

ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL 2025

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE





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2024-2025 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- Round House was honored with four Helen Hayes Award nominations for plays from the 2024 calendar year (two for *Topdog/Underdog* and one each for *Next to Normal* and *Sojourners*), with acting wins for Renea S. Brown (*Sojourners*) and Yao Dogbe (*Topdog/Underdog*).
- The highly anticipated world premiere of *A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical* became the third best-selling production in Round House history.
- Our Teen Performance Company presented the 23rd Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play—and the first by a teen playwright and TPC member—Fin Davis's *Gallows Humor*.
- Round House welcomed the Nigerian, West African, and African diaspora communities for a special performance of *Sojourners*. Members of the cast stayed after the show to meet, chat, and celebrate with audience members on one of our special Community Nights, established for specific cultures to celebrate and enjoy a performance that represents their community on the main stage.
- Sharyn Rothstein's *Bad Books* anchored the fourth year of Round House's newly renamed Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival, comprising world premieres and readings of new plays in development, and became the best-selling world premiere play in Round House history.
- In summer 2024, we welcomed more than 800 students into our buildings for summer camp.
- Round House celebrated our annual *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala featuring Tony Award winner and original *Hamilton* cast member Renée Elise Goldsberry. The event became the highest-grossing gala in Round House history, raising more than \$520,000 in support of Round House programs.
- When we lost a \$20,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant slated to support the world premiere of *Bad Books* by Sharyn Rothstein, our community answered with breathtaking generosity, raising more than nine times the amount of the lost grant in just three weeks. Together, our supporters proved that art and community can rise to meet the moment, with passion, courage, and unstoppable impact.

The 2024-2025 Season was sponsored by Linda J. Ravdin and Don Shapero.







DEAR FRIENDS OF ROUND HOUSE,

THANK YOU for being a part of our remarkable 2024-2025 Season! We always strive to produce relevant work that explores current issues, inspires empathy, and demands conversation. While we had planned the timing of certain shows to respond to what is happening in the country, we couldn't have predicted just how clearly the stories on our stage would address the most pressing issues of our day.

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STORIES ON OUR STAGE
WOULD ADDRESS
THE MOST PRESSING
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The 2024-2025 Season began with *Sojourners* by Mfoniso Udofia, a stunning reflection on the challenges of Nigerian immigrant life in America and how to decipher where you truly belong. The play is the first in the playwright's expansive Ufot Cycle; Round House has commissioned the seventh play in the cycle, and we look forward to reuniting with some of these characters.

In the winter, we produced *A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical*, the first of three world premieres to grace the Round House stage in the 2024-2025 Season. We were thrilled to welcome back Harrison Bryan, last seen onstage at Round House in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, as one of the brilliant creators of this hilarious and

heartwarming new musical, alongside lyricist Rob Berliner and composer Aaron Kenny. Critics and audiences alike were charmed by this new musical as a delightful addition to the canon of holiday shows.

What the Constitution Means to Me by Heidi Schreck opened on January 21, 2025, the day after the Presidential Inauguration. We were honored to be the only theatre in the country to have the playwright's permission to update the script in order to reflect the many significant political changes since the play was first performed in 2019, making our production one-of-a-kind. Director Morgan Gould's additions succinctly incorporated these massive shifts very much

in the spirit of the original script, resulting in a resonant and thought-provoking artistic experience.

In the spring, the Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival was named in honor of longtime Round House supporter and former Trustee, Bonnie Hammerschlag. Our festival was nothing short of spectacular, including the world premiere of *Bad Books* by Sharyn Rothstein, an all-too-relevant exploration of censorship, parental rights, and all that lies between. The play premiered just as the Supreme Court heard a case about book banning in Montgomery County. The shifting perspectives throughout the story made it the perfect production to be staged in the round—the first time we’ve achieved such a feat in our renovated Bethesda theatre. The festival also featured readings of four new plays in development, including *Indian Princesses*, which has since become a hit across the country and will premiere off-Broadway next season.

We concluded the season with *King James* by Rajiv Joseph. This charming “bromantic comedy” offered a look at how male friendship can grow and evolve at a time in which discussions of a male loneliness epidemic have become common. It was fitting to end our season with a story that proves that you can always go home again.

In March, we achieved another long-held dream: for the first time ever, our Teen Performance Company (TPC) produced a world premiere play written by a teen playwright. *Gallows Humor* by Fin Davis had its world premiere on the Round House stage. *Gallows Humor* followed a group of high school students trapped in a classroom during a lockdown; a story that could only be told authentically by the students who live with this reality every day. We continue to be inspired by the remarkable teens who have found their artistic home at Round House.

Outside of TPC, Round House Education continues to thrive. We are grateful to grow deeper roots in our community by partnering with Montgomery County Public Schools to bring long-term arts education opportunities to students who might not otherwise benefit from creative learning. Our

popular Summer Camps continue to inspire hundreds of kids to discover their inner artist.

The record-breaking 2025 *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala gave us a much-needed chance to celebrate the importance of the arts. Tony Award-winner Renée Elise Goldsberry gave a stunning performance, featuring not only the popular songs that she has brought to life throughout her Broadway career, but also classic standards and original songs from her debut album. Round House actor Kimberly Gilbert led a rousing auction

THIS SEASON DEMONSTRATED
THE URGENCY OF HEARING
STORIES FROM NEW VOICES
AND BEING OPEN TO SEEING
THE WORLD THROUGH NEW
PERSPECTIVES.

that helped make this year’s *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala the highest-grossing Gala in Round House history!

