



MEMORANDUM

Community Services Department

DATE: February 17, 2021

TO: Performing Arts Committee

FROM: Noelle Magner, Business Manager
Scott Whisler, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2019-20 Annual Review for SecondStage Home Company
Upstage Theater

BACKGROUND

As of October 2018 Upstage Theater and the City of Mountain View (CITY) have entered into the process to execute a SecondStage Home Company Agreement. The initial agreement will be for a one (1) year term. If both parties find the agreement to be mutually beneficial, Upstage Theatre will have the option to extend this agreement into a three (3) year term com. Due to changes in City staff and procedures this agreement is still in the process of being executed, but Center staff are operating as if it were technically in force. Upstage Theater is a theater company solely run by teenagers. It is an organization founded in 2016, whose mission is to provide opportunities to teens of all backgrounds from across the Bay Area to participate in every aspect of theater, allowing them to hone their skills in both acting and production work.

The SecondStage Home Company agreement requires Upstage Theater to perform a minimum of six performances, offer at least three different production titles, and perform more than 50 percent of their total performances at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (MVCPA). The company must also identify itself as a Mountain View SecondStage Home Company in appropriate publicity and meet certain outreach requirements. SecondStage Home Company status benefits each organization and meets MVCPA program functions of providing entertainment, education, and community outreach opportunities. The agreement terms also preserve and protect

dates historically used by Home Companies as well as by other organizations during the primary booking process.

One of the requirements of the SecondStage Home Company Agreement is an annual review meeting. The annual review meeting is meant to ensure the terms of the agreement are being met by both Upstage Theater and CITY; to discuss sales, fees, rates and use days; to bring up any concerns or issues that might be unresolved; and to discuss new ideas that could benefit both organizations. Performing Arts Center staff will provide an overview of ticket sales, total expenses, usage days and current rates for discussion. The meeting is also an opportunity to highlight the benefits that Upstage Theater brings to our community through various outreach programs and their participation in Performing Arts Committee (PAC) sponsored events in return for the reduction in fees and booking priority afforded by their SecondStage Home Company status.

ANALYSIS

For the 2019-2020 season Upstage Theater planned to present three productions which included *Radium Girls*, *Witness for the Prosecution* and *Carrie the Musical*. During this fiscal year the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts was greatly impacted due to the ongoing public health crisis of Covid- 19. To ensure the safety of our patrons, clients and staff the performing arts center shut down on March 15, 2020 and has not reopened. This closure included both of Upstage's productions *Witness for the Prosecution* and *Carrie the Musical*, creating a total of seven cancelled performances. The accompanying summary and analysis is based on the data from their reduced season.

Upstage had a successful production of the *Radium Girls* selling over 270 tickets and grossing almost \$5,000 in ticket sales. The MVCPA shut down days before Upstage's second production, *Witness for the Prosecution*. Upstage rallied and planned to continue on with their season in a virtual capacity but due to unforeseen circumstances was not able to obtain the necessary rights and equipment to proceed with virtual productions.

As Upstage looks to building their 2020-2021 season, it is understood that live theater productions will not be viable in the near future. Upstage is adapting and implementing some special free programming which includes master classes with a focus toward college applications/auditions. Thus far, they have offered three master classes in college auditioning, college directing programs, and general audition techniques.



Beyond that, their winter play, currently scheduled for March 2021, is set to be a recorded as a virtual production of *Vintage Hitchcock: A Radio Play*. Upstage has also adapted their spring musical, *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, a live, but virtual format.

The MVCPA and Upstage Theater look forward to the safe return of in person live theater, but until then both parties remain optimistic and flexible. MVCPA greatly appreciates the ongoing partnership with our SecondStage Home Company, Upstage Theater and continue to look for ways to support them in this unprecedented time of theater.