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November 6, 2017 - National Players, America's longest-running tour company, presents ***Othello*** by William Shakespeare, touring September through May of 2017-18.

The war is over, and Othello, a peerless and good-hearted military commander, is returning home to marry his love, Desdemona. He meets the hate and anger his dark skin and foreign origin provoke head-on--but he is not prepared to be consumed in the machinations of his most trusted servant, Iago, who spins a web of deceit that spreads and entangles everyone in its path.

National Players brings Shakespeare's celebrated tragedy into modern light, spinning its central themes of institutional racism, unconditional trust, and the nature of identity into a barbed and brutal story of our contemporary world.

Othello is directed by **Jason King Jones**, the Artistic Director of National Players, and the director of National Players Tour 68's production of Hamlet. In addition to his role as Artistic Director, Jones also serves as Senior Associate Artistic Director at Olney Theatre Center. Rounding out the creative team are **Paige Hathaway** (Scenic Designer), **Seth Gilbert** (Costume Designer), **Sarah Tundermann** (Lighting Designer), and **Roc Lee** (Sound Designer), **Kate Brittingham** (Properties Master), and **Casey Kaleba** (Fight Director).

"What strikes me most about this play is how deeply intimate the story is," says Jones, "both in its scale of characters and in its action. Yes, there are grand scenes, destructive storms, and raucous parties; but the story centers around matters of the heart - love, jealousy, fear, and hate."

National Players is made up of ten early-career actors, who not only play multiple roles onstage, but also serve as managers, teaching artists, and technicians. This year's National Players are: **Dylan Arredondo, John Austin, Emily Brown, Melissa Carter, Benjamin DeCamp Cole, Amy Desrosiers, Kelsey Godfrey, Jared Graham, Kenn Hopkins Jr., and Simon Kiser.**

Othello is one of a trio of plays National Players will tour this year, the other two being ***Alice in Wonderland*** and ***The Great Gatsby***. Ultimately, National Players will bring their repertory to over 60 venues in 22 states in the next 12 months.

ABOUT NATIONAL PLAYERS

Established in 1949 and based at Olney Theatre Center since 1953, National Players is America's longest-running touring company. Founded on the principle of working with communities that have limited access to live theatre, National Players is comprised of professional young actors who travel across the country each year performing three Shakespeare and classic plays in repertory. National Players also acts as an educational ambassador, teaching theatre-related courses to students of all ages and

backgrounds. Though it travels thousands of miles and serves tens of thousands of people each year, National Players always comes home to Olney, Maryland. www.nationalplayers.org.

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ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Since 1952, National Players has been the touring program of Olney Theatre Center as part of its mission to incubate and educate the next generation of theatre artists and audiences. Located just outside of Washington, DC, and currently celebrating its 80th Season, Olney Theatre Center is an award-winning, mid-Atlantic destination for excellence in performance and education. With four performance spaces, Olney produces an 8-10 play mainstage season featuring a combination of musicals, classics and new works. We work with schools both close-to-home and around the country through our Arts Integration program and in workshops lead by teaching artists, National Player ensemble members and student matinees. Through National Players, Olney Theatre Center extends its mission to unleash the creative potential of all its artists and audiences across the country. www.olneytheatre.org

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