

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> August

## NEW WEST END THEATRE OPENS... IN A CAR

- *A new play written by Olivier Award-winning playwright Bola Agbaje takes place entirely in a car parked on Drury Lane, with the cast in the front seats and audience in the back*
- *The 20-minute play 'Papa Don't Preach' focuses on the relationship between a father and daughter as they discuss her flying the nest and her growing independence*
- *The play and unique theatre space was commissioned by motor insurer MORE TH>N to celebrate the important family conversations that take place in the car each day, with 51% of parents seeing everyday conversations in the car as beneficial to their family's mental health and wellbeing*
- *'Papa Don't Preach' is to initially run over three days from Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2018 on London's Drury Lane*

The West End is famous the world over for its diverse and vibrant theatre scene, with playhouses and productions coming in all different shapes and sizes. Now, the West End is to get its most unique theatre ever – **one in a car**, where the cast sit in the front seats and the audience in the back.

Parked on the iconic Drury Lane, 'Auto Play' will be Theatreland's most petite playhouse, with a maximum audience of just six people per performance. The car theatre, created by insurers MORE TH>N, will stage a production of a brand new play from Olivier Award-winning playwright Bola Agbaje.

Agbaje's 20-minute 'Papa Don't Preach' focuses on the relationship between a father and daughter. The play unfolds while daughter Laura, 24 (played by Lekhani Chirwa) and her embarrassing, but fun-loving dad, David, 50 (played by Tony Timberlake) are parked and waiting for an estate agent to arrive outside a prospective flat.

The play explores the familiar theme of a yearning for independence by young adults, and the conflicting emotions this can cause for their parents. Motor insurer MORE TH>N commissioned Bola to write the play after its research with parents revealed the prominent role the car can play in facilitating positive family interactions. Indeed, 45% of those surveyed view the car as the one of the most important places when it comes to getting the family talking, while over half (51%) of parents believe that candid car conversations are particularly beneficial to their family's mental health and wellbeing.

On arrival, car theatregoers will be directed to their seats in the rear of the car ('stalls' for those in the middle row, 'dress circle' for those furthest back), all of which have been

reupholstered in red to mirror traditional theatre seating. Once seated, the cast will appear on 'stage' (the front seats) before the performance commences.

Playwright Bola Agbaje commented: "I'm extremely excited to present this unlikely new four-wheeled addition to London's celebrated West End theatre scene. While it may sound like a particularly strange concept, the story of 'Papa Don't Preach' sets out to champion the kind of heart-warming, funny and important conversations that take place between loved ones inside cars all over the country each day - and what better way of doing this than sitting the audience right in the middle of their real-life setting, in possibly the smallest theatre in the world!"

MORE TH>N's research, conducted with 1,000 parents, additionally revealed that over a third (38%) see the car as the environment in which they are most likely to bring up a particularly sensitive or important subject matter with their children. Indeed, topics that have are regularly broached in the car include how their child is doing at school (53%), finance and money matters (28%), social behaviour (23%) and relationship advice (18%).

The research also revealed what it is in particular about the car that gets families talking. Topping the list was the fact that there's little to no distraction from the outside world (43%), followed by the fact it puts people together in small space for a long time (39%) and the soothing effect of being on the road (30%).

Gareth Davies, head of motor insurance at MORE TH>N commented: "As our research shows, the car remains at the heart of the family and is one of the most influential and important spaces when it comes to getting families talking and interacting with one another, which is key to their overall positive emotional wellbeing. Our Auto Play project aims to celebrate these everyday family conversations that so many of us will be able to relate to, by drawing on them as the inspiration behind a surprise new addition to Britain's acclaimed theatrical landscape."

Parking up on London's Drury Lane, the car theatre will stage free preview performances of Papa Don't Preach over three days on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> (at 5:30pm, 6:15pm and 7pm), Friday 24<sup>th</sup> (5:30pm, 6:15pm and 7pm) and Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018 (2:00pm, 2:45pm and 3:30pm). Depending on its success and audience feedback, MORE TH>N will explore the possibility of adding further dates and taking the Auto Play car theatre on a tour of other UK theatre districts.

The car theatre holds an audience size of up to six people per performance and individuals are allowed to book a maximum of three tickets per performance. To book a free ticket to see 'Papa Don't Preach' please email [autoplay@cowpr.com](mailto:autoplay@cowpr.com) with a preferred date and time.

**- ENDS -**

For more information, please contact [morethan@cowpr.com](mailto:morethan@cowpr.com) or call 020 7 234 9150.

Research conducted by Markettiers on behalf of MORE TH>N. 1,000 parents were surveyed.

#### **About MORE TH>N**

MORE TH>N is the direct financial services arm of RSA. Established in 2001, the company offers car, home, pet, business and travel insurance.

#### **About Bola Agbaje**

**Insert biography**