

New Works, Full Houses: What the Richard P. Stahl Festival Means for Phoenix Theatre

By Elizabeth Montgomery



The Richard P. Stahl Festival of New American Theatre is in full swing, and it's already proving to be a standout event for Phoenix's thriving arts community.

With multiple sold-out performances and audiences buzzing with excitement on social media and beyond, this year's festival is one to remember.

Hosted annually by The Phoenix Theatre Company, the 2025 Festival runs January 17th – February 2nd and features: a play reading, two musical readings, two Composer Lyricist Cabarets, Choreography Lab,

and a return of the 24-hour Theatre Project.

This event brings together the best and brightest talents, showcasing innovative stories that will shape the future of live theatre in Phoenix and beyond.

For audiences, it's an invitation to experience the raw energy of new plays and musicals, for playwrights and creatives, it's a chance to take risks, refine their craft, and see their visions realized on stage.

"Our Festival showcases the collaborative spirit of theatre, featuring a wide range of events from readings to cabarets to talkbacks and panel discussions to celebrate the developmental process" said Festival Director Michelle Chin.

"The festival uplifts a diverse array of artists, allowing the community to experience a varied mix of stories and styles and a unique opportunity to participate in the new work journey."

This year's lineup captivated audiences last weekend with the play reading "Judgment of the Eye," a gripping piece about art and deception during the 1940s and the unique 24-Hour Theatre Project which challenged artists to write, rehearse, and perform brand-new short plays – to a sold-out crowd – in just one day.

Still to come are "Loch Lomond," a Celtic-inspired musical that dives into themes of rebellion and love, Composer Lyricist Cabarets featuring song writing team Michael Kooman and Christopher Dimond, and Composer/Lyricist Maiga Vidal. The following weekend features Choreography Lab and First Draft Series: Young Playwrights in

collaboration with Spotlight Youth Theatre. Also performing next weekend is a musical reading of “Genius,” a zany sixties comedy that is already sold out!

The festival’s success is a testament to the strength and vibrancy of Phoenix’s arts scene. These sold-out performances reflect the community’s hunger for fresh, dynamic storytelling and its unwavering support for local talent as well as artists from around the country.

The impact of this annual festival extends beyond the immediate performances. To reflect that, the Festival of New American Theatre, has been renamed The Richard P. Stahl Festival of New American Theatre, honoring the late Richard P. Stahl, a lifelong supporter of the arts and a beloved member of the Arizona community.

“This festival is a vital part of the Phoenix arts community, and we are proud to rename it in honor of Richard Stahl’s extraordinary legacy,” said Vincent VanVleet, Executive Director of The Phoenix Theatre Company.

“His passion for the arts and his unwavering support of creativity inspire everything this festival stands for.”

For those who haven’t yet joined the festivities, there’s still time. Check out the schedule and secure your tickets at [The Phoenix Theatre Company’s website](#).