



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Near West Theatre Prepares to Stream Original Youth Production, Reflects on 20th Anniversary of 9/11

From September 11 – 19, “America is under construction until further notice!”

CLEVELAND – Streaming September 11 – 19, tune in to *Rise: The Reconstruction Project*, the season opener for Near West Theatre’s blockbuster 2021-22 season.

The second piece in Near West Theatre’s series of “Rise” productions, *Rise: The Reconstruction Project* is an original show highlighting the unshakeable truth that history is repeating itself, and how some of life’s societal matters can only change when people acknowledge and root out the problem.

Created over the summer by the minds of 24 creative Cleveland youth, the production features NWT’s youth cast, ages 7 – 16, who devised the production over a hybrid schedule of Zoom and in-person rehearsals.

Presented in an episodic format, the program sheds light on contemporary issues as experienced by today’s youth through a series of pop music covers, choreography, acting, and original writing by the participants and director.

This show intentionally coincides with the 20-year anniversary of 9/11 – a topic revisited by the cast and NWT alumni for a few very special reasons. “In 2002, *America Through the Looking Glass* was brought to life by approximately 20 NWT kids and teens. It was an original piece that showed the youths’ thoughts, fears, and hopes. Though *America* and *Rise* were created 20 years apart, the thoughts, fears, and hopes for the country and the world at large remain quite hauntingly the same,” says Mariah Burks, director of the production.

Despite the serious subject matter, hope still echoes throughout the production. “Last year when we produced our first installation of *Rise* virtually, the kids delivered a highly impactful show,” says Trinidad Snider, NWT’s Artistic Director. “Despite it all, their creativity and voices soared because we made space for them to have their say. In this production we see the best of their creativity all over again—but in a unique, exciting way.”

Pay What You Can ticketing is the standard at Near West Theatre, with a suggested donation of \$15 per stream. Tickets for a timed release of opening night are available now, and after September 11, will be available on demand until September 19. Purchase and learn more at www.nearwesttheatre.org.

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About Near West Theatre

Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable and



transformational theatre arts experiences. Since 1978, Near West Theatre has been shaping, changing, even saving the lives of children, teens and adults. The community theater hosts a variety of free community events and free after school programs to underline its commitment to accessibility for all people. The organization serves people of all ages, but a focus on youth goes back to its founding and continues to this day.

Rise: The Reconstruction Project

Fall Youth Production, ages 7 – 16

Streamed Opening Night: September 11, 7:30pm

On Demand: September 12 – 19

Run Time: 1.25hr

Streaming Access: \$15 suggested / Pay What You Can

Cast

Evangelina Calderon, Jayla Carter, Xavier Kirk, Megan Kless, Deshay Lloyd, Penelope Markowitz, Violet Markowitz, Christopher Moore, Amaya Moore, Olivia Moore, Charlie Morrison, Frankie Morrison, Vivi Morrison, Josephine O'Leary, Sophie O'Leary, Kai Pennington, Avery Pyo, Meredith Richardson, Jada Sikora, Yamini Sridhar, Serenity Walker, Ronald Watkins, Lydia Whitehouse, Julia Ziel. **Special appearances by:** Mo Eutazia Dugger, Rachel Drotar, Coletta Gruss, Xavier Reminick.

Production Team

Director: Mariah Burks. Assistant Director/Stage Manager: Nigeria Gould. Lighting Designer: Jack-Anthony Ina. Sound Designer: Matt Torok. Cinematographer/Technical Director: Perren Hedderson. Assistant Technical Director: Emily Hennen. Production & Rentals Manager: Michael Stein. Best Boy: Russell Miller.

Tickets at www.nearwesttheatre.org.