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ROUND HOUSE THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2024-2025 SEASON

**47TH SEASON INCLUDES AN ACCLAIMED NIGERIAN-AMERICAN DRAMA,
A WORLD PREMIERE HOLIDAY MUSICAL, TWO PULITZER PRIZE FINALISTS,
FOURTH ANNUAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL WITH ONE WORLD PREMIERE, AND MORE**

BETHESDA, Md., April 2, 2024 – Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Managing Director Ed Zakreski are thrilled to announce the full five-show lineup for Round House Theatre’s 2024-2025 Season. Following a season filled with a wide range of shows for every theatrical taste, Round House is excited for audiences to experience its 2024-2025 Season, which includes five fervant shows that encourage timely conversation and reflect Round House’s ongoing commitment to amplifying under-represented voices in the American theatre community.

“Our 2024-25 Season features five heartfelt, intimate and humorous stories,” Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette** said. “With two Pulitzer Prize finalists and two world premieres, including a family-friendly musical for the holidays, this season will have you laughing, crying, and talking with your friends long into the night!”

The 2024-2025 Season

The season begins with Mfoniso Udofia’s *Sojourners* (September – October 2024), a beautiful origin story of Udofia’s nine-part, multigenerational Ufot Cycle, which depicts the Nigerian-American experience. This “moving and powerful” (*The New York Times*) play is a testament to the complexity of the American dream. Udofia is also one of Round House’s Equal Play commissioned playwrights who is developing a later play as part of this profoundly moving family saga. **Valerie Curtis Newton** will direct this epic story that focuses on a love triangle of three young Nigerian immigrants who must decide whether to return home after they finish their education, or stay and make a life in an America that is much harder than home.

Round House audiences will then experience a world premiere holiday musical, ***A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical*** (November – December 2024). With music by **Aaron Kenny** and lyrics by **Rob Berliner**, originally conceived by **Harrison Bryan** (last seen at Round House in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) and recently named the winner of the Audience Favorite Award at this year’s Broadway Shark Tank—this musical is a hilarious riff on a holiday classic that celebrates making the world a kinder place. This production, which was rescheduled from winter 2023, will be directed and choreographed by **Marlo Hunter**.

Round House’s dynamic new season will continue with Heidi Schreck’s smash hit, ***What the Constitution Means to Me*** (January – March 2025), an exhilarating exploration of democracy that focuses on women’s rights and dignity, while mixing personal and political perspectives. Previously recognized with an Obie Award for Best New American Play for its Off-Broadway run, the Broadway transfer was nominated for a Tony, and won a New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award.

Round House will produce the first local production of this “electrifyingly topical and eye-opening” (*The New York Times*) Pulitzer Prize finalist, which examines how the Constitution serves (or fails to serve) our modern society. The director of this production will be announced at a later date.

Round House will continue its commitment to producing compelling new work with the fourth annual **National Capital New Play Festival** (see page 3 for additional information), headlined by the captivating and timely world premiere of Sharyn Rothstein’s ***Bad Books*** (April 2025), which was previously presented as a reading in the 2023 festival. This brilliant new play (and National New Play Network 2024 Showcase selection) offers compassion and empathy, and provides an opportunity to reflect on what it means to truly care for our children. The production’s cast and creative team will include Artistic Director Ryan Rilette (director), and local acting legends Kate Eastwood Norris and Holly Twyford.

Following the festival, Round House is thrilled to close the season with Pulitzer Prize Finalist Rajiv Joseph’s ***King James*** (June 2025), a compassionate story that examines male friendship and sports fandom. This 2023 Off-Broadway hit and deeply affecting new play chronicles the sudden camaraderie of two men who bond when “King” LeBron James joins their home team in Cleveland, sparking much-needed hope in them and their city. This play is a “wonderfully daring, imaginative, and compassionate” (*The New York Times*) celebration of the power of the sports community and unexpected friendships.

National Capital New Play Festival

In April 2022, Round House launched the inaugural year of the National Capital New Play Festival, a regional celebration of new plays that forms an annual part of the Theatre’s programming. In service of Round House’s longstanding investment in diversifying the voices that are amplified through live theatre, the festival seeks to nurture relationships with both established and early-career playwrights while cultivating an interest in new work among audiences in the DC metro area and demystifying the new play development process.

The 2025 festival will feature one **world premiere production** (*Bad Books*) presented as part of the mainstage season, as well as four plays presented as **developmental readings** (titles to be announced) and more. Full schedule and details will be announced at a later date.

The 23rd Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play

Established by the Metzger family and friends to celebrate the memory of Sarah Metzger, an inspiring and active member of the theatre community who was killed in an automobile accident during her freshman year of college, the “Sarah Play” is the culminating performance of the **Teen Performance Company** each year. Following a year of training, master classes with artists working in the field, and behind-the-scenes access to Round House productions, the TPC members direct, design, stage manage, and perform a full production on the Round House stage. Next season’s Teen Performance Company production will be announced at a later date.

