



American Repertory Theater  
64 brattle street, cambridge, massachusetts 02138  
617.495.2668 TEL  
617.495.1705 FAX  
617.547.8300 TICKETS  
[www.americanrepertorytheater.org](http://www.americanrepertorytheater.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, October 31, 2024

**Contact:** Rebecca Curtiss, Public Relations Director  
[Rebecca\\_Curtiss@harvard.edu](mailto:Rebecca_Curtiss@harvard.edu) | 617.496.2000 x8846

**IMAGES FOR DOWNLOAD**

**AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
UNVEILS LAVINE LEARNING LAB,  
NEW STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE**

**\$5 Million Gift from the Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation  
Endows New Public High School Program in Perpetuity**

**Cambridge, MA — November 15, 2024 —** The American Repertory Theater (“A.R.T.”) at **Harvard University**, led by Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., today unveiled the **Lavine Learning Lab (“the Learning Lab”)**, a new public high school initiative that will sustain and deepen student engagement with the theater. The program is supported by a \$5 million gift from the **Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation**, which was founded by Bain Capital Chair Jonathan Lavine and Jeannie Lavine to support nonprofit organizations focused on leveling the playing field for individuals and families.

Built around A.R.T.’s groundbreaking theatrical programming, the Lavine Learning Lab is designed to foster lasting relationships between the theater and public high schools in the greater Boston area through season-based engagement. The Learning Lab exemplifies the type of community-centered, accessible programming A.R.T. will offer from its new home, the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance. Currently under construction at 175 N. Harvard Street in the Allston neighborhood of Boston, the Center is expected to be completed in the fall of 2026.

Rooted in A.R.T.'s core values of inquiry and collaboration, the Lavine Learning Lab will use A.R.T. productions as the foundation for three student workshops at each that bridge the arts, humanities, and social and emotional learning. In addition, two educators from each participating school will join a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in which A.R.T. facilitates ongoing collaborative learning and provides professional development.

Instead of attending a morning matinee designated for school groups, Learning Lab students will attend evening performances of every show in A.R.T.'s season to build their familiarity with theatergoing and sense of belonging at the theater. Students will sit in groups of 2 - 4 throughout the auditorium alongside the general evening audience to cultivate a culture of lifelong theatergoing. To increase accessibility by removing common barriers, A.R.T. will provide transportation between the schools and the theater and a pre-show dinner onsite. A.R.T. will work with the PLC to identify and address additional barriers to theatergoing.

Throughout the 2023/24 school year, A.R.T. facilitated a pilot with six public high schools to develop the current model.

"Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine recognize the importance of reaching young people and the transformative power of theater, and their galvanizing support is making it possible for A.R.T. to fulfill our vision to center community in our artistic programming," said Paulus. "The theater is where we develop our muscles for inquiry, empathy, and debate. Thanks to the Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation, the Lavine Learning Lab will be a gymnasium where high school students will come to exercise their humanity so they can become the most impactful citizens and participants in our society."

"We've been struck by A.R.T.'s commitment to expanding access to theater," said Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine. "We are delighted to play a part in engaging Boston's students and teachers in the essential questions sparked by A.R.T.'s world-class programming and in supporting A.R.T., whose work inspires people all throughout our city and this country."

"When we attend a performance, we aren't impacted only by what we see onstage, but also by our fellow audience members," said A.R.T. Associate Artistic Director Dayron J. Miles. "The Lab's students will diversify A.R.T.'s audience in multiple dimensions, turning our theater into a space for intergenerational dialogue among people with different lived experiences and perspectives. Empathy is a necessary tool for responsible democratic participation, and that's what we can cultivate with this model."

“I feel like a lot of my analytical skills have been reinforced and retaught in the Learning Lab, but I’ve also taken the vulnerability that I feel when I’m in the Lab and applied it to other parts of my life,” said Malden High School student and Lab participant Addison McWayne. “This experience has provided me with opportunities to speak up for myself and to share my opinion, which has made me a stronger and more confident person.”

“The Lab is one of the ways that A.R.T. shares the resources of Harvard University with our community, but the A.R.T. community gains so much, too,” said Dinkins. “The students bring their anticipation and excitement, which translates into a galvanizing energy on the sidewalk, in our lobbies, and in the theater itself that enhances the experience for everyone. Thanks to this incredible support from the Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation, A.R.T. is positioned to bring our mission into public high schools across Boston for years to come.”

“When the Lavine Learning Lab works in Boston, we hope it will be a model for other cities, because A.R.T. has led the way in so many areas, and A.R.T. can help lead the way in providing this kind of access and inspiration to students all over the country,” said the Lavines.

[See the Lavine Learning Lab Fact Sheet for more information and details.](#)

## **ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER (A.R.T.) AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

**The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University** is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking theatrical experiences that catalyze dialogue and transformation. Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus began her tenure in 2008 and co-leads the theater in partnership with Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., who began in June 2022.

A.R.T. is a Tony Award-winning creative hub, launching productions seen on Broadway, across the US, and around the world throughout its 45-year history. As the professional theater on campus, A.R.T. plays a central role at Harvard University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange, and sharing University resources with the broader community. Driven by its value to lead with inquiry, A.R.T. builds community with audiences, artists, students, staff, and neighbors across Greater Boston, embracing theater’s power to cultivate the full breadth and beauty of our shared humanity.

A.R.T. will relocate from Harvard Square to its new home in Allston, the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance. Currently under construction, this new, inspiring center

will include flexible adaptive spaces to rehearse, create, teach, and convene in community, fueling A.R.T.'s vision and creative work for years to come.

### **ABOUT THE CRIMSON LION / LAVINE FAMILY FOUNDATION**

The Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation's mission is to level the playing field so everyone can participate. The Foundation supports nonprofit organizations that address pressing social challenges in the focus areas of education, healthcare, anti-discrimination, anti-poverty, and democratizing information. The multi-disciplinary efforts of these organizations strengthen the foundations of society by directly serving communities through research, innovation, public policy, and advocacy.

The Lavine Family also devotes their time, resources, and networks to provide hands-on investment in the success of several nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping those less fortunate. Jeannie and Jonathan Lavine, Co-Founders and Trustees of The Crimson Lion / Lavine Family Foundation, have shared their philanthropic spirit with their children, making generosity and volunteerism an essential part of their family life.

In addition to this gift, the Lavines are major contributors to causes at Harvard University. They endowed the Lavine Family Humanitarian Studies Initiative at the Harvard School of Public Health and have also provided substantial support to fund scholarships for first-generation students at Harvard Business School.

Passionately committed to higher education, Jeannie Lavine is an active member of the Harvard University community, serving as Dean's advisor to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and as a member of the Board of Dean's Advisors for The Harvard Business School. She is a recipient of the Richard T. Flood '27 Award by the Harvard College Fund and also served as co-Chair of the Campaign for the Harvard School of Public Health. Jonathan Lavine currently serves as a member of the Board of Dean's Advisors for both Harvard College and The Harvard Business School. He is Chair Emeritus of the Trustees at Columbia University.