

# THEATRE HORIZON

# ANNUAL REPORT

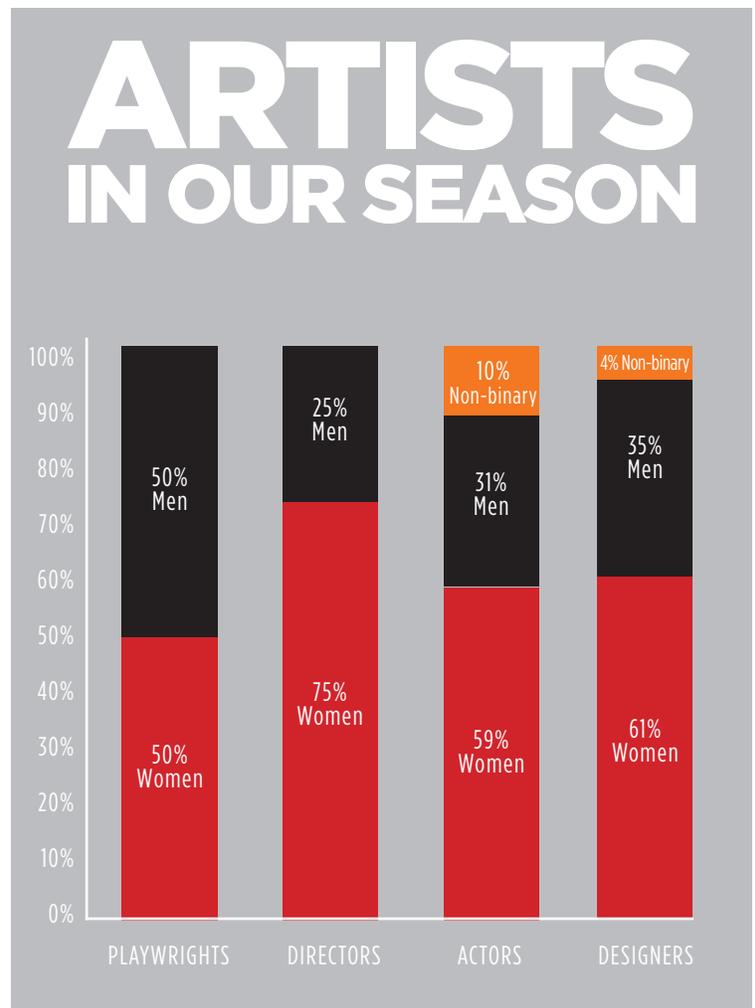
## 2017/18 SEASON

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

### Our 2017/18 Productions:



Theatre Horizon's 13<sup>th</sup> season featured the most work on stage to date, as we expanded our season to include an original piece for families, offering audiences four exciting productions that embodied the theme of **Women Who Dare**. All season long we were proud to highlight courageous female protagonists, and to continue our ongoing commitment to female writers and directors, artists and administrators. In American theatre, where the work of female playwrights makes up fewer than 25% of all plays produced, we are committed to representing a diversity of voices and viewpoints on our stage, and to the important work of inclusion. We are determined to defy statistics and be a company who dares.





HERO SCHOOL  
Matthew J Photography



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Matthew J Photography

## HERO SCHOOL

In this completely original production, young heroes-in-training sharpen their super skills while going on an adventure that travels through several locations. But when the school is menaced by the villainous Polonium Malogrove, the students must put their skills to the test and work together to save the day.

With support from the Independence Foundation's New Theatre Works Initiative and our Heart the Art Campaign, *Hero School* was developed and workshopped at Theatre Horizon over a three-year period. This immersive play for the young and the young at heart put storytelling into the hands of children to encourage action and personal agency instead of passive reception. Staged in several rooms of our theatre simultaneously, children moved through the space in the company of professional actors. Along the way, they learned lessons about teamwork, courage, and the transcendent power of forgiveness.

