

UNITE: A Benefit for Black Lives Matter

A showcase of Black artists, produced by The Phoenix Theatre Company

(PHOENIX – June 15, 2020) The brutal violence committed against the Black community and the increased burden placed on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals as the result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have led to a pivotal moment in history. In solidarity with the Black community, The Phoenix Theatre Company will host an online showcase of Black artists called *UNITE: A Benefit for Black Lives Matter*.

“We unequivocally affirm that Black lives matter,” says Producing Artistic Director Michael Barnard. “The violence against Black people must stop. We have a tremendous amount of power and responsibility to lift up the voices of Black artists and to provide a platform for diversity and inclusion. The arts inspire empathy and create change.”

“Black artists bring a tremendous amount of value to the arts in Phoenix. We’re more than just characters on stage. We are members of your community,” says Chanel Bragg, director of *UNITE* and Phoenix-based performer (most recently in *Cabaret* at Arizona Theatre Company and *Kinky Boots* at The Phoenix Theatre Company). “I challenge arts organizations to confront racial biases and to have meaningful dialogues with the Black community. The journey of doing better begins with close self-examination. It will be uncomfortable, and that’s actually a good thing.”

The Phoenix Theatre Company is also committing to changes at the structural level. “In the coming days we are convening a group of staff, board members, and community artists to undertake a new comprehensive strategic planning process,” says Managing Director Vincent VanVleet. “Integral to that process is a re-envisioned equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) program, as well as a deeper commitment to the BIPOC community.”

UNITE: A Benefit for Black Lives Matter will be streamed live on The Phoenix Theatre Company’s YouTube channel June 26 at 7:00pm. Tickets are available in a pay-what-you-can format at phoenixtheatre.com/unite. All proceeds will benefit Black Lives Matter of Phoenix Metro, an organization committed to healing and strengthen a community that has faced generations of trauma. To learn more visit www.phoenixtheatre.com/uniteresources.

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ABOUT THE PHOENIX THEATRE COMPANY

The Phoenix Theatre Company is the largest professional regional theatre company in Arizona. As the first arts organization in Arizona and a founding member of the Central Arts District, The Phoenix Theatre Company is committed to advancing performing arts in the Valley with nearly 500 performances each year on multiple stages. Located at 1825 N. Central Ave in Phoenix, The Phoenix Theatre Company’s mission is to create exceptional experiences by using the arts to articulate messages that inspire hope and understanding. The Phoenix Theatre Company is currently celebrating its 100th anniversary. For more information, visit www.phoenixtheatre.com.

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