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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ROUND HOUSE THEATRE RINGS IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH
THE U.S. PREMIERE OF SAM HOLCROFT'S**

RULES FOR LIVING

Directed By Ryan Rilette

December 3-January 4

A hilarious holiday comedy that dives into family dysfunction, societal expectations, and the unspoken rules we all follow to survive family gatherings

BETHESDA, MD (October 28, 2025): Round House Theatre continues its 2025-2026 Season with the U.S. premiere of ***Rules For Living***, a wickedly funny yuletide farce about family dysfunction and societal norms. Written by British playwright **Sam Holcroft**, the play has been newly adapted for American audiences and is directed by Round House Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette**. It will run from December 3-January 4. More information and tickets [here](#).

The play follows a family preparing Christmas lunch. As the matriarch of the house puts everyone to work to create the perfect meal, what seemingly starts as a pleasant Christmas tradition descends into chaotic revelations of secrets, hostilities, and bitter

grudges. As the story unfolds, the audience uncovers the hidden “rules” each character follows to cope with family dynamics, offering a sharp, funny look at how we handle pressure and conflict.

“I’m so excited to tackle this hilarious holiday comedy with a dream team of comedic actors. *Rules for Living* takes the typical dysfunctional family holiday story into new territory by drawing attention to the unspoken rules we all follow, often unconsciously, and the coping mechanisms we rely on when navigating the complexities of family dynamics. It’s an entertaining and relatable story told with wit, heart, high energy, and a lot of laughs,” says **Artistic Director Ryan Rilette**.

The cast includes (alphabetically) **Will Conard, Jonathan Feuer, Avery Harris, Naomi Jacobson, John Lescault, Maisie Posner, Dani Stoller, and Dina Thomas**.

The cast is joined by a brilliant creative team, which includes Scenic Designer **Jimmy Stubbs**, Costume Designer **Ivania Stack**, Lighting Designer **Emma Deane**, Sound Designer **Delaney Bray**, Fight Director **Casey Kaleba**, Dramaturg **Naysan Mojgani**, Casting Director **Sarah Cooney**, Assistant Director **Michael Glenn**, Production Stage Manager **Tori Schuchmann**, and Production Assistant **Ellen Mitchell**.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 240.644.1100 or ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org. Round House Theatre is located at 4545 East-West Highway, one block from Wisconsin Avenue and the Bethesda station on Metro’s Red Line.

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***Rules for Living* is sponsored by Mitch & Heidi Dupler and Susan & Tim Gibson.**

The 2025-2026 Season is sponsored by Linda J. Ravdin & Don Shapero and David & Sherry Smith.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Sam Holcroft (Playwright) is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter. Theatre credits include *A Mirror* (Trafalgar Theatre, West End), co-produced with Second Half Productions; the musical *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Nuffield Theatre, Southampton and Lyric Hammersmith); *Rules for Living*, *The Wardrobe*, and *Edgar and Annabel* (The National Theatre); *While You Lie* (Traverse Theatre); *Pink* (Tricycle Theatre); *Vanya* (Gate Theatre); and *Cockroach* (National Theatre of Scotland). Television work includes *The Rook* (Lionsgate). Awards include the Windham Campbell Prize for Literature in the Drama category and the Tom Erhardt Playwriting Award for Most Promising Writer. Sam is currently writing on an HBO series, is developing a new play for Second Half Productions, and is under commission to the National Theatre.

Ryan Rilette (Director) is in his fourteenth season as Artistic Director of Round House Theatre. For Round House, he has directed *Bad Books* (world premiere), *The Seafarer*, *"We declare you a terrorist..."* (world premiere), *Throw Me on the Burnpile and Light Me Up*, *Homebound*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Oslo*, *Small Mouth Sounds*, *"Master Harold"...and the Boys*, *The Book of Will*, *Angels in America: Perestroika*, *The Night Alive*, *Fool for Love*, *This*, and *How to Write a New Book for the Bible*. He also acted in *Ink* and *Uncle Vanya* at Round House, has directed at theatres throughout the country, and has acted in a handful of TV shows and films. During his tenure at Round House, he has produced seven of the 10 highest grossing seasons and 17 of the top 20 highest grossing productions in the theatre's history. His productions have received 99 Helen Hayes Awards nominations and 30 Helen Hayes Awards. Ryan created the theatre's Equal Play commissioning program, Resident Artist program, Fair Play pay scale for artists, and Free Play ticketing program. Prior to joining Round House, Ryan served as Producing Director of Marin Theatre Company, Producing Artistic Director of Southern Rep Theatre, and co-founder and Artistic Director of Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company. He is the former Board President of the National New Play Network.

