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Mahaiwe Receives Support for Community Outreach and Inclusion

Great Barrington, Mass.–The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center recently received grants totally $114,000 in support of its 2019 community outreach and inclusion efforts. Funders include the Feigenbaum Foundation, the Town of Great Barrington’s Community Preservation Act program, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation’s Arts Build Community initiative with funding from the Barr Foundation, and Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Universal Participation Initiative.

“Here at the Mahaiwe, we are focusing our attention on engaging as broad and inclusive an audience base for our year-round programming as possible,” said Mahaiwe Executive Director Beryl Jolly. “We are greatly appreciative of our town, state and foundation funders, and local partners for supporting these community investments.”

So far in 2019, the Mahaiwe has received the following grants for these purposes:

A $70,000 Feigenbaum Foundation grant will be divided among the following Mahaiwe projects this year: $50,000 to support expanded, year-round arts education programs; the theater’s youth discount tickets to all live performances and HD broadcasts; and digital marketing and broad community outreach to new audiences. $20,000 will help fund capital projects.

The Town of Great Barrington’s Community Preservation Act program awarded $34,500 to fund ADA standard automatic door openers for a pair of doors at the front entrance of the Mahaiwe lobby and assisted-opening devices for the two accessible first-floor restrooms adjacent to the lobby. This project plays a critical role in literally opening doors to audience members in this historic 1905 theater.
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation’s Arts Build Community initiative with funding from the Barr Foundation awarded $6,500 to support the Mahaiwe’s efforts to welcome new audiences to live performances, including pre and post-show receptions to celebrate community spirit. Following the aims of the grant, the theater is reaching out primarily to adults in the Southern Berkshire County community through local non-profit partners, including Community Access to the Arts (CATA), Community Health Programs (CHP), Clinton Church Restoration, Literacy Network of South Berkshire, Multicultural BRIDGE, and Volunteers in Medicine.

Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Universal Participation Initiative granted $3,000 to fund Mahaiwe staff training in inclusive design and accessible audience engagement practices. Led by experts in the field, the Mahaiwe team learns with a cohort of nine other organizations from across the Commonwealth. The training addresses inclusive design for policy, information, communication, education, social, and physical environments. A central tenet is that design that works for everyone is the best design for all.

The Mahaiwe is also participating in Massachusetts Cultural Council’s EBT Card to Culture Program; all EBT Cardholders can receive four free Mahaiwe monthly movie tickets per monthly movie.

About the Mahaiwe
Located in downtown Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center is the year-round presenter of world-class music, dance, theater, classic films, Live in HD broadcasts, and arts education programs for the southern Berkshires and neighboring regions. The intimate jewel box of a theater opened in 1905. Since 2005, the performing arts center has hosted over 1,500 events and welcomed over half a million people through its doors. More than 20,000 students from 68 different schools have benefited from the Mahaiwe’s school-time performances and residencies. For more information, see www.mahaiwe.org.