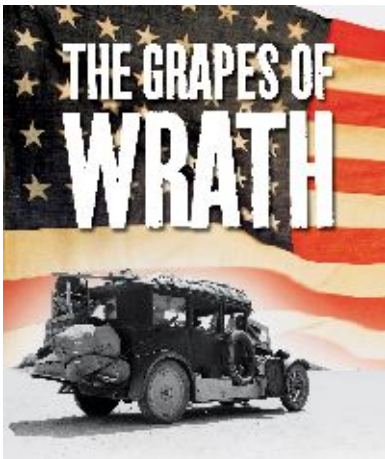




Platform Event To Run On Opening Night Of GRAPES OF WRATH At New Wimbledon Theatre

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by BWW News Desk



Adapted by Frank Galati and based on the novel by John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* follows a family of impoverished Oklahoman sharecroppers who lose everything when their farm is repossessed after a devastating drought during the Great Depression in the 1930s. Driven from their home to make the monumental trek Westward to

California and seduced by the prospect of opportunity and dignity, they invest everything they have in the journey. When forced to face the possibility that California may not after all be the promised land, they have no choice but to go on; nothing is left for them in Oklahoma.



Frank Galati's groundbreaking adaptation of Steinbeck's epic novel opened at the Chichester Festival Theatre in August and rightfully won critical acclaim from the national press, especially its' stellar cast of 20 which is led by favourites Christopher Timothy, Sorcha Cusack and Oliver Cotton. This fantastic production is embarking on a brief UK tour, which launches at New Wimbledon Theatre - the only venue in London on its schedule - on Thursday 1 October for just four performances.

On the opening night performance on Thursday 1 October, New Wimbledon Theatre will also be holding an exclusive pre-show Platform Event: *Recession vs. Depression* at 6.30pm chaired by Artistic Director of the Chichester Festival Theatre and Director of *The Grapes of Wrath* Jonathan Church and internationally renowned business expert Allyson Stewart-Allen who will be discussing the economic elements creating the Dustbowl, how California today is facing similar conditions, the impact of economic imbalance on communities and the challenges of bringing a specifically American story to the British stage. There will also be a brief Q&A session.

Jonathan Church trained as Assistant Director at the Nottingham Playhouse and went on to be Artistic Director at Derby Playhouse, Salisbury Playhouse, Hampstead Theatre and Birmingham Repertory Theatre before working at the acclaimed Chichester Festival Theatre where he has directed *The Circle*, *Hobson's Choice*, *Pravda* and co-directed, with Philip Franks, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*.

Allyson Stewart-Allen is a Californian-born international business guru and media personality whose expertise in the fields of international marketing, US business and inter-cultural working is sought by major newspapers, magazines radio and television programmes on both sides of the Atlantic including CNN, CNBC, Sky News, BBC, Fox Business, Bloomberg, Financial Times and USA Today amongst others.