



July 5, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## YOUTH PLAY INSTITUTE CRAFTS PLAY ON GUN CONTROL & 2<sup>nd</sup> AMENDMENT

HARTFORD, CT – Members of HartBeat’s Youth Play Institute (YPI), in its 9<sup>th</sup> season, are preparing a one-act play based on interviews they conducted about gun control and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment.

The broad theme was chosen before the Orlando mass shooting, however, as a result of being exposed to those media reports, as well as local news on recent shooting fatalities in Hartford and Greater Hartford, YPI interns have dug deep beyond the headlines.

The 11-member youth group, which has interviewed experts on all sides of the issue, will talk with Sen. Chris Murphy on July 12 about the filibuster he held in the U.S. Senate to force Congress to address gun control laws, among other aspects of gun violence.

The play runs **July 29 and 30 at 7:30 p.m., and July 31 at 2 p.m. at HartBeat’s Carriage House Theater, 360 Farmington Ave.**

“The members of this YPI group were born right before or right after the school shootings in Columbine,” notes Artistic Director Julia Rosenblatt. “They’ve grown up during the worst mass shootings in our nation’s history, as well as recent gun deaths in their own communities. It’s time to listen to their perspective.”

HartBeat’s YPI is a paid internship program in acting, playwriting, theater design and stage management for young adults from 16 and 21. The 5-week summer session includes students from the Greater Hartford area, with at least 50 percent of participants being Hartford residents. Working theater professionals spend 60-70 hours training the interns, who are given an overarching theme. The group then determines an issue within that theme and researches the topic using HartBeat’s method of first-hand interviews. Each session culminates in three public performances of the new work followed by a post-show dialogue between the audience and the actor/playwrights.

YPI originally was conceived to reduce student racial isolation while teaching theater skills and play creation. By teaching our youth to communicate with each other through theater, the program breaks down racial and economic stereotypes and exposes participants to people they have been sheltered from. **In 2012, HartBeat restructured YPI with a new emphasis on workforce development and career readiness.**

Tickets are on sale now at [hartbeatensemble.org](http://hartbeatensemble.org) or by calling (860) 548-9144 x115. General admission is \$5 and as always, *No One Turned Away for Lack of Funds (NOTALF)*. *NOTALF* tickets must be requested in person at the door on the day of the performance. Box office opens one hour before the scheduled performance. Free parking is available in the Mark Twain House visitor parking lot and on-street parking is available on Woodland and Gillette streets.

Major support for YPI is provided by City of Hartford Arts & Heritage Jobs Grant, Community Development Block Grant, Ahearn Family Foundation, Charles Nelson Robinson Fund, Ensworth Charitable Foundation, The Fisher Foundation, Fund for Greater Hartford, Mabel F. Hoffman Fund, the William & Alice Mortensen Foundation and Travelers.

*Founded in 2001 by Steven Raider-Ginsburg, Julia B. Rosenblatt and Gregory R. Tate (1952-2012), HartBeat Ensemble creates provocative theater that connects our community beyond traditional barriers of class, race, geography and gender. HartBeat's resident home is the Carriage House Theater located on Farmington Avenue in Hartford. Learn more about HartBeat at [hartbeatensemble.org](http://hartbeatensemble.org).*

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