

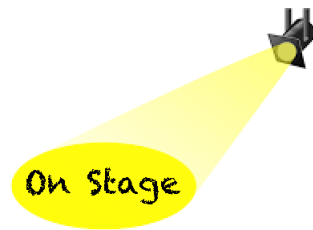
**On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater**

*We are the Levinsons*

**MN Jewish Theatre Company, April 22 – May 14, 2017**

**Created by: Lucas Erickson**

**Fiscal Sponsor: Springboard for the Arts**



## **On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater**

**Mission:** To make local theater relevant to younger and non-traditional audiences and to lay the groundwork for building future theater audiences

“On Stage” raises awareness of the theater offerings in the Twin Cities to academic classes and groups. It brings local actors to Twin Cities college classrooms and community settings to read scenes from a play in current local production. Participants then engage in a lively discussion of the play’s themes, tying in current events, personal values and narratives to stimulate critical thinking. Subsequently attending the full play is encouraged.

## **ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons* – Discussion Schedule**

**1. University of Minnesota – ENGL 1701: Modern Fiction – Monday, April 24th, 9:45-11:00AM. Anne Roth-Reinhardt. **30 students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Alyssa***

\* Basic techniques for analyzing/understanding fiction. Readings from novels and short stories written in English-speaking countries and elsewhere (in translation). Introduction to fictional techniques such as point of view, fictional conventions, and some forms of experimentation.

**2. Concordia University – THR 446: Theatre History, Theory and Literature – Monday, April 24th, 12:50-1:55PM. Mark Rosenwinkel. **8 students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Alyssa***

\* The class is Theatre History II, which covers essentially the 20th C. theatre up to today. We have had some speakers from a variety of theatres come and talk to us.

**3. Hamline University – HSCI 1100: Intro to Public Health – Tuesday April 25th, 12:50-1:50PM. Susi Keefe. **40 students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Kiara***

\* To provide students with a broad overview of the interdisciplinary field of public health, health systems and health policy. Content: History of public health, the scientific basis of public health practices, mechanisms of disease and disease spread, disease control, disease surveillance, public health policy. Just ended an extended unit on Aging issues.

**4. University of Minnesota – TH 1321: Beginning Acting: Fundamentals of Performance – Wednesday, April 26th, 9:05-10:05AM. Luverne Seifert. **20 students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Kiara***

\* Vocabulary/techniques for practical performance studies. Use/training of body/voice. Creation of choices and dramatic phrases. Storytelling. Training the will, the instrument, and the imagination.

**5. Bethel University – Creative Writing Department (Q&A about the production) – Tuesday, May 2nd, 10:15-11:00AM. Susan Brooks. **10 students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Kiara, Wendy***

\* Gives students with a passion for writing the tools to more uniquely and creatively express themselves. It is an opportunity for students to hone their creative talents while strengthening critical communication skills. This was a one-time event put together by the Creative Writing Department.

**6. Bethel University – ENGL 100: Intro to Creative Writing – Tuesday, May 2nd, 11:10-12:30PM. Angela Shannon. **20 Students.** *Michelle, Stuart, Kiara, Wendy***

\* The class just started their unit on drama. It's the last genre for Creative Writing. The students will be writing a one-act play or a (10 page) scene. They are learning about the elements of writing a play and how it differs from prose, fiction, and poetry. They will also do a stage-reading of some of the plays they write.

**ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Total Tickets Purchased**

**Total Participants: 128**

**Total Tickets Purchased: 30**

**Note: The total tickets purchased was confirmed by the MN Jewish Theatre Company Box Office.**

**ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Survey Results**

**1. Have you seen a play before?**

**58 YES (85%) 10 NO**

**2. Have you been to this specific theater before?**

**4 YES 64 NO (94%)**

**3. After our visit, do you feel more inclined to see the play?**

**42 YES (62%) 25 NO 1 MAYBE**

**4. Do you now feel more inclined to see other plays at this theater?**

**41 YES (63%) 23 NO 1 MAYBE**

**Note: This survey was issued to participants in four of the six discussions.**

## **ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons* – Discussion Agenda**

**Lucas** will welcome everyone, thank the teacher/sponsor, say why we are there, ask who has seen play/been to MJTC, why we want you to see a play, and pass it off to the actors to introduce themselves and why do you go to theater and why is important for others to go.

**Michelle and Stuart** will briefly set up the play/weigh in about their personal take on it.

**Michelle** will set up the first scene between Rosie (read by **Michelle**) and Lenny (read by **Stuart**) (pg. 30-34).

