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FirstWorks Wins \$270,000 from Rhode Island Foundation to Expand Offerings to a Broader Audience

Three-year award will propel the non-profit arts organization forward as it enters its 15th anniversary year of connecting art with audiences

PROVIDENCE, RI – FirstWorks, a Rhode Island non-profit dedicated to building community through world-class arts has received a \$270,000 multi-year grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. The funding will support a three-year strategic plan to expand FirstWorks' capacity to deliver live arts programming and educational opportunities to broad Rhode Island audiences.

“As FirstWorks approaches its 15th anniversary, this strong endorsement of our strategic plan by the Rhode Island Foundation will help us grow and build our national reputation for connecting art with audiences,” said Kathleen Pletcher, FirstWorks Founder and Executive Artistic Director. “Our objective is to become the cultural nexus for a state that celebrates the arts as essential to its success.”

The Foundation's grant, which will be paid over three years, will enable FirstWorks to continue building cross-sector partnerships that bring live performances to Rhode Island, reach diverse audiences and deliver an arts education program that currently serves more than 30 Rhode Island schools. While the Foundation has awarded grants to FirstWorks over the years, this is the single largest commitment it has made to the Providence-based non-profit.

"FirstWorks has demonstrated that it can harness the power of the arts to meaningfully impact our community. By supporting its work developing new initiatives and building partnerships, we can enhance the arts in our schools as well as boost the arts and culture sector of Rhode Island's economy," said Jenny Pereira, the Foundation's vice president of grant programs.

FirstWorks' three-year strategic plan endeavors to refine organizational and program models, develop new partnerships, and improve managerial systems and technology on-boarding in order to expand the reach of FirstWorks programs. These strategies serve to strengthen its model, which places mainstage performances by world-class artists as a centerpiece to more extensive audience engagement that can span days, weeks or months.

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since 2004, FirstWorks festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 500,000 participants. The FirstWorks Arts Learning Program reaches more than 4,000 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with

transformative arts-based learning experiences. FirstWorks is Founding Partner for PVDfest, collaborating with the City of Providence to produce an international arts celebration held each June that in 2018 drew 100,000 visitors to Providence to experience music, art and spectacular performances. Visit first-works.org to learn more.

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