Victory Gardens Theater and the Illinois Holocaust Museum announce season-wide partnership

Chicago, IL—Victory Gardens Theater and Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center (IHMEC) announce an innovative programming partnership to further their shared goals of combating hatred, prejudice, and indifference. Performances will be held at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, while related programs and exhibitions will be held at Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie.

“Both the Museum and Victory Gardens are committed to engaging audiences with stories of historical and contemporary struggles and triumphs. As we explored our partnership, we realized the incredible overlap between the themes in our exhibits and Victory Garden’s performances over the coming year. It’s thrilling to be able to present a year of thought-provoking programming together,” says Susan Abrams, CEO of the Illinois Holocaust Museum.

“We’re extremely proud to embark on this year-long partnership with the Illinois Holocaust Museum,” states Victory Gardens Artistic Director, Chay Yew. “We remain committed to making American Theatre accessible and relevant to all people, igniting civic dialogue on issues of social justice and equity, and creating meaningful societal change especially in these challenging times.”

Shoshana Buchholz-Miller, Vice President of Education and Exhibitions at Illinois Holocaust Museum comments, “We hope by bringing together our two arts organizations, we will reach a broad audience to explore timely topics through multiple mediums, inspiring people to be Upstanders, as opposed to bystanders.”

Tickets for the 2018-19 Victory Gardens season will be available at the Victory Gardens Box Office, located at 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, 773.871.3000 and www.victorygardens.org. IHMEC members will receive 25% off performances on the following dates: Indecent (September 21 – 27, 2018), Rightlynd (November 9-15, 2018), Pipeline (February 1–7, 2019), Cambodian Rock Band (April 5–11, 2019) and Miriam for President (June 7–13, 2018).

Tickets to the events at IHMEC will be free to Museum members or with paid Museum admissions for nonmembers and will be available for purchase on the Museum’s events page at https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/. Victory Gardens Theater goers will receive 20% off adult tickets with the use of a promo code.

Schedule of Events:

INDECENT
Program: #WhyArtMatters
Date: Tuesday, October 2 at 6:30pm
Location: Illinois Holocaust Museum

Cast members from Indecent will perform selections from the powerful, award-winning play, followed by a panel discussion about #WhyArtMatters? The panelists will explore the responsibility of the artist in
times of injustice, oppression and censorship; and how theater has created change throughout history and remains a tool of activism today.

**About Indecent**
Written by Paula Vogel  
Directed by Gary Griffin  
September 21-November 4, 2018  
Press Opening: September 28, 2018

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*) tells the deeply moving story of the controversial 1923 Broadway debut of Jewish playwright Sholem Asch's *God of Vengeance* — a play about a forbidden lesbian romance that enchanted and outraged audiences. Inspired by true events, *Indecent*, is performed by an ensemble of seven actors and three musicians portraying more than 40 roles to chart an explosive moment in theatrical history and the artists who risked their careers and lives to perform it. Award winner Gary Griffin (*Hand to God, Fun Home*) returns to Victory Gardens to direct this 2017 Tony Award-nominated play.

**CAMBODIAN ROCK BAND**
Program: Exploring the Cambodian Genocide through Theater and Music  
Date: Sunday, January 13, 2019 – 2:00pm  
Location: Illinois Holocaust Museum

Cast members of Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band* will present a scene and a song from the production, followed by an in-depth conversation of the human cost of the Cambodian Genocide. Discussion will be inspired by Cambodian refugee objects and images from IHMEC’s exhibit *Stories of Survival: Object.Image.Memory*. Audience members will also have an opportunity to experience the full exhibit.

**About Cambodian Rock Band**
Written by Lauren Yee  
Directed by Marti Lyons  
April 5 – May 5, 2019  
Press Opening: April 12, 2019

Part comedy, part mystery, part rock concert, this thrilling story toggles back and forth in time, as father and daughter face the music of the past. Neary, a young Cambodian American, has found evidence that could finally put away individuals who carried out the Cambodian genocide. But her work is far from done. When Dad shows up unannounced—his first return to Cambodia since fleeing 30 years ago—it's clear this isn't just a pleasure trip. A wild rock-and-roll journey through the eyes of father and daughter, Artistic Director Chay Yew brings the world premiere journey of Lauren Yee's (*Samsara*) *Cambodian Rock Band* from South Coast Repertory Theatre to Victory Gardens.

**About Stories of Survival: Object.Image.Memory (Open through Jan 13, 2019)**
*Stories of Survival* features personal artifacts, photographed by Jim Lommasson, and brought to America by local Survivors of the Holocaust and genocides, including Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Syria. Photographs with written text by Survivors and their family members describe the object’s significance and history as well as the objects are showcased in the exhibition. Curated in honor of the Museum’s 10th anniversary, this exhibition will then travel to other venues beginning in 2019.