Ask audience what they heard/thought.

Discussion follows (Life-altering events, caretaking, etc.).

**Stuart** sets up the next scene between Rosie (read by **Michelle**), Lenny (read by **Stuart**), and Grace (read by **Alyssa/Kiara**) (pg. 52-56).

Ask audience what they heard/thought.

Discussion follows (identity, etc.).

Final questions.

**Lucas** will remind everyone how to get \$14 tickets to *We are the Levinsons*, and final plug for MJTC.

End.

## **ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons* – Topics/Themes**

1. Life-Altering Events
  - a. Loss of Lil
  - b. Rosie's job
    - i. Relationship with daughter reflected
    - ii. What is the responsibility of parent/child when family dynamic is altered?
  - c. How do you reconcile your identity when you lose part of it?
  - d. What would you say to a person in your life to resolve a conflict before losing them? What would it change?
    - i. What are the unanswered questions/unfinished business left behind after a loss?
    - ii. What do you take for granted with those you love?
2. Identity
  - a. How do we receive clues to another's identity?
    - i. Sight
      1. Clothes
      2. Hair
      3. Objects
      4. Gait
      5. Movements
    - ii. Sound
      1. Voice
      2. Mood/Tone
    - iii. In what ways are stereotypes useful? Not useful?
      1. How does it lead to prejudice?
  - b. How are gender identity and sexual identity related yet not inter-dependent?
3. Caretaking
  - a. Independence
    - i. For elders
    - ii. For caretakers
  - b. Do we live in a society that celebrates age? Or does it become a burden?
  - c. Your life trajectory – does it include someone taking care of you as you age?
  - d. There is no 'instruction manual' for taking care of our elders/parents

## **ON STAGE: We are the Levinsons– Feedback**

*Lucas,*

*It was wonderful. This class is pretty special and in general is open to contributing. I thought the scenes were appropriate for public health and the actors who participated were really great at facilitating the conversations. Overall, I was really pleased and would welcome you back any time.*

*Thank you again -- it was really great.*

*Susi Keefe – Hamline University*

*Lucas,*

*I thought that it was very informative and educational to have the playwright and actors in class to read from the script, as well as to have a dialogue by professionals in the field.*

*Thanks again,*

*Angela Shannon – Bethel University*

*Hi Lucas,*

*Thanks for all you did to make this day a success. The sessions exceeded my expectations! It was absolutely great to have a couple of scenes to talk about and I loved the way that the conversation bounced between the actors, Wendy and the audiences. I wish we had been able to increase attendance in the first session--we've learned some lessons about timing, buy-in, etc. and will apply those in the future!*

*I really don't have any suggestions for improvement on your end. You were really great to work with--helpful, organized and kept us focused on the goal (What plays are on next year?).*

*Susan Brooks – Bethel University*

*I thought the program was very much successful--here's what was the best thing I observed: students connecting the emotionally-charged issues expressed in the scenes to their own lives. As an instructor it was so helpful to have your even-keeled organizational style putting this all together. Here's where I think it could improve the program: now that we know what this thing is, we can bring the excited attitude toward Twin Cities theatre into the classrooms. We should be engaging the students in meaningful discussion and leaving them wanting more--which we offer to them in the form of discount tickets to deepen understanding and further the conversation.*

*Stuart Gates – Actor*



## **ON STAGE: We are the Levinsons– Feedback**

*Now that you have come here to talk about this play and the Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, I definitely will check out some shows there... I had no idea it was so close. I also know about five theaters in Minnesota, and there are way more than that, so it is nice to learn about other local theaters.*

*Student – Concordia University*

*Super awesome. So rarely do readers get to think about a work of literature, form opinions and then get to ask the writer what their original intentions were. I felt closer to the play after talking to the playwright and the actors.*

*Student – Bethel University*

*I'm really unfamiliar with plays and the whole process. I've grown up going to the theater and seeing plays my whole life, which I love! But the behind the scenes is what I didn't know a lot about. Having them come really opened my eyes to the whole process. Hearing the actors explain the way they get into character and how playwrights write for years, always editing their piece – all of it was so interesting! I loved it!*

*Student – Bethel University*

# ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons* – Sample Contract

## PROJECT CONTRACT

### *On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater*

This Agreement is made effective as of **10/15/16** by and between **On Stage**, and the following individual ("Actor")

