

# THEATRE HORIZON

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2016/17 SEASON

Our mission: Through theatre, we create a community of artists, students and audiences in which each member is encouraged to grow.

### Our 2016/17 Productions:

The productions in our 12th season brought new audiences to Theatre Horizon, invited them into discussions around difficult questions, and showcased the talents of the area's best artists. With acclaim from critics and audiences alike, all three shows in our season were Barrymore Recommended. We are proud that over the last few years we have created a community space within our professional theatre where people bravely discuss complex topics together, including gender, race, and the experiences that shape us as a human family.



**A NEW BRAIN**  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

### **A NEW BRAIN**

This autobiographical musical comedy from Tony Award-winners William Finn (*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*) and James Lapine (*Into the Woods*) explores one man's quest for a second chance at life. After a children's television songwriter receives a life-changing diagnosis, he struggles to come to terms with his creative ambitions and family



**A NEW BRAIN**  
Peter Carrier and Steve Pacek  
Photo by Matthew J Photography



**A NEW BRAIN**  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

relationships. In an unforgettable performance, Barrymore Award-winning actor Steve Pacek led a cast of Philadelphia's top vocalists through this gorgeous musical about how we spend the time we are given.

**Written by:** William Finn & James Lapine

**Directed by:** Matthew Decker

**Cast:** Rachel Camp, Peter Carrier, Christian Eason, Doug Hara, Melissa Joy Hart, Mina Kawahara, Larry Lees, Steve Pacek, Susan Riley Stevens, Rob Tucker

**Executive Honorary Producers:**  
Doug & Sherry Kargher

**Associate Honorary Producers:**  
Raymond Decker in Memory of Michele Decker, Chris & Lee van de Velde

**Run at Theatre Horizon:**  
October 13 - November 6, 2016

- ❖ In our “powerhouse production...a phenomenal cast, directed with bravura and sensitivity by Matthew Decker, delivers all of the humor and pathos inherent in the story, with explosive vocals, supported by an outstanding orchestra, that convey a mastery of Finn’s challenging score.” - *Phindie*
- ❖ “Director Matthew Decker’s production soars with joy.” - *Broad Street Review*



**GRAND CONCOURSE**  
David Bardeen  
Photo by Matthew J Photography



**GRAND CONCOURSE**  
Samantha Rosentrater and Randy Nuñez  
Photo by Matthew J Photography



**GRAND CONCOURSE**  
Samantha Rosentrater and Ariella Serur  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

## **GRAND CONCOURSE**

### **A Regional Premiere Production**

Shelley runs her church's soup kitchen in the Bronx with unsentimental efficiency, but lately her faith is wavering. Emma is a reckless young woman with a secret. When Shelly and the two men she works with, Oscar and Frog, accept the mysterious Emma as a new volunteer, she careens into their world, pushing everyone to their breaking point. Heidi Schreck's funny and insightful play navigates the limits of forgiveness and the pursuit of something resembling joy.

**Written by:** Heidi Schreck

**Directed by:** Beth Lopes

**Cast:** David Bardeen, Randy Nuñez, Samantha Rosentrater, Ariella Serur

**Associate Honorary Producers:** Lis & Mike Kalogris

**Run at Theatre Horizon:** February 3 – 26, 2017

- ❖ “The triumph of *Grand Concourse* is the way Heidi Schreck takes her play along a swift arc that begins with people doing good works and ends with them questioning their own potential for goodness, faith, even forgiveness.” - *Newsworks*
- ❖ “With a fine ensemble directed by Beth Lopes, Theatre Horizon’s regional premiere is often funny, sometimes moving, and nearly always engrossing.” - *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- ❖ “The ensemble’s superb acting, starting with their believable kitchen activities but excelling far beyond, highlights *Grand Concourse*’s strength as a deeply disturbing, profoundly moving play that examines hope’s fragility, faith’s responsibilities, and forgiveness’s burdens.” - *Broad Street Review*



