



CONTACT:

Nikki Battestilli

Marketing Director

nbattestilli@citytheatrecompany.org

CityTheatreCompany.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CITY THEATRE RECEIVES GRANT AWARD
FROM NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

*The grant will support City Theatre's commissioned play, **The Rivers Don't Know**, about immigration in Pittsburgh.*

Pittsburgh, PA (February 24, 2021): City Theatre is pleased to be an award recipient in the first round of the 2021 Grants for Arts Projects (GAP) from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The **Grants for Arts Projects (GAP)** awards range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 and cover these artistic disciplines: Artist Communities, Arts Education, Dance, Design, Folk & Traditional Arts, Literary Arts, Local Arts Agencies, Media Arts, Museums, Music, Musical Theater, Opera, Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works, Theater, and Visual Arts. **City Theatre is one of 1,073 national projects that were funded and, at \$25,000, received the largest grant from the theater discipline in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.**

"The creativity and resilience of artists and arts organizations across the country have inspired Americans during this challenging year," said **Arts Endowment Acting Chairman Ann Eilers**. "These projects represent the vitality and perseverance of arts organizations small and large to overcome significant challenges, transform to new ways of engagement, and forge new relationships that benefit the diverse populations in neighborhoods and cities throughout the United States."

The award received by City Theatre will support the creation of a community-centered new play by **Jim McManus** featuring stories of immigration in Pittsburgh. The project is created in collaboration with director **Michael John Garcés** and **Cornerstone Theater Company**. Over the past year Mr. McManus and Mr. Garcés have conducted interviews and story circles (both in person and virtually during the pandemic) with immigrant communities and partner organizations throughout Pittsburgh. Mr. McManus has since brought those stories to life in a new play titled ***The Rivers Don't Know***, which will now premiere as part of City Theatre's 2021/2022 season (the project was originally announced, prior to the pandemic, for production later this spring).

"Writing a play where the words are not strictly from my imagination, but from people who sat across from me feels like a sacred trust," said **Playwright Jim McManus**. "I can conjure the faces and feel the words of those who shared difficult and joyous moments from their lives about the struggles and

triumphs of being an immigrant or refugee in a new city. I want to be careful with the pieces of their lives that they were brave enough to share while at the same time crafting a script that will engage an audience and give a fuller account of their lives than is often shared in the news. I feel a weight to get it ‘right’ because that feels to me what every person and every community deserves.”

Lead support for *The Rivers Don’t Know* comes from the **Allegheny Regional Asset District’s RADical ImPact program**, made in honor of RAD’s 25th Anniversary in 2019. City Theatre was one of only 12 organizations funded by this initiative ([learn more](#)). With RAD’s support, City Theatre has commissioned and developed the play and engaged several community partners including **ARYSE, The All for All Coalition powered by the Global Switchboard, Global Minds, Literary Pittsburgh, JFCS Refugee & Immigrant Services, and World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh.**

ABOUT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov) to learn more.

ABOUT CITY THEATRE:

Founded in 1975, City Theatre is in its 46th season as Pittsburgh’s home for bold new plays. Located in the historic South Side on its four-building cultural campus, the company produces a season of regional and world premieres; its renowned Young Playwrights Festival, celebrating its 21st year; a season-long reading series of new works in progress; and the annual Momentum Festival. City Theatre’s mission is to provide an artistic home for the development and production of contemporary plays of substance and ideas that engage and challenge a diverse audience. With a pre-Covid annual average operating budget of \$3 million, City is the largest performing arts organization not located in Pittsburgh’s downtown Cultural District and is a constituent and core member of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), Theatre Communications Group (TCG), and the National New Play Network (NNPN). Marc Masterson returned as Artistic Director in July 2018, after an 18-year absence, to join Managing Director James McNeel as co-leaders of the organization.

*Like almost all performing arts organizations, City Theatre was forced to halt its 2019-2020 season on March 12, 2020 due to the Covid-19 national crisis. Its modified 46th season began in September with a reimagined line-up of shows, including the creation of a live, outdoor drive-in theatrical experience at Hazelwood Green. Over the course of seven weeks, City Theatre provided more live performances – including presenting 11 local organizations and groups, as well as Manual Cinema’s *Frankenstein* – than any other Pittsburgh organization. The 2020-21 season has continued this winter with virtual content and productions, including *Claws Out: A Holiday Drag Musical*, *F**k7thGrade* by Jill Sobule & Liza Birkenmeier, and the 21st Young Playwrights Festival. City Theatre looks to return to in-person performances when safe and allowed by health officials.*

City Theatre has received significant general operating support and/or recent Covid emergency funding from the Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Heinz Endowments, Hillman Family Foundations, Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Shubert Foundation.

###