

For Immediate Release

Contact:

John Fries

412-760-2299

johnfries@comcast.net

**Prime Stage Theatre to present stage adaptation of *The Diary of Anne Frank*
May 4 through 13, 2018 at New Hazlett Theater, North Side;
Prime Stage Artistic Producing Director Wayne Brinda to direct**

(PITTSBURGH, PA - April 3, 2018) Prime Stage Theatre, a professional Pittsburgh theater organization that produces and presents plays based on works of literature, announces that it will present *The Diary of Anne Frank* as the third and final stage production of its 2017-2018 season. The play will run from May 4 to 13, 2018 at the New Hazlett Theater Center for the Performing Arts on Pittsburgh's North Side.

The play tells the story of Annalies Marie "Anne" Frank, a German-born Jewish teen, who kept a journal as a teen when she and her family hid in an attic in the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation of the country as part of World War II.

Apprehended by the Nazis in 1944, Anne Frank and her family were taken to a North German concentration camp, where Anne died of typhus a year later. Her diary was saved by Miep Gies, a Dutch friend of the Franks who helped shelter Anne and her family. Gies gave the diary to Anne's father, Otto Frank, and it was published in 1947 as the now-classic book *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. In the decades since, the book has been published in more than 60 languages.

About the stage adaptation

Prime Stage's production uses the 1955 Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning stage adaptation by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. The original production, which starred Susan Strasberg (who was nominated for a Tony) as Anne Frank, was presented at the Cort Theater on Broadway. In 1959, George Stevens directed a film based on the stage production that earned Shelley Winters an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. In 1997, a revised version of the play returned to Broadway with Natalie Portman in the Anne Frank role.

Directing the production is Wayne Brinda, Ed.D., Prime Stage's co-founder and artistic producing director, who is returning to a main stage directing role after a multiple years leading the organization's efforts from behind the scenes.

Brinda, associate professor of education and coordinator of secondary education at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, is also a Museum Teaching Fellow at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC who conducts research using young adult literature and the theatre to teach the Holocaust. He is excited to again bring this story to the stage.

"I am thrilled," says Brinda, who has directed the play on three previous occasions. "Anne Frank was incredibly articulate as a 14- and 15-year-old diarist, describing the fear she and her family experienced on a daily basis. There are some light moments in the play, too as, in many ways apart from the persecution she and her family experienced, Anne was also a typical teenager."

Brinda notes that the play not only conveys the Frank family's difficult situation, but also the many sacrifices made by the "Righteous Gentiles"—non-Jewish people who risked their lives in their efforts to save many Jews during World War I. One of the most famous of these Gentiles—although not part of Anne Frank's story—was Oskar Schindler, whose efforts were dramatized in Steven Spielberg's 1993 film "Schindler's List."

Pittsburgh teen actress lands Anne role

Brinda also notes that, true to the theater's policy of practicing age-appropriate casting, the coveted role of Anne Frank will be played in the Prime Stage production by Madeline Dalesio, a 13-year-old Pittsburgh stage and screen actress. In 2014, veteran Pittsburgh theater critic Ted Hoover praised the then-nine-year-old Dalesio for the "force and passion" she displayed in the role of Helen Keller in Little Lake Theatre's production of *The Miracle Worker*, adding that she was "playing a role that's beyond the range of most seasoned actors."

Performances

Performances of *The Diary of Anne Frank* are scheduled at 8:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2:30 p.m. on Sundays. An opening night celebration is planned for Saturday, May 5 following the performance.

Audio description via headphones will be available for the Friday May 11th performance, a sensory-friendly performance will be provided on May 12th at 1:00 p.m., and a sign language-interpreted performance will be offered on May 12 at 8:00 p.m.

Tickets for all performances are available at www.PrimeStage.com.