CAST INFORMATION (ALPHABETICAL)

Will Conard (Matthew) is a recent graduate of NYU's Grad Acting MFA program and is very excited to begin his theatrical career at Round House Theatre in this production of *Rules for Living*. Film/TV: *Lapsis*. BA: Brown University. Website: willconard.com.

Jonathan Feuer (Adam) is making his Round House Theatre debut. Local credits include *Richard III* and *As You Like It* at Shakespeare Theatre Company, *John* at Signature Theatre, *Monumental Travesties* and *Charm* at Mosaic Theater Company, *Antigone Project* at Rep Stage, and *The Call* at Theater J. He has also worked at Arena Stage, Studio Theatre, Kennedy Center TYA, Imagination Stage, Prologue Theatre, Solas Nua, Spooky Action Theater, The Keegan Theatre, Adventure Theatre, and more. Jonathan is an MFA graduate of the Academy for Classical Acting at GW. He will next appear in *Eureka Day* at Theater J in the spring.

Avery Harris (Emma) is delighted to be stepping onto the Round House Theatre stage for the first time. Her most recent credits include *The Bedwetter* (Laura) at Arena Stage and *Ragtime* (The Little Girl) at Signature Theatre (Helen Hayes Nomination for Best Ensemble). Other theater credits include *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel) and *Matilda* (Matilda). On Instagram at @avery.laina.harris.

Naomi Jacobson (Deborah) has appeared at Round House in *Caroline, or Change*; *The Lyons*; *Wintertime*; *The Talented Mr. Ripley*; *Smell of the Kill* (all married to actual husband John Lescault); *The Tempest*; and *Mere Mortals*. She has performed at most of the DC-area Equity theatres, including The Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre, Arena Stage, Signature Theatre, and Woolly Mammoth Theatre. Regionally, she has performed at the Guthrie Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Cleveland Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Indiana Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, Village Theatre, Maltz Jupiter, and the Berkshire Theatre Festival. Her voiceover work includes NPR, PBS, Discovery Channel, and the Smithsonian. She has received three Helen Hayes Awards, numerous nominations, the Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, the

Anderson-Hopkins Award, and a DC Arts Individual Artist grant. For full credits, visit naomijacobson.com.

John Lescault (Francis) Previous credits at Round House include *Shakespeare, Moses, and Joe Papp*; *Our Town*; *Wintertime*; *The Lyons*; *Caroline, or Change*; *A Prayer for Owen Meany*; and *Handbagged*. International credits include *Defiant Requiem* (Prague Spring Music Festival) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Theatre Company/Macau Arts Festival). New York credits include *Handbagged* (59E59/ Round House Theatre) and *Le Deserteur* (Opera Lafayette at Lincoln Center). Regional credits: *Native Gardens* and *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (Cincinnati Playhouse); *The Second City's Twist Your Dickens*, *Love Factually*, and Opera Lafayette's *Sancho Panza* (The Kennedy Center), as well as productions at Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Signature Theatre, Ford's Theatre, Studio Theatre, Olney Theatre, and CATF (among many others). Film/TV: *Lincoln*, *The Day Lincoln Was Shot*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Beautiful Something*, *The Fox Hunter*, and *Dakota*. John has been a narrator of commercial audiobooks and for the Library of Congress's Talking Books program for 30 years. He is a graduate of The Catholic University of America.

Maisie Posner (Emma) is ecstatic to be making her Round House Theatre debut in this hilarious and heartfelt play. Previous professional roles include Bielke in *Fiddler on the Roof* at the Olney Theatre Center and Rebecca Gibbs in *Our Town* at the Shakespeare Theatre. She has also done professional readings of *The Story of Walter* for Signature Theatre and *Shakespeare & the Zombie Plague of 1590*. Maisie is a 9th grader in the CAP Program at Montgomery Blair High School.

