

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Prime Stage Theatre and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh Honors Genocide Awareness Month providing *Education and Learning Resources for Teachers, Kids and Adults***

***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to  
change the world,” said Nelson Mandela.***

(Pittsburgh, PA – April 17, 2021) **Prime Stage Theatre** and the **Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh** is aware of the challenges teachers face daily and they are excited about bringing literature to life remotely with free at-home learning resources and an innovative global classroom opportunity.

In conjunction with the original production of ***Miracle in Rwanda*** in honor of **Genocide Awareness Month Prime Stage Theatre** and the **Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh** is offering a multitude of education and learning resources for teachers, kids and adults.

"In all of our partnership efforts, the **Holocaust Center** and **Prime Stage** have been focused on how our work supports the efforts of teachers and student learning. **Miracle in Rwanda** has opened up a new part of the world for many in our region, and I am eager for schools to view the play and learn more about resilience, faith, and forgiveness, while experiencing the power of theater," said **Lauren Bairnsfather**, Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh Director.

Proudly presented by **The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh** and **Prime Stage Theater** this production of ***Miracle in Rwanda*** is written by **Leslie Malaika Lewis** and **Edward Vilga**. The uplifting play of forgiveness and compassion is based on the the life of New York Times bestselling author of *Left To Tell*, **Immaculée Ilibagiza**. Acclaimed Rwandan actor, singer, poet and social justice activist **Malaika Uwamahoro** stars in this production of the one-woman play. It is directed by **Steven Wilson**.

Genocide is the intentional action to destroy a people—usually defined as an ethnic, national, racial, or religious group—in whole or in part. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was a systematic campaign by the ethnic majority Hutus aimed at wiping out every member of the minority Tutsi group. From April 7 through July 4, 1994, during a 100 day period an estimated 1 million Tutsi people were slaughtered.

The play is about much more than just the details of this dark period in time of Rwandan history. It is a play about **Immaculée Ilibagiza**, a 24-year-old woman who hid in a tiny bathroom with seven other women for 91 days, surviving the unprecedented onslaught of rape and murder that overcame the country in the spring of 1994. **Immaculée** was able to survive the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi through prayer and her dedication to her faith that kept her afloat in the most trying of times. Through this faith she was able to walk away with the power of forgiveness.

“Through inspirational theatrical works and partnerships like ***Miracle in Rwanda***, we raise awareness and open up worlds by bringing literature and history to life. The education programs of ***Miracle in Rwanda***, like Global Classroom, will inspire young people and adults all over the world to not be a bystander but instead help others and stop violence wherever they see it. We are proud and honored to bring this true story of faith, hope and forgiveness to life,” said **Wayne Brinda**, Prime Stage Theatre Producing Artistic Director.

For over 25 years, **Prime Stage Theatre** has been dedicated to providing teachers and students with in-school and outreach programs that help everyone understand, enjoy and appreciate literature and the arts. Now with the new approaches of teaching and performing they also provide Virtual Online Programs, Virtual Act 48 workshops and live streaming performances. Lesson plans and resource guides are accessible through their website.

“We were able to work with staff at the **Pittsburgh Holocaust Center** to create an educators’ guide that provides activities, background and historical context. We are very proud of this one! It also became apparent that we needed a resource guide for adult theater patrons. It is our hope that providing more information on this subject matter, specifically the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, will give them a deeper experience of the show but, more importantly instill curiosity and inspire others to educate themselves on genocide and mass atrocities and even take action against it,” said **Monica Stephenson**, Education Coordinator, Prime Stage Theatre.

We are haunted by the stories and images of too many mass atrocities. Remembrance is very important. We owe it to the victims and their families. Teaching younger generations about genocide is challenging, but it is a moral duty for genocide prevention and awareness through education.

“The educational element of this production is as important as the production itself. Blending **Prime Stage's** programming and the strengths of the **Holocaust Center's** educational team is going to make this a rewarding experience, not just for the students but all of us,” said **Tina Marie Cerny**, Prime Stage Theatre Managing Director, “Prime Stage Theatre’s Global Classroom is a special opportunity for students to connect, share ideas and experiences, and discuss theater productions. We use video conferencing technology to connect schools in multiple locations; allowing students to

“meet” virtually and talk with other students they would never have encountered in their everyday lives.”

Global learning breaks down national borders and enables participants to share problems and challenges that ultimately affect everyone because of the interconnectedness of today’s world. The Global Learning program creates opportunities that foster students’ understanding of the intersection between their lives and global issues and their sense of responsibility as local and global citizens. This also presents opportunities for understanding and encouraging diversity and commonalities among the world’s peoples, cultures, nations, and regions.

"We are thrilled to again collaborate with the **Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh** in preparing our Global Classroom. We look forward to bringing together (virtually) students from different locations to explore this important and timely subject during Genocide Awareness Month," said **Ken Lutz**, Prime Stage Theatre Global Classroom Coordinator.

This year’s Global Classroom experience is centered on our upcoming production of ***Miracle in Rwanda*** and will take place in collaboration with the **Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh** and the **Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre** and will include students from area schools and organizations as well as those in African countries. In order to accommodate international time zones, Global Classroom will take place virtually at 8 AM EST on Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

"As Education Director/Teaching Artist for Prime Stage Theatre, I am proud to be a part of the educational collaboration with the **Holocaust Center** for this most important production. It is a great addition to our Global Classroom learning program and I look forward to our next collaboration in the upcoming seasons," said **Linda Haston**, Prime Stage Theatre Education Director.

Global Classroom signup is on the website at <https://forms.gle/FfwYhywpJqqtprSNA>

## TICKET INFORMATION FOR MIRACLE IN RWANDA

**Tickets and registrations:** <https://hcofpgh.org/rwanda>

A recorded link 24-hour access pass will be available through April 26, 2021 and will be available with ***Audio Description and Closed Caption in English, French and Kinyarwanda (National language of Rwanda)***. To view:

[Miracle in Rwanda](http://video.primestage.com/) <http://video.primestage.com/>

## Classroom Registration for Student Matinees:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/miracle-in-rwanda-student-matinee-tickets-145897185409>

**Group Tickets: Contact Jackie Reese at [jreese@hcpgh.org](mailto:jreese@hcpgh.org)**

**Link for Miracle in Rwanda teaser: <https://vimeo.com/533165265> and the video can be downloaded directly from there.**



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