



50 Church Street
Hartford, CT 06103
www.hartfordstage.org

Melia Bensussen, Artistic Director
Cynthia Rider, Managing Director

MEDIA RELEASE **2019/2020 SEASON**

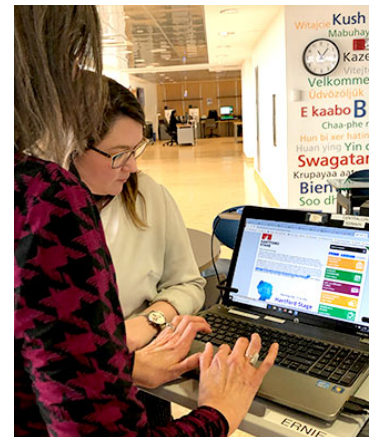
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Theresa M. MacNaughton, tmacnaughton@hartfordstage.org, 860-520-7114

Hartford Stage to present the Hartford Public Library with inaugural Inspiration Award during its annual Gala in April

HARTFORD, CT — February 12, 2020 — Hartford Stage will present the Hartford Public Library with the inaugural Inspiration Award during *The Heart of Connecticut Ball*, the theatre's annual Gala, on Saturday, April 18. The Hartford Stage Inspiration Award was conceived by Artistic Director Melia Bensussen and Managing Director Cynthia Rider to celebrate and honor an individual, group, or organization which has inspired and supported the theatre in furthering its growth as a community partner. The Hartford Public Library was selected as the first award recipient in recognition of its successful four-year community partnership with Hartford Stage.

“Cynthia and I have been so inspired by the many individuals and organizations doing such incredible work in this city. As we continue to deepen our commitment to the residents of Hartford, the Hartford Public Library has helped connect us more authentically to our neighbors, welcoming new theatre-goers and more diverse audience members into our space,” Bensussen said. “As we continue to deepen connection and seek collaboration in Hartford, we have repeatedly looked toward the Hartford Public Library and the partnership Hartford Stage began four years ago as a model for that commitment. The leadership, staff, and librarians have inspired us all to understand how to better serve our community members.”



Elizabeth Davis, Head of Circulation and Access Services for Hartford Public Library, (left) explains the library pass program, which offers free Hartford Stage tickets to Hartford residents with library cards to a patron.



Elizabeth Davis, Head of Circulation and Access Services for Hartford Public Library stocks

“We are deeply honored to be recognized by Hartford Stage with its Inspiration Award. That we are the first recipients of such an honor makes it all the more special,” said Bridget Quinn-Carey, Chief Executive Officer of the Hartford Public Library. “Hartford Stage – with its great team of creative, committed professionals – is a pleasure to work with; and we are proud of this collaboration that continues to enrich our community in so many ways.”

Hartford Stage partnered with the Hartford Public Library four years ago to create a program inviting Hartford residents to attend shows at the theatre, free of charge. Through the Library Pass Program, which debuted with *Feeding the Dragon*, Hartford residents with an adult or teen library card can reserve a two-ticket pass per eligible show from any of the seven library branches in the city. Since its inception, nearly 2,000 Hartford residents have enjoyed free performances at Hartford Stage.

The partnership with the Hartford Public Library has grown to include programs designed to help Hartford Stage connect more authentically with residents of the city. One initiative, the Neighborhood Ambassador Program, is comprised of a dozen Hartford residents recommended by branch librarians who see each production together as a group and discuss the relevance of the shows to their own lives and communities. The Ambassadors, in turn, are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to see the productions to help grow a new community of theatre-goers.

To increase theatre literacy and foster a richer theatrical experience, HPL @ Hartford Stage – a micro-branch of the Hartford Public Library housed in the Hartford Stage lobby – gives theatre-goers the opportunity to browse through a selection of carefully curated titles directly related to the themes of each production. All micro-branch titles can be checked out by theatre-goers with a valid Connecticut public library card and returned to their town’s library.

The Heart of Connecticut Ball will be held at Hartford Stage’s

for Hartford Public Library, stocks books for the library branch kiosk at Hartford Stage for ‘Jane Eyre’



‘Pike St.’ playwright Nilaja Sun (second from left) chats with Neighborhood Ambassadors (L-R) Jolie Medina, Michelle McFarland (Outreach Coordinator, Hartford Public Library), Laurie Bompert, and Willie Mann

Scene & Paint Shop located at Murphy Road in Hartford on Saturday, April 18, at 6 p.m. To learn more, visit <https://www.hartfordstage.org/gala/>.

About Hartford Public Library

Now celebrating its 126th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. Please visit www.hplct.org.

HARTFORD STAGE

Hartford Stage enters its 56th season beginning an exciting new chapter. Artistic Director Melia Bensussen and Managing Director Cynthia Rider will continue the theatre's legacy of artistic excellence by creating theatrical works that enlighten, entertain, and educate.

Renowned for producing innovative revivals of classics, as well as provocative new plays and musicals, Hartford Stage has earned many of the nation's most prestigious awards, including the 1989 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Additional national recognition includes honors from the Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, American Theatre Wing (OBIE), and the New York Critics Circle.

Hartford Stage has produced over 80 world and North American premieres, including the new musical *Anastasia*, which enjoyed a two-year run on Broadway; *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, winner of four 2014 Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Direction of a Musical; and Quiara Alegría Hudes' *Water by the Spoonful*, winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Other notable premieres include *The Engagement Party* by Samuel Baum; *Make Believe* by Bess Wohl; *The Age of Innocence* by Douglas McGrath; *Seder* by Sarah Gancher; *Rear Window*, adapted by Keith Reddin, and starring Kevin Bacon; *An Opening in Time* by Christopher Shinn; *Reverberation* by Matthew Lopez; Big Dance Theatre's *Man in a Case* with Mikhail Baryshnikov; and *Breath & Imagination* by Daniel Beaty. Nationally-renowned titles include the New York transfers of *Enchanted April*; *The Orphans' Home Cycle*; *Resurrection* (later retitled *Through the Night*); *The Carpetbagger's Children*; and *Tea at Five*. The leading provider

of theatre education programs in Connecticut, Hartford Stage's offerings include student matinees, in-school theatre residencies, teen performance opportunities, theatre classes for students (ages 3-18) and adults, afterschool programs and professional development courses.

The leading provider of theatre education programs in Connecticut, Education @ Hartford Stage offers student matinees, in-school theatre residencies, teen performance opportunities, theatre classes for students (ages 3-18) and adults, afterschool programs and professional development courses. Education @ Hartford Stage programming reaches approximately 21,000 Connecticut students annually.

###

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Forward](#) | [View in browser](#)

Hartford Stage does not share personal data with anyone outside of our organization.

Hartford Stage | 50 Church Street | Hartford, CT 06103