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES AND PAYMENT.** Actor will receive compensation for providing the following services/expenses including but not limited to: 6 discussions (\$600), 4 planning meetings (\$200), facilitator prep time (\$150), and parking expenses (\$20).
2. **TOTAL PAYMENT.** On Stage will pay total compensation for services in the amount of **\$970**. Payment will be sent directly to the Actor from On Stage at the address listed above at a date postmarked on or before **11/14/16**.
3. **TERM/TERMINATION.** This Agreement shall terminate automatically on **11/14/16**.
4. **RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES.** It is understood by the parties that the Actor is an independent contractor with respect to On Stage, and not an employee or contractor of On Stage.
5. **WORK PRODUCT OWNERSHIP.** Any copyrightable works, ideas, discoveries, inventions, patents, products, or other information (collectively, the "Work Product") developed in whole or in part in connection with the Services Rendered shall be the exclusive property of On Stage.
6. **NAME AND LIKENESS.** Actor agrees to allow On Stage full use of their name, likeness, voice, testimonial, and/or portrayal in whole or in part, severally or in conjunction with other material, for any documentation and marketing purposes at any time including after determination of this agreement.
7. **ENTIRE AGREEMENT.** This Agreement contains the entire agreement of the parties, and there are no other promises or conditions in any other agreement whether oral or written. The actor waves any liability against On Stage.
9. **SEVERABILITY.** If any provision of this Agreement shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the remaining provisions shall continue to be valid and enforceable. If a court finds that any provision of this Agreement is invalid or unenforceable, but that by limiting such provision it would become valid and enforceable, then such provision shall be deemed to be written, construed, and enforced as so limited.
10. **APPLICABLE LAW.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.

This Project Contract is executed and agreed to by:

**ACTOR**

(Printed Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Date Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**ON STAGE**

(Printed Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Project Manager)

(Date Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

## **ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Financials**

- **Michelle O’Neill (Facilitator) - \$970**
  - \* 6 discussions (\$600), 2 planning meetings (\$100), facilitator prep-time (\$150), bonus discussion (\$100), and parking expenses (\$20).
- **Stuart Gates (Facilitator) - \$970**
  - \* 6 discussions (\$600), 2 planning meetings (\$100), facilitator prep-time (\$150), bonus discussion (\$100), and parking expenses (\$20).
- **Kiara Jackson (Actor) - \$520**
  - \* 4 discussions (\$400), bonus discussion (\$100), and parking expenses (\$20).
- **Alyssa DiVirgilio (Actor) - \$220**
  - \* 2 discussions (\$200) and parking expenses (\$20).
- **Wendy Kout (Playwright) - \$220**
  - \* 2 discussions (\$200) and parking expenses (\$20).
- **Lucas Erickson - \$669**
  - \* Planning and coordination of all On Stage discussions (\$500), printing and copying (\$74), space rental (\$50), miscellaneous (\$25), and parking expenses (\$20).

**TOTAL: \$3,569**

Notes: 1 discussion (1 hour in length) is \$100, 1 rehearsal (1 hour in length) is \$50, 1 extra meeting (1 hour in length) is \$50 (not listed on the above budget), prep-time for the facilitator is \$150, and the coordination stipend is \$500. The number of classroom/community visits (5) is an approximate number. The total number of actors/facilitators in the program (3) is an approximate number. These fees are based on a similar program that was used at the Guthrie Theater (*Creating Dialogue*) and Project SUCCESS (fiscal sponsor pilot program). The program emphasizes education, and is not a performance piece. The discussions will take place in college classrooms and community spaces (i.e. library room, public meeting room, etc.).

ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Marketing

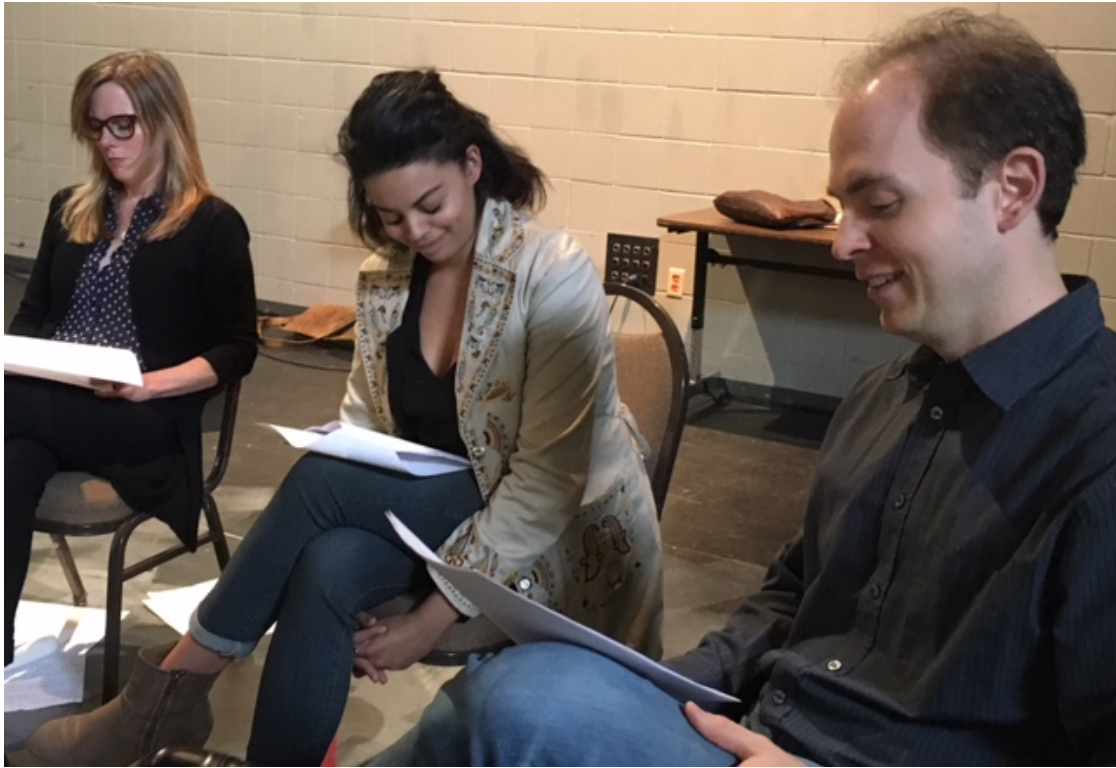
Minnesota Jewish  
Theatre Company

Igniting your mind by touching your heart.  
(Even if you're not Jewish!)

Use code **"ONSTAGE"** to reserve  
514 tickets online for Wednesday &  
Thursday night performances!  
<http://wearethelevinsons.bpt.me>

**We are the  
LeVINSONS**  
By  
Wendy Kout

ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Photos



ON STAGE: *We are the Levinsons*– Photos



## ON STAGE: Total Outreach

*An Octoroon* (Mixed Blood Theater – Fiscal Sponsor: Project SUCCESS)

Total Participants: **196**

Total Tickets Purchased: **115**

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*A Raisin in the Sun* (Park Square Theater)

Total Participants: **190**

Total Tickets Purchased: **100**

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*Anna in the Tropics* (Jungle Theater)

Total Participants: **142**

Total Tickets Purchased: **73**

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*We are the Levinsons* (MN Jewish Theatre Co.)

Total Participants: **128**

Total Tickets Purchased: **30**

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**TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 656**

**TOTAL TICKETS PURCHASED: 318**

**\* 48% OF THE STUDENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS WE HAVE VISITED SAW THE PLAY THAT WE DISCUSSED.**

## **The Need For A Younger Theater Audience**

NEA 2012 Survey: The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) is the largest and most comprehensive survey of U.S. arts participation, with a total sample size exceeding 37,000 adults, ages 18 and over.

- Adults who attended performing arts or visited museums as children were three to four times as likely to see shows or visit museums as adults. Exposure to the arts in childhood turns out to be a stronger predictor of adult arts participation than education, gender, age, or income.
- Technology is a great enabler of arts creation and participation. In 2012, nearly three-quarters of American adults—about 167 million people—used electronic media to view or listen to art.
- 12.3 percent of adults in 2002 said they had attended a non-musical play in the past year; only 8.3 percent of adults in 2012 could say the same.
- The average age of those attending classical music performances, the ballet, jazz concerts and plays is increasing. This is not just because the median age of the general population is creeping up as well; it is the result of one generation of audience members not being adequately replaced by the next.
- The average age of the theatergoer for touring Broadway is 52 (according to The Broadway League).

June 17, 2012, Boston Globe:

“The Boston area is home to an estimated 250,000 college students from September to June. In other words, there is a huge population of 18-to-22-year-olds at more than 65 colleges and universities, quite a few of whom are eager, even desperate, for something to do off-campus on the weekends. Many who go to college here settle down in the area after graduation; they are the logical foundation of Boston theater’s future. So, theoretically, Boston should be the perfect laboratory for experiments in how to attract young adults to the theater, right? ... Intellectual curiosity and a spirit of cultural adventure are, or should be, cornerstones of higher education” (Don Aucoin).