“These five distinctive, hilarious, and profound plays for our 2024-2025 Season represent the conscientious and rewarding work that comes with theatrical storytelling,” adds Managing Director **Ed Zakreski**. “These are stories that will help us expand our perspectives and empathize with one another in this ever-changing community. We can’t wait to see you at the theatre.”

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2024-2025 SEASON DETAILS

POWERFUL AND HEARTFELT DRAMA

Sojourners

By Mfoniso Udofia

Directed by Valerie Curtis Newton

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2024

Abasiama Ufot and her husband Ukpong are Nigerian immigrants studying and living in Texas in the 1970s. Ukpong is exhilarated by the promises of America, but Abasiama is homesick and frustrated by Ukpong’s frequent absences. As Abasiama struggles with the physical pain of her pregnancy, the demands of work and

schooling, the isolation of being away from her family, and the uncertainty of her future, an unexpected community inspires her to forge her own path. The first play in Mfoniso Udofia’s epic nine-part *Ufot Cycle* depicting the Nigerian-American experience, *Sojourners* is a “moving and powerful” (*The New York Times*) testament to the complexity of the American dream.

HYSTERICAL HOLIDAY MUSICAL

A Hanukkah Carol

Or GELT TRIP! The Musical

Music by Aaron Kenny, Book & Lyrics by Rob Berliner, Book & Original Concept by Harrison Bryan

Directed and Choreographed by Marlo Hunter

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024 | World Premiere

Misanthropic millennial influencer Chava Kanipshin’s internet followers are turning into haters. Desperate to regain her popularity, Chava shuns anything and anyone she sees as an obstacle, including her family, friends, and holiday traditions. But on the first night of Hanukkah, Chava is visited by the ghost of deceased social media star Mimi Marley and other spirits who warn her to change her ways—or be cursed forever. The spirits lead Chava on a madcap journey through Hanukkahs past, present, and future to help her reconnect with her spirit of generosity, her Jewish identity, and an appreciation of her real-life supporters. Winner of the Audience Favorite Award at this year’s Broadway Shark Tank, *A Hanukkah Carol* is a heartfelt, hilarious riff on a holiday classic that celebrates making the world a kinder place.

A Hanukkah Carol is produced by special arrangement with Daryl Roth and Jim Kierstead.

EXHILARATING EXPLORATION OF DEMOCRACY

What the Constitution Means to Me

By Heidi Schreck

Director TBA

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

As a teenager, Heidi Schreck traveled across America, earning her college tuition by winning constitutional debate competitions. Now, as an Obie Award-winning playwright, she takes a closer look at the Constitution and its effects on four generations of women in her family. Both poignant and hilarious, *What the Constitution Means to Me* is a profoundly personal look at our nation’s most debated document and how it could evolve to fit our modern times. One of the most popular and beloved plays in America, this “electrifyingly topical and eye-opening” (*The New York Times*) Pulitzer Prize finalist has never been more relevant, urgent, or needed.

CAPTIVATING AND SUSPENSEFUL WORLD PREMIERE

Bad Books

By Sharon Rothstein

Directed by Ryan Rilette

APRIL 2025 | World Premiere

When a troubled teen is given a controversial book, his mother visits the local library to discuss “appropriate” reading material with the librarian. However, their reasonable discussion quickly turns into a heated confrontation, sparking a dramatic chain reaction of unexpected consequences. With both heartbreak and humor, Sharon Rothstein offers compassion and empathy as an antidote to the deep debates that divide us. Staged in the round, this brilliant world premiere challenges us to see past our political divisions and first impressions, and asks us what it truly means to care for our children. *Part of the National Capital New Play Festival.*

CELEBRATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND SPORTS FANDOM

King James

By Rajiv Joseph

Director TBA

JUNE 2025 | World Premiere

At first glance, Shawn and Matt couldn’t be more different. However, when they discover they are both diehard Cleveland Cavaliers fans, they quickly form a close bond over their shared love of basketball—and the breathtaking talents of NBA star LeBron James. Over the course of many years and sports seasons, their friendship relationship ebbs and flows with the fortunes of their beloved team. This witty and energetic comedy is a “wonderfully daring, imaginative, and compassionate” (*The New York Times*) celebration of the enduring power of sports fandom and unexpected friendships, written by Pulitzer Prize finalist Rajiv Joseph (*Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*).

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TICKET INFORMATION

Subscription packages for Round House Theatre’s 2024-2025 Season are now available for purchase online at **RoundHouseTheatre.org**, or by calling the Box Office at **240.644.1100**. Subscribers enjoy the best prices and the best seats on their preferred night, with benefits including free ticket exchanges, waived single ticket fees, and more. Tickets for individual productions will be available for sale in mid July.

ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, D.C. area, producing a

season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals for more than 50,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 213 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 42, including four Outstanding Resident Play Awards and the Charles MacArthur Award for Original New Play in 2016. Round House's lifelong learning and education programs serve more than 5,000 students each year at its Education Center in Silver Spring, in schools throughout Montgomery County, and at our Bethesda theatre. Cornerstone programs include Free Play, which provides free tickets for students age 13-college, the Teen Performance Company, which culminates in the student-produced Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Summer Camp for students in grades K-12, and a full slate of classes for adults and youth.

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