

# TWO RIVER THEATER

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## **TWO RIVER THEATER CONCLUDES ITS 2013/14 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON, HIGHLIGHTED BY FAR-REACHING NEW-PLAY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

**Other significant achievements include the launch of new education and audience-engagement programs; numerous collaborations and community partnerships; and a 25% increase in Contributed Income**

RED BANK, NJ—Two River Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, has concluded its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, highlighted by far-reaching new-play development activities supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The season was bookended by the Two River directorial debuts of acclaimed actors Joel Grey (Paul Osborn's *On Borrowed Time*) and Michael Cumpsty (Wendy Wasserstein's *Third*).

Highlights of the year include the following achievements:

- The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation awarded the theater a \$40,000 grant through its Building Demand for the Arts program. With the support of this grant, Two River launched a new series of conversations and storytelling workshops created and led by award-winning playwright and television writer Tanya Saracho (*Girls, Looking*) and director Jerry Ruiz, curator of Two River's annual Crossing Borders festival. In addition to supporting their work as theater artists, this artistic outreach program is fostering a closer relationship between the theater and its Latino neighbors and building demand for theater among Latino audiences.
- Two River's commissioning program, launched in 2010 to create a pipeline for developing new work that contributes to the vitality and future of the American theater, continued to expand with commissions to playwright and actor Martin Moran (whose performances of his solo shows *The Tricky Part* and *All the Rage* were performed at the theater in repertory as *A Map of the Soul* in 2013/14) and Tony Meneses (author of *Guadalupe in the Guest Room*, which will have its world premiere in Two River's 2014/15 Season).
- The theater continued to develop Ruben Santiago-Hudson's *Your Blues Ain't Sweet like Mine* and the musical *Be More Chill*, written by the team of composer/lyricist Joe Iconis and

bookwriter Joe Tracz, in preparation for their world-premiere productions in 2014/15. Additional new-play development activities included separate week-long artist residencies with the New York-based company Clubbed Thumb and alumni from NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing program.

- In February, Two River produced Andrea Thome's new play *Pinkolandia*, directed by Jose Zayas, as part of Lark Play Development Center's "Launching New Plays into the Repertoire Initiative" supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Through this rolling world premiere, Two River supported the play's continued development, as well as conversations around the themes of exile, immigration, and home, alongside initiative partners 16th Street Theater in Chicago, INTAR Theatre in New York, and Salvage Vanguard Theater in Austin.
- In February, the theater launched a new annual program called A Little Shakespeare that brought a 75-minute version of *As You Like It*—adapted and directed by Jason McDowell-Green, designed by professional artists, and performed by high school students from six area schools—to the Marion Huber stage, with a week of performances overlapping director Michael Sexton's Rechnitz Theater production of the same play. TheaterWorks and No Seats Empty 2.0, which were launched in the 2012/13 Season to serve at-risk youth, were established as flagship programs. All of Two River's Education initiatives were augmented by opportunities for enhanced learning including curriculum support, in-school residencies, pre-show workshops, and/or post-show discussions.
- In April, Two River presented its first show for audiences aged 2 to 6 with *Hatched: Life on the Farm*, performed by the Treehouse Shakers.
- In a first-time partnership, Two River joined with New Jersey Performing Arts Center to co-produce Meredith Willson's *The Music Man: In Concert*. Directed by Obie Award-winner Robert O'Hara, with music direction by Kenny J. Seymour, America's favorite musical about big brass bands and small-town spirit was performed by an African-American cast for six sold-out performances in Red Bank and four performances in Newark.
- Other new collaborations in the 2013/14 Season included August Wilson's American Century Cycle, presented in New York by The Greene Space, for which Two River was a cultural partner; playing host to TEDx Navesink in May 2014; and poetry slams in partnership with the Loser Slam open-mic nights throughout the season.
- In the fall the theater launched "Inside Two River," an audience-development initiative designed to create a deeper level of engagement for new and current audiences. For each production, Two River now offers a series of free events and programs including open rehearsals featuring cast and artistic teams; humanities forums; guest lecturers; film screenings; and a Two River book club. This season's events attracted more than 3,000 audience members to the theater.
- In celebration of Two River's 20th Anniversary, the theater engaged Design Army, an award-winning graphic design firm located in Washington DC, to help refresh and unify its visual identity, including the Two River logo and show art.
- In June, Two River was honored with the 2014 Leadership Award from the Cultural Access Network Project, a co-sponsored project of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the

New Jersey Theatre Alliance. The award recognized Two River Theater's outstanding leadership in making its programs and facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

- During the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, Two River's contributed income increased 25% before taking into account founder support. The theater also secured funding for the first time from national foundations including the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### Two River's 2013/14 Season Supporters

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit theater, Two River keeps ticket prices low to make the theater accessible to everyone. In fact, only one-third of the theater's operations are support by tickets sales. Two River Theater enjoys support from hundreds of generous individuals, corporations, and foundations.

- Corporate sponsors for Two River's productions during the 2013/2014 Season included Durso Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley, Investors Bank, Monmouth University, the Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, Wells Fargo, Brookdale Community College, and ZAIS Group, among many others.
- Foundation support was provided by The Shubert Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Foundation, and the William T. Morris Foundation, among many others. The theater was also supported by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.
- Two River's education programs were supported by The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, the Mary Owen Borden Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Investors Foundation, and Jorgensen Foundation.
- The theater's access programs for seniors and individuals with disabilities were supported by the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and Springpoint Senior Living Foundation.
- In-kind support was provided by local businesses including the Molly Pitcher/Oyster Point Hotel, Courtyard Marriott, Flowers on Front, and Spirits Unlimited.
- Sponsors for Two River's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala included Meridian Health/Riverview Medical Center, Monmouth Medical Center, Monmouth University, and the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County, among many other businesses and individuals.

Two River Theater is supported in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a division within the Department of State and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Columbus Foundation, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, Monmouth University, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, Durso Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley, Monmouth Medical Center Foundation, Wells Fargo, Investors Bank, Brookdale Community College, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, William T. Morris Foundation, Springpoint Senior Living Foundation at the Atrium at Navesink Harbor, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and many other generous foundations, corporations and individuals.

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**Two River Theater**, under the leadership of Artistic Director John Dias and Managing Director Michael Hurst, creates great American theater performed by award-winning artists. We produce an eight-play season on two stages, including American and world masterpieces, and new plays and musicals. Two River Theater offers new-play commissions and artistic development activities that support the most adventurous artists in the American theater; invites its audience to be part of the creative process through readings and open rehearsals; and cultivates students and young people to participate in innovative arts-education programs and become a new generation of theatergoers. Founded in 1994 by Joan and Dr. Robert M. Rechnitz, Two River Theater is easily accessible by car, train, or bus, with great restaurants and shopping within walking distance of the theater. For more information, visit [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org) or call 732.345.1400.