**PIPELINE**
Program: School to Prison Pipeline  
Date: Thursday, February 28, 2019 – 6:30pm  
Location: Illinois Holocaust Museum

This event will begin with cast members from *Pipeline* presenting a scene from the production, followed by a panel discussion about the school to prison pipeline. The panel will explore the parallels between the effects of this phenomena on inner-city youth and in the themes of the exhibit *Purchased Lives: The American Slave Trade From 1808 to 1865*. 

About *Pipeline*
Written by Dominique Morisseau
Directed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce
February 1 – March 3, 2019
Press Opening: February 8, 2019

Nya, an inner-city public high school teacher, is committed to her students but desperate to give her only son, Omari, opportunities her students will never have. When a controversial incident at his private school threatens to get him expelled, Nya must confront his rage and her own choices as a parent. But will she be able to reach him before a world beyond her control pulls him away? With profound compassion and poetry, Dominique Morisseau's (*Skeleton Crew, Detroit 66,* and the Broadway-bound *Ain’t Too Proud to Beg*) *Pipeline* brings to light a powerful and important conversation about parenthood, the state of our public school system, and the prison pipeline that claims so many of our inner city youth.

About *Purchased Lives: The American Slave Trade From 1808 – 1865 (Feb 10- Aug 25, 2019)*

*Purchased Lives* uses original artifacts, documents, paintings, prints, and photographs that illustrate the domestic slave trade, along with first person accounts of being enslaved. Three interactive components allow visitors to engage directly with the historical record, tracking the shipment of more than 70,000 people to New Orleans from other US coastal ports; the Freedom to Move map highlighting the experiences of fugitive slaves; and the Lost Friends database, which includes searchable ads placed by freed slaves looking for family members.

The remaining productions in Victory Gardens 2018-19 season include:

**RIGHTLYND**
Date: November 9 – December 23, 2018
Location: Victory Gardens Theater
Written by Ike Holter
Directed by Lisa Portes
November 9 – December 23, 2018
Press Opening: November 16, 2018

Rightlynd is Chicago's 51st Ward. The L doesn't run here anymore and it is full of abandoned storefronts, crumbling apartment buildings, and its fair share of crime. A powerful real estate conglomerate is planning a massive redevelopment project that would gentrify the neighborhood and change Rightlynd forever. Only one woman stands in the way: Alderman Nina Esposito. In award-winning local playwright Ike Holter's ambitious new work, one woman tries to use her street smarts and raw determination to save the Chicago neighborhood she loves. But will the political machine turn her into the very person she is trying to destroy? Lisa Portes (*BREACH, A Little Bit Not Normal*) directs the first play that sets in motion Holter’s ongoing seven play saga set in this fictional Windy City neighborhood; the story cycle that includes previous pieces *Exit Strategy, Sender, Prowess,* and *The Wolf at the End of the Block.*

**MIRIAM FOR PRESIDENT**
Date: June 7 – July 7, 2019
Location: Victory Gardens Theater
Written by Madhuri Shekar
Directed by Artistic Director Chay Yew
June 7 – July 7, 2019
Press Opening: June 14, 2019

Miriam hates to be known as “that girl who got kidnapped then escaped that sex trafficking ring.” She wants to be known as Miriam, your top candidate for student council president at Roosevelt High School. But her parents, counselor, and best friend keep insisting that she's not ready. But what do they know? What do they really know about what happened to Miriam? From Madhuri Shekar, the author of *Queen,* comes a powerful play about survival, rebirth, and the silent crime of human trafficking in Chicago.

About the Illinois Holocaust Museum
Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, located at 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, IL, honors the Survivors and victims of the Holocaust and transforms history into current, relevant, and universal lessons in humanity. Through world-class exhibitions and programs, the Museum inspires individuals and organizations and provides a universal wake-up call to action: Take history to heart. Take a stand for humanity. The Museum is open daily from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and Thursday evenings until 8:00 p.m. Learn more at https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/.

About Victory Gardens Theater
Under the leadership of Artistic Director Chay Yew and Managing Director Erica Daniels, Victory Gardens is dedicated to artistic excellence while creating a vital, contemporary American Theater that is accessible and relevant to all people through productions of challenging new plays and musicals. Victory Gardens Theater is committed to the development, production and support of new plays that has been the mission of the theater since its founding, set forth by Dennis Začek, Marcelle McVay, and the original founders of Victory Gardens Theater.

Victory Gardens Theater is a leader in developing and producing new theater work and cultivating an inclusive Chicago theater community. Victory Gardens' core strengths are nurturing and producing dynamic and inspiring new plays, reflecting the diversity of our city's and nation's culture through engaging diverse communities, and in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, bringing art and culture to our city's active student population.

Since its founding in 1974, the company has produced more world premieres than any other Chicago theater, a commitment recognized nationally when Victory Gardens received the 2001 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. Located in the Lincoln Park neighborhood, Victory Gardens Biograph Theater includes the Začek-McVay Theater, a state-of-the-art 259-seat mainstage and the 109-seat studio theater on the second floor, named the Richard Christiansen Theater.


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