



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MTA & The MSU Riley Center Host Annual Theatre Conference

Over 500 high school students and community theatre enthusiasts will travel to Meridian to participate in the annual statewide theatre festival and convention being held at The MSU Riley Center January 17-20, 2019. This unique festival brings theatres from around the state to perform their one-act productions, to learn more about theatre and how to improve theatre arts in the respective theatres.

High schools throughout the state have been rehearsing plays since September in hopes of placing in the regional competitions and then advancing to the State Festival. High schools that were awarded a Distinguished Play Award at the North and South regional festivals held in December advanced to the State Festival. The schools advancing to the State Festival include: Hancock High School, Hernando High School, Jackson Academy, Jackson Preparatory School, Northwest Rankin High School, Oak Grove High School, Ocean Springs High School, Pearl River Central High School, and Tishomingo High School. High school productions will be held Friday, January 18, at The MSU Riley Center Theatre. The top two winners of the MTA Festival advance to the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

Community Theatres from around the State also participate in the State Theatre Festival in hopes of advancing to the regional Southeastern Theatre Conference. Community Theatres performing include: The Center Players Community Theatre, Corinth Theatre Arts, Fondren Theatre Workshop, Starkville Community Theatre, Tupelo Community Theatre, and WINGS Performing Arts. Community Theatre productions will be held on Saturday, January 19, at The MSU Riley Center Theatre.

Additionally, MTA sponsors a Theatre for Youth Festival on January 18 at The MSU Riley Center- Studio Theatre. The Theatre for Youth Festival is geared towards youth audiences and includes both community theatre and community college groups performing. This year's lineup includes: Biloxi High School, Northwest Rankin High School, Oak Grove High School, Ocean Springs High School, and WINGS Performing Arts. Schools from throughout the region will be bussed in to see these productions. The Theatre for Youth Festival is open and free to the public.

The MSU Riley Center will host the festival. The full schedule is available on the MTA's website. General Admission ticket for the secondary and community theatre productions will be available at the door. Prices are \$25 for all 15 productions, \$15 for all productions on one day, and \$5 for a block of plays.

MTA is sponsored in part by grants from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information, visit the MTA website at <http://www.mta-online.org> or contact Stacy Howell, Executive Director of the Mississippi Theatre Association, at (601) 201-9564 or execdir@mta-online.org.