The 2024-2025 Season was truly monumental. This season demonstrated the urgency of hearing stories from new voices and being open to seeing the world through new perspectives. More than ever, Round House is a place where audiences can come together to connect, to ask questions, and to challenge themselves in a space that is safe and welcoming to all. Thank you for being a part of our community.



RYAN RILETTE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



ED ZAKRESKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



MISSION AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

Round House is a theatre for everyone. We enrich our community through bold, outstanding theatrical and educational experiences that inspire empathy and demand conversation.

////////////////////

OUR VALUES

THEATRE FOR EVERYONE

We are a theatre of and for our community, committed to equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. We believe that engaging in the arts is essential to the human experience and that arts education should be available to all. Therefore, we intentionally and rigorously work to break down barriers to attending, learning, and creating theatre—including those based in race, gender, sexuality, ability, and economics. We amplify voices that have been historically under-represented and under-resourced by the theatre field and strive to incorporate anti-racist and anti-sexist practices across all aspects of our work.

ARTISTIC AMBITION

We hold ourselves to the highest professional standards in all our work. We aim to be an important voice in the theatrical world by creating art locally that has an impact globally.



COMMUNITY

We believe that we enhance our communities through our collaborative artistry both on stage and in the classroom. We invest locally—in both talent and products. We create civic dialogues with art at the center and endeavor to be the artistic home for our community. We consider our communities to encompass Bethesda, Silver Spring, Montgomery County, Maryland, the Washington theatrical community, and the broader Washington metropolitan area.

EMPATHY

We believe that fostering empathy creates stronger communities and that communities thrive when they represent a wide and diverse set of stories and viewpoints that reflect the breadth of human experience. We challenge audiences and theatre-makers to awaken their empathy through artistic risk on the stage and in the classroom.

INTEGRITY

We believe in treating everyone with respect—staff, artists, students, trustees, and patrons. We endeavor to create a supportive culture that allows our teams to do their best work with an appropriate work/life balance. We are transparent about achieving our mission-based artistic and education initiatives and are committed to doing so in a financially responsible manner.

SEPT 11 - OCT 6, 2024

SOJOURNERS

BY MFONISO UDOFIA

DIRECTED BY VALERIE CURTIS-NEWTON

“

A TRUE
THEATRICAL
VICTORY

—BROADWAY WORLD

”

“

INTIMATE
AND INSIGHTFUL

—WASHINGTON
CITY PAPER

”





“THE WARMTH OF THE ACTORS
LEND AN ACHING HUMANITY
TO THE PRODUCTION”

—THE WASHINGTON POST

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE OPENED THE 2024-2025 SEASON WITH

a production of *Sojourners* by Mfoniso Udofia. This moving and powerful play followed the story of Abasiama, a Nigerian immigrant studying and living in Texas. Caught between two cultures—American and Nigerian—and struggling with the physical pain of pregnancy and isolation from her homeland, Abasiama leans on unexpected friends and begins to forge her own path. With empathy and nuance, *Sojourners* examined the true complexity of the “American dream” and celebrated the tenacity, courage, and leadership of the first major wave of Nigerian immigrants to America in the 1970s.

Sojourners featured remarkable and nuanced performances from Opa Adeyemo, Renea S. Brown, Kambi Gathesha, and Billie Krishawn. Brown won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Supporting Performer for her riveting and funny portrayal of Moxie.

Sojourners is the first play in Mfoniso Udofia’s epic and ambitious nine-play Ufot Cycle, which depicts a Nigerian-American family over many generations. Round House workshopped another play in the cycle, *Adia & Clora Snatch Joy*, as part of our new play festival in 2022. We have also commissioned a third play in the cycle, and are proud to have been part of the growth of this large, sweeping story.

During the run of the show, we hosted a special Community Night for members of the Nigerian, West African, and African diaspora communities. Participants were encouraged to discuss the play’s themes with each other and met members of the cast after the performance at Round House’s Fourth Wall Bar and Café. Dozens of patrons took advantage of this Community Night to attend Round House for the first time, and relished meeting and discussing the play with each other.

≡ *Sojourners* was sponsored by Nan Beckley and Jay & Robin Hammer.

NOV 20 - DEC 29, 2024

A HANUKKAH CAROL, OR GELT TRIP! THE MUSICAL

MUSIC BY **AARON KENNY**

LYRICS BY **ROB BERLINER**

BOOK BY **HARRISON BRYAN & ROB BERLINER**

ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY **HARRISON BRYAN**

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY **MARLO HUNTER**

WORLD PREMIERE





“
JOYOUS
AND
POWERFUL

—DC THEATER ARTS

“
THE SHOW [REMINDS]
AUDIENCES TO
EMBRACE THEIR TRADITIONS
AND MAKE THE WORLD
A BETTER PLACE

—MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

“A DELIGHT... [FULL OF]
SHEER CHARM AND CHUTZPAH...
WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GELT”

—THE WASHINGTON POST

AFTER A ONE-YEAR DELAY, ROUND HOUSE THEATRE presented the highly anticipated world premiere of *A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical*, a joyful reimagining of Charles Dickens' holiday classic that celebrates making the world a kinder place. The heartfelt, family-friendly musical follows misanthropic millennial influencer Chava Kanipshin, who is visited by the ghost of deceased social media star Mimi Marley and other spirits who lead Chava on a madcap journey through Hanukkahs past, present, and future to help her reconnect with her spirit of generosity and her Jewish identity.