**Written by:** Jeremy Gable

**Directed by:** Emmanuelle Delpech

**Cast:** Aram Aghazarian, Fred Brown, Taysha Canales, Ben Grinberg, Johanna Kasimow, Brett Ashley Robinson

**Artistic Sponsors:**

Angela Mullen & Lisa Yanak

**Run at Theatre Horizon:**

August 4 -27, 2017

- ❖ “*Hero School* is carefully crafted for fun and gentle learning, with a positive moral that’s organic to the story and not contrived or overstated. *Hero School* includes everyone and doesn’t condescend, and that’s a great lesson.”  
- *Broad Street Review*
- ❖ “*Hero School* was a truly unique show and a very exciting experience. Instead of sitting in theatre seats, the kids travel through different rooms throughout the theatre... and are encouraged to talk, touch, participate, and share ideas during the adventure.”  
- *Mommy Poppins*



**2.5 MINUTE RIDE**  
Leah Walton  
Matthew J Photography



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## 2.5 MINUTE RIDE

Lisa's 74-year-old father won't stop riding roller coasters. But as his health begins to fail, Lisa must deal with the limits of an aging parent she idolizes. With compassion and razor-sharp humor, *2.5 Minute Ride* weaves together Lisa's memories of two very different family trips: their annual pilgrimage to an Ohio amusement park and an unforgettable journey through their family's history. With her wife's support, Lisa chronicles her father's life as a Holocaust survivor and weathers the many pitfalls of adventuring with a septuagenarian.

**Written by:** Lisa Kron

**Directed by:** Elaina Di Monaco

**Cast:** Leah Walton

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

**Associate Honorary Producer:** Linda Lipscomb

**Artistic Sponsor:** Rebecca Bradbeer

**Run at Theatre Horizon:** October 6 - 29, 2017

- ❖ An autobiographical, one-woman show by three-time Tony-winner Lisa Kron, writer of Broadway's *Fun Home*.
- ❖ "Under the direction of Elaina Di Monaco, Barrymore winner Walton is giving a bravura, physically expressive performance as Lisa in this idiosyncratic, discursive memory play."  
- *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- ❖ "The emotional swings of *2.5 Minute Ride* - all of them well-earned in the show's construction and Walton's performance - allow us to sense the grand sweep of a life and ultimately, our lives, too."  
- *WHYY*



## THE REVOLUTIONISTS

Four badass women try not to lose their heads in this irreverent, rebellious comedy set during the French Revolution. Amidst the Reign of Terror, four renegades—an assassin, a spy, a writer, and, of course, Marie Antoinette—hang out, plot murder, find friendship, and try to beat back extremist insanity in Paris. Armed with sharp wit and even sharper knives, this comedy of *liberté, égalité, and sororité* considers how we actually go about changing the world.

**Written by:** Lauren Gunderson

**Directed by:** Kathryn MacMillan

**Cast:** Jessica Bedford, Jaylene Clark Owens, Claire Inie-Richards, Charlotte Northeast

**Executive Honorary Producers:**

Angela Mullen & Lisa Yanak

**Artistic Sponsors:**

Rebecca Bradbeer, Nancy DeLucia

**Run at Theatre Horizon:** February 1 -25, 2018

- ❖ The smash-hit of our 2017/18 season!
- ❖ “The right play for right now ... a revolutionary good time”  
- *Broad Street Review*
- ❖ “MacMillan’s direction of this fast-paced romp is sure handed and well executed. Her ensemble of four is a talented group of actresses who attack the material with fierce joy.”  
- *Delco Culture Vultures*
- ❖ “[The] production at Theatre Horizon fits the play perfectly, alternating between lightheaded and tragic, fluidly moving from mood to mood without being forced.”  
- *WHYY*



## PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

With virtuosity, imagination, and stunning theatricality, a dozen musicians and storytellers use handmade magic to conjure ships and stardust, create more than 100 characters, and ultimately upend the familiar story of how a fearless girl inspires an orphan boy to become the legendary Peter Pan. This 5-time Tony Award-winning show is a song-filled adventure full of grown-up savvy and childlike wonder.