Dani Stoller (Carrie) is an award-winning playwright and actor currently based in Washington, DC. Performance credits include *This Much I Know* (59E59 Off-Broadway); *Which Way to the Stage* and *Ragtime* (Signature Theatre, Helen Hayes Nomination for Best Supporting Performer); *My Body, No Choice* (Arena Stage, Helen Hayes Nomination for Best Supporting Performer); *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *District Merchants* (Folger Theatre); *The Joy That Carries You*, *The*

Humans, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and *The Crucible* (Olney Theatre Center); and *This Much I Know*, *Hester Street* (Helen Hayes Nomination for Best Supporting Performer), and *Prayer for the French Republic* (Helen Hayes Nomination for Best Supporting Performer) (Theater J). She has also performed at Studio Theatre, 1st Stage, Keegan Theatre, and The Kennedy Center. Playwriting credits include *Easy Women Smoking Loose Cigarettes* (Signature Theatre), *Just Great: an adaptation of some book by F. Scott Fitzgerald* (recently published by Broadway Licensing), *The Voices of Blackwell Island*, *The Possumneck Playhouse Presents...*, *Failureland* (Signature Theater SIS Program), *Girlhood* (Round House Theatre Teen Performance Company commission), and *The Joy That Carries You*, co-written with Awa Sal Secka (Olney Theatre Center, winner of the Helen Hayes Charles MacArthur Award for Best New Play). Education: BFA Ithaca College, MFA CUA.

Dina Thomas (Nicole) is a DC theatre artist and real estate agent who is thrilled to be back after making her Round House debut earlier this year in the reading of *Baby Shower Katie*. Other DC credits include *At The Wedding*, *Cry It Out* and *2.5 Minute Ride* at Studio Theatre; *The Berlin Diaries*, *Chameleon*, and *The Wanderers* at Theater J; *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Metromaniacs* at Shakespeare Theater Company. Her Off-Broadway credits include *The Metromaniacs* at Red Bull Theater, *Clever Little Lies* at Westside Theatre, and *Tribes* at Barrow Street Theatre directed by David Cromer. Regional credits include *Everything You Touch* at Contemporary American Theater Festival; *The Metromaniacs* at The Old Globe; *See How They Run* and *10x10 New Play Festival* at Barrington Stage Company; and *Bad Jews* (BroadwayWorld Award, Best Actress), *I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard*, and *Miss Witherspoon* at Unicorn Theatre. She has an MFA in Acting from the University of Missouri–Kansas City and a B.A. in Theatre from Binghamton University. On social media @tinydthomas and @dbtrealtor (Instagram).

Amy Benson (Understudy, Carrie/Nicole) is thrilled to be understudying at Round House Theatre once again! Amy is Round House's Artistic and Executive Associate, was the assistant to director Alan Paul on Round House's production of *Next to*

Normal, and understudied the incomparable Kimberly Gilbert in *What the Constitution Means to Me*. She is also the Festival Producer for the workshops during the Bonnie Hammerschlag National Capital New Play Festival. She was the Founding Artistic Director of Walking Shadow Readers Theatre, a new play development company, and has directed *Best Medicine Rep*, *Too Much Damn Theater*, and the Philadelphia Dramatists Center. Amy also has extensive teaching experience as a teaching artist at Imagination Stage, Adventure Theatre, and Epworth Preschool. She has taught in Beijing, China, and Berlin, Germany, where she founded her own acting studio, Amy Benson Studios. Amy has a BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Instagram: @amybensonacts

Ari Post (Understudy, Matthew/Adam) is thrilled to make his Round House Theatre debut with *Rules for Living*. DC credits include *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Rover* at Shakespeare Theatre Company; *Electionland* at Storyworks Theater; and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Odyssey* at Shakespeare Theatre Company (MFA). Other credits include *Now to Ashes* at the DC Fringe Festival (Best of Fringe), and *Venus in Fur*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and *Side Man* at local area theaters. Upcoming credits include *Appropriate* at Olney Theatre Center and *Once* at NextStop Theatre Company. Training: MFA in Acting, Shakespeare Theatre Company at George Washington University.

Vince Rossano (Understudy, Francis) is back for his second understudy gig at Round House. He is a recent arrival in the DMV area, having spent most of his nearly-60-year theatrical career performing in regional theatre in his home state of Vermont. In the past few years, he has appeared in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Seagull*, and *The Father* at Unadilla Theater, *Taming of the Shrew* at the Vermont Shakespeare Festival, *Native Gardens* and *A Number* at Vermont Stage, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Kiss Me Kate* at the Mirror Repertory Theater. He and his wife have also toured the Eastern Seaboard with their production of A.R. Gurney's *Love Letters*. He has a degree in theatre from the University of Vermont and also studied theatre at Goddard College.

