour); *Barnum* (UK tour); *South Pacific* (Kilworth House); *Caroline, or Change* (National Theatre); *Billy Elliot* (Victoria Palace); *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (London Palladium). Television includes: *Casualty*. Commercial includes: Amazon Echo, Walkers, You've Been Tangoed.

Raffaella Covino. Raffaella trained at Arts Educational School, Tring Park School and The London School of Musical Theatre. Theatre includes: *King* (Hackney Empire); *Cinderella* (Hackney Empire); *On The Town* (Regent's Park Open Air Theatre), *Rent* (UK Tour), *In the Heights* (King's Cross Theatre / Southwark Playhouse), *Hairspray* (UK Tour), *The Sound of Music* (International Tour). Raffaella is the Founder and Director of 'Applause for thought' - a triple award-winning non-profit organisation providing free and low-cost mental health support, talks and workshops to those working in the entertainment industry.

Ammar Duffus (Conor). Theatre includes: *Peter Pan* (Troubadour White City Theatre); *The Play About My Dad* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *Holes* (Nottingham Playhouse); *The Woman in the Moon* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Twelfth*

Night (National Theatre); *Dolphin and Sharks* (Finborough Theatre); *If We Got Some More Cocaine I Could Show You How I Love You* (Old Red Lion). Film includes: *Blake Fears* and *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*. TV includes: *Doctors*. Radio includes: *The Trails of C.B. King* and *Jabota Bridge*.

Keith Gilmore (Monster). Keith trained at Laine Theatre Arts. Theatre includes: *Eqqus* (Trafalgar Studios and Theatre Royal Stratford East); *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (UK Tour); *Gary Tank Commander: Mission Quite Possible* (The SSE Hydro); *Never Forget* (UK Tour). Television and film include: *Waterloo Road*, *River City* and *Ghost Recon: Future Soldier*.

Jade Hackett (Sully) Theatre includes: *Some like it Hip Hop* (UK Tour); *Nine Night* (Trafalgar Studios); *SYLVIA* (The Old Vic); *Pied Piper* (Boy Blue Entertainment); *Into Da Hoodz: Remixed* (Zoo Nation: The Kate Prince Company). Dance credits include: *Here Come the Girls* (Sugababes); *That Aint Right* (Hannah V); *GO GO GO* (Lethal B); *Get Em High* (Sway); Indigo Tour (Blackstreet); *Comic Relief* (N Dubz); *Tear it All Down* (Mz Bratt); Leeds Festival (Shystie); *Hard Kaur* (Monte Carlos).

Cora Kirk (Lily). Theatre includes: *The People are Singing* (Manchester Royal Exchange); *Peter Pan* (National Theatre, Troubadour White City); *Emilia* (Vaudeville); *Not Such Quiet Girls* (Leeds Playhouse); *The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe* (Leeds Playhouse); *Peter Pan* (Regent's Park Open Air). Television includes: *Doctors*.

Kel Matsena (Anton). Kel trained at Bristol Old Vic theatre school. Theatre includes: *Boing!* (Bristol Old Vic). Television includes: *Doctors*.

Maria Omakinwa (Mum). Theatre includes: *SYLVIA*, *A Christmas Carol* (The Old Vic); *Girl from the North Country*, *TINA – The Tina Turner Musical*, *The Bodyguard*, *Avenue Q* (West End); *One Love* (Birmingham Rep); *Show Boat* (New London, Sheffield Crucible); *Soul Sister* (UK Tour); *Little Shop of Horrors* (Kilworth House Theatre); *Philip Pullman's Grimm Tales for Young and Old* (The Bargehouse).

Luke Potter. Theatre credits as Associate MD/Musician include: *Peter Pan* (Troubadour White City Theatre). Composer/MD/Sound Design credits: *The Worst Witch* (Royal & Derngate, Vaudeville) Composer/Musical Director credits: *Henry II* (Reading Between the Lines); *Polstead* (Eastern Angles). Other theatre credits include: *La Strada* (The Other Palace, UK Tour); *Hetty Feather* (Rose Theatre, Vaudeville, Duke of Yorks, UK & International Tour); *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Regents Park Open Air Theatre, UK Tour); *The Story Giant* (Marine Theatre); *Outpost* (Green Ginger, Tobacco Factory, Norland Visual Theatre); *Cinderella* (Unicorn Theatre). Music credits include: *Yes Sir Boss*. He has also performed on albums by Ergo Schmidt and Joss Stone. He is currently writing and performing for his solo project *Potts Music*.