**Written by:** Rick Elice

**Music by:** Wayne Barker

**Directed by:** Matthew Decker

**Cast:** David Bardeen, Ciera Gardner, Ben Grinberg, Johnnie Hobbs Jr., Maggie Johnson, Leigha Kato, Mel Krodman, Trey Lyford, Kevin Meehan, Amanda Morton, Michael McCoy Reilly, Samantha Rosentrater

**Executive Honorary Producers:**

Doug & Sherry Kargher  
Harvey & Virginia Kimmel

**Associate Honorary Producers:**

Diane & Jon Edelman

**Artistic Sponsors:**

The Hamilton Family, Laura & Douglas Pratt

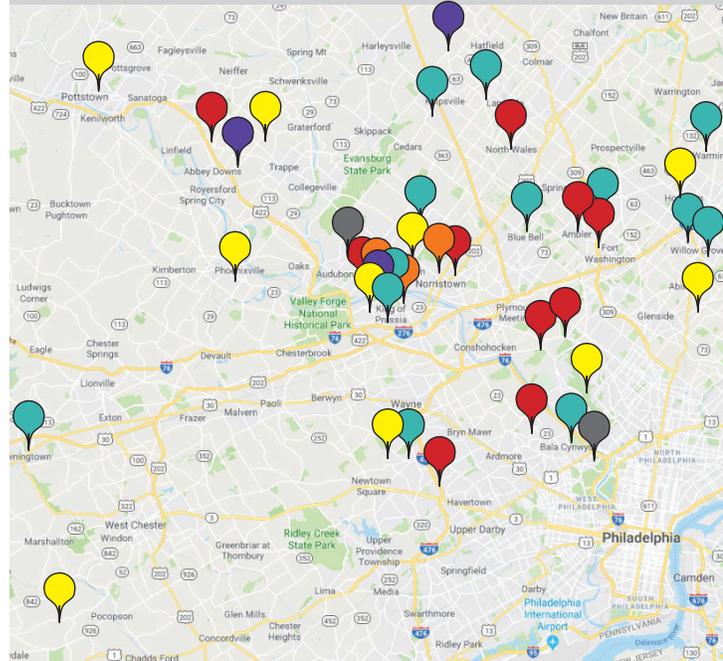
**Run at Theatre Horizon:** April 26 - May 20, 2018

- ❖ Performers incorporated over 15 instruments into the action onstage in this musical adventure.
- ❖ “The Theatre Horizon production of *Starcatcher* is a charming reprise of the verbal, take-no-prisoners comedy of Monty Python. Language, situations, and actors’ antics are unpredictable and riotously funny.”  
- *Philadelphia Inquirer*
- ❖ “[Proof] that smart theater doesn’t need bells, whistles, computer-generated sizzle and a bank full of money to make magic.”  
- *WHYY*

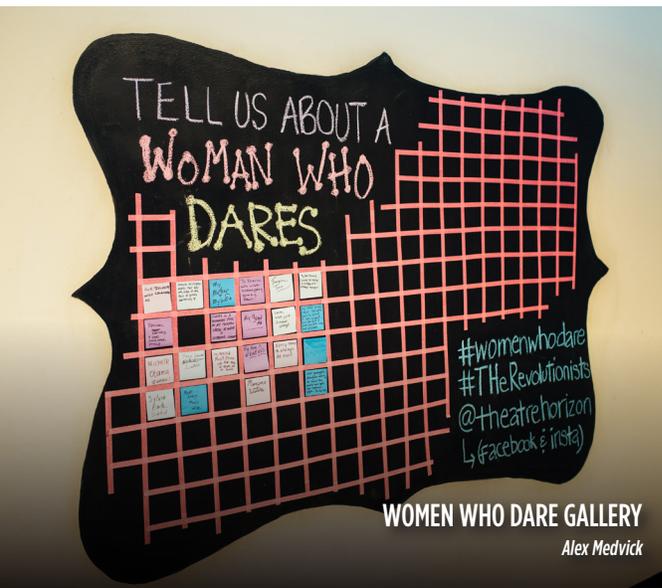
## OUR 2016/17 EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

