DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS PRESENTS
2022-2023 **MAINSTAGE SEASON**



A new musical written by Assistant Professor Katya Stanislavskaya

THE USEFUL CITIZEN

Saturday, September 17 at 7 p.m. in Parker Theatre
Sunday, September 18 at 2 p.m. in Parker Theatre*

By Katya Stanislavskaya
Music Directed by Katya Stanislavskaya
Directed by Catherine Doherty

Tickets Available Now!

The Useful Citizen, a reading of a new musical written by Katya Stanislavskaya, examines America's relationship with poverty vis-a-vis morality. Set in post-Civil War New York State, the musical follows a controversial historical figure, Josephine "Effie" Lowell. A privileged Civil War widow, Effie dedicates her life to being a "useful" citizen and becomes a renowned charity reformer. Through her journey, Effie learns that some of her reforms are hurting the people they are intended to help.

***Talkback to follow performance on Sept. 18**

This reading contains in its content an attempted sexual assault of a minor





Cast and crew had the first read-through and musical rehearsal of* The Useful Citizen *last week



Katya Stanislavskaya, writer and musical director

New Paltz as Inspiration

In 2020, I found a website by New Paltz town historian Susan Stessin-Cohn, which is dedicated to the Ulster County Poorhouse—now the site of Ulster County Fairgrounds. I was inspired to trace the origins of America's moralistic attitude toward poverty back to its roots in the 1800s. During my research process, I discovered my protagonist, the controversial charity reformer Josephine "Effie" Lowell. The musical juxtaposes upper-class Effie, who has a fountain built in her honor in Bryant Park, with working-class Rebekah Brower, whose lonely grave can be found in front of the Ulster County Recreation Center. — **Katya Stanislavskaya**





A Journey of Support

Stanislavskaya spent two weeks in May 2021 writing and composing "The Useful Citizen" in New Hampshire as a MacDowell Fellow in Theatre. In summer 2021, SUNY New Paltz Theatre Arts students Christopher Lunetta (above, left) and Gina Lardi received a Summer Undergraduate Research Experience grant to record an eight-song demo of the musical.

In October 2021, an excerpt was performed in a BMI Musical Theatre Workshop masterclass with Broadway director Sarna Lapine. Through the support of a fall 2021 Drescher Leave, Stanislavskaya researched and workshopped the piece at the Gainesville Theater Alliance in Georgia.



Stanislavskaya writing* The Useful Citizen *on a MacDowell fellowship in New Hampshire in May 2021

What is a Reading of a Musical?

Because dramatic works are meant to be seen and heard, not read, it's important for the author and creative team to hear the material performed by actors. This type of workshopping concentrates on acting and singing in order to facilitate the writing and rewriting. Unlike a full production, a reading of a musical has almost no design elements, and very minimal staging. Actors perform with their scripts and scores. One of the performances is followed by a talkback with the cast and audience. These talkbacks are a great way to get involved in the creative process of a new musical!

—Katya Stanislavskaya

Tickets Available Now!

In-Person Audience Guidance

Full 2022-2023 Mainstage Season Schedule

New Paltz
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

F&PA
SCHOOL OF FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Subscribe to our email list.