The production welcomed thousands of first-time visitors to Round House, as well as families and groups from local synagogues, on its way to becoming one of the best-selling productions in Round House history.

As an audience favorite in its early development process, and with a group of financial backers on board to guide the show to future productions, *A Hanukkah Carol* represents a new and unique addition to the holiday theatre canon. Round House is proud to have produced the world premiere production!

Lead Sponsors: David & Sherry Smith and The GPS Fund

Sponsors: Bonnie & Alan Hammerschlag and
Martha Newman & Brian Sutton

Pegaschvitz Sponsors: Ellen & Jon Bortz

Additional Support from Nan Beckley and Gil & Rona Eisner

A Hanukkah Carol was produced by special arrangement with Daryl Roth,
Jim Kierstead, and Feelin' Gelly.

JAN 15 – FEB 16, 2025

WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME

BY HEIDI SCHRECK

DIRECTED BY MORGAN GOULD

“

A THOUGHT-PROVOKING
AND ESSENTIAL
PIECE OF THEATRE

—MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

”





“
NEVER
HAS A PLAY
BEEN SO TIMELY!
”

—BROADWAY WORLD

“STIRRING... HAS NEVER ECHOED LOUDER”

—THE WASHINGTON POST

ONE DAY AFTER THE 2025 INAUGURATION, WE

opened *What the Constitution Means to Me*, Heidi Schreck’s beloved deep-dive into our nation’s founding document and its effects on the lives of four generations of women in her family. Inspired by Schreck’s real-life experiences competing in constitutional debate competitions as a teenager, this profoundly personal play asks thought-provoking questions about the Constitution and how it has failed our nation’s most vulnerable citizens. The production couldn’t have been more timely, and was made even more relevant by a series of brand-new, only-seen-at Round-House updates to the script (by director Morgan Gould, in collaboration with the playwright). These updates brought a fresh urgency to this popular, well-known play.

What the Constitution Means to Me featured DC theatre favorites Kimberly Gilbert and Michael Glenn, who often broke the fourth wall to speak directly to the audience with both heartbreaking pathos and hilarious irreverence. In the second act of the show, Gilbert had a live debate about whether or not the Constitution should be abolished with a local high schooler. The role of “debater” was played on alternating nights by two teen actors—Fadekemi Laniyonu and Kat Pascual—both making their Round House debuts. (Pascual would join us later in the spring for the developmental reading of *Indian Princesses* during the Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival—see page 21.)

What the Constitution Means to Me is one of the most produced plays in America, but due to the updated script, timeliness of its staging, Morgan Gould’s vision, and the star power of the actors, Round House’s production was uniquely transformative and galvanizing.

≡ What the Constitution Means to Me was sponsored by Susan & Tim Gibson,
≡ John & Rachel King, and Rafael Hernandez Mayoral & Laura Roulet.

TEEN TAKEOVER WEEKEND

FEB 28 - MAR 2, 2025

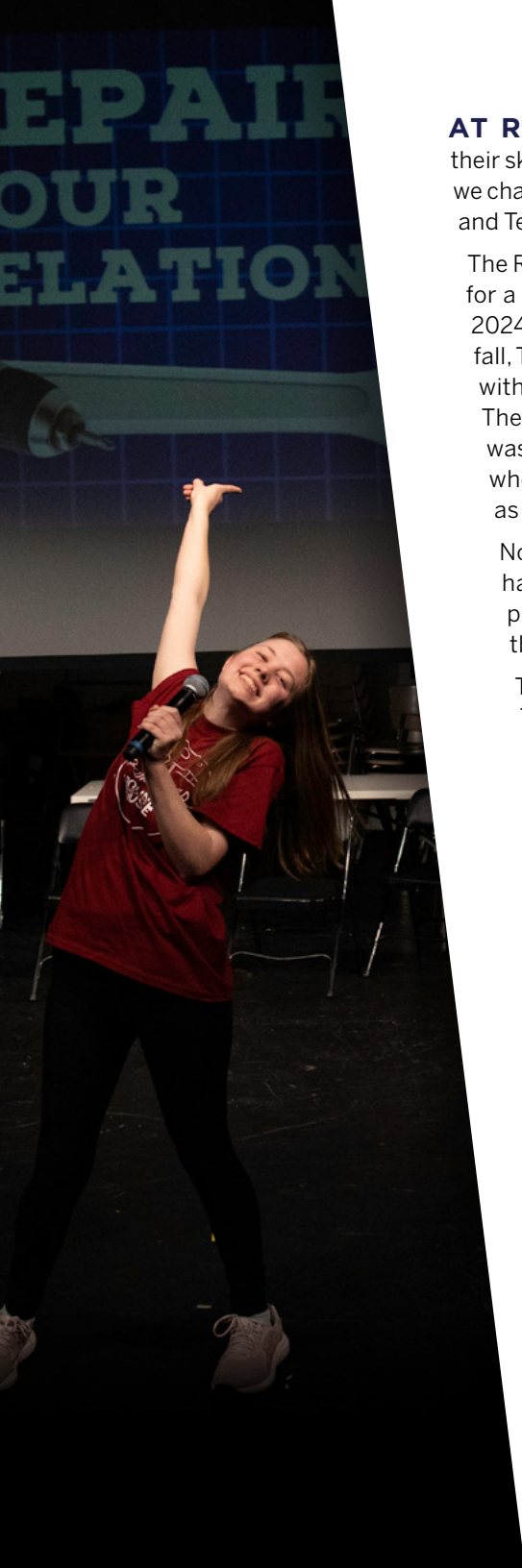
THE 23RD ANNUAL SARAH METZGER
MEMORIAL PLAY

GALLOWS & OUR HUMOR PARENTS PAID FOR THIS

BY FIN DAVIS

BY THE ROUNDLINGS





AT ROUND HOUSE, WE CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO DEVELOP

their skills not just in acting, but in movement, design, and playmaking. Even more importantly, we challenge our students to develop and express their own artistic voices. Our teen companies and Teen Takeover Weekend represent the best of Round House Theatre doing that.