**WHITE**  
Jamison Foreman and Jessica Bedford  
Photo by Matthew J Photography



**WHITE**  
Jaylene Clark Owens  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

## **WHITE** **A World Premiere Production**

Gus is an artist. He's just not a *famous* artist. So when a major art museum puts out a call for "new perspectives," Gus — a white man — decides to seize his opportunity. He hires a black actress to present his work as her own, but as the actress gets more deeply into her role, Gus's scheme spirals out of his control. Award-winning Philadelphia playwright James Ijames challenged assumptions about race, gender, identity and art in this seriously funny new comedy.

**Written by:** James Ijames

**Directed by:** Malika Oyetimein

**Cast:** Jessica Bedford, Jamison Foreman, Justin Jain, Jaylene Clark Owens

**Executive Honorary Producers:**  
Tom & Carol Beam

**Associate Honorary Producers:**  
Christina Kind, Linda Lipscomb

**Run at Theatre Horizon:** April 27 – May 28, 2017

- ❖ "WHITE morphs into possibly the strongest theatrical statement on the commodification of black bodies since Suzan-Lori Parks' *Venus*." - *Phindie*
- ❖ "Ijames has created a piece in which every expectation (internal and external) and stereotype gets turned inside out. Also, it's hilarious, and not just in a jokes-that-land way (though it's also that)." - *Broad Street Review*
- ❖ "Ijames may not have known just how prescient he would be. His world premiere is striking a chord." - *Newsworks*
- ❖ "WHITE bursts with humor, which director Malika Oyetimein and this cast exploit for huge laughs." - *Philadelphia Inquirer*



**WHITE**  
Justin Jain and Jamison Foreman  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

## OUR 2016/17 EDUCATION PROGRAMS:



THEATRE HORIZON'S AUTISM DRAMA PROGRAM  
Photo by Matthew J Photography



SUMMER DRAMA CAMP AT THEATRE HORIZON  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

- ❖ We served 269 students during our Summer Drama Camps in 10 townships, including new locations in Whitemarsh Township and Upper Gwynedd Township.
- ❖ Our After-School Drama Clubs served 253 students in 12 townships, including new locations at Paul V. Fly School (our first Norristown public school), Center School in Abington, and Candlebrook Elementary School (which served students in all four Upper Merion public elementary schools).
- ❖ We offered a free weeklong acting program for 15 middle school students at Norristown's Eisenhower Science and Technology Leadership Academy. They created their own show focused on themes of tolerance and acceptance.
- ❖ We forged new partnerships with Jenkintown High School and Unionville High School, serving approximately 90 high school students at these two locations
- ❖ We continued our partnership with ACLAMO Family Centers in Norristown through no-cost Drama Club sessions with activities in both Spanish and English.
- ❖ We expanded our partnership with our upstairs neighbor, The Willow School, providing weekly no-cost acting classes to 40 pre-kindergarten students.
- ❖ Our unique Autism Drama Program continues to grow rapidly, serving over 100 students at Theatre Horizon and even more via off-site residencies.



THE WILLOW SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FINAL PERFORMANCE  
Photo by Matthew J Photography

## OTHER SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:



**IMAGINE NO HUNGER**  
Photo by Linda Panetta



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Photo by Linda Panetta



**IMAGINE NO HUNGER**  
Photo by Linda Panetta

### Imagine No Hunger

- ❖ Run in conjunction with *Grand Concourse*, and made possible through a partnership with Cabrini University, this community engagement initiative included a photo gallery and a series of post-show discussions focusing on individuals who work in service organizations dedicated to serving the food insecure.
- ❖ By the Numbers:
  - 500 food items were collected and donated to Laurel House & Norristown Hospitality Center
  - We partnered with 3 local organizations concerned with food insecurity
  - 300 vegetables - chopped during the run of the show - were donated to the Grace and Cecil Bean Soup Kitchen in Norristown, PA
  - We displayed 75 photos illuminating food insecurity in our region in our lobby
  - 18 local food insecurity experts joined us for 12 different post-show discussions
  - 200 people expressed interest in learning more about how to change the tide of food insecurity in our region, and 15 made a written pledge to do so
  - Cast, crew and staff spent 40+ volunteer hours at our partner organizations
  - We created a video about food insecurity featuring State Senator Daylin Leach, which was seen by over 10,000 people on Facebook, and an additional 400+ on YouTube

