



News Release

For Immediate Release

**Florida Theatre and BABS' LAB
Partner To Present Anti-Bullying Play *CHALK*
*PNC Bank Arts Alive Grant Funds Free Tickets for Title One Students***

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., – Community arts organizations, The Florida Theatre in partnership BABS' LAB will present a special school - time presentation of Al Letson's critically acclaimed anti-bullying play *CHALK* on Feb. 5 at 10am.

A PNC Bank Arts Alive grant will make it possible for students at Fort Caroline Middle School, a Title One school, to attend *CHALK* for free. Additionally, discounted \$5.00 tickets are available for students at non-Title One schools. A limited number of general public tickets are available for purchase for \$10.00. Tickets can be purchased at floridatheatre.com, in person at the box office, located at 128 E. Forsyth Street or by calling the Florida Theatre Box Office at 904.355.ARTS(2787).

"Not only is this an awesome opportunity for our students to see other artist at work in their craft, but this is also a chance to address an extremely significant topic in which many students are faced with every day – bullying," said Chelvert J. Wellington, Principal Fort Caroline Middle School. "There was no hesitation in my response. This production is so groundbreaking that we are offering the experience to ALL of our students."

Written by Al Letson, a nationally known poet and award-winning host of the NPR radio broadcast, *Reveal* (heard weekly on WJCT 89.9), *CHALK* centers around a group of kids making the transition to middle school. Through poetic monologues, *CHALK* reveals the inner voices of kids who are trapped in a society where bullying is tolerated in schools and on social media.

"Through the experience of witnessing this powerful piece of theatre, students, educators, parents, and the wider community will examine the complexities of how verbal abuse and bullying can be addressed and transformed. Letson's poetic language moves us to a deeper level of thinking about aggressive interaction giving us a vocabulary for our feelings," said Barbara Colaciello, Artistic Director of BABS'LAB



“Everyone knows the Florida Theatre as one of Northeast Florida's best venues, but what they may not realize is that the theatre is managed and operated by a nonprofit corporation. Our partnership with BABS'LAB is a terrific example of why that operating model matters,” said Florida Theatre President Numa Saisselin. “As a nonprofit theatre, we are thrilled to help secure funding from PNC Bank, and we're excited to provide the performance space, and we're thrilled to host hundreds of students for free who might otherwise not see this show, or maybe any show this school year.”

The historic, nonprofit Florida Theatre is sponsored by Community First Credit Union.

[Florida Theatre](#) : From ballet to contemporary dance, jazz, rock, country and blues the nonprofit Florida Theatre offers 175 to 200 cultural and entertainment events annually for every taste and age. More than just an entertainment center, The Florida Theatre is also home to graduations, awards ceremonies, lectures, business meetings and charity events that support the community's schools, churches, hospitals and civic groups. As an anchor to downtown development along the beautiful St. Johns River, The Florida Theatre draws 175,000 to 200,000 people to Jacksonville's center each year. The magnificently restored Florida Theatre is recognized as one of the finest concert venues in the Southeast. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Florida Theatre holds special memories for four generations. From the Vaudeville acts and silent films of its earliest days to today's blend of performances of all kinds, The Florida Theatre has served as Jacksonville's premier entertainment center since 1927.

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