Mara Rosenberg is delighted to return to Round House Theatre where she understudied the role of Nan in *Jennifer, Who is Leaving*. Since relocating to the DMV from Charlotte, NC, Mara has been seen in productions at Silver Spring Stage (*Circle, Mirror, Transformation*), NOVA Nightsky Theater (*Picnic* and *The American Plan*), The Arlington Players (*A Daughter's a Daughter*), Greenbelt Arts Center (*Motherhood Out Loud*) and Pipeline Playwrights (*Wednesdays in Mississippi*). Mara spends her days making silly voices as a school librarian.

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Rules for Living

By Sam Holcroft

Directed by Ryan Rilette

December 3, 2025–January 4, 2026 | U.S. Premiere

ABOUT THE PLAY

A “raucous, unbridled” (*The Guardian*) hit at London’s National Theatre, *Rules for Living* has been updated for its American premiere at Round House this holiday season! The holidays are all about family, but what happens when long-standing tensions, buried resentments, and hilariously disastrous coping mechanisms collide at Christmas dinner? In this inventive, high-energy comedy, the internal rules that the characters live by become visible, turning every awkward pause, biting remark, and outburst into a brilliantly choreographed meltdown. Wickedly funny and all too relatable, this is one family holiday gathering you won’t want to miss.

WHERE: Round House Theatre, 4545 East-West Highway in Bethesda (one block from Wisconsin Ave. and Metro’s Bethesda station). For directions, parking, and public transportation info, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/Visit-Us/.

DATES AND TIMES

Rules for Living runs from December 3-January 4. Performances are:

- **Tuesday through Friday at 7:30 pm**
- **Saturday at 8:00 pm**
- **Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 pm**

ACCESSIBLE PERFORMANCES

- **Audio-Described performances:** December 13 (matinee)
- **Open-Captioned performances:** December 14, December 20 (matinee)
- **Masks are required at the following performance:** January 3 (matinee)

POST AND PRE-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

- **Post Show Discussions:** Dec 3, Dec 4, Dec 14, Dec 21
- **Director Discussion:** Dec 5 at 6:45 pm
- **Designer Discussion:** Dec 3 at 6:45 pm
- **Teen Night: Dec 5:** Join us for dinner followed by a pre-show discussion before the show and attend a performance of the play followed by a post-show activity.

TICKETS: From \$50 with ticket discounts available. Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100, ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org, or visiting the box office.

Available ticket discounts include:

- **Pay-What-You-Can performances:** PWYC tickets go on sale online or by phone only (no walk-up sales) beginning three weeks before the first performance of each show. The patron decides the admission price. Limit of two tickets per order. PWYC tickets are available for performances on Wednesday, December 3 (7:30pm) and Saturday, December 6 (2pm) and are subject to availability.
- **2-For-1 Tuesday:** For all Tuesday performances of *Rules for Living*, all seats are buy one, get one free. 2-for-1 Tuesday tickets are available online or by phone (240.644.1100) with promo code TWOFORONE. Discounts may not be combined. Not valid on previously purchased tickets.
- **Free Play: Free Tickets for students ages 13 through college:** Round House Theatre's Free Play initiative ties into our greater strategy to develop theatre audiences

of tomorrow by providing rich, meaningful arts experiences today. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/FreePlay or email Education@RoundHouseTheatre.org.

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- **On the House community ticket access program:** Round House's next step to remove barriers that can make it difficult for some members of our community to experience our work is On the House, which provides complimentary group tickets to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and community-serving organizations with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor. For more information, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/On-TheHouse or email Community@RoundHouseTheatre.org.
- **Blue Star Theatre Program:** Active-duty military personnel, veterans, and their immediate family qualify for a \$10 discount off the single ticket price. Learn more at RoundHouseTheatre.org/On-Stage/Tickets.
- **Group Sales:** Groups of 10 or more can save 10% off the single ticket price and are exempt from single ticket fees. These tickets must be reserved and purchased in advance by calling 240.644.1100 or emailing GroupSales@RoundHouseTheatre.org.

ROUND HOUSE THEATRE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Round House Theatre no longer requires that audience members wear masks for most performances in our theatre. However, masks are required for certain performances and for events in other Round House spaces, including our Event Room. We continue to strongly recommend masks as the best way for individuals to protect themselves from COVID-19 and other seasonal viruses, and we ask our audience members to respect the choices of others. Round House will offer a limited number of mask-required performances for audience members who may prefer a fully masked environment. Masks are required for the matinee performance on January 3.

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 235 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 54, 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.