Sarah Quist (Miss Godfrey). Theatre includes: *Absurd Person Singular* (Watford Palace); *Ear For Eye* (Royal Court); *The Captive Queen* (The Globe); *Fox on the Fairway* (Queen's Theatre Hornchurch); *Travesties* (Apollo Theatre); *King Lear* (Talawa/Royal Exchange Manchester); *Wind in the Willows*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Romeo & Juliet* (Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre); *The Playground* (Old Red Lion Theatre); *The Amen Corner* (Royal National Theatre); *Los Sobrinos del Capitán Grant* (Teatro de la Zarzuela, Madrid); *The Lion King* (Disneyland Paris), *The Bacchae* (National Theatre of Scotland); *A Mad World My Masters*, *The Tempest*, *Hecuba*, *Alice in Wonderland* (Royal Shakespeare Company). Television credits include *Eastenders*, *Stella*, *Doctors* and *A Voice From Afar*. Sarah has recorded on an album with Willie Mitchell and works regularly with jazz bands in Spain and the UK.

Paul Sockett (Mr Marl). Theatre includes: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (UK Tour & West End); *The Tempest & Henry V* (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, York); *Plain Jane*; *Some Scary Stories* (Royal Exchange); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Fort Lovrijenac, Dubrovnik); *Tony Blair the Musical* (Edinburgh Fringe); *The Crimson Retribution* (24:7 Festival); *The Girl with the Iron Claws* (UK Tour). Screen includes: *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (Universal Pictures); *Humans* (Kudos); *Banana* (E4); *Coronation Street* (Granada); *The Best Little Whorehouse in the North* (IV Films). Voice work includes: *Bang Up* (Radio 4); *Tyre* (Radio 3); *Bitesize*; *School Radio* (BBC).

Ewan Wardrop (Dad) Theatre includes: *The American Clock* (The Old Vic); *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Midsummer Nights Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe); *The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips* (Kneehigh); *Formby* (UK tour); *Rebecca* (Kneehigh); *The Wind in the Willows* (Royal Opera House, Vaudeville, Duchess); *The Deep Blue Sea*, *Rattigan's Nijinsky* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Enron* (Noel Coward); *Pinocchio* (Royal Opera House); *West Side Story* (Sage Gateshead); *Up from the Waste* (Soho Theatre); *Johnno* (Derby Playhouse); *The Noise of Time* (Complicite); *Promises, Promises* (Crucible Theatre); *Barbershopera* (UK Tour); *On Your Toes* (Southbank Centre); *Play Without Words* (National Theatre); *Beauty and the Beast* (RSC); *Dick Whittington* (Sadler's Wells); *Nutcracker* (New Adventures); *The Carman*, *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake* (Adventures in Motion Pictures). Movement Direction credits include: *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Jane Eyre* (Watermill Theatre); *The Bo Diddlers Morris Group*. Television includes: *Matthew Bourne's Christmas* and *The Nutcracker*. As a Musician, Ewan has recently toured with the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain and with Martin and Eliza Carthy.

Sam Wood. Sam began his directing career as Associate/Resident Director with RADA, Leeds Playhouse, Kneehigh, Shakespeare's Globe and Chichester Festival Theatre, Associate/Resident Director credits include: *Peter Pan* (National Theatre); *Guys & Dolls* (Chichester Festival Theatre , West End, UK Tour); *The Lightening Child*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare's Globe); *Steptoe and Son* (Kneehigh); *Where Have You Been All My Life* (Young Vic); *King Lear*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *You: The Player*, *Angus* (Leeds Playhouse); *The Tyrant*, *The Workroom* (RADA); *You Can Still Make a Killing*, *Wind in the Willows* (Southwark Playhouse); *Above and Beyond* (Look Left Look Right); *Original Bearings* (Slung Low). Director credits include: *Jane Eyre*, *The Fix*, *Carrie*, *Guys & Dolls* (GSA); *Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (LMST); *The Neighbourhood* (Bush Theatre), *Julius Caesar*, *Witness for the Prosecution*; *Dr Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*; *The Importance of Being Earnest*; *Sherlock Holmes* (Theatre Mill); *One, Two, Cold Terror*, *The Rain King*, *Laridae*, *Littlefoot* (Leeds Playhouse); *Dictation*, *No Pyjamas* (RADA).