The Round House Theatre Teen Performance Company (TPC) is a pre-professional program for a select group of teen artists. Round House covers the full cost of the program. In the 2024-2025 Season, 22 students representing 13 schools participated in the program. In the fall, TPC members attended Round House productions as well as a series of master classes with professional theatre artists. Their months of rehearsals and workshops culminated in The Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, a production of *Gallows Humor*. This world premiere play was directed, designed, stage managed, and performed by the members of the company, who worked closely at every step with experienced professional artists and practitioners as mentors.

Not only was *Gallows Humor* brought to life by teenagers, but it was also the first time TPC has produced a world premiere play written by a high school student. Fin Davis' writing provided a remarkable, insightful look at how the looming threat of gun violence affects the daily lives of American teenagers.

The Teen Performance Company performed as part of Teen Takeover Weekend with The Roundlings, a group dedicated to teen improv and stand-up. The Roundlings' performance is the culmination of another endeavor, one which features teen voices not just as actors, but as creators in a truly special way. Working with mentor Kevin Corbett, students performed stand-up, sketch comedy, and improvisations created by the teens themselves.

“Round House Theatre’s Teen Performance Company is extraordinary. The experience they provide for these young people is singular.”

TPC Parent

“TPC was by far the most impactful experience of my child’s high school experience. The care that Round House took to provide my child with mentorship over the course of this experience was life-changing.”

TPC Parent

“TPC was a formative experience for me, and the mentorship that I received from Round House has made me a better artist, leader, and individual. It also revealed new avenues for me and my future as an aspiring theater professional.”

TPC Student

APR 2 - MAY 4, 2025

BAD BOOKS

BY SHARYN ROTHSTEIN

DIRECTED BY RYAN RILETTE

A NATIONAL NEW PLAY NETWORK

ROLLING WORLD PREMIERE



“

THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND
MOVING

—BROADWAY WORLD

”

“

A DEEPLY RIVETING PLAY..
NAVIGATES A
TIMELY ISSUE WITH
INCREDIBLE FINESSE,
SHARPNESS, AND WIT

—MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

”

“

STUNNING AND
THOUGHTFUL

—DC THEATER ARTS

”





“BOTH ACTORS DO BRILLIANT WORK BRINGING CONFLICTING VIEWPOINTS TO LIFE”

—THE WASHINGTON POST

THE ANCHOR OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL BONNIE HAMMERSCHLAG NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL WAS THE WORLD PREMIERE

of *Bad Books*, a moving and funny examination of how empathy can bridge the deep debates dividing our country. Starring local acting legends Holly Twyford and Kate Eastwood Norris, the play asked us to see past our first impressions, and asks us what it truly means to care for future generations. Round House audiences loved this production, and *Bad Books* became the best-selling world premiere play in Round House's history.

For the first time, the Round House stage was transformed to literally be in the round! The inventive set design by Meghan Raham converted our theatre into an intimate arena. This unique configuration brought the audience much closer to the action on stage and heightened the emotional experience of the play. As part of the set design, we featured real banned books, and collected over 1,500 books contributed and loaned by members of the Round House community. In addition to these real banned books, the Round House creative team and staff created an additional 700 “faux books” to display as part of the on-stage library.

Bad Books first appeared at Round House as a reading in the 2023 Festival, and we were thrilled to be the first theatre to stage Rothstein's incisive play. Since premiering at Round House, as part of a rolling world premiere, *Bad Books* has been or will be produced at Florida Studio Theatre, Curious Theatre Company, and Williamston Theatre. In addition to the multiple productions, *Bad Books* has also received the David Goldman Prize for New American Plays. This play has a bright and important future in American theatre, and we are proud to have been an integral part of its creation.



Bad Books was sponsored by Mitch & Heidi Dupler, Bonnie & Alan Hammerschlag, Rick Kasten, and Judy & Leo Zickler.

“HEARTBREAKING, SNAPPY, AND FREQUENTLY HUMOROUS...SUPERBLY-DIRECTED”

—MORRIS THEATRE DC

THE BONNIE HAMMERSCHLAG NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL READING SERIES



In 2025, we renamed our new play festival "The Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival." Bonnie Hammerschlag has been one of Round House's biggest fans for decades, and we are grateful to Bonnie and her husband Alan for a generous naming gift that allows us to continue to champion the future of American theatre.

New play development is an integral part of Round House's DNA. The Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival Reading Series provides playwrights with a thrilling opportunity to workshop plays in development, and an equally thrilling opportunity for audiences to get an early sneak peek at works by brilliant up-and-coming playwrights. The 2025 lineup was socially relevant and artistically imaginative, and we look forward to seeing future renditions of these stories!



