



**Theater of War Productions and Brooklyn Public Library Present
Extended 10-Week Run of *ANTIGONE IN FERGUSON*
May 8 – July 13, 2019**

Free performances at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn to feature performances by live gospel choirs and leading actors including Paul Giamatti, Chris Noth, Amy Ryan, Obi Abili, Linda Powell, NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, and others

With support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), the expanded partnership will increase access to community-based services and resources across all five boroughs and spark community conversations on race, gender violence, and social justice

New York, NY – March 21, 2019 – **Theater of War Productions** and **Brooklyn Public Library** (BPL) today announced an extended 10-week run of FREE performances of Theater of War Productions' original project, *Antigone in Ferguson*, exclusively supported by the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)**. The partnership builds on the organizations' mission to engage diverse communities in discussions on the urgent issues of our time and to expand access to community-based services and resources across the five boroughs. *Antigone in Ferguson* opens on Wednesday, May 8 and continues through Saturday, July 13, 2019 at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn (157 Montague St.). The 800-seat church will provide thousands of audience members the opportunity to join the public conversation and raise awareness of timely social issues.

For the past two years, Brooklyn Public Library has served as a key partner in Theater of War Productions' tenure as Public Artist in Residence for the Department of Veterans' Services through the [Department of Cultural Affairs' Public Artist in Residence program \(PAIR\)](#). BPL will continue to provide critical support in marketing, audience curation, impact assessment and contribute to the development of new projects. In addition, through the ongoing partnership Theater of War Productions will extend its projects to an even broader cross-section of New Yorkers, engaging residents with artistic programming that is designed to destigmatize conversations around mental health, reduce isolation, promote greater connection among community members, and inspire positive action.

Following its longstanding support of Theater of War Productions, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) will exclusively support the 10-week run of *Antigone in Ferguson* at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church, providing free access to 50 performances for all attendees. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation will also provide generous lead support for the Theater of War Productions and Brooklyn Public Library partnership and was the sole supporter of Theater of War Productions' two-year PAIR residency and the previous five-week run of *Antigone in Ferguson* at Harlem Stage.

Antigone in Ferguson was conceived in the wake of Michael Brown's death in 2014, through a collaboration between Theater of War Productions and community members from Ferguson, MO. Translated and directed by Theater of War Productions Artistic Director **Bryan Doerries** and composed by **Phil Woodmore**, the project fuses a dramatic reading by leading actors of excerpts from Sophocles' Greek tragedy with live choral music performed by a choir of activists, police officers, youth, and concerned citizens from Ferguson and New York City. The performance is the catalyst for panel and audience-driven discussions about racialized violence, structural oppression, misogyny, gender violence, and social justice, which serve as the core component of the event.

“Brooklyn Public Library is excited to expand our partnership with Theater of War Productions, which uses narratives from the past to pose urgent questions about the present,” said **Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library**. “Through innovative programs like this one, the Library remains dedicated to fostering democratic dialogue about the most critical issues of our time.”

“Brooklyn Public Library has been an incredible partner to work with over the past two years, and our collaboration on *Antigone in Ferguson* will empower us to welcome even more audience members, from all walks of life, through the doors of the church and to continue the vital conversations we started in Ferguson, Baltimore, Harlem, and around the world,” said **Bryan Doerries, Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Theater of War Productions**. “With the generous support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, we are working to ensure all of New York has access to *Antigone in Ferguson*, bringing diverse communities together to engage in crucial conversations and inspiring positive change.”

“Theater of War Productions recognizes that theater can have the greatest impact when it is treated not as a product, but as a process, as an experience, one that meaningfully engages its audience,” said **Andreas Dracopoulos, Co-President of the SNF**. “*Antigone in Ferguson* is a perfect example of this, demonstrating the incomparable value of theater in opening conversations among a broad public where traditional dialogue falls short. The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is proud to support this critical work.”

During the *Antigone in Ferguson* run, Brooklyn Public Library and Theater of War Productions will work closely with various partners to engage audiences from across the city, providing interborough transportation and targeted outreach initiatives in order to encourage and facilitate diverse audience attendance for each event. To further deepen connections to the community, performances will be enriched by the participation of local choirs from around the five boroughs, who will join **The Phil Woodmore Singers** each week. Local choirs include the **Bethel Gospel Assembly**, **R.Evolución Latina**, **Brooklyn Interdenominational Choir**, **United Voices of Hope**, and **The Guardians** led by Sergeant Marcus Lewis, marking the first participation of full police choir in a run of *Antigone in Ferguson*.

Local stakeholders and community leaders will participate as panelists, assisting in opening up dialogues with audiences. These guided discussions aim to promote healing, access to resources, and bridge the growing divide between law enforcement and local communities.

The presentation will feature a rotating roster of acclaimed actors, including **Chris Noth** (“Sex and the City”), and **Obi Abili** (“Billions”), both who were featured in *Antigone in Ferguson* at Harlem Stage; along with **Paul Giamatti** (“Billions”); **David Strathairn** (*Good Night, and Good Luck*); **Amy Ryan** (“The Wire”); **Josh Hamilton** (“Eighth Grade”); **Linda Powell** (“Chicago Fire”); and New York City Public Advocate **Jumaane Williams**, a frequent participant in Theater of War Productions’ projects. Each week will feature a different group of actors.

