
HarlemStage

Diverse Artists. Transformative Art.

THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

**Harlem Stage and Theater of War Productions Present *Antigone in Ferguson*
September 13 - October 13, 2018**

Free performances to feature a live gospel choir and leading actors including Samira Wiley, Paul Giamatti, Adepero Oduye, David Strathairn, Tamara Tunie, Frankie Faison, Kathryn Erbe and more

Performances will spark community conversations on race and social justice

New York, NY – June 26, 2018 – **Harlem Stage** and **Theater of War Productions** today announced an unprecedented five-week FREE run of performances of Theater of War Productions' original project, ***Antigone in Ferguson***. Opening on September 13 and kicking off Harlem Stage's 2018/2019 programming season, *Antigone in Ferguson* was conceived in the wake of Michael Brown's death in 2014, through a collaboration between Theater of War Productions and community members from Ferguson, MO. Translated and directed by **Bryan Doerries** and composed by **Phil Woodmore**, the project fuses a dramatic reading by leading actors of excerpts from Sophocles' Greek tragedy with live choral music performed by a choir of activists, police officers, youth, and concerned citizens from Ferguson and New York City. The performance is the catalyst for panel and audience-driven discussions on race and social justice, the core component of the event. This multifaceted production will offer a glimpse not only into the effects of the tragedy in Brown's local community, but also the trauma of police violence and racial injustice in communities of color in New York and across the nation.

During the *Antigone in Ferguson* run, Harlem Stage, with deep roots in both the Harlem and broader artistic community, and Theater of War Productions will work closely with various partners to engage audiences from across the city, providing interborough transportation and targeted outreach initiatives in order to encourage and facilitate diverse audience attendance for each event. To further deepen connections to the community, performances will be enriched by the participation of local choirs from Harlem and around the city, who will join **The Phil Woodmore Singers** each week.

Local stakeholders and community leaders will participate as panelists, assisting in opening up dialogues with audiences. These guided discussions, which aim to promote healing and bridge the growing divide between law enforcement and local communities, will focus on the impact of racialized violence against communities of color, and the legacies of the tragic deaths of Michael Brown, as well as Eric Garner, Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell, Saheed Vassell, and numerous other victims.

The presentation will feature a rotating roster of acclaimed actors, including **Samira Wiley** (*The Handmaid's Tale*), who will reprise the role she portrayed in the premiere of *Antigone in Ferguson*, first presented on the stage of Michael Brown's high school near Ferguson in 2016. Other cast members include: **Paul Giamatti** (*Billions*), **Tamara Tunie** (*Law & Order: SVU*), **David Strathairn** (*Good Night, and Good Luck*), **Adepero Oduye** (*12 Years a Slave*), **Frankie Faison** (*The Wire*) and **Kathryn Erbe** (*Law & Order: Criminal Intent*). Each week will feature a different group of actors.

“We are grateful to Harlem Stage for creating a home for our work in Harlem,” said **Bryan Doerries, artistic director of Theater of War Productions**. “With our projects, we strive to make brave spaces for difficult conversations that have the power to heal rifts and strengthen community bonds. With *Antigone in Ferguson*, we hope to build upon the great work that Harlem Stage has been doing for decades to engage diverse audiences with dynamic performances, igniting dialogue and inspiring positive change.”

“This production reflects our goal of making the arts accessible to everyone and to position the arts as a fertile breeding ground for discussion on current topics” said **Monique Martin, director of programming of Harlem Stage**.

Antigone in Ferguson is the culmination of artistic director Bryan Doerries’ work as a NYC Public Artist in Residence -- for which Theater of War Productions has presented over 60 performances across all five boroughs. *Antigone in Ferguson* at Harlem Stage marks a departure from the company’s history of nomadic presentations. Having mounted over 700 events at a range of venues around the world, from Guantanamo Bay to a playground in Brownsville, Brooklyn, this extended run will be the first time Theater of War Productions will embed itself in one location for an extended period of time. Exclusively supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the 30 free performances at Harlem Stage will offer expanded opportunities for community participation in this innovative social justice project.

“Harlem Stage is incredibly grateful to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for their generous support of this collaboration with Theater of War Productions which extends our mission-driven programs and enables us to offer the entire five week run for free to the public,” said **Pat Cruz, executive director of Harlem Stage**.

The company’s partnership with Harlem Stage builds on Doerries’ two-year tenure as Public Artist in Residence, which has also been supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The residency has served as an incubator for the company’s projects which have been presented to diverse communities around New York City, from audiences at Lincoln Center to Rikers Island, as well as at other community centers such as public libraries, homeless shelters, public housing developments, high schools and domestic violence shelters.

