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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Ford's Theatre Launches Lincoln's Great Words Challenge June 8-July 31, 2020**

### **Virtual Challenge Encourages Participants to Perform Lincoln's Words**

Washington, D.C. –Ford's Theatre announced the launch of **Lincoln's Great Words Challenge, June 8 to July 31, 2020**—an eight-week online oratory challenge exploring Abraham Lincoln's speeches. The challenge features weekly hour-long workshops via Zoom exploring the text of Abraham Lincoln's public addresses and his oratorical delivery while also providing public-speaking training to improve participants' skills. The challenge encourages participants to film themselves speaking Lincoln's great words and submit video recordings to Ford's. Participant videos may be published on the Ford's Theatre website and social media channels to celebrate Lincoln's leadership at another time of crisis in American history.

Lincoln's Great Words Challenge is open to the public, and registration is free. Register for the webinars online at <https://www.fords.org/visit/virtual-events-and-special-tours/lincolns-great-words/>.

"One of the things that made Abraham Lincoln such an extraordinary leader was his genius with words. Lincoln's speeches inspired a nation during one of the most trying times in our history; today our leaders continue to invoke his words and the ideas behind them," said **Ford's Theatre Associate Director for Arts Education Cynthia Gertsen**.

"In this time of crisis, we hope Lincoln's Great Worlds Challenge will help participants find encouragement and comfort and hone their own oratory skills," Gertsen continued. "We believe that speaking the words of others is a powerful way to understand them better and make their meaning personal."

Participants in Lincoln's Great Words Challenge are encouraged to:

- Register to participate in one or more of the six live webinars, each focusing on one of Lincoln's most powerful speeches. Webinars are led by Master Oratory Fellows (classroom teachers who are long-time ambassadors for the Ford's Theatre Approach to Oratory) and Ford's Theatre Master Teaching Artists (performer-educators who specialize in teaching the power of public speaking).
- Read and analyze an Abraham Lincoln speech.
- Watch Ford's Theatre videos on the Ford's Approach to Oratory, outlining simple tools for delivering speeches for maximum impact.

- Film themselves speaking Lincoln's words – a portion of one of his speeches or the whole thing.
- Send Ford's Theatre a video clip (two-minute limit) of their performance by uploading it to YouTube and sharing the video link with Ford's through this form here: <https://www.fords.org/visit/virtual-events-and-special-tours/lincolns-great-words/lincoln-s-great-words-challenge-entry-form>. The final date to submit videos is July 31, 2020.
- Participants also may share their videos on their personal social media pages, tagging @FordsTheatre and using hashtags #LincolnsWords and #FordsOratory.

Ford's Theatre education programs are supported by Lead Education Sponsor **BP America** with additional support from **Bloomberg Philanthropies, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Park Service, Southern Company, United Airlines** and **Visa Inc.**

### **Ford's Theatre Society**

The Ford's Theatre Society was founded under the guidance of executive producer Frankie Hewitt, who, during her 35-year tenure, established Ford's as a living, working theatre producing performances that highlighted the diversity of the American experience. Since the arrival of Paul R. Tetreault as Director, critics and the theatregoing public have recognized Ford's for the superior quality of its artistic programming. With works from the Tony-nominated *Come From Away* and nationally acclaimed *Big River* to the world premieres of *Meet John Doe*, *The Heavens Are Hung In Black*, *Liberty Smith*, *Necessary Sacrifices*, *The Widow Lincoln* and *The Guard*, Ford's Theatre is making its mark on the American theatre landscape. For its accomplishments, the organization was honored in 2008 with the National Medal of Arts. For more information, visit [www.fords.org](http://www.fords.org). In the past decade, the mission of Ford's Theatre Society expanded to include education as a central pillar. This expansion led to the creation and construction of the Center for Education and Leadership, which opened in February 2012. Currently, under the leadership of Board Chairman Phebe N. Novakovic, Ford's Theatre Society is advancing the unfinished work of Abraham Lincoln by creating a vibrant, accessible Ford's Theatre campus that cultivates civic discourse, supports our nation's educators and engages the community with our history.

**#FordsOratory #LincolnsWords**

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