ON NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY, OUT MONTCLAIR AND VANGUARD THEATER ANNOUNCE SPECIAL COLLABORATION FOR LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVE ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

SERIES WILL SPOTLIGHT ICONIC LGBTQIA+ PERFORMANCE ART AND OFFER SPACE FOR LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE ITS HISTORY AND CELEBRATE IN SOLIDARITY WITH QUEER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

(Montclair, NJ - October 11, 2022) – Out Montclair, a nonprofit, volunteer-run organization established in 2021 to provide community, support, and solidarity for LGBTQIA+ people, today announces a special collaboration to honor and celebrate LGBTQIA+ performance and history, with Vanguard Theater, a non-profit founded in 2015 to challenge social and cultural narratives through theater dedicated to DREAM: Diversity, Reciprocity, Education, Activism and Mentorship.

The collaboration is being announced on National Coming Out Day, an awareness day for LGBTQIA+ Americans and allies to encourage visibility, safety and acceptance for all in the LGBTQIA+ community.

In partnership with Out Montclair, Vanguard Theater will produce and host several LGBTQIA+ inclusive events and performances. The collaboration will feature drag performances, “sip and sings” for community members to gather and belt out Broadway standards in intimate piano bar style, and a series of main stage professional performances with LGBTQIA+ inclusive characters and themes, including The Spitfire Grill, Passing Strange, Cabaret and Spring Awakening. The series will conclude next June with another special performance by Vanguard Theater, live from the second annual Montclair Pride stage.

“LGBTQIA+ people are drawn to Montclair for just this kind of celebration of diversity and talent, and we could not be more thrilled to collaborate with the artists of Vanguard Theater,” said Out Montclair President, Peter Yacobellis. “Having LGBTQIA+ specific entertainment on an ongoing basis in Montclair will be a joy for LGBTQIA+ people to see and participate in. We are so excited for all that’s to come on stage and for our community to come together to experience it.”

“The arts are where our stories come alive to expand hearts, minds and acceptance,” said Janeece Freeman Clark, co-founding Artistic Director of Vanguard Theater. “All of our events with the Out Montclair community have been smash successes and a perfect fit for the goal of our theater - to be a space where all can be welcome and celebrated. We are so excited to produce these special events and partner with Out Montclair to elevate and celebrate LGBTQIA+ people, stories and history.”
The collaboration launches with Drag Halloween on October 31st at Vanguard Theater, with live performances from drag performers and Vanguard Theater artists. The party is hosted by local drag legend, Harmonica Sunbeam. LGBTQIA+ people and allies are invited to come in costume and join the parade.

Vanguard Theater will also host a series of classic LGBTQIA+ inclusive Broadway musicals with professional actors: The Spitfire Grill (beginning November 11), Passing Strange (February 24, 2023), Cabaret (April 21), Spring Awakening (June 23).

In addition, Vanguard Theater opens its doors to community members who love to sing showtunes with its kickoff “Sip and Sing” musical singalong, with a creative and intimate piano bar staging that encourages participation and fosters actual and symbolic harmony for all in attendance. The inaugural “Sip and Sing” musical sing along kicks off on December 8th. For more information on all of these upcoming programs, visit VanguardTheaterCompany.org. Theater fans can also get discount codes for the Out Montclair main stage musical series at https://ci.ovationtix.com/36651/store/packages/131762.

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**About Out Montclair:** Out Montclair is a nonprofit, all volunteer-run organization dedicated to fostering community and providing support and solidarity for the LGBTQIA+ population of Montclair, NJ. Launched in April 2021, it hosted the first-ever Montclair Pride in June 2022. Its programs include Out at Night for ages 21+, Out Montclair Teens, Out Montclair Families and Out Montclair 50+

**About Vanguard Theater:** Founded in 2015, Vanguard challenges conventional social and cultural narratives through theater dedicated to DREAM: Diversity, Reciprocity, Education, Activism, and Mentorship. Vanguard approaches this mission through color and gender conscious casting, and partnering with non-arts organizations to use the stage to lift up their organizations and messages.
Vanguard Theater cast of Rent, Montclair Pride 2022
Photo by Yvonne Duck for Montclair Pride

Video of Vanguard Theater cast performing at Montclair Pride:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_I7f_LOB_Pm9EB6rCN2XJRIHNFNyvfUL/view?usp=drive_web
video by Calli Macchia