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***THE STAGES FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 22 YEARS***

**New Jersey's largest festival of theatre presents over 70 FREE and low-price theatre performances, workshops, and events throughout the month of March**

**Morristown, NJ** -- New Jersey Theatre Alliance ("the Alliance") is offering over 70 performances and programs for children and adults free-of-charge or at significantly discounted rates during its 22nd annual Stages Festival ("*Stages*"), a statewide, month-long event. Events will take place at theatres, schools, libraries and arts centers throughout the month of March.

"We thank our many supporters whose investment in this program enables all New Jersey residents, regardless of economic background or geographic location, to experience the joy and wonder of live theatre," said John McEwen, Executive Director of the Alliance.

The program's Spotlight Sponsors are The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Bank of America, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, OceanFirst Foundation, and Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. Other program supporters are Atlantic Health System, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and George A. Ohl Trust.

The following are a few 2019 *Stages* highlights. **Most events are free but require registration.** For a full listing of events, program details, and registration information visit [stagesfestival.org](http://stagesfestival.org):

**Morris County Events:** Writers Theatre of New Jersey will present the New Plays New Jersey series at the Madison Community Arts Center on March 7th through the 10th for a ticket donation of \$10. The Growing Stage: The Children's Theatre of New Jersey in Netcong is featuring a sensory friendly performance of *Curious George and the Golden Meatball* with tickets starting at \$18. At Investors Bank Theatre in Succasunna on March 31, Pushcart Players has *Stone Soup and other Stories* free for children with an adult ticket purchase. The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey introduces two classics to audiences on March 9th with two free kid's tickets for every paid adult ticket purchased for the morning or afternoon show.

**Theatre Especially for Kids and Families:** There are dozens of performances tailored for kids and families in various locations across the state, such as *Unveiling Liberty* in Jersey City, *Mi Casa Tu Casa* in Newark and Elmer, *A Cinderella Tale* in Jackson, *The Velveteen Rabbit* in Wayne, *Victorian Magic* in Oakland and Tuckerton and *A Year with Frog and Toad* in six locations. Cape May Stage is offering several theatre summer camp samplers for different age ranges on March 30th. A bi-lingual live reading of

the first two episodes of the children's podcast *Timestorm* will be presented as a contemporary radio play for ages 8 and up with music and sound effects on March 11 at the Island Heights Branch of the Ocean County Library.

**Performances:** In Summit, Dreamcatcher Repertory Theatre will be presenting the world premiere of Phoebe Farber's *Psychodrama* March 1st to 3rd. A limited number of \$25 tickets are available using code: **STAGES**. On March 16th, the audience takes part in a free event about the learning process of creating an original musical, *Unbelievable*, a new musical about the 17-year-old who struck out Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig with a cast of NY & NJ professionals at Skyline Theatre Company followed by a talkback with the creative team.

**Special Events:** Winners of the Young Playwrights Competition will have their work performed at the Cranford Library on March 2nd by professional actors from The Theatre Project. Hudson Theatre Works will hold its annual *Theatre on the Edge* reading on March 11th. In celebration of Women's History month, Writers Theatre of New Jersey will present the NJ Women Playwrights Showcase at Jersey City Theater Center on March 6th, and at Mile Square Theatre in Hoboken from March 12th through the 26th.

**Be a Part of the Making of a New Play:** On March 8th at NJPAC in Newark, there will be a sneak peek of the two new original plays commissioned as part of NJPAC's *Stage Exchange*. The first is produced by Cape May Stage called *Mother of the Bride?* – a comic tale of two families, one from northern New Jersey, the other from Texas, with traditional views on life who find that their children have decided to wed and face life as a transgender couple. The second is produced by Passage Theatre Company called *Silueta* – a musical inspired by the life and work of Cuban-American performance artist, Ana Mendieta, and the unlikely friendship of two women who were ripped from their roots and planted in New York City.

Produced in partnership with Writers Theatre of NJ, Premiere Stages at Kean University, The Growing Stage: The Children's Theatre of New Jersey, and George Street Playhouse, *Healing Voices OnStage: Caregivers' Stories* weaves together stories of both professional and family caregivers as part of an original professional theatre performance about the caregiving experience. Each theatre is working with different writers to create three professional presentations of selected works. Performances are on March 26th at George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick; March 27 at The Growing Stage Theatre in Netcong; and April 12th at Enlow Hall on the Kean Stage in Union.

In keeping with its commitment to making theatre accessible, the Alliance strives to make *Stages* events accessible to all people with disabilities.

*Founded in 1981, New Jersey Theatre Alliance was the first statewide service organization for professional, not-for-profit theatre companies in the United States, and is a leader in developing model programs that foster collaboration, cooperation, and audience development.*

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