



POWERFUL STORIES. BOLDLY TOLD. 40 YEARS STRONG.

163 3RD ST N, ST PETERSBURG, FL 33701

For Immediate Release

November 28, 2017 **after 6PM**

Contact: The American Stage

Marketing Team

(727) 823-1600 x 209

marketing@americanstage.org

American Stage offers unprecedented access with a bold new experiment.

**Beginning January 1, 2018, American Stage is making live theatre free to
young people under the age of 20.**

St. Petersburg, FL – As American Stage celebrates its 40th Anniversary season, the Saint Petersburg professional theatre company is announcing a new initiative focused on the long-term future of the organization by developing the next generation of theatre professionals, theatre audiences and advocates.

“As I thought about the American Stage’s role as an arts leader, I began to think more seriously about our responsibility to this art form and to the community we serve,” said Producing Artistic Director, Stephanie Gularte. *“With a quickly evolving cultural landscape, there are some questions that need to be addressed with some urgency: Who will shape the future of the American theatre? Who will perform on, design and direct for our stages? Who will market, advance and lead our theatres? And who will fill the seats, champion our programs and engage with our work?”*

These questions led Gularte, along with her leadership team at American Stage, to create an unprecedented initiative committed to developing the future artists, audiences and advocates of professional live theatre in Tampa Bay. **The Young Americans initiative** is comprised of three major pillars of forward-looking opportunities, including one pillar which is being considered a bold experiment for the year 2018.

Pillar #1: The American Stage apprenticeship program is dedicated to building the skills and careers of future theatre artists and arts leaders. This year-long residency provides young people who have recently completed their undergraduate degrees, to be fully immersed in American Stage’s operations and programming, receiving hands on experience and impactful mentoring by industry professionals to prepare them for careers in the theatre.

Pillar #2: The Under 30 Pass offers unlimited theatre to young people under the age of 30 for only \$15 per month. Pass holders may attend American Stage mainstage productions, improv, cabaret, American Stage in the Park as often as they like.

Pillar #3: The Under 20 Free Passport is a bold experiment in 2018 that allows young people under the age of 20 to have access to American Stage’s full mainstage season at **no cost**.

*“With our **Young Americans initiative**, teens and young adults will have unprecedented access to our work and will have the opportunity to make theatre a regular part of their lives,”* said Gularte. *“The initiative is exciting, it’s bold, and it’s absolutely imperative: live theatre must engage today’s youth to survive and thrive.”*

The third pillar, making professional live theatre free to young people under the age of 20 is a particularly ambitious effort aimed at eliminating cost as a barrier to this art form. It is also a potentially risky move for the theatre. With full priced tickets covering only 55-60% of the costs of producing, giving away thousands of dollars of ticket inventory is sure to have a financial impact.

-MORE-

The theatre is counting on the generosity of the community and arts supporters to help fund this initiative and to keep it going throughout 2018 and beyond. Scott Wagman and Beth Houghton, two Saint Petersburg residents actively involved in the philanthropic community recently offered a \$25,000 matching gift, specifically to support the **Young Americans initiative**.

“Beth and I love American Stage and were inspired by the Young Americans initiative to increase accessibility by radically cutting costs for students and young people,” said Wagman. *“We are happy to support this outstanding initiative and are gratified that American Stage trustees and supporters were able to meet our match of \$25,000.”*

The company is preparing for an aggressive outreach plan with the community to let young people know of this opportunity and to find additional supporters who will help sponsor effort. Said Gularte, *“We believe in this effort and are committed to making it work for the community and for American Stage.”*

SERVICE & FACILITIES

Physical Accessibility: The theatre features accessible parking, entrances, restrooms, and seating.

*Displaying a valid disabled parking permit will allow you to park at City metered spaces for FREE, for as long as your event requires, including those posted with time limit signs (green signs). **This does not apply to loading zones or otherwise restricted parking signage (red signs).***

Large Print Program: Theatregoers may peruse large print programs for each Mainstage production.

Listening System: Theatregoers may enjoy the free infrared listening system from any seat.



AMERICAN STAGE | AS/40

American Stage celebrates **40 Years Strong** this season. Since 1977, American Stage, has contributed to the vitality of Tampa Bay as a regional professional theatre. American Stage’s mission is to reinforce the power of live theatre with high quality productions that excite and challenge a diverse audience. Our year-round programming seeks to realize this through our Mainstage season, Spotlight Series, 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival, American Stage in the Park and Improv. American Stage Education’s offerings include award-winning Teaching Artist Outreach focused on bringing theatrical arts experiences to underserved populations, helping them to excel onstage & beyond.

We believe that through the telling of dynamic stories, live theatre has the power to unite us in our shared experiences and to deepen our connection to one another through the illumination of diverse perspectives. American Stage artists and stakeholders are responsible for helping a small theatre touring company blossom into a thriving world-class professional theatre providing nearly 70,000 Tampa Bay residents and tourists with accessible, relevant art and arts education annually.

Powerful Stories. Boldly Told. 40 Years Strong.

SOCIAL MEDIA



@americanstage

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION:

Phone: (727) 823-PLAY (7529)

Email: BoxOffice@americanstage.org

Location: 163 3rd St. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

####