- ❖ We served over 1,000 students in 2017/18, at the theatre and in the community.
- ❖ During our week-long Summer Drama Camps, we served 310 students over 21 weeks of programming.
- ❖ Our semester-long After-School Drama Clubs served 256 students in 14 townships. One satisfied participant wrote: “The drama club was a great experience because I got to meet new people and I got to be myself - if I wanted to be goofy or silly that was ok.”
- ❖ We expanded our School Workshop offerings, providing 10 workshops at 5 schools for 167 students.
- ❖ We continued our partnership with ACLAMO Family Centers in Norristown through no-cost Drama Club sessions with activities in both Spanish and English.
- ❖ We continued the partnership with our neighbor, The Willow School, providing weekly no-cost acting classes to 40 pre-kindergarten students. Improvements were noted in the participants’ ability to perform/speak in front of others, their ability to work cooperatively with other children and their ability to listen and follow directions.
- ❖ Our Theatre School program, which offers studio classes on a range of subjects in our newly-constructed classroom, served over 85 students.
- ❖ Our unique Autism Drama Program continues to grow rapidly, serving almost 180 students this year. We recently expanded our offerings to include a support group for parents during class sessions and organized trips for students to see improv shows with professional actors. We also worked to make our mainstage productions more inclusive by offering Relaxed Performances as part of our season.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM LOCATIONS



## OTHER SEASON HIGHLIGHTS:



### Relaxed Performances

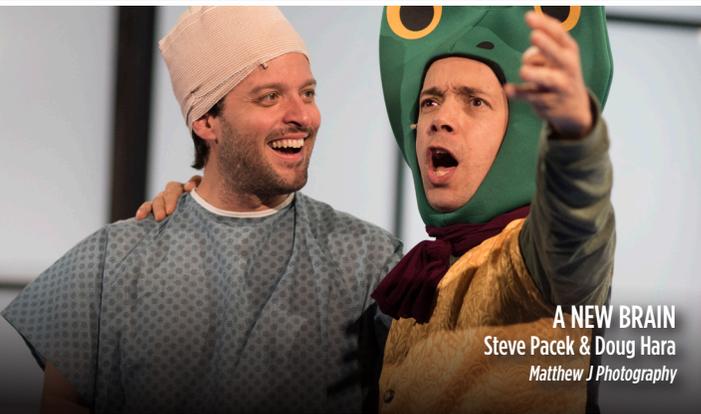
- ❖ In an effort to expand the reach of our Autism Drama Program and unite our education initiatives with the work we produce onstage, we held Relaxed Performances for two of the productions in our season: *Hero School* and *Peter and the Starcatcher*.
- ❖ For these performances, we adjust sounds levels and soften sudden sounds or events. We establish a relaxing-zone for anyone who needs to take a break from the performance and provide a Preparation Packet with details about the show for any caregiver who wishes to prepare their child in advance. Accommodations like those can mean the difference between exclusion and inclusion for individuals on the spectrum.
- ❖ In partnership with five other professional theatres in our area, we formed the Relaxed Performances Cohort, a group committed to increasing the amount of sensory-friendly and relaxed arts experiences available in the tri-state area.
- ❖ The Relaxed Performances Cohort meets quarterly to share results and lessons learned from the recent relaxed performances at each member theatre. This collaboration also includes professional consultation on relaxed performance efforts.

### Women Who Dare Gallery

- ❖ In conjunction with our production of *The Revolutionists*, we turned our lobby into a gallery honoring impactful women often overlooked or misunderstood by history.
- ❖ The display featured 32 women who changed the way we look at the world - including three historical figures from the play: Olympe De Gouges, Charlotte Corday and Marie Antoinette.
- ❖ Many of the featured heroines were internationally influential figures and some were local visionaries whose leadership has transformed our community for the better.