BABY SHOWER KATIE by Beth Hyland hilariously explores the absurd expectations placed on mothers and the terrors and uncertainty that can sometimes accompany pregnancy. With zany meltdowns and imaginative flair, this uproarious comedy is a powerful testament to friendship and parenthood.



PIN. by Sam Mueller questions the arbitrary nature of gender binaries and imagines a world in which nonbinary and trans kids can thrive. Set in the world of high school wrestling, this powerful play felt particularly relevant as nationwide debates about trans athletes dominated the news cycle during the 2025 Festival.



INDIAN PRINCESSES by Eliana Theologides Rodriguez is set at a Native American-themed father-daughter program, in which frustrations and tensions grow as a group of young girls try to build friendships while their fathers struggle to talk about race and diversity. This poignant and hilarious celebration of complicated identities went on to have a well-received world premiere production at La Jolla Playhouse, and will have an Off-Broadway production at The Atlantic Theater in 2026.



PROXIMITY by Harrison David Rivers explores the struggles facing a recently divorced couple as they try to navigate the COVID-19 lockdown with two young children. This funny and beautiful play explores the lingering effects of isolation, the messiness of parenting, and the critical importance of real human connection.

MAY 28 - JUN 22, 2025

KING JAMES

BY RAJIV JOSEPH

DIRECTED BY ROB RUGGIERO

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THEATERWORKS

HARTFORD AND BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY.



“

**A RICH PORTRAIT
OF A FRIENDSHIP...
COMIC YET
TOUCHING**

—WASHINGTON
CITY PAPER

”

“

**DEEPLY MOVING,
EMINENTLY
RESONANT, AND
MOST CERTAINLY
UNFORGETTABLE**

—MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

”

**“IN A TIME WHEN AMERICAN MEN REPORT
INCREASED FEELINGS OF ISOLATION, THIS WARM-HEARTED PLAY
SHOWS HOW SPORTS CAN STILL BE A GLUE FOR
MEANINGFUL MALE FRIENDSHIP.”**

—DC THEATER ARTS

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE CLOSED ITS 2024-2025 SEASON

with the regional premiere of *King James*, a heartfelt comedy by Pulitzer Prize finalist Rajiv Joseph and directed by Rob Ruggiero. Featuring performances by Blake Anthony Morris and Gregory Perri, the production explored the unlikely friendship between a Cleveland bartender and an aspiring writer, brought together by their shared love for basketball and the arrival of LeBron James in the 2003–2004 NBA season.

While *King James* takes its title from LeBron James' nickname, this hilarious and heartwarming play went beyond being a sports-themed buddy comedy, and resonated deeply with audiences by highlighting the nuances of male friendship. In an era in which many men are feeling increasingly isolated, this play showed and celebrated the powerful connection that can happen through shared activities and open conversation. The play's humor and emotional depth struck a chord with patrons and critics alike, earning praise for its authenticity and relevance, with one review acknowledging its honest portrayal of male friendship and noting, “You cheer for this relationship, mourn their rifts, and genuinely care [about them.]”

King James was presented in partnership with TheaterWorks Hartford and Barrington Stage Company. After finishing performances at Round House, this moving and entertaining play continued to delight audiences in Massachusetts.



EDUCATION

At Round House Theatre Education, students of all ages and backgrounds can experience the joy of creating and sharing theatre in programs that inspire creativity, exercise imaginations, and promote artistic risk-taking! We believe everyone is an artist and encourage them to explore all aspects of theatre—acting, movement, design, and play creation. We challenge our students to develop their own artistic voices and give them a platform to tell their stories on our stage.

SUMMER CAMP

Round House Theatre Education began the fiscal year with a great summer, offering ten weeks of in-person summer camps to 866 registrants ranging from age 4 to 18 across three Round House spaces.

Students in **GRADES K-3** met for week-long sessions at the Round House Education Center in Silver Spring, and used their imaginations to travel to destinations from the Enchanted Forest to the Future. In a new partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools, 35 students from New Hampshire Estates Elementary school joined us for four sessions of our popular Destinations program, while also receiving tutoring from teachers from their schools.

Students in **GRADES 4-6** attended camps at our theatre in Bethesda and the Education Center and Civic Building in Silver Spring. During Playmakers camp, students wrote, designed, and rehearsed a live theatrical production. The Filmmakers camp offered students the chance to create, write, design, and shoot a film. We also offered several weeks of Improv, for those ready to think on their feet!

Students in **GRADES 6-12** attended camps in Bethesda, covering a variety of more specialized topics such as musical theatre and stand-up comedy.

In addition, our summer programs brought interns and teen educators into our buildings to support our teaching artists and learn about the art of teaching theatre. We were joined by fifteen teen educators and eleven college interns, as well as a Summer Rise Student through our partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools.

“This was AMAZING!! The boys had such a great time making this film. Thank you for everything!”

Parent, Filmmakers: Art Around the World

“The finished product is absolutely awesome... Our son is beyond excited and already asking to come back to Round House next summer.”

Parent, Filmmakers: Magic School

“I was able to attend the sharing on the last day and was so impressed with the energy and kindness expressed by all of the instructors and other staff...Thank you to everyone at Round House for creating such a fabulously enriching and fun learning experience for kids this summer!”

Parent, Destinations

ON SITE CLASSES AND DAYS OFF!

Weekends brought young students to the Education Center for various classes, from pre-K students exploring their creativity in Dramatots, to middle school students learning to trust their instincts and play through improvisation.

