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**Saratoga Performing Arts Center Partners with Empire State Youth Orchestra,
Northeast Ballet Company and Capital District Youth Chorale for
the Inaugural “2018 Festival of Young Artists” on Sunday, June 3 @ 2 PM**

**Free community festival to showcase hundreds of the Capital Region’s brightest young dancers, musicians,
singers, poets and visual artists, culminating in a performance on SPAC’s stage**

Dedication ceremony for the new Charles R. Wood Stage highlights the celebration

Saratoga Springs, NY (April 17, 2018) – As part of Saratoga Performing Arts Center’s commitment to fostering artistic collaboration and providing free access to enriching arts programs for local youth, it has partnered with Empire State Youth Orchestra, Northeast Ballet Company, and the Capital District Youth Chorale to present the first-ever “Festival of Young Artists” on Sunday, June 3 from 2 – 5 p.m. The festival will celebrate the collaborative creativity of more than 400 of the Capital Region’s brightest young dancers, musicians, singers, poets, and visual artists. This event is free to the community, however reservations are recommended; visit spac.org for details.

“These young and incredibly talented students who are all passionate about dance, music and art represent our future SPAC audiences and performers. Offering these aspiring artists a place to perform and create new works, while developing a curiosity for new genres and disciplines, is at the heart of our mission to introduce new and younger demographics to the arts,” said Elizabeth Sobol, president & CEO of Saratoga Performing Arts Center. “We are grateful to the Empire State Youth Orchestra, Northeast Ballet Company and Capital District Youth Chorale for their partnership and efforts to help us showcase the rich tapestry of works by young artists throughout the region.”

Kicking off at 2:00 p.m., SPAC’s grounds will be transformed into a festive celebration with student pop-up performances, fine art displays, food stands, poetry jams, immersive workshops and activities. At 4:00 p.m., hundreds of young artists from all three organizations will gather together to present a one-hour concert on SPAC’s main stage, featuring a large-scale production of celebrated works by great American composers such as Copland, Hansen, Ellington, Gershwin and Rodgers.

All works of art presented at the festival are inspired by a student-generated theme that centers on their shared concept of gathering circles – that art-making, at its best, is community-building, peace-generating, and an all-inclusive process. Featured performances include demonstrations led by the Haudenosaunee Singers and Dancers from the Onondaga Nation, and local Native American author and storyteller, Joseph Bruchac, as the festival’s special guest and master of ceremony.

"We are thrilled to be part of this exciting gathering of Capital Region's youth artists. ESYO's Youth Orchestra, Wind Orchestra and CHIME musicians will perform and collaborate with young dancers, singers, poets and artists who are as passionate about the arts as they are. I cannot think of a more meaningful way to come together as a community of young artists than this festival and I hope a large crowd will show up to witness and experience what promises to be life-affirming performances by our incredibly talented and dedicated young people. We are all so energized by our collaborative work with fantastic colleagues at SPAC, Northeast Ballet and Capital District Youth Chorale for the past year and I am proud to say farewell to ESYO at such an inspiring event," said Helen Cha-Pyo, ESYO Music Director & Youth Orchestra Conductor.

Charles R. Wood Stage Dedication Ceremony

A special highlight of the festival will be the official dedication ceremony of the new Charles R. Wood Stage, which was constructed in advance of the 2017 season to replace the former gazebo stage. The Charles R. Wood Foundation generously awarded a \$150,000 grant to SPAC that underwrote the cost of replacing SPAC's aging gazebo stage with a larger, updated version. The new stage will be named in honor of Mr. Wood, a strong supporter of the arts and a member of SPAC's board in the 1990's. The new structure features a 25 x 21 feet of usable performance space; an increase in square footage of 133 percent.

"With the new, larger Charles R. Wood Stage, we have been able to present a greater variety of programming for the jazz festival, our "Caffe Lena @ SPAC" concert series, student music and dance presentations, and multi-stage music and arts festivals," said Sobol. "We are delighted to honor Charles R. Wood, an individual of great vision and devotion to arts education, at our inaugural youth festival."

Reservations for this free event are recommended; visit spac.org for details.

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