Bridging Literature, Life and Learning
www.primestage.com

Mission

The mission of Prime Stage is to entertain, inspire and enrich through professional theatre by bringing literature to life. Prime Stage produces three adaptations of literature drawn from middle and high school reading lists and topics that are relevant to teens and young adults to stimulate the audiences' imaginations, intellects and emotions. All programs engage 21st century learners by meeting PA Core Standards and National Arts Standards.

Incorporated as a non-profit 501c3 in 1996, Prime Stage has established itself on the Pittsburgh cultural scene. The company has produced over 65 shows including 9 world and regional premieres. In addition to its public performances, the student matinee series for middle and secondary school students and teachers draws an audience of more than 3,000 each year, including underserved school groups in the *Literacy in ACTion* Program.

Artistic Vision

Prime Stage blends excellence in its productions with excellence in its education programs for audiences who are seeing theatre for the first time, attending adaptations of literature they are struggling to read, and are patrons of the arts. Prime Stage enriches lives through theatre and literacy with programs that deliver quantifiable results and benefits to the region by doing the following:

- Present innovative, thought provoking and entertaining theatrical and educational experiences.
- Serve a diverse range of audiences with adaptations of literature, 2nd Stage, and education programs.
- Provide teachers with arts-based strategies and experiences to transform struggling students into proficient readers and learners.
- Realize the dreams of those who create the theatrical experiences.
- Build an enthusiastic, respected and committed staff, Board and team of volunteers.
- Collaborate with local organizations to enrich the experiences for audiences.
- Secure Prime Stage as an organization that is fiscally, artistically, and administratively solid.
- Ensure the longevity of Prime Stage with leaders who guide Prime Stage well into the future.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2000, we were awarded the Zeta Phi Eta-Winifred Ward Outstanding New Children's Theatre Company Award by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education.

The Post-Gazette recognized Prime Stage for "The best educational programs," and for *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Elephant Man*, and *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

In 2006, Mary Badham, Academy Award-nominated actress who played Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, attended performances and teacher workshops during the production. She commented that our production "is the way the play should always be done."

In 2010, Prime Stage began its touring program to raise awareness of teen dating violence. To date, we have partnered with the YWCA for its Violence Awareness Week and have reached over 3500 students, teachers, and parents. Prime Stage received national endorsement by "Futures without Violence".

In 2013, Prime Stage's touring program was a recipient of the Peace Partner Award of the Peace It Together Community.

In 2014, Prime Stage was recognized as the Pittsburgh's "A-List's Best Theatre Group."

In 2015, our world premiere of *The Devil's Arithmetic* was noted as one of the "Notable World Premieres" and Julia Zoratto, the actress playing Hannah, was mentioned as a Lead Actress.

In 2016, Prime Stage was nominated as a Champion of Learning Award by The Consortium for Public Education.

PROGRAMS FOR 2016-2017

Celebrating 20 years of Bringing Literature to Life showcases our current programs and looks ahead to how we will continue to discover and meet the needs and interests of people. Prime Stage serves the region with a series of programs that include the following: Three mainstage adaptations of literature in the middle and secondary curriculum for public and student matinee audiences, 2nd Stage Series of staged readings and workshops to extend the experience for audiences, Literacy in ACTion Education Program which includes a Global Learning program for three schools beyond our region and country, Young Artists Company partners with local Domestic Violence organizations and survivors to create a theatrical program that tours to schools, Discover Your Inner Hero Program for urban students at Milliones University Prep, a Sensory–Friendly performance, and 15 Minutes of Fame where young people showcase their talents and could receive a recording session and consultation with a talent agency.

In addition to those programs, we present a series of fundraising events to increase individual giving as well as expand the region's awareness of what all Prime Stage does through theatre, education and partnerships.

Main Stage presentations at The Hazlett Theatre Center for Performing Arts

To Kill a Mockingbird – directed by Scott P. Calhoon

Public performances	November 4 thru 13, 2016 on Friday, Saturdays @ 8:00, Sundays @ 2:30pm
Student Matinees	November 9, 10 11@10:00am
Mary Badham special event	Saturday November 12

1984 – directed by Richard Keitel

Public performances	March 3 thru 12, 2017 on Fridays, Saturdays @ 8:00, Sundays @ 2:30pm
Student Matinees	March 8, 9, 10 @10:00am
Special event	Saturday March 11

The Perks of Being a Wallflower – directed by Jeffrey Cordell

Public performances	May 5 thru 14, 2017 on Friday, Saturdays @ 8:00, Sundays @ 2:30pm
Student Matinees:	May 9, 10, 11, 12 @10:00am
Sensory-Friendly Performance	Saturday May 11 @ 1:00pm

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Statement of Prime Stage Theatre's Commitment to Literacy

Literacy, in relation to adolescent learners, is defined as "constructive, fluent, strategic, motivated, and a life-long pursuit." Theater has demonstrated its effectiveness as a strategy to teach reading, speaking and listening skills, focus, discipline, teamwork and patience as well as any sport. Our distinctive Literacy in ACTion Program, Resource Guides, Teacher Workshops, and Mentor/Internship Program make theater accessible and valuable to middle school and high school students and educators.

Our programs build a better understanding of the world, an enjoyment of language, reading, writing and critical thinking for students and educators. Helping students connect to the literature, by connecting it to their lives and the community in which they live, puts literature into a framework for everyone to understand and appreciate. Characters come alive from the pages to life, giving them full dimension, providing multi-sensory experiences, allowing audiences to "see" and vicariously "live in" literature.