Our **YOUNG ARTISTS PERFORMANCE COMPANY (YAPC)**, which is designed to introduce students to the rehearsal and performance process, presented *Little Red Reboot* by Sonya Sobieski and *Margaret Cradmeier's Catalogue of Minor Yet Helpful Uncanny Abilities* by Alan Haehnel.

ADULTS took classes with some of Round House's favorite teaching artists including Kevin Corbett. This year, we began a new improv drop-in classes each month for adults wishing to explore improvisation just for an evening.

45 students also joined us for one or more days of our **SPRING BREAK DAYS OFF!** Program, which provided days

of theatrical fun in the Education Center when Montgomery County Schools were closed.

AFTER-SCHOOL CLASSES AND PRODUCTION RESIDENCIES

Round House teaching artists taught **AFTER-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES** to approximately 344 students in local schools. Our regular after-school classes included 12 classes in five schools such as East Silver Spring, Kensington Parkwood, and Westbrook Elementary Schools.

We were invited to expand our partnership with the Montgomery County Public Schools Out-of-School Time program to provide programming to students at five elementary schools. For more than 20 weeks, teaching teams were in the school system five days a week providing arts programming to students in high-need schools through this partnership, funded by the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Maryland Out-of-School Time Program grant.

“[The students] are so unbelievably into acting and it warms my heart!”

Round House Theatre Teaching Artist

“This is my favorite part of my week!”

Student at Brookhaven Elementary

“I adore Viers Mill and all the kids we got the chance to work with this year.”

Round House Theatre Teaching Artist



TEEN NIGHT AND FREE PLAY

Over 1,500 high school and college students attended Round House productions at regular performances at no cost through our **FREE PLAY** program. We continued our Teen Nights, which invite teens to join us for pizza, a pre-show discussion, and a performance of one of our shows.



STUDENT MATINEES

Round House continued its long tradition of offering outstanding theatrical experiences to high school students through our **STUDENT MATINEE PROGRAM**, which hosted over 800 students from 17 schools at our student matinees.

"I know it is unique to the particular play in this case, but integrating an actual high school student into the performance and conversation was an outstanding point of connection and one that I hope you are able to repeat in other contexts!"

Teacher, Washington Waldorf School

"I thought it was very well-organized and a great opportunity for students to access work that they might not have considered seeing. I would love to bring my students back to future events or performances."

Teacher, British International School

"Fantastic experience! Hoping to bring back students next year."

Teacher, Huntington High School

"I thought the atmosphere was really welcoming and I enjoyed the way the theatre was set. I also think it's very accessible for students."

Student, British International School



DONOR EVENTS

During the 2024-2025 Season, Round House donors enjoyed an array of opportunities to go behind-the-scenes of the artistic process, meet our talented artists, and see how the magic of theatre happens. Visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/InnerCircle to learn more about our exciting donor benefits and events.

OPENING NIGHTS

Round House's Opening Nights bring together our Leadership Circle patrons, artistic leaders from the region, elected officials, press outlets, teaching artists, staff, and friends of the cast and crew to bear witness to one of the first public performances of a production. After the show, the artists and attendees gather for a dessert reception in the lobby to honor the artists onstage, crew behind the curtain, and to thank the show sponsors who helped support the show bring it to the stage.



INSIDE LOOKS

Inside Looks provide a special sneak peek behind the curtain into the process of a production as it makes its way from rehearsal to Round House's stage. This donor benefit began as a smaller offering and has since grown to Round House's most popular donor event, with an average of 120 attendees. Midway through a production's rehearsal schedule, donors enjoy a moderated Q&A in the theatre with the cast, director, and designers about their experiences building the show, journey in developing its design elements, and what they're hoping audiences will take away when it finally opens. The audience also gets the opportunity to ask questions of their own. At the end of the program, attendees enjoy a intimate reception in our lobby and mingle with the cast and designers.



BACKSTAGE TOURS AND TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

This past year, Round House invited donors at the Benefactor level and higher to step backstage and explore the sets of two unique productions in our 2024-2025 Season, *A Hanukkah Carol*, or *Gelt Trip! The Musical* and *Bad Books*. Donors were intrigued by *A Hanukkah Carol*'s intricate backstage arrangement, the plethora of new props and costumes, and the inner workings of an exciting world premiere musical.

Bad Books was the first-ever production to be staged in the round at Round House. Donors learned more about how we transformed not only the set design, but the physical structure and seating of our audiences to accommodate an entirely new theatre arrangement, complete with a set that rotates throughout the entirety of the show.

BROADWAY IN BETHESDA GALA

For the 2025 *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala, we welcomed Tony and Grammy Award-winning actress Renée Elise Goldsberry to Round House. We also featured an impressive opening performance from beloved Round House artist Dendy (*The Tempest*), followed by special remarks from playwright Fin Davis and director Lark Jeffers (Teen Performance Company's *Gallows Humor*) about the impact of Round House's educational programs on their futures. For the first time, the *Broadway in Bethesda* auction was led by an artist, Kimberly Gilbert (*What the Constitution Means to Me* and *Jennifer Who is Leaving*), who energetically enticed the audience to raise over \$275,000 in auction bids and paddle raises, bringing the total Gala revenue to \$525,000. This outpouring of support was a meaningful reflection of our community's commitment to Round House's programming and truly reinforced our theatre as a place of unity during uncertain times. The entire evening was catered by Susan Gage Catering with floral arrangements by Chevy Chase Florist.