### WHITE Post-Show Discussions

- ❖ Following performances of *WHITE*, Theatre Horizon staff members led post-show discussions with audience members to address questions raised by the play and grapple with the social implications thereof.

- ❖ This initiative was made possible by generous support from the Virginia Brown Martin Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation, and 700 people participated in these vital conversations throughout the course of the run.



**BLACK NATIVITY** Photo by Matthew J Photography

### **The 2015 Barrymore Awards**

- ❖ On October 25, 2016, we won three Barrymore Awards for our production of *Black Nativity*, including Outstanding Music Direction, Outstanding Ensemble and Outstanding Choreography.

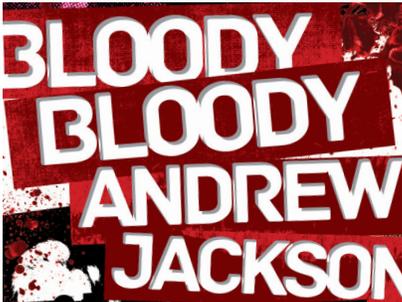
### **New Voices, New Viewpoints**

- ❖ On August 19 & 20, 2016, we presented an evening of scenes from four new plays that had not yet been seen in our region. These plays represented a diversity of voices and viewpoints, providing a valuable platform for local artists to make their voices heard.



### **42nd and Main Concert Series**

- ❖ On August 4, 2016, we presented a one-night-only concert reading of *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. This audacious musical follows America's first populist president from his early days on the wild frontier to his controversial reign in the White House. The cast featured actors from New York and Philadelphia stages uniting for a truly remarkable evening of theatre.



- ❖ On June 29 and 30, 2017, we performed the premiere of Tim Acito's updated version of *Zanna Don't*, the Off-Broadway musical set in a fairytale world where homosexuality is the norm. Given the tremendous demand for tickets, we expanded our traditional one-night-only model to include two evenings of performances and hosted a post-show conversation with Tim Acito himself.

## OFFSTAGE:



### Heart the Art Campaign

- ❖ In July 2015, we launched our “Heart the Art” campaign, a three-year initiative to help us retain our annual commitment to musical theatre, raise artist’s salaries by 74% over three years, and create our first ever children’s production.
- ❖ Thanks to our generous donors, we are thrilled to announce that as of July 1st, 2017, we have raised 96% of the campaign goal, with only \$12,000 needed to get us across the \$380,000 finish line.



### Audience Impact

- ❖ This year we served 6,565 patrons through six artistic offerings (three mainstage and three limited-run engagements) - our most expansive season ever! We’re happy to report that we broke our record number of subscribers - over 500 - and that we gave away 472 free tickets to Norristown residents via the sixth year of our popular Norristown Neighbor Program.

### Apprentice Program

- ❖ Our Professional Apprentice Program continues to flourish. This program is designed to provide an advanced, hands-on, paid professional development opportunity for emerging artists and aspiring arts administrators. Apprentices gain a comprehensive knowledge of the theatre by working in every department - Marketing, Development, Education, Audience Services, Artistic, and Production. It’s a season-long commitment and apprentices are an integral part of our team. Now in its third year, this program continues to evolve and expand, and we are delighted that both of our 2016/17 apprentices will be continuing their journey with Theatre Horizon in 2017/18, using this season to expand on the skills they have developed with us over the last nine months.