

## ***Becoming Dr. Ruth Kicks Off Summer Season at Valley's Oldest Theatre***

*The Phoenix Theatre Company Welcomes Audiences Back Inside June 2*

(May 5, 2021 – Phoenix, Ariz.) After nearly 16 months, the Valley's oldest live performance venue, The Phoenix Theatre Company, is excited to welcome audiences back indoors this summer. The 102 season kicks off with the one-woman show, *Becoming Dr. Ruth* June 2 and runs through June 27.

Opening on the Mainstage Theatre, *Becoming Dr. Ruth* chronicles the life of noted psychologist Dr. Ruth Westheimer from her early years fleeing Nazi Germany and her time spent as a sniper in Jerusalem to the path she took to becoming America's most famous sex therapist.

*Becoming Dr. Ruth* is a triumphant and heartwarming story of a woman who found her own unique place in the world after many personal struggles. The show demonstrates true perseverance and determination sprinkled with humor, honesty and life-affirming spirit.

"During the live performance, audiences will learn about this incredible woman and the things she rallies for throughout her life," said director, Katie McFadzen. "The play it isn't necessarily about sex, it's a story about survival, loss, resilience and hope. Dr. Ruth's life is truly remarkable. She fled Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport, she joined the Haganah in Jerusalem as a sniper, she was a single mother married three times and the only possession she has from her childhood is a washcloth with her initials on it. Yet, through it all, everything she does – and is – comes from a place of pure joy."

Dr. Ruth's career skyrocketed in 1980 with her pioneering radio show, "Sexually Speaking." The listener call-in program was a bold, original sex therapy advice program and it caught the attention of the nation. She went on to author 36 books dispensing advice on all matters of human relationships and even had a board game created in her honor, "Dr. Ruth's Game of Good Sex."

To enhance the one-woman show, The Phoenix Theatre Company will incorporate photos and props including television screens to play videos, and sound and lighting designed to set up stories that convey the enormity of Dr. Ruth's life.

While The Phoenix Theatre Company adapted during the pandemic and produced shows in an outdoor venue, they are excited about the return to some normalcy.

"It has been a long time coming but we are unbelievably grateful to welcome audiences back into our home," said Michael Barnard, producing artistic director at The Phoenix Theatre Company. "The last year brought countless creative and financial challenges, but we weathered them and have come out stronger. As a community, we are beyond grateful to announce our 102<sup>nd</sup> season with shows hand-picked to demonstrate resilience and tenacity. We have no doubt our supporters will be just as happy to see a return to live performance as we are."

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The off-Broadway hit stars local veteran actress Debra K. Stevens as Dr. Ruth. Stevens and McFadzen have collaborated on nearly 100 shows together.

*Becoming Dr. Ruth* is the first show produced indoors at The Phoenix Theatre Company since the start of the global pandemic. To keep audiences safe, face masks and temperature checks will be required for all staff and patrons. The indoor theatre's ventilation systems exceed recommendations by public health officials, and cleaning and disinfecting will occur frequently. Seating will not be socially-distanced. As vaccines become more available and accessible, safety protocols will be updated to ensure patron and staff comfort and wellbeing.

Tickets for the summer series, which also includes *Daddy Long Legs* and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*, are on sale now. To purchase call (602) 254-2151 or visit [www.phoenixtheatre.com](http://www.phoenixtheatre.com).

### **ABOUT THE PHOENIX THEATRE COMPANY**

The Phoenix Theatre Company is the largest professional regional theatre company in the state. 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 theatrical experiences by using the arts to articulate messages that inspire hope and understanding. For more information visit, [www.phoenixtheatre.com](http://www.phoenixtheatre.com).