

# ASBURY & PARK PRESS

## Two River Theater picks up \$500G in grants



(Photo: Photo by T. CHARLES ERICKSON)

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### **Major funders include:**

**The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's National Playwrights Residency Program**, which will support a three-year residency for Pulitzer Prize-nominated playwright Madeleine George. George is the author of "The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence" and "Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England." Through the grant, Two River will produce the world premiere of George's play "Hurricane Diane" in the winter of 2017 and support her in developing

new work. She also will partner with the theater's artistic, marketing and education departments on season planning, audience engagement and mentoring young people.

**The Roy Cockrum Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts** will back the second American production of "The Ballad of Little Jo," a musical by Grammy Award-winning composer Mike Reid, lyricist Sarah Schlesinger and Two River artistic director John Dias, who will collaborate with Reid and Schlesinger on the book and direct the production. The musical is based on Maggie Greenwald's film of the same name and is "inspired by the real-life story of Josephine Monaghan — a young woman from Boston who, in the late 19th century, made a new life in an Idaho mining town disguised as a man called Jo." It will be produced at Two River Theater in June 2017.

**Shakespeare in American Communities**, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, will support Two River's production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and its A Little Shakespeare program, which introduces the works of Shakespeare to hundreds of young people each season, according to the release. In connection with the theater's production, which will be directed by Eric Tucker and feature a cast of three actors, Two River will offer a 75-minute version of the play adapted and directed by Nicole A. Watson, and performed by local high school students for audiences age 9 and up.

**The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation** will support Two River Theater's production of "The Lion in Winter," which runs from Nov. 12 to Dec. 4 and stars Tony Award nominee and Obie Award winner Michael Cumpsty and three-time Tony Award nominee Dee Hoty.

**Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and Bank of America Charitable Foundation** will support Two River's Latino outreach programs. Two River will be able to continue producing plays by Latino writers; hosting free public events, including activities for families, and making available free tickets to mainstage performances.

**The William T. Morris Foundation** will support Inside Two River, a series of events that engage and cultivate audiences.

**The Jorgensen Foundation** will support Two River's career development programs for young people, including TheaterWorks, Metro Scholars, and A Little Shakespeare. TheaterWorks connects at-risk youth to the opportunities available in theater through study of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into putting on a professional play. The Metro Scholars program is a competitive year-long internship at the theater for high school juniors who work within the theater's departments, see all of its productions and take workshops exploring various aspects of professional theater. A Little Shakespeare is a fully immersive experience for the student actors and crew who spend three months in rehearsal and performances.



Sturdyvant (Peter Van Wagner) and Irvin (Michael Cumpsty) plead with an unyielding Ma Rainey (Arnetia Walker) as nephew Sylvester (Marcel Spears) looks on in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom,” the play by August Wilson now onstage at Two River Theater. *(Photo: Photo by T. CHARLES ERICKSON)*

Two River Theater also is supported in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Roy Cockrum Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, Monmouth University, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Riverview Medical Center, The Stone Foundation of New Jersey, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Shakespeare in American Communities, National Endowment for the Arts, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, Investors Bank, Springpoint Senior Living Foundation at the Atrium at Navesink Harbor, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Jorgensen Foundation, Wells Fargo, William T. Morris Foundation, and many others.

For more information about Two River Theater, 21 Bridge Ave. in Red Bank, call 732-345-1400 or visit [tworivertheater.org](http://tworivertheater.org).  
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