LONDON TOUR

In fall 2024, Round House Theatre hosted two unforgettable trips to London—an immersion into the world-class theatre scene of the West End and beyond. Each week, a group of passionate theatre lovers, led by Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Executive Director Ed Zakreski, journeyed across London for performances and insider experiences that deeply resonated. This limited-capacity tour sold out quickly, affirming the enthusiasm and appetite for the camaraderie and experiences.

During the trip, 52 participants stayed in style at the luxurious Sea Containers London on the South Bank. With each group seeing five shows in total, Week One guests enjoyed a fun stage adaptation of *Dr. Strangelove* starring the infamous Steve Coogan, the inimitable Mark Rylance in *Juno and the Paycock*, and a heartbreaking play about aging, *A Tupperware of Ashes* at the National Theatre. Week Two audiences saw John Lithgow tower as Roald Dahl in *Giant*, a beautiful musical adaptation of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, and the inventive *The Buddha of Suburbia* by the RSC at The Barbican Centre. After each performance, guests returned to our apartment at Sea Containers for spirited discussions and reflections on the evening's entertainment.

Beyond the performances, the trip wove in exclusive behind-the-scenes elements: a private tour of The Old Vic, exploring Sir John Soane's museum, a behind-the-glass tour of the Churchill War Rooms, candid conversations with London theatre makers, scrumptious meals, elegant afternoon teas and a chance to enjoy the beautiful South Bank neighborhood of London. The 2024 London Trip reignited curiosity, fostered creative belonging, and strengthened the bonds between Round House champions. Attendees returned inspired, armed with fresh ideas, broadened perspectives, and deeper admiration for the universality and transformative power of theatre.



SPONSORS' AUDITIONS

At Round House Theatre, the introduction of **Sponsors' Auditions**—sometimes called backer's auditions—proved to be both innovative and highly successful for our special production of *A Hannukah Carol*.

For *A Hannukah Carol*, the August 2024 Sponsors' Audition became a joyful launchpad. Hosted in an intimate setting, it combined spirited performances with direct conversation between artists and potential supporters, highlighting the play's unique cultural resonance and festive energy. The event generated both enthusiasm and commitments that helped secure the resources needed for a robust production, while also broadening our circle of engaged donors.

This event demonstrated how Sponsors' Auditions can serve not only as fundraising tools, but as community-building celebrations that deepen investment in Round House's mission.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Round House Theatre **Business Advisory Council (BAC)** brings together a select group of business and civic leaders who believe in the power of the arts to strengthen Montgomery County's economy and quality of life. Council members serve as ambassadors, advisors, and advocates, helping Round House build deeper connections between the business and arts communities. Through invitations to special events and gatherings, members enjoy meaningful dialogue with theatre leadership, behind-the-scenes access to productions, and opportunities to shape the role Round House plays in advancing cultural vibrancy across the region.

Participation in the BAC is also a platform for visibility, networking, and impact. Members gain access to exclusive events like the Broadway in Bethesda Gala, receive recognition in Round House materials, and help develop initiatives that benefit both the business community and the arts. Most importantly, they join a dynamic network of leaders who understand that a thriving theatre enriches our community, attracts and retains talent, drives economic activity, and creates a more inspired and engaged workforce.



FINANCIALS

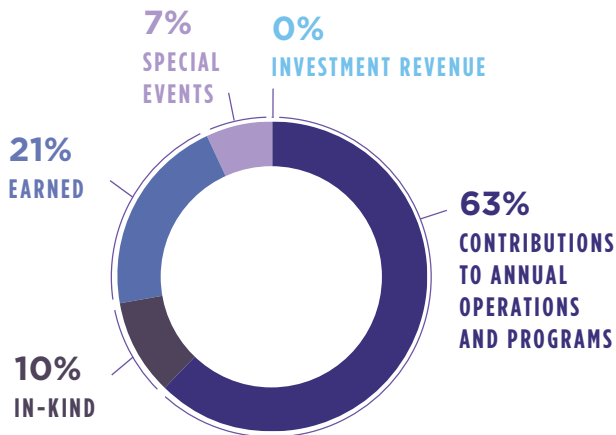
The 2024-2025 Season was the third highest-grossing season in Round House history, including the best-selling world premiere play in the history of the organization. Education and facility rental revenue grew, thanks in part to new and expanded partnerships. Round House donors once again demonstrated their dedication to the theatre, stepping up when a National Endowment for the Arts grant was revoked and contributing to the highest-grossing *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala, in addition to supporting Round House all season long.

As our economic situation began to show some stability, Round House worked to improve our financial standing after using our reserves and other fiscal safeguards to manage the challenges of the last several years. We reduced outstanding debt by nearly \$600,000 and deferred surplus revenue to help reduce future financial risk as we work to enhance production quality and invest in our staff and facilities. We are grateful to Round House supporters for their unwavering commitment and for making the 2024-2025 Season such a success.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 (JULY 1, 2024-JUNE 30, 2025)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