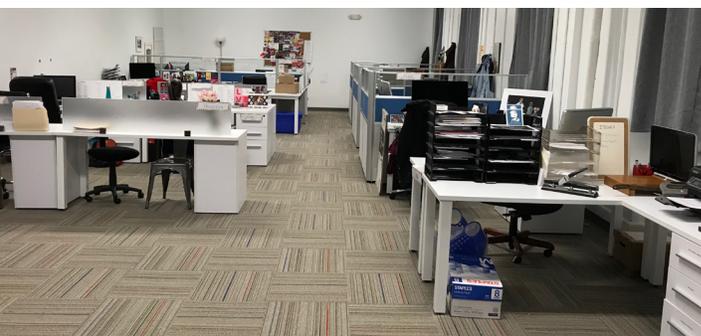
**GRAND CONCOURSE**  
David Bardeen  
Matthew J Photography



**A NEW BRAIN**  
Steve Pacek & Doug Hara  
Matthew J Photography



**National  
Endowment  
for the Arts**  
arts.gov



## The 2017 Barrymore Awards

- ❖ On October 30, 2017, two of our 2016/17 productions were honored with Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre: David Bardeen was named Outstanding Supporting Actor in a play for his work in *Grand Concourse* and Doug Hara won Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical for his performance in *A New Brain*.

## Theatre Horizon in the News

- ❖ This season, Theatre Horizon entered the national stage by winning two major awards.
  - » In October 2017, Theatre Horizon received the American Theatre Wing's National Theatre Company Award - one of only twelve companies in the nation to be honored with this prestigious award from the organization that presents the Tony Awards each year.
  - » We also received support from the National Endowment for the Arts for our summer 2017 production of *Hero School*.

## Theatre Improvements and New Partnerships

- ❖ In the spring of 2017, we forged a partnership with the Norristown SeniorLAW Center, a nonprofit organization providing legal services to the elderly. Bringing on the SeniorLAW Center to share our office space also enabled Theatre Horizon to undergo a long-awaited capital project - the construction of a professional office space for our staff and artists, and a classroom facility for our students. Our new offices have positively impacted both organizations' staff, while The Connelly Foundation Classroom has already improved the scope of our education programming.

## OFFSTAGE:

### Heart the Art Campaign

- ❖ In 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 completed the campaign in December of 2017 with a total of \$381,000 raised.
  - » Funds from this campaign supported our productions of *Black Nativity* (2015), *A New Brain* (2016), and *Peter & the Starcatcher* (2018). These three shows brought 92 artists to our stage, as well as earning Theatre Horizon numerous Barrymore nominations and awards.
  - » The campaign also made possible our three-year workshop development of *Hero School*, as well as the full production, which launched our Women Who Dare season in the summer of 2017.
  - » Over the last three years we increased artist and staff salaries and benefits by 74%, which has positively impacted nearly 80 artists and 12 staff members.



### Audience Impact

- ❖ This year we served 5,616 patrons through our four mainstage productions. We're happy to report that we had a record number of subscribers - 526 - and that we gave away 440 free tickets to Norristown residents during the sixth season of our Norristown Neighbor Program.

**2.5 MINUTE RIDE**  
BY LISA KRON  
DIRECTED BY ELAINA DI MONACO

October 6 - 29, 2017  
THEATRE HORIZON

THEATRE HORIZON  
401 DeKalb Street, Norristown, PA 19401

**HERO SCHOOL**

Written by Jeremy Gable  
Directed by Emmanuelle Delpech

August 4-27, 2017  
An exciting interactive performance!

www.theatrehorizon.org  
610.283.2230

**Peter and the Starcatcher** APRIL 26 - MAY 20, 2018

by Rick Elice Music by Wayne Barker  
Directed by Matthew Decker

THEATRE HORIZON

**THE REVOLUTIONISTS**  
BY LAUREN GUNDERSON

Liberté, Égalité, Sororité... they came to slay

DIRECTED BY KATHRYN MACMILLAN  
FEBRUARY 1 - 25, 2018

Find us on  
THEATRE HORIZON f i o t y