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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Baltimore Center Stage Announces New Virtual Student Matinee Library

*Library includes world premiere show *The Glorious World of Crowns, Kinks and Curls*, among other BCS programming*

**Baltimore, MD, April 23, 2021**---- Today, Baltimore Center Stage announced its new Virtual Student Matinee Library. The Virtual Student Matinee Library is an online repository of filmed versions of some of Center Stage's programs and plays with corresponding program material, such as curricula and program guides, to prompt questioning and classroom discussion. It is completely free for teachers.

"The Virtual Student Matinee Library exemplifies the ingenuity our team at BCS has cultivated over the past year, using the readjusting and reimagining necessitated by the pandemic as an opportunity to make theater more accessible for everybody," said **Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra**. "Through this program, we are beginning to knock down barriers of cost, geography, and transportation for students in Maryland and beyond."

Baltimore Center Stage has had the pleasure of welcoming thousands of students to its in-person matinees. The Student Matinee program has deepened the theater's relationship with Maryland schools, youth, and educators. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the season's cancellation presented an immediate access barrier. At that moment, Baltimore Center Stage recognized an opportunity to continue to provide engagement to students with the performing arts at a time when connection was seemingly non-existent. Working alongside Maryland State Department of Education and Arts Education in Maryland Schools, Baltimore Center Stage innovated the Student Matinee program for the virtual realm to continue engaging students with its productions and curriculum.

"I am so encouraged that we are able to share such a potentially expansive and creative resource with teachers, students and schools," said **Director of Learning and Social Accountability Janal Daniel**. "It continues to underscore and strengthen the alignment of our efforts with our values of community, inclusion and access."

With the new Virtual Student Matinee Library, students can stream a professionally filmed production of a play or community programming. Educators will receive access to curriculum that encourages conversation, community, and critique. Aligned with Common Core and MSDE standards, this new program format removes geographic barriers and creates an opportunity for students to connect with the performing arts in a modern, interactive way at a time where students are only allowed to solitarily engage in the arts. So far, the reimagined matinees successfully served 43 schools or learning programs for over 1,700 students. This program is unique to the state of Maryland, and one of the first of its kind nationally.

The library currently includes the world premiere show *The Glorious World of Crowns Kinks and Curls* by Keli Goff, *Where We Stand* by Donnetta Lavinia Grays, *The Baltimore Butterfly Sessions*, *The 19<sup>th</sup>: Whose Vote Is It Anyway*, and the *My America Too* series. All of the content comes with an accompanying curriculum or programming guide. It is the theater's hope that the Virtual Student Matinee Library will continue to be expanded to include a multitude of helpful learning resources that support arts education and in school academics, along with completely filmed seasons of their shows and community programming.

With this library, teachers will be able to integrate on demand arts education into their academic planning, as well as access to arts education in spaces without funding or resources. One of the theater's goals is to continue to deepen this relationship with educators and show up for community members as a partner in arts access. Baltimore Center Stage is looking forward to continuing to address barriers to arts access in response to the ever-evolving needs of their communities.

This program was made possible through the support of the Warnock Foundation and the Lois and Philip Macht Family Philanthropic Fund.

For interview requests, more information and other media related inquiries, please contact the Communications office. For general information, visit [www.centerstage.org](http://www.centerstage.org) or call the box office at 410.332.0033.

### **About Baltimore Center Stage**

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephanie Ybarra and Managing Director Michael Ross. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages and an intimate 99-seat theater, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in

providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.