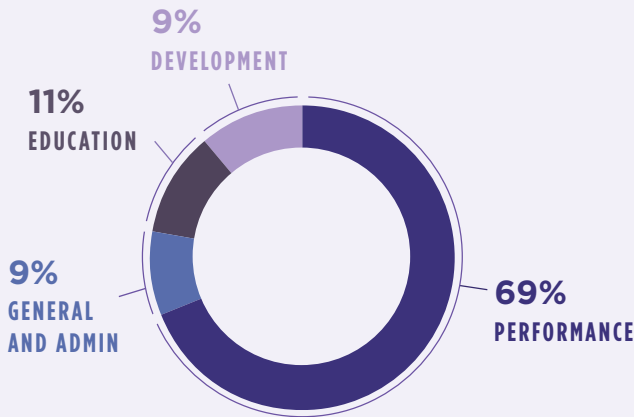
Earned Revenue (tickets, tuition, concessions, rental)	\$	2,425,089
Grants and Contributions	\$	7,373,550
Special Events	\$	856,634
In-kind	\$	1,126,156
Investment Revenue	\$	8,265
TOTAL	\$	11,789,694



As a non-profit arts organization, Round House raises funds from many sources to supplement earned income from ticket sales, tuition, and concessions. The majority of our support comes from generous contributions by individuals.

EXPENSES

Performance	\$	5,910,683
Education	\$	921,448
General and Admin	\$	752,940
Development	\$	983,152
TOTAL	\$	8,568,223



Our artistic and educational programming accounts for 75 percent of our total expenses.

+\$3,221,471

TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

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List is current as of June 30, 2025

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List is current as of June 30, 2025

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Artistic Director:

Ryan Rilette

Executive Director:

Ed Zakreski

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General Manager:

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Facilities Manager:

Liz Sena

Associate General Manager:

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Artistic & Executive Associate:

Amy Benson

ARTISTIC

Casting Director & Associate

Producer: Sarah Cooney

Artistic & Dramaturgical Advisor:

Naysan Mojgani

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Development: Katelyn Maurer

Development Operations

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Development Associate:

Natalie Cumming

EDUCATION

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Danisha Crosby

Education Programs Manager:

Emily Lettau

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Kelsey Hall

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Sean Baldwin

Maddi Bard

Ian Anthony Coleman

Lila Cooper

Kevin Corbett

Fabiolla Da Silva

Anna DiGiovanni

Victoria Donnelly

Luke Dorris

Amanda Dullin-Jones

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Jordan Essex

Deven Ferrer

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Assistant Production Manager/

Company Manager:

Chassi Slappy

Technical Director: Matt Saxton

Assistant Technical Director:

Jose Abraham

Costume Shop Manager:

Alison Johnson

Lighting Supervisor:

Steven Burrall

Audio/Visual Supervisor:

Delaney Bray

Scenic Charge:

Jenny Cockerham

Resident Stage Manager:

Che Wernsman

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(as of June 30, 2025)

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who support the work of our 2024-2025 Season through Annual Fund and Gala contributions. These tax-deductible gifts help Round House continue to be a theatre for everyone and enrich our community through bold, outstanding theatrical and educational experiences that inspire empathy and demand conversation.

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COVER: Photo of Kate Eastwood Norris (The Librarian) and Holly Twyford (The Mother) in *Bad Books* by Margot Schulman Photography.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS: Photo of Blake Morris (Shawn) in *King James* by Margot Schulman Photography; photo of Kimberly Gilbert (Heidi) in *What the Constitution Means to Me* by Kent Kondo; photo of Samantha Sayah (Chava Kanipshin) by Margot Schulman Photography; photo of Summer Camp 2025.

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A HANUKKAH CAROL, OR GELT TRIP! THE

MUSICAL: Photo of the cast of *A Hanukkah Carol, or Gelt Trip! The Musical* by Margot Schulman Photography.

WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME: Photo of Kimberly Gilbert in *What the Constitution Means to Me* by Kent Kondo.

TEEN TAKEOVER WEEKEND: Photo of *Gallows Humor* and Teen Performance Company by Danisha Crosby.

BAD BOOKS: Photo of Kate Eastwood Norris (The Librarian) and Holly Twyford (The Mother) in *Bad Books* by Margot Schulman Photography.

DEVELOPMENTAL READINGS: Photo of Miranda Cornell, Eliana Theologides Rodriguez, and Amy Benson in a talkback; photo of Harrison David Rivers, Otis Cortez Ramsey-Zöe, and Ryan Rilette in a talkback; photo of Naomi Jacobson and Maria Rizzo in *Baby Shower Katie* developmental reading; photo of Nicholas Gerwitz and Ahmad Kamal in *PIN*, developmental reading; photo of Mercedes Hesselroth, Samantha Yangilmau, Toni Avonne, Tsaitami Duchicela, and Kat Pascual in *Indian Princesses* developmental reading; and photo of Chelsea Shorte, Shayla Simmons, and Jasmine Brooks in *Proximity* developmental reading. All photos by Susan Gibson.

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EDUCATION: Photos of summer camp students; photo of student matinee; and photo of Days Off! Students. All photos by Danisha Crosby.

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photo of Ryan Rilette, Holly Twyford, Rick Kasten, and Kate Eastwood Norris by Cameron Whitman Photography; photo of Valerie Curtis-Newton and Ryan Rilette by Kent Kondo; and photo of *Bad Books* inside look by Kent Kondo.

BROADWAY IN BETHESDA GALA: Photo of Renée Elise Goldsberry; photo of Dendy and Rachel Snitzer; photo of Renée Elise Goldsberry with TPC students; photo of Renée Elise Goldsberry with donors. All photos by Cameron Whitman Photography.

LONDON TRIP: Photos of participants on the Round House 2024 London Trip by Amy Benson and Michael Barret Jones.

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