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ENGLAND**

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TOUR DATES

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

6 – 15 Feb 2020

NOTTINGHAM THEATRE ROYAL

18 – 22 Feb 2020

THE LOWRY, SALFORD

25 – 29 Feb 2020

BELGRADE THEATRE, COVENTRY

3 – 7 Mar 2020

SHEFFIELD LYCEUM

10 – 14 Mar 2020

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE, ABERDEEN

17 – 21 Mar 2020

CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE

24 – 28 Mar 2020

MARLOWE THEATRE, CANTERBURY

31 Mar – 4 Apr 2020

KINGS THEATRE EDINBURGH

7 – 11 Apr 2020

MALVERN THEATRE

14 – 18 April 2020

THEATRE ROYAL NORWICH
21 - 25 Apr 2020

WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE, CARDIFF
28 Apr – 2 May 2020

NEWCASTLE THEATRE ROYAL
6 – 9 May 2020

YVONNE ARNAUD THEATRE, GUILDFORD
12 – 16 May 2020

THEATRE ROYAL PLYMOUTH
19 – 23 May 2020

CURVE, LEICESTER
26 - 30 May 2020

BRISTOL OLD VIC
2 – 6 June 2020

Global Creatures

Global Creatures is at the forefront of innovative stagecraft and spectacular theatricality. Global Creatures' first venture was *Walking With Dinosaurs—The Arena Spectacular*, followed by *How to Train Your Dragon Live Spectacular*. Baz Luhrmann's *Strictly Ballroom The Musical* made its West End debut in 2018 at the Piccadilly Theatre, having had its world premiere in Australia in 2014. The ground-breaking theatre production *King Kong* had its world premiere in Melbourne at the Regent Theatre and opened on Broadway in November 2018 at the Broadway Theatre. The 2017 world premiere of *Muriel's Wedding The Musical*, co-produced with Sydney Theatre Company, played a sold-out season at Sydney's Roslyn Packer Theatre and has just completed an Australian tour. *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* had its world premiere in Boston in 2018 and is now playing at Broadway's Al Hirschfeld Theatre. Productions of *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* have been announced for London, Melbourne and a North American Tour.

Jonathan Church Productions

Jonathan Church Productions was formed in 2015 in association with Delfont Mackintosh Theatres to produce and general manage high quality theatre in the West End, on tour and internationally. Jonathan was the Artistic Director of Birmingham Repertory Theatre (2001-2006) and Artistic Director of Chichester Festival Theatre (2006-2016). Recent productions include: *The Price* (Bath Theatre Royal/Wyndham's Theatre); *The Life I Lead* (UK Tour); *Misty* (Trafalgar Studios); *Frozen* (Theatre Royal Haymarket), *Pressure* (UK Tour/Ambassadors).

Chichester Festival Theatre

Chichester Festival Theatre is one of the UK's flagship theatres, renowned for the exceptionally high standard of its productions as well as its work with the community and young people. Situated in a cathedral city in West Sussex between the South Downs and the sea, the Festival Theatre's bold thrust stage design makes it one of England's most striking playhouses, equally suited to epic drama and musicals. Its studio theatre, the Minerva, is particularly noted for premieres of new work alongside intimate revivals. The annual Festival season runs from April to November, during which productions originated at Chichester reach an audience of over 230,000; many transfer to London or tour nationally. Year-round programming continues through the winter with the Theatre presenting high-class touring productions. For more information, visit cft.org.uk

The Old Vic

The Old Vic aims to be surprising, unpredictable, ground-breaking, rule-breaking, independent, accessible and uplifting. Today, Artistic Director Matthew Warchus is building on 201 years of creative adventure.

The Old Vic is a not-for-profit theatre operating a breakeven budget in a historic, Grade II* listed building with the help of £4 million of philanthropic support every year from our generous supporters. We produce and present five to seven diverse productions every Season, enhanced by a vibrant programme of One Voice monologues, Voices Off talks, Lates and day-time events for Families. Off stage we engage with over 10,000 people a year from across the UK through our award-winning education, employability and community work.

We hold the belief that theatre needs to be supported and shared by as many people as possible. Our 1,000 seats are yours from £10 a ticket. Our productions are adventurous, new, epic, exciting. Our Education and Talent programmes allow students to explore and artists of tomorrow to create. Our building is open and alive day and night. Our theatre is yours.

Bristol Old Vic

Bristol Old Vic is the longest continuously running theatre in the UK, and celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2016. The historic playhouse aims to inspire audiences with its own original productions, both at home and on tour, whilst nurturing the next generation of artists, whether that be through their 350-strong Young Company, their many outreach and education projects or their trailblazing artist development programme, Bristol Ferment.

They use their funding to support experiment and innovation, to allow access to their programme for people who would not otherwise encounter it, or be able to afford it, and to keep their extraordinary heritage alive and animated.

In September 2018, the theatre completed a multi-million pound redevelopment project to transform its front of house space into a warm and welcoming public building for all of Bristol to enjoy, create a new studio theatre and open up its

unique theatrical heritage to the public for the first time.

