

UNICORN • COLONIAL • PLAYHOUSE
BERKSHIRE
THEATRE GROUP

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**BTG's Playhouse Project Receives \$500,000 Matching Gift
From Gilson Family Foundation and Anonymous Donor**

PITTSFIELD, MA — Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG), together with Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, is pleased to announce a \$500,000 matching gift in support of the ongoing Stockbridge Playhouse renovation project, a significant investment in the future of this historic cultural landmark.

The gift includes an initial \$250,000 leadership contribution from the Gilson Family Foundation, paired with a \$250,000 matching challenge made possible by an anonymous donor. Together, these gifts will directly support the revitalization of the Stockbridge Playhouse, advancing BTG's vision to restore the venue as a vibrant center for artistic creation, education and community engagement.

"This extraordinary generosity reflects a deep belief in the power of the arts to strengthen communities," said Kate Maguire, Artistic Director and CEO of Berkshire Theatre Group. "We are profoundly grateful to the Gilson Family Foundation for this leadership gift, and to the anonymous donor whose matching challenge will help inspire additional support for the Stockbridge Playhouse. This investment brings us meaningfully closer to reopening this historic space for artists, audiences and the wider Berkshire community."

BTG also gratefully acknowledges the leadership and longstanding arts advocacy of Mary Gilson Spina, a member of the Board of the Gilson Family Foundation, in helping to make this gift possible.

“Like so many people in the Berkshires, I have deep personal memories of the Stockbridge Playhouse and the transformative experiences it made possible,” said Mary Gilson Spina. “Supporting its restoration is about honoring that legacy while ensuring future generations have the same opportunity to experience the magic of live theatre in this remarkable space.”

Founded in 2011 by Leo and Lucy Gilson, the Gilson Family Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to strengthening education, health—particularly food security—community resilience and the arts throughout Massachusetts. The Foundation makes grants to a wide range of nonprofit organizations, notably in the Berkshires and the Boston area, including the Boston Food Pantry, CHP Family Services and ThinkGive. Today, led by Michelle Spina Schmidt and Peter Spina, the Foundation employs a philanthropic approach that includes direct giving, matching gifts and impact investments, with a strong emphasis on supporting Berkshire County and communities across the Commonwealth.

The Stockbridge Playhouse renovation is a cornerstone of Berkshire Theatre Group’s long-term vision to preserve historic theatre spaces while expanding access to high-quality arts programming, educational opportunities and community partnerships. The project is being led by Kate Maguire and former Massachusetts State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, whose leadership has been instrumental in guiding the restoration and reimagining of the Playhouse as a revitalized cultural resource for the Berkshires.

For more information about the Playhouse renovation project, including a video highlighting the vision of the restoration, please visit

<https://www.berkshiretheatregroup.org/save-the-playhouse/>

or contact Allison Rachele Bayles at allison@berkshiretheatre.org or (413) 448-8084 x19.

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

Founded in 2010 through the merger of The Colonial Theatre (est. 1903) and the Berkshire Theatre Festival (est. 1928), Berkshire Theatre Group (BTG) operates four distinct performance spaces across its historic campuses in Pittsfield and Stockbridge. In 2028, BTG will celebrate a major milestone—100 years of continuous theatre in the Berkshires. Under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, BTG has expanded its programming to include award-winning theatre, music, dance and year-round educational offerings. Each year, BTG engages more than 68,000 patrons and reaches approximately 10,000 students through its BTG PLAYS! education program. In 2020, BTG became the first theatre company in the United States to receive approval from Actors’ Equity Association to produce a musical during the COVID-19 pandemic. That production of *Godspell* marked a national turning point for live performance. BTG remains committed to preserving and revitalizing its historic venues. The

Colonial Theatre, originally opened in 1903 and restored in 2006, continues to serve as a cultural anchor in downtown Pittsfield. Ongoing improvements to the Stockbridge Playhouse further reflect BTG's dedication to honoring its storied past while building for the future.