Art will tell the unexplored stories of young Utah immigrants — at least for one night

By ELLEN FAGG WEIST | The Salt Lake Tribune

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Telling new versions of immigrant stories, especially those of the young immigrants known as the Dreamers, will be the theme of this year’s "Rose Exposed," a one-night performance by the six resident arts companies of the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center.

Performing will be artists representing Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation, Plan-B Theatre, Pygmalion Theatre Company, Repertory Dance Theatre, Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and SB Dance.

Taking the idea of a cross-disciplinary partnership further, proceeds from the "Rose Exposed: The Dreamers" event on Saturday, Aug. 29, will benefit another neighborhood partner, Arts Access, a nonprofit gallery that makes art accessible for disenfranchised populations.

The event also marks the beginning of Art Access’s yearlong Dreamers Project with a photography exhibit by Annie Brewer, a social worker at Horizonte Instruction and Training Center, and Lynn Hoffman-Bouse, a documentary photographer, from "DREAMers: Living in the Shadow of Hope," their photo book focusing on young Utah immigrants.

Art Access’ initiative will include creative writing and dance workshops, as well as an art exhibit. "It is our hope that the Dreamers Project will spark conversations in our community about what it means to belong somewhere — and to respect the right of all to create their own stories," says Sheryl D. Gillian, executive director of Art Access.

Those who still consider Utah "white-bread homogeneous" are overlooking our city’s large, diverse population, Gillian says. Using a variety of art forms, she hopes The
Dreamers Project will help replace "the stories we think we already know with authentic identity stories created by people we may have dismissed."

Home can be a complicated idea for some young dreamers, who might have deep roots here in their adopted country, yet government regulations dictate that their home is really the place where they were born. "I'm hoping the stories at The Rose will explore that idea of where you call home, as well as the idea that immigrants have always been dreamers, because in order to leave your homeland, you have to have compelling reasons," says Gillian.

The annual "Rose Exposed" event is about "making art on a deadline with really creative people," says Fran Pruy, artistic director of Pygmalion Productions.

Using music provided by a pianist from the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation, the five dance and theater companies use 10 hours on Saturday to create original works, which they will perform at an 8 p.m. show. The public is invited to watch the creative process of art taking shape at rehearsals throughout the day on Saturday.

"That first meeting when we all get together, it's really fun," says Pruy, of the theater company dedicated to telling stories by and about women. "It's fun to stand backstage with the dancers and see them warm up, and say: 'That's really different.'"

For this year's show, Pygmalion Productions has invited three actors to tell stories of their parents' dreams, which will be turned into a short play by Utah playwright Julie Jensen.

Plan-B Theatre Company has invited Utah playwright Eric Samuelsen to draft a script about unexpected immigrant stories, which will be altered in the rehearsal room as the actors work with director Mark Fossen. The work will spotlight three young actors who will perform in the company's upcoming free elementary-school tours.

"I think artists are just happy to be doing art," says Pruy of collaborating on "Rose Exposed." "It's taking something from nothing and telling a story. The art is typically good, and you'll never see it again, in this structure, with these people."

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**AT A GLANCE**

Dreamin' of Rose Exposed

The six resident arts companies of the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center — Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation, Plan-B Theatre, Pygmalion Theatre Company, Repertory Dance Theatre, Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and SB Dance — will perform original works inspired by the theme "The Dreamers." The companies will begin at 9 a.m. to create original work, which will they present 10 hours later. Proceeds from the show will benefit nonprofit Art Access. The gallery is working with The Sorenson Unity Center to launch a yearlong exploration of the immigrant experience and will present a photography exhibit launching the project at the performance.

**When** Saturday, Aug. 29, 8 p.m.

**Where** Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center's Jeanne Wagner Theater, 138 W. 300 South, Salt Lake City

**Tickets** $15.801-355-2787, artix.org (http://artix.org) or the box office

**Also** The public is invited to watch the work of creation by dropping by the theater — for 15 minutes, an hour or the entire afternoon — between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

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