BPL Presents, which offers cultural enrichment opportunities through the Library and beyond, presents boundary-pushing programs connecting internationally recognized writers, scholars, critics and artists with the broader public to discuss issues that are critical to Brooklyn’s communities and to the nation. Since 2017, in partnership with Theater of War Productions, classical Greek tragedies have been presented across Brooklyn to engage with the borough’s diverse audiences about gun violence, mental health, domestic abuse, and social justice. In addition to the 10-week run of *Antigone in Ferguson*, Theater of War Productions and BPL will work together to offer additional programming throughout Brooklyn to continue to build civic engagement and strengthen the fabric of the community, with details to be announced.

With nearly all of its services and events such as *Antigone in Ferguson* free to the public, BPL continues to be a leader in creating libraries for the 21st century, offering educational, career, cultural, and civic opportunities for all, providing a democratic space where citizens can engage in programs of the highest quality, and learn ways in which they might address the challenging personal and civic issues of our day.

Antigone in Ferguson at St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church

Presented by Theater of War Productions and Brooklyn Public Library

Translated and Directed by Bryan Doerries

Composed by Phil Woodmore

In association with THE OFFICE performing arts + film

Dates: May 8-July 13, 2019 (Wednesday through Saturday)

Time: 7:00pm (Saturdays: 2:00pm and 7:00pm)

Runtime: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Location: St. Ann & the Holy Trinity Church, 157 Montague St. between Henry St. and Clinton St.

Tickets: Tickets are FREE but RSVP is encouraged.

To RSVP please visit <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/antigone-in-ferguson>

For inquiries, please contact (917) 426-3233 or AlFinfo@theaterofwar.com

ABOUT ANTIGONE IN FERGUSON

Created in collaboration with citizens from St Louis and Ferguson whose lives were impacted by the death of Michael Brown, *Antigone in Ferguson* features an unconventional presentation of scenes from Sophocles' ancient Greek play. The staged readings, performed by leading television, film and theater actors, are accompanied by live music performed by a roster of local choirs who will complement The Phil Woodmore Singers, a St Louis-based gospel choir, featuring police officers, activists, youth, and members of the faith community. Notable members of the choir include Michael Brown's former teacher, Duane Foster, and Lt. Latricia Allen, Commander of the Community Engagement Unit of the St Louis Metropolitan Police Department, a special unit created following the unrest catalyzed by Brown's death.

Set in ancient Thebes in the midst of a brutal civil war, Sophocles' *Antigone* is a play about a teenage girl who wishes to bury her brother, Polyneices, whose slain body lays lifeless on the street. In defiance of King Creon, who wishes to make a public example of Polyneices, Antigone buries her brother and chaos and violence ensues. At its core, *Antigone* is a play about what happens when personal conviction and state law clash, raising questions about justice, oppression, and the use of power and force.

The performance seamlessly flows to the heart of the project: a dynamic conversation aimed at fostering empathy and deeper understanding between communities. Following comments and reactions from a panel of community leaders, audience discussions will be guided by De-Andrea Blaylock, a social worker based in St Louis, Dominic Dupont, a formerly incarcerated clemency recipient, educator and advocate, and artistic director Bryan Doerries, among others.

ABOUT THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

Since its founding in 2009, Theater of War Productions has facilitated events for over 100,000 people, presenting over 20 different tailored programs targeted to diverse communities across the globe. The company works with professional actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern works—to provide a framework for engaging communities in challenging dialogues about human suffering.

The company uses a combination of theater and guided public dialogue to help communities address pressing public health and social issues such as combat-related psychological injury, suicide, end-of-life care, police/community relations, prison reform, gun violence, political violence, natural and manmade disaster, domestic violence, substance abuse, and addiction. Theater of War Productions was co-founded by Bryan Doerries and Phyllis Kaufman, who served as producing director from 2009 to 2016. Doerries currently serves as the company's artistic director.

For more information on Theater of War Productions, visit: www.theaterofwar.com

ABOUT BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is an independent library system for the 2.6 million residents of Brooklyn. It is the fifth-largest library system in the United States with 59 neighborhood libraries located throughout the borough. BPL offers free programs and services for all ages and stages of life, including a large selection of books in more than 30 languages, author talks, literacy programs and public computers. BPL's eResources, such as eBooks and eVideos, catalog information and free homework help, are available to customers of all ages 24 hours a day at our website: <http://www.bklynlibrary.org/>.

ABOUT THE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

The [Stavros Niarchos Foundation](http://www.stavrosniarchosfoundation.org/) (SNF) is one of the world's leading private, international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. Since 1996, the Foundation has committed more than \$2.75 billion, through more than 4,400 grants to nonprofit organizations in 124 nations around the world.

The SNF funds organizations and projects, worldwide, that aim to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact, for society at large, and exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also supports projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare.

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