Literacy in ACTion

Prime Stage's flagship program, *Literacy in ACTion* helps teachers in underserved schools. As a year-long residency, teachers learn theater-based best practices to transform reluctant and struggling adolescent readers into motivated, proficient readers, creative writers and critical thinkers who enjoy literature and live theatre. This theatre/literacy program is provided at no cost to participating schools. Each year, participating schools receive in-school workshops and tickets to three shows where students and teachers see literature come alive.

Student Matinee Series and Resource Guides

Weekday matinees serve over 3500 students and teachers throughout Southwestern PA. On-line Resource Guides provide enrichment activities and help teachers prepare their field trip.

Responses of students and teachers to our education programs that use theatre to address literacy

Teachers' responses

"The program enhanced my prior teaching methods in regards to differentiating instruction. Even though I consider myself to be a teacher that instructs in a diverse manner, I can admit that I sometimes get into the "traditional" rut of teaching content and having students provide proof of understanding by simply answering questions or writing an essay. The program showed me a new way to assess students, as well as a new way to instruct students." - Bentworth

"I can attest to the fact that my students' confidence went through the roof as the year progressed. Also, the students displayed more respect for one another while they were presenting for their acts (thus, being better audience members). They learned to take risks as well; this was phenomenal. A few of my students now would like to pursue a career in acting! Phenomenal!"

"This program enabled me to emphasize the need for creative critical thinking in all areas of comprehension. Students got more out of each work by investigating further and asking questions. Several students who are not normally known to share ideas aloud came out of their shells and took risk because they were inspired to seek out answers to questions and take pride in their curiosity. I learned how to develop drama-based activities to increase adolescent literacy and will use the activities and techniques I learned from the artist in the future." - Carlynton

Student responses:

My interest in reading has increased during this process. Average score - 4.3
My confidence in reading increased through the process. Average score - 4.7
My interest in live performing arts events has increased. Average score - 4.5
I connected to the literature in some way. Average score - 4.8

"I think it was a good way to learn about literature because it shows more emotion and differences when performed than read.

"This experience helped me to be able to read deeper into this book and understand it better. I will take all that I have learned with me in the future."

Teen Dating Awareness Touring Program

The award-winning Teen Dating Awareness program is a multi-faceted platform that uses theatre, a personal testimony, and discussions forums to raise awareness, encourages, and provides the resources for audiences to make a difference in their lives. Presented with the YWCA Violence Awareness Week, the program also tours to schools in October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month and in February for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. A student who attended a presentation at Gateway High School commented: "The play embodied Dating Violence in a way that anyone could understand and, in turn, never forget."

Teens, parents and educators learn the warning signs, where to turn for help, and how to find positive role models with healthy, happy relationships. The program opens with the personal testimony of Jody Cuccia, the parent of a teen dating violence victim. A one-act play engages audiences in the story of teens that are in the middle of problems associated with teen dating violence. A post-show forum with the cast, Ms. Cuccia and counselors provides opportunities for young people and adults to share their thoughts, questions and concerns.

2nd Stage @Prime Stage

This series of smaller performances sustains the public's awareness of Prime Stage between productions and during the summer.

The Internship/Mentor Program

High school and college students learn the craft of creating and producing theatre by working one-on-one with members of our artistic and administrative staffs during the pre-production, rehearsal, and performance phases of a show. They also develop valuable connections with professionals in the field.

Professional Development Workshops for Teachers

A professional development workshop on "Creative Assessment Strategies" is offered to teachers and university education departments so their pre-service students experience professional development while learning alternative assessment techniques.

PRIME STAGE REALIZES ITS ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS

"Prime Stage is filled with teachable moments for everyone"! (Post-Gazette)

The Giver - 2016

"Prime Stage Theatre has created a new kind of experience that should be called "Intelligent Family Drama." Its production of The Giver is just as challenging and entertaining for children as it is for adults. This isn't "children's theater"; it's theater that speaks to an entire family, without condescension." City Paper, Pittsburgh.

"Students go home, into their communities, and their churches and speak about the theater. These experiences give me the opportunity to teach a novel in another way that has not been done before" (Ms. West, Lincoln Intermediate School).

Walk Two Moons - 2013

*"We all loved **Walk Two Moons**. Students laughed, cried, and were at the edge of their seats following the characters from beginning to end. There were a few students who were not sure what to expect, and they all came out of the theater saying - Wow! Prime Stage has made theater lovers of our Middle School Students. Thank you very much"* (Ms. Guering, Shadyside Academy).

"I saw a different learning pattern from my students. I was thrilled when the IEP/troubled readers shared ideas. I was shocked at one student spoke since he is truly a reluctant reader"

Animal Farm - 2015

"Seeing the play live helped me connect with the play because I could tell how people were feeling during each scene and what they were doing" (Student, South Fayette School District).

"Today I attended a student matinee with 200 sixth grade students. The play was magnificent and well received by students and adults! I do not know of any other theater organization that goes to such lengths to accommodate and educate" (Ms. Longo, Carlynton High School).

"Although the true terror of the Holocaust cannot be fully appreciated by those not present, the play magnificently conveys the horror, fear, etc. I thought that the show was fantastic. To recreate such a hard topic is a difficult task. Bravo!" (A patron).

"Nearly all of my grandmother's siblings with their families were lost in the Holocaust. We must always remember or else it could happen again. The book should be required reading in public schools in every state! Quite sobering, brilliant, and so necessary" (A patron).

"*I learned that there are many ways to interpret a quote in a book. / It was really fun. I think every English class should do this. / The program helped me read the literature more"* (Students).

The Devil's Arithmetic - 2014

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