



American Stage Now Accepting Submissions for 21st Century Voices: 2021 New Play Festival *Submission Deadline is Oct. 16, 2020*

St. Petersburg, FL - American Stage is now accepting submissions for the 21st Century Voices: 2021 New Play Festival, scheduled to take place this upcoming January.

The company is seeking submissions of new plays exploring **themes of mental illness, wellness and resilience**. Plays should examine characters grappling with, learning about or advancing in their own mental health or the mental health of someone they love. The intention is to shine a spotlight on mental health and to contribute to the de-stigmatization of mental illness. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), almost half of all American adults (46.4%) will experience a mental illness during their lifetime. Mental Health America reports that anxiety and depression is up by nearly 400% since January 2020. With the social isolation due to COVID, the need for connection to mental health resources as well as the need for compassion and education around mental health are greater than ever.

American Stage is interested in probing the individual experience as well as society's perception of wellness and the mental health industry. The company is also interested in plays that can be performed flexibly, since the festival will potentially be offered as hybrid performances, with both onsite and virtual readings. The festival may also include panels and workshops on mental health, presented by experts in the field.

Submission guidelines for the American Stage's 21st Century Voices: 2021 New Play Festival are as follows:

- Plays must be full-length in any genre: comedy, drama, multimedia, etc. Musicals will not be accepted at this time.
- Translations, collections of one-acts, children's plays and any play that has received more than two full-scale, professional productions prior to submission are not eligible.
- Plays that have had workshops, readings or non-professional productions are still eligible.
- Plays with casts larger than 8 people will not be considered at this time.
- Only one submission per playwright is allowed each year.
- Plays with flexibility for performance in a digital and in-person setting are preferred.

American Stage's competitive selection process consists of two rounds. All 10-page play excerpts submitted during the first round are reviewed by a committee of theatre artists and arts

advocates. In the second round, selected playwrights are asked to provide a full manuscript of their play for consideration by the committee. Finally, American Stage invites up to five playwrights to have their work included in 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival in January 2021.

Playwrights invited to participate in our 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival will receive a \$250 stipend.

Applicants should email their complete submission package to 21stCenturyVoices@americanstage.org by October 16, 2020. Complete submission packages are to be submitted as one attached PDF file and must include:

- Contact information
- Playwriting resume
- Title of the play; Character breakdown and description (please include total number of characters); Time and place of the play; Synopsis (no longer than 1 page); and a concise paragraph (no longer than 1 page) describing the development history of the play you are submitting
- A statement describing why your play is a good fit for American Stage's 21st Century Voices' mission to develop and present powerful plays that speak to a contemporary audience in a fresh and compelling way and our 2021 focus on works exploring themes of mental illness, wellness and resilience
- A ten page sample of the play

About 21st Century Voices:

American Stage is committed to producing powerful and relevant professional live theatre. Our 21st Century Voices is an initiative dedicated to developing and presenting new works for the stage that speak to a contemporary audience in fresh and compelling ways. 21st Century Voices programming includes an annual staged reading festival, workshopping of new scripts, playwrighting residencies and fully produced new plays receiving one of their first three professional productions at American Stage.

AMERICAN STAGE

American Stage Theatre operates as a non-profit 501(C)(3) in the heart of St. Petersburg, Florida, providing live theatrical productions as a professional regional equity theatre since 1977. As Tampa Bay's longest-running, most critically-acclaimed professional theatre company, our vision is to be a vital arts leader, connecting our community to world-class productions that celebrate the most powerful stories of the moment and the most defining stories from our past.

American Stage's year-round accessible programming brings the power of quality live theatre to each generation with our Mainstage Season, 21st Century Voices: New Play Festival, American Stage in the Park and AS Education & Outreach. 2020 marks the launch of the Virtual Stage and Academy, providing continued community engagement and learning opportunities for audiences and students of all ages through live streaming performances and classes. American Stage believes that through the telling of dynamic stories, theatre has the power to unite us in our shared

experiences and to deepen our connection to one another through the illumination of diverse perspectives. **Powerful Stories. Boldly Told.**

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