Known as an incubator of performing arts that stems from and relates to Black culture, Harlem Stage was the natural partner for this series. As a legendary uptown venue that has promoted the creative legacy of artists of color from around the globe for over 35 years, Harlem Stage is proud to include *Antigone in Ferguson* as the launch production for its 2018/2019 season. This upcoming season is curated by Monique Martin, recently appointed Director of Programming, and features artists as #Disrupters, who take creative risks. They reflect the times via a range of artistic genres, offering audiences the chance to experience legendary performers and rising stars.

Antigone in Ferguson at Harlem Stage

Translated and Directed by Bryan Doerries

Composed by Phil Woodmore

Dates: September 13-October 13, 2018 (except for Sundays and Mondays)

Time: 7:30pm (Saturdays: 3:00pm and 7:30pm)

Runtime: 2 hours and 15 minutes

Location: Harlem Stage Gate House, 150 Convent Avenue. New York, NY, 10031

Tickets: Tickets are FREE but RSVP is required.

For tickets and further details on cast and performers, visit harlemstage.org.

Tickets available beginning August 13; for advanced registration, email: marketing@harlemstage.org

ABOUT ANTIGONE IN FERGUSON

Created in collaboration with citizens from St Louis and Ferguson whose lives were impacted by the death of Michael Brown, *Antigone in Ferguson* features an unconventional presentation of scenes from Sophocles' ancient Greek play. The staged readings, performed by leading television, film and theater actors, are accompanied by live music performed by a roster of local choirs who will complement The Phil Woodmore Singers, a St Louis-based gospel choir, featuring police officers, activists, youth, and members of the faith community. Notable members of the choir include Michael Brown's former teacher, Duane Foster, and Lt. Latricia Allen, Commander of the Community Engagement Unit of the St Louis Metropolitan Police Department, a special unit created following the unrest catalyzed by Brown's death.

Set in ancient Thebes in the midst of a brutal civil war, Sophocles' *Antigone* is a play about a teenage girl who wishes to bury her brother, Polyneices, whose slain body lays lifeless on the street. In defiance of King Creon, who wishes to make a public example of Polyneices, Antigone buries her brother and chaos and violence ensues. At its core, *Antigone* is a play about what happens when personal conviction and state law clash, raising questions about justice, oppression, and the use of power and force.

The performance seamlessly flows to the heart of the project: a dynamic conversation aimed at fostering empathy and deeper understanding between communities. Following comments and reactions from a panel of community leaders, audience discussions will be guided by De-Andrea Blaylock, a social worker based in St Louis and artistic director Bryan Doerries, among others.

ABOUT THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

Since its founding in 2009, Theater of War Productions, has facilitated events for over 100,000 people, presenting over 20 different tailored programs targeted to diverse communities across the globe. The company works with professional actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern works—to provide a framework for engaging communities in challenging dialogues about human suffering.

The company uses a combination of theater and guided public dialogue to help communities address pressing public health and social issues such as combat-related psychological injury, suicide, end-of-life care, police/community relations, prison reform, gun violence, political violence, natural and manmade disaster, domestic violence, substance abuse, and addiction. Theater of War Productions was co-founded by Bryan Doerries and Phyllis Kaufman, who served as producing director from 2009 to 2016. Doerries currently serves as the company's artistic director.

In 2017, Doerries was appointed a NYC Public Artist in Residence, a joint appointment with the NYC Department of Veterans' Services and Department of Cultural Affairs. Co-produced by Brooklyn Public Library, the two-year residency has been supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

For more information on Theater of War Productions, visit: www.theaterofwar.com

ABOUT HARLEM STAGE

Harlem Stage, led by Executive Director Pat Cruz and Managing Director James King, is the performing arts center that bridges Harlem's cultural legacy to contemporary artists of color and dares to provide the artistic freedom that gives birth to new ideas. For over 35 years Harlem

Stage has been one of the nation's leading arts organizations, achieving this distinction through its work with artists of color and by facilitating a productive engagement with the communities it serves through the performing arts. With a long-standing tradition of supporting artists and organizations around the corner and across the globe, Harlem Stage boasts such legendary artists as Harry Belafonte, Max Roach, Sekou Sundiata, Abbey Lincoln, Sonia Sanchez, Eddie Palmieri, Maya Angelou and Tito Puente, as well as contemporary artists like Bill T. Jones, Christian Scott aTunde Adjuah, Tamar-kali, Vijay Iyer, Mike Ladd, Stew, Meshell Ndegeocello, Jason Moran, José James, Nona Hendryx and more. Its education program each year provides over 1,000 New York City children with introduction and access to the rich diversity, excitement and inspiration of the performing arts. In 2006, Harlem Stage opened the landmarked, award-winning Harlem Stage Gatehouse. This once abandoned space, originally a pivotal source for distributing fresh water to New York City, is now a vital source of creativity, ideas and culture. Harlem Stage is a winner of the William Dawson Award for Programming Excellence and Sustained Achievement in Programming (Association of Performing Arts Professionals).

For more information on Harlem Stage, visit: www.harlemstage.org
For a full list of donors, please visit: <https://www.harlemstage.org/support/>

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