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## THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF 2016 NATIONAL THEATRE COMPANY GRANTS

**New York, NY** (October 3, 2016) – The **American Theatre Wing** has announced the recipients of its **2016 National Theatre Company Grants**. This year's seven initial support recipients are: **American Blues Theater** (Chicago, IL), **Bedlam** (New York, NY), **Chance Theater** (Anaheim, CA), **Classical Theatre Company** (Houston, TX), **Cygnnet Theatre Company** (San Diego, CA), **South of Broadway Theatre Company** (Charleston, SC), and **Yellow Tree Theatre** (Osseo, MN). The inaugural second time support grant recipients are the following five companies: **16<sup>th</sup> Street Theater** (Berwyn, IL), **1812 Productions** (Philadelphia, PA), **Golden Thread Productions** (San Francisco, CA), **Portland Playhouse** (Portland, OR), and **Synchronicity Theatre** (Atlanta, GA). The prestigious grants totaling \$120,000 will be presented on Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at a private event.

Initial Support grants for the 2016 cycle in the amount of \$10,000 each will be distributed for general operating support to these companies which, according to grant guidelines, have been in operation at least five, but not more than fifteen years; have articulated a distinctive mission; cultivated an audience; and nurtured a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.

This year marked the implementation of new guidelines, creating Second-Time Support grants. These grants for the 2016 cycle in the amount of \$10,000 each will be distributed for general operating support to companies who have already received the National Theatre Company Grant in grant cycles occurring between 2010 and 2015. It is the American Theatre Wing's hope to provide additional support for companies who plan to advance their work in a significant way and have a strategic goal to build the organization's capacity to continue to innovate and create a more dynamic American Theatre and have described an actionable plan to achieve that goal.

"The quality of work that these remarkable theater companies produce is nothing short of inspiring," said **Marva Smalls**, Chair of the National Theatre Company Grants committee. "They further the conversations of issues important to their local communities."

"I am delighted to be honoring this year's selections for the National Theatre Company Grants, and for the first time ever awarding Second-Time Support grants to five companies that have previously been supported by this initiative," commented **Heather Hitchens**, President of the American Theatre Wing. "The Wing remains dedicated to promoting excellence in theatre across the country, which these young companies have more than demonstrated."

The **American Theatre Wing** has long shown its dedication to not-for-profit theatres through its Theatre Company Grants Program. After many years during which eligibility was restricted to New York City companies, 2010 marked a significant change in the granting of The Wing, resulting from extensive review by the organization's Board of Trustees. The ATW Grants have distributed over \$3 million dollars over the past 60 years. For more information on the ATW's National Theatre Company Grants, visit: <http://americantheatrewing.org/program/national-theatre-co-grants/>. The application period for 2017 grants will open in the spring of next year.

The **American Theatre Wing (Heather Hitchens, President and CEO)** is dedicated to advancing artistic excellence and nurturing theatre's next generation: on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. For nearly a century, the Wing has pursued this mission with programs that span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre. Traditionally, the Wing has encouraged members of the theatre community to share their off-stage time and talent directly with the theatre audience at large--whether it was singing for the troops in the Stage Door Canteen of the 1940s, or sharing their stories on a podcast today. As the founders of The Tony Awards®, the American Theatre Wing has developed the foremost national platform for the recognition of theatrical achievement on Broadway. Yet the Wing's reach extends beyond Broadway and beyond New York. The American Theatre Wing is now in a long-term partnership with *The Village Voice* to co-present The Obie Awards, off-Broadway's Highest Honor. The Wing also develops the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubates innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, fosters the song of American theatre through the Jonathan Larson Grants, honors the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, illuminates the creative process through the "Working in the Theatre" program and media archive. Finally, the Wing supports theatre education opportunities for underserved young people and under-resourced public schools around the United States with the newly launched Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative. Visitors to [AmericanTheatreWing.org](http://AmericanTheatreWing.org) can gain inspiration and insight into the artistic process through the Wing's extensive media collection, and learn more about its programming for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences.

Follow the Wing on [Facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing) and [Twitter.com/TheWing](https://twitter.com/TheWing).

## MISSION STATEMENTS

**16th Street Theater** (Berwyn, IL) exists to encourage debate, discussion and compassion amongst our community through the medium of intimate and diverse theater with the playwright as its central focus. Created to be a theater for people NOT going to the theater, and to give voice to all in Berwyn's community. 16th Street is dedicated to artistic excellence, professionalism (paying artists a decent wage) diversity and affordability.

**1812 Productions** (Philadelphia, PA) is dedicated to creating theatrical works of comedy and comedic works of theater that explore and celebrate our sense of community, our history and our humanity. The world needs more comedy and 1812 Productions was founded on the belief that laughter is a powerful communication tool. When people are laughing they are open and ready to connect, debate, listen, and engage.

**American Blues Theater** (Chicago, IL) is the premier American theater producing visceral theatrical works while engaging its audience in missions of local service agencies. American Blues Theater illuminates the American ideas of freedom, equality, and opportunity in the plays produced and communities served. Their multi-generational and interdisciplinary artists have established the second-oldest professional Equity Ensemble theater in Chicago.

**Bedlam** (New York, NY) creates works of theatre that reinvigorate traditional forms in a flexible, raw space, collapsing aesthetic distance and bringing its viewers into direct contact with the dangers and delicacies of life. Bedlam is committed to the immediacy of the relationship between the actor and the audience. In this new, fresh, active environment storytelling becomes paramount and the result is a kinetic experience of shared empathy.

**Chance Theater** (Anaheim, CA) believes that theater is a gym for empathy. It's where we go to build the muscles of compassion, to practice listening, understanding and engaging with people that are not like ourselves. It's a shelter from a world bombarded by media, from technology that may connect us globally but may also keep us from connecting with our own neighbors. Our mission is to utilize the power of live theater to contribute to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community.

**Classical Theatre Company** (Houston, TX) is dedicated to boldly re-envisioning classical drama on the stage, in the community, and in the classroom through engaging and enlightening plays that brings them new life and relevance while maintaining the integrity that the works deserve. The Classical Theatre Company is the only professional theatre company in the Houston area that produces year round classical drama.

**Cygnnet Theatre Company** (San Diego, CA) believes in the power of theatre to startle the soul, ignite debate and embrace the diversity of the community in which it serves. Cygnnet Theatre Company is fearlessly committed to the dissection, examination and celebration of the human story through the medium of live theatre. To explore the human story, Cygnnet curates thought-provoking seasons, featuring edgy Off-Broadway style works, classics and musicals that highlight issues and themes relevant to San Diego's diverse community.

**Golden Thread Productions** (San Francisco, CA) the first American theatre company focused on the Middle East, produces passionate and provocative plays from and about the Middle East that celebrate the multiplicity of its perspectives and identities. We are a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their career that believes that immersing yourself in someone else's experience is the best way to appreciate their point of view. Golden Thread's work is borderless and serves to reorient the United States-Middle East relationship.

**Portland Playhouse** (Portland, OR) is dedicated to producing quality, intimate performances where the interaction between artists and audience is paramount. Our mission is to create a space where people of ALL social, economic, racial, sexual and political backgrounds can come together to celebrate the complexity of the human experience. Our vision is a world awakened by the wonder of theatre.

**South of Broadway Theatre Company** (Charleston, SC) produces theatre of the highest professional standards, ensuring diversity in programming to foster an enduring educational and culturally enriched environment. South of Broadway Theatre Company (SOBTC) was founded in 2000 with the vision to become South Carolina's first LORT Theatre.

**Synchronicity Theatre** (Atlanta, GA) produces smart, gutsy and bold theatre to spark community connections and uplift the voices of women and girls. Synchronicity was founded in 1997 by four women with a desire to work collaboratively and bring challenging, meaningful theatre to Atlanta audiences. We believe in the power of bond between artist and audience, and our intimate stage brings us together to experience stories, music and drama as a community.

**Yellow Tree Theatre** (Osseo, MN) brings stories to life that ignite passion, inspire laughter and awaken possibility while exploring and celebrating the great complexities of the human spirit. We strive to be a welcoming artistic venue where people of all ages and walks of life can gather to experience authentic community, and to produce high-quality professional productions in the heart of the Northwest suburbs of Minneapolis, making